

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Fountain Valley School District**



Volume 19, Issue 114

November 2023



## Fountain Valley Partnerships Good for All!







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# SUPERINTENDENT

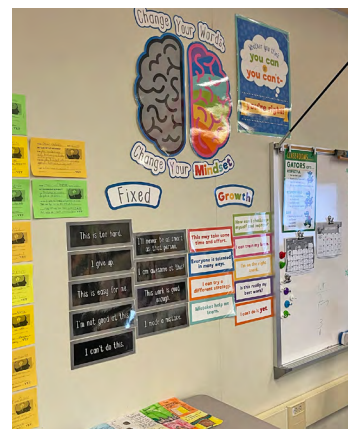


**Dr. Katherine Stopp**  
Superintendent

One of the most rewarding aspects of serving as the Fountain Valley School District superintendent is the opportunity to engage directly with our educational community. The ability to visit every school site, step into every classroom, witness every program, and observe our dedicated teachers and students in action is a privilege like no other.

These visits provide invaluable insights into the daily lives of our educators and learners. It allows me to better understand the unique challenges and successes of each school, as well as the diverse range of programs and initiatives being undertaken. Moreover, it fosters a strong sense of connection with our talented teaching staff and the bright young minds they nurture.

This firsthand experience not only informs my leadership decisions but also reinforces my passion for education. It's a constant reminder of the collective effort that goes into shaping the future, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of it.





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*By Sandra Crandall, Clerk*

The much-anticipated California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) scores were released. Fountain Valley School District (FVSD), like all school districts, provides a report to the board, school site administrators and teachers, various parent groups and the public-at-large on the results of the yearly testing of 3rd through 8th and 11th grade students. Doing so highlights mastery of standards-based content, progress which was made year over year and areas needing improvement.

FVSD students are a product of parents/guardians who value education, taught by excellent teachers, and supported by trained support staff. As a result, they outscored state-wide and county-wide achievement averages and landed #1 in English Language Arts and #1 in math as compared to the other 12 elementary school districts in Orange County.

How was this accomplished and how have we sustained high rankings over the years?

FVSD has a clearly articulated mission where “the main thing is the main thing,” a focus where everyone is “rowing in the same direction,” people understand the role they play and their responsibilities, employees are acknowledged for the difference they make as they work in safe and nurturing environments, and success is celebrated. Our staff continue to provide differentiated instruction and a tiered system of support to address the needs of the whole child, and that makes all the difference.

Our FVSD staff members embrace what one of my administrator friend calls “the love language of leadership – culture and systems.” A positive, purposeful, and rich culture abounds and systems are in place in FVSD. We are grateful to all for keeping the focus on students and we are most proud of their achievements.





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www.schoolnewsrollcall.com

Covering the  
FOUNTAIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



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Netragrednik  
Neta Madison

This year is quickly coming to a close and we will soon be celebrating Thanksgiving. I have many reasons to be thankful and included are you, our readers, who continue to support public education. We have been publishing *School News* for 24 years bringing you information directly from the classrooms. Readers may sign up on our website to receive issues from the districts of their choice. Interest in public education is at its highest in our years

of publishing. I sold real estate for many years before founding *School News* and every buyer asked what the schools were like in the community they were considering. Even if they didn't have children, buyers knew the quality of the schools set the standard for the quality of the community and would determine their selling price. We are all stakeholders in the future of our children.

Our next issue is January 24.

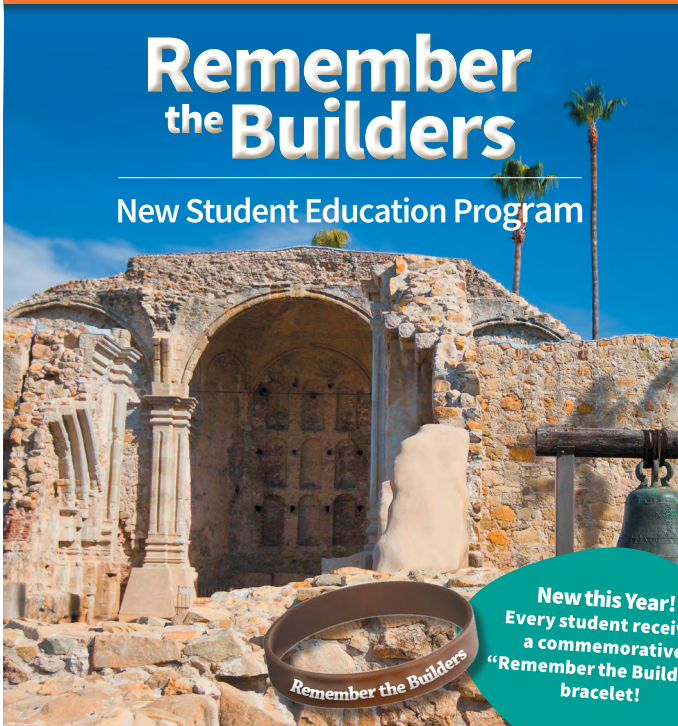
**Happy Thanksgiving**  
from the  
*School News staff!*



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# City of Fountain Valley Office of the Mayor

10200 Slater Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/593-4400  
www.fountainvalley.org



**Kim Constantine**  
Mayor

As Mayor in our “Nice Place to Live” to nearly 56,000 residents, I remained active and engaged overseeing many pivotal, exciting milestones. City Council approved and received significant grant funding for Fountain Valley’s first ever Universally Accessible Playground (UAP) for our Sports Park. We partnered with the Cities of Garden Grove and Westminster on a referral-based Navigation Center available to all 3 communities’ unboxed. As the I-405 Improvement Project nears completion, all 7 City bridges reopened reconfigured to their fullest potential. We continue welcoming new businesses striving to be an Orange County food destination. We welcomed MOI Cuisines, Urban Plates, and soon the first two Dutch Bros. in Orange County. Our Crawfish and Lobster Festivals, and Annual SummerFest were well-attended. City Council and staff look forward to discovering new, innovative ways to deliver high-quality services to our community so residents, businesses, and visitors can thrive and ‘Live their Best Life’.

# Fountain Valley Library

17635 Los Alamos St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/962-1324 • www.ocpl.org

## Winter Reading is On Its Way!

*Kimberly Tran-Hoang, Children & Teen Librarian*

Our Winter Reading Program is coming beginning! You can sign-up online with Beanstack at <https://ocpl.beanstack.org/reader365>. The Winter Reading Program will run from December 11, 2023, to January 27, 2024.

Check out the variety of programs offered in the library during this time. Find out the details at <https://www.ocpl.org/libraries/fountain-valley>.

Below are some highlights of upcoming programs:

**Children & Families:** Spanish Bilingual Storytime: Last Tuesdays at 4pm. Vietnamese Bilingual Storytime: November 25 & January 20 at 11am.

Acrylic Painting Workshop: Last Wednesdays at 4pm. For ages 10 & up, registration required.

We also have weekly Toddler and Preschool Storytimes, monthly Family Craft Nights, movie screenings for families, and more!

### Teens

Volunteer Orientation: First Wednesdays at 5pm – Volunteer application required for teens ages 14-18.

Teen Advisory Board: Meets First Thursdays at 5pm – Volunteer application required for teens ages 13-18.

Animescapes (Anime Film Screenings for Teens & Adults) – Third Saturdays at 2pm.

Teen Crochet 101: Tuesday, November 7 at 4pm.

Teen Gingerbread House Competition: Thursday, December 21 at 5pm.

Mason Jar Snow Globe Workshop for Teens: Saturday, December 23 at 2pm.

### Adults

Crafts for Adults w/Developmental Disabilities: Mondays at 10:30am.

ESL/ELL Crafts & Conversation: Third Wednesdays at 5pm. Improve your English and make new friends!

Paint N Sip Workshop: Second Wednesdays at 4pm. Registration required.

Paul Stein Violin Melodies and Holiday Harmonies: Saturday, December 9 at 2pm.

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# Roch Courreges *Elementary (K-5)*

18313 Santa Carlotta, Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4280 • [www.courreges.fvdsd.us](http://www.courreges.fvdsd.us)



**Lisa Tanita**  
Principal

## Building Connections the Courreges Way

We've had an amazing start to the school

year, with an emphasis on the Courreges way: Positive, Respectful, Responsible, Safe, and Kind.

This year marks

the beginning of an exciting journey of cultivating student leadership, offering students opportunities to shine brightly. From student announcers at

flag ceremonies to buddy classrooms across all grades, our students are taking on leadership roles that nurture their confidence and sense of responsibility. All upper

grade students actively participate in our buddy classrooms where they mentor a primary student in a variety of activities that develop critical thinking, cooperation, and citizenship. We look forward to celebrating the successes of our students as they continue to embrace the Courreges way and reach new heights.





# James H. Cox *Elementary (K-5)*

17615 Los Jardines E., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4240 • [www.cox.fvsd.us](http://www.cox.fvsd.us)



**Dr. Jennifer Ollila**  
*Principal*

## Fire Safety at Cox Kindergarten

At Cox Elementary, Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten students learned about fire safety with the help of the Fountain Valley Fire Department. FVFD visited Cox on October 11 2023. Students learned what they should do in a fire to stay safe and get the help they need. They also learned about the different types of tools that firefighters use including saws and special

equipment for entering a house when there is a fire. Kindergarten teacher Ms. Jill Richards displayed her skills in suiting up for a fire as she raced against the clock to get dressed in under one minute. Kindergarten student, Owen, helped display how firefighters help those in need with their heart rate monitor. Each student was able to climb in the fire engine and then practice rolling out the fire hose. We are so happy to partner with FVFD. Thank you for helping keep our community safe!



**Student, Owen, is hooked up to the heart rate monitor.**



**Ms. Jill Richards displays the firefighters special suit.**



# Harry C. Fulton Middle School (6–8)

8778 El Lago St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/375-2816 • [www.fulton.fvgsd.us](http://www.fulton.fvgsd.us)



**Jenny Salberg**  
Principal

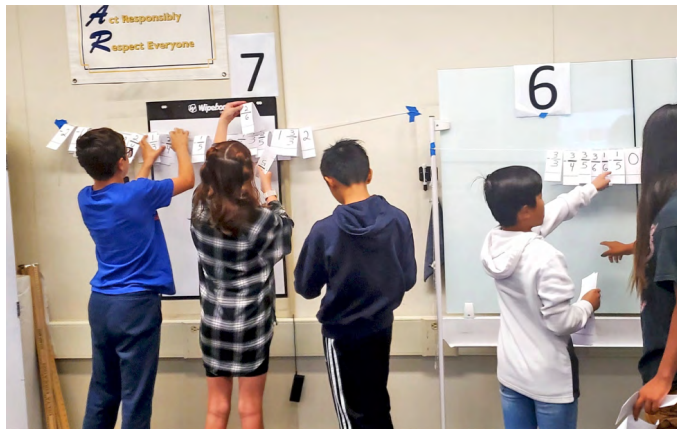


**Molly Kuykendall**  
Assistant Principal

## Thinking Classroom

In the realm of Math education, the concept of a “Thinking Classroom” has gained prominence in recent years, as outlined in Peter Liljedahl’s book “Building Thinking Classrooms.” This innovative approach transforms traditional teaching paradigms,

emphasizing active engagement and fostering critical thinking skills among students.



Mr. Vivar has built a Thinking Classroom where students become active participants in their own learning journey. This has become evident in the collaboration and dialogue that is heard among students in his classroom. He acts as a facilitator, guiding discussions and posing open-ended questions that stimulate conversations. Parents had an opportunity to experience a Thinking Classroom during back to school night.

Mr. Vivar’s Thinking Classroom cultivates a culture of thinking where mistakes are celebrated as opportunities for learning, and students are encouraged to take risks and explore different strategies. He is empowering his students to become active thinkers and problem solvers.





# Robert Gisler *Elementary (K-5)*

18720 Las Flores, Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4211 • [www.gisler.fvsd.us](http://www.gisler.fvsd.us)



**Katherine Pavidis**  
*Principal*

## Building Community and Growth Mindset

At Gisler, we believe that building a strong sense of community is essential for the holistic development of our students. We've taken meaningful strides in this direction through various initiatives:

**Lunch on the Lawn:** Our recent "Lunch on the Lawn" event witnessed an amazing turnout of families coming together to enjoy a meal and connect with one another. It's

these moments of togetherness that create lasting bonds within our Gisler Community.

**Skate Night:** We got our hearts pumping and had a blast at our school's skate night, promoting exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

**Weekly Gator Gatherings:** Our regular Gator Gatherings have been instrumental in fostering school spirit and a sense of belonging among students. Coming together on a weekly basis, we celebrate our achievements, big and small, as one United Gisler family.

Most recently, we hosted a guest speaker on Growth Mindset, Dr. Blake Brandes, for our students during the day and in the evening for our parents. Growth Mindset is a belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. Encouraging this mindset in our children can lead to increased resilience, perseverance, and a love for learning. Some big takeaways...Praise effort, not just results; embrace mistakes as learning experiences; set achievable goals; encourage curiosity and exploration.

Let's inspire our children to cultivate a growth Mindset and embrace a world of opportunities!



**Skate Night**



**Growth Mindset Assembly**



**Gator Gathering**



**Lunch on the lawn**



# Kazuo Masuda *Middle School(6-8)*

17415 Las Jardines W., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4250 • [www.masuda.fvsd.us](http://www.masuda.fvsd.us)



**Cara Robinson**  
*Principal*



**Jessica O'Malley**  
*Assistant Principal*

## Lunchtime at Masuda is the Place to Be!

At Masuda, we pride ourselves on our positive school climate. This year, staff designed a master schedule with two lunches--one for our sixth graders and one for our combined seventh and eighth graders.

The purpose of having two separate lunches is twofold; first, it helps ensure a more relaxed lunchtime atmosphere-- shorter lines for food and

games, and second, it helps facilitate closer connections among students. Twice a month on Fridays, our activities director, Mr. Garcia, along with our ASB leadership students, host fun competitions such as a teacher dunk competition or mini-tricycle races. We also rely upon our 8th-grade WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) leaders to design activities to help our new sixth graders build friendships at lunchtime. At lunchtime, we also have an Esports club hosted by our math teacher, Mr. Goldsworthy. Additionally, our library is open every lunch, and there are always quiet games and lots of reading for another option. We will continue to build upon our lunchtime successes, soon incorporating noon sports leagues led by Assistant Principal Jessica O'Malley.





# William T. Newland *Elementary (K-5)*

8787 Dolphin St., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4200 • [www.newland.fvdsd.us](http://www.newland.fvdsd.us)



**Matt Ploski**  
*Principal*

## Leadership and Citizenship

Newland Dolphins participated in learning about two of Fountain Valley School District's Guiding Principles: Leadership and Citizenship.

Thirty-two fourth and fifth-grade students rose to the challenge of running for student council, each of them defining tenets of leadership such as setting and achieving goals, being a good example to others, seeking solutions, and creating positive change for our school community. They worked hard on some outstanding posters, campaigned with respect and integrity, and persevered through the daunting challenge of public speaking.



The whole student body, staff, and parents also showed themselves to be grateful citizens by honoring the memory of the victims of the tragic events of September 11th, 2001, and recognizing the selfless service to society of heroic first responders. Newland Dolphins were proud to welcome first responders from our own community who volunteered their time to join us in our ceremony.

The staff at Newland Elementary believes that promoting leadership and citizenship is integral to character development and strives to keep these guiding principles at the forefront whenever opportunities arise.





# Isojiro Oka Elementary (K-5)

9800 Yorktown Ave., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4260 • [www.oka.fvsd.us](http://www.oka.fvsd.us)



**Julie Ballesteros**  
Principal

## Wolfpack WOW Writers

Oka Wolfpack students are WOW writers. During the first few months of school, our Oka staff focused on building connections, learning each child's story, and nurturing a love of learning. All children in grades TK through 5th grade have been immersed in Writers' Workshop lessons and collaborative opportunities to share and write about special moments from their lives through the narrative writing



process. Each child's writing piece was inspired by the things they love and the special memories attached to them. The Oka staff is very proud of how the children are engaging in meaningful and collaborative learning activities. All of our Wolfpack Writers will celebrate their final narrative writing piece together. We know our students will thrive to new heights when they feel a strong sense of belonging and appreciation for their efforts. The love of writing is alive at Oka, and we are excited to watch our children's writing continue to grow throughout the year.





# Urbain H. Plavan *Elementary (K-5)*

9675 Warner Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4230 • [www.plavan.fvdsd.us](http://www.plavan.fvdsd.us)



**Dr. Patrick Ham**  
*Principal*

## Plavan Elementary School's 1st Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) Team

Developing future leaders is very important to the Plavan staff. In our effort to foster future leaders and to spread the spirit of service, Ms. Britt Hughes and Mrs. Diane Traw have successfully kicked off the PAL program for the 2023-2024 school year.

PAL is a school-based, peer to peer youth development program built upon a philosophy of students helping students. The mission of PAL is to develop youth leaders who connect with their peers to create a caring, safe, and supportive school environment.



Our PAL students have already made a huge impact on our school climate! They have initiated Fun Friday activities, Spirit Day promotions, and Holiday Boo Grams and Encouragement Notes.

Thank you Ms. Hughes, Mrs. Traw, and our amazing 26 PAL leaders for impacting the culture of our school. We can't wait to see the impact that our PAL team will have here at Plavan for the rest of the school year!





# Samuel E. Talbert Middle School (6-8)

9101 Brabham Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4220 • [www.talbert.fvbsd.us](http://www.talbert.fvbsd.us)



**Jay Adams**  
Principal



**Brandon LoMonaco**  
Assistant Principal

## Noon Leagues are a HIT with the T-Birds!

To promote school engagement and a healthy sense of competition, Talbert's Noon Leagues are off to a rousing start at lunchtime, with grade levels (6th and 7/8th) competing with their peers. We've started off the year with

basketball, which will be followed up soon by rugby and cornhole...and the year would definitely not be complete without the ever-popular...dodgeball.



Students do not need any experience to play--just the right attitude. Teachers have also been joining the fun, helping coach and cheer their teams to victory. At the end of each season, the grade-level champs get bragging rights and a donut or pizza treat! But they can't get too comfortable--since the next season is lurking around the corner, and there are other students waiting for their turn to be at the top. Special thanks to Mr. LoMonaco and Ms. Marley for helping to organize and to ASB for refereeing and running the show!





# Hisamatsu Tamura *Elementary (K-5)*

17340 Santa Suzanne St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/375-6226 • [www.tamura.fvsd.us](http://www.tamura.fvsd.us)



**Chris Mullin**  
Principal

## Lunch on the Lawn

We recently held Lunch on the Lawn at Tamura. This wonderful community event is where we invite parents, grandparents, and other family members to come to Tamura and eat lunch with their students in a picnic-like atmosphere. This fantastic event helps to build strong bonds and community support. We know when students find their school environment to be supportive and caring, they are less likely to become involved in bullying, and other problems and are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward themselves and others. Additionally, studies have shown that on average, children who enjoy school are more likely to get good grades. This is always one of the schools most well attended events, estimating Tamura had hundreds students and

family members in attendance. I have been pleased to hear many positive comments from both parents and students regarding this event. It is a wonderful way to promote both Tamura and the family.

