

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Magnolia School District



Volume 17, Issue 66

March 2024



**Dr. Albert Schweitzer Leadership Academy and Dr. Peter Marshall School
Earn America's Best Schools Recognition.**





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Two Schools Earn National Recognition



Dr. Frank Donovan
Superintendent

Two Magnolia School District schools have earned prestigious recognitions from the National Center for Urban School Transformation. Dr. Albert Schweitzer Leadership Academy was named one of twelve finalists in America's Best School Awards program, while Dr. Peter Marshall School earned Honor Roll status.

To compete for an America's Best Schools Award, schools must meet rigorous criteria, including high academic proficiency rates, evidence of achievement for students with disabilities and English learners, low suspension rates, and high attendance rates. Both schools are dedicated to fostering a positive learning environment, innovative teaching methods, and a culture of academic success. These amazing schools continue to inspire and make a positive impact on the lives of students. Their commitment to educational excellence is truly commendable and these recognitions are well-deserved.

Judges from America's Best Schools will be visiting the twelve schools that were selected as finalists. On March 19th they will be visiting Schweitzer School to interview our students, staff members, Principal, Board President, and myself. After the conclusion of their visits and interviews, they will determine which schools move on to the next level of the competition.



This is a very prestigious award and recognition that is open to all schools across the country. Thousands of schools applied for the award, but only twelve were selected as finalists, and only three made the Honor Roll. We are all very proud of our amazing students, teachers, staff, schools and district. Congratulations once again to both of our schools on this outstanding accomplishment!



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Dr. Al Mijares
 Superintendent



Dr. Ramon Miramontes
 Deputy Superintendent of Instructional Programs

Here's a common question we hear: Why are you called the Orange County Department of Education when other county offices of education across California are known as, well, county offices of education?

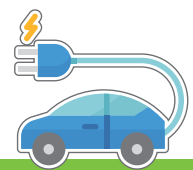
The answer takes us back to a decision made under the leadership of Dr. Robert Peterson, who served as county superintendent from 1966 through 1991. Early in his tenure, Dr. Peterson proposed changing the name of the then-Orange County Schools Office to the Orange County Department of Education, saying it was more in line with other county departments.

It was also reflective of the organization's expanding role. Our office had evolved into an agency that coordinated academic programs and provided technical and special services to all school districts, according to a resolution. The change was approved in March 1969.

See **OC DEPT OF ED** • Page 15

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Dr. Albert Schweitzer Leadership Academy

229 S. Dale Ave., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/527-7761 • schweitzer.magnoliasd.org



Marcy Chant
Principal

Building Bridges of Understanding

The Dr. Albert Schweitzer Leadership Academy radiated with cultural vibrancy on Friday, February 9th as students, teachers, and staff members gathered to honor the Lunar New Year. This wonderful assembly was a testament to our school's commitment to diversity and cultural appreciation.

The students took center stage in delivering heartfelt greetings in Vietnamese and sharing their insights into the significance of Lunar New Year. The highlight of the assembly was a fun dragon dance performed by our student leaders. Everyone very much enjoyed watching the dragon bow make its way around the rows of children.

Adding to the festive atmosphere, many students donned traditional attire that represented their Chinese, Korean, or Vietnamese heritage. Many other students wore red to symbolize prosperity and good luck. The colorful display showcased our school's rich cultural tapestry and fostered a sense of pride among our students of different backgrounds.

Following the performances, the students received red envelopes symbolizing good luck and fortune in the new year. Fortune cookies provided words of wisdom and encouragement to help inspire our students as they embark upon their academic journey.

The success of this assembly was made possible by the dedicated efforts of Mrs. Tran, a sixth-grade teacher, along with Mrs. Bogdanoff, our parent liaison, and Mrs. Phan, a parent and School Site Council member. They all worked tirelessly to organize the event and help promote cultural awareness within the school community.

This spirit of camaraderie and cultural pride lingered as the assembly concluded, leaving a lasting impression on everyone in attendance. The celebration of Lunar New Year served as a poignant reminder of the importance of embracing diversity and building bridges of understanding in our school community and beyond.





Katie Brown
Principal

Be the 'Kind Kid'!

Salk School embraced a heartwarming initiative that radiated positivity throughout its halls: Kindness Week. This special week was not just about spreading kindness but also about fostering a culture of compassion and empathy among students and staff.

Throughout the week, students enthusiastically participated in various activities and events that reinforced the importance of kindness in our daily lives. Spirit days added an extra layer of fun as students dressed up to show their support for kindness.

One of the highlights of Kindness Week was the creation of kindness chains. Students were encouraged to perform acts of kindness, no matter how small, and write them down on colorful paper strips. These strips were then linked together to form long chains that adorned the school's campus, serving as a visual representation of the collective kindness efforts of the students.



Kindness-grams provided another opportunity for students to spread positivity. Students wrote heartfelt notes of encouragement and appreciation to their peers, teachers, and staff members, brightening their days with words of kindness and gratitude.

As the week progressed, students took to the blacktop for Chalk It Up to Kindness. Armed with vibrant-color chalk, they enhanced the pavement with uplifting messages and drawings, inspiring others to embrace kindness in their actions and words.

In addition to these activities, a special assembly, "Bye-Bye Bully," was held. It emphasized the importance of kindness in preventing bullying and creating a safe and inclusive school environment. Students were reminded of the power they hold to make a positive difference through acts of kindness.

At Salk School, kindness isn't just a temporary theme for a week, it's a way of life. The school continues to uphold its motto of being the "kind kid," fostering a culture where kindness is celebrated and practiced every day.





Alma Guzmán
Principal

A Recognition of Excellence

We are thrilled to announce that Dr. Peter Marshall Elementary School has achieved a remarkable milestone by being honored with the America's Best School-Honor Roll Award from the National Center for Urban School Transformation. This recognition is a testament to our commitment

to provide an outstanding educational experience for our students.

One key criterion that contributes to this recognition is the way in which we strive to promote a positive and transformative school culture that emphasizes inclusivity and celebrates diversity. At Peter Marshall, we take pride in embracing various cultural heritages through heritage months, folkloric dance performances, pathways to biliteracy recognitions, and our first annual Día de los Muertos community event. Our dedication to socio-cultural competence is also evident through the implementation of our Dual Language Guiding Principles framework which ensures that our students will both excel academically and develop an understanding and appreciation of different cultures and traditions.



Ballet Folklórico de Marshall graces our school assembly with vibrant performances, sharing the richness of our cultural heritage. Cultivating unity, diversity, and pride through the art of dance!



PAL students taking the lead in a Mental Health Awareness workshop during the month of awareness. Inspiring peer support, fostering positive relationships, and breaking the stigma together.

In addition to these efforts, our school has been acknowledged for its outstanding Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) program, and is recognized for its dedication to fostering peer support, mentorship, and positive relationships among students, while also pioneering student-led initiatives such as mental health awareness stations.

Furthermore, our students have consistently achieved the highest math scores in the district on the Smarter Balance assessment, which showcases the effectiveness of our rigorous curriculum and Tier 1 instruction. Our commitment to provide challenging academic programs that support the growth and achievement of all of our students is unwavering.

This success results from the collaborative efforts of our dedicated staff members, motivated students, supportive families, and an engaged community. The America's Best School Award Honor Roll is not just an accolade, it's a reflection of our unwavering commitment and dedication to the success and well-being of every student.

As we celebrate this achievement, we also want to express our gratitude for the continued support of our school community. Together, we are shaping a future of excellence in education.



PAL students and staff radiate joy as they celebrate the recognition of our outstanding Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) program in 2022. Together, we've built a community of support and positivity!



Parent Volunteers proudly showcase their certificates of recognition for exceptional service to our school.

Esther L. Walter School

10802 Rustic Ln., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/761-5997 • walter.magnoliasd.org



Rudy Aguila
Principal

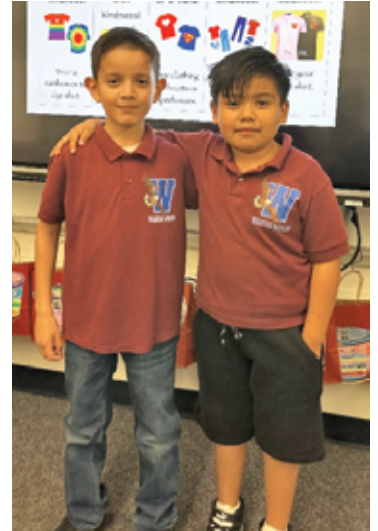
Kindness Thrives at Walter

Walter Elementary School recently wrapped up an inspiring and heartwarming Kindness Week, leaving a trail of compassion and positivity throughout the halls. The school community came together for a week filled with various activities that emphasized the importance of kindness in every aspect of life.

The spirit of Kindness Week was palpable as our students and staff members eagerly participated in daily dress-up themes that created a vibrant and unified atmosphere. From Crazy Hat Day to Mismatched Sock Day and Superhero Day, their creativity and enthusiasm showcased the diverse personalities that lie within our Walter Elementary community.

A standout project during the week was the creation of a kindness chain, which symbolized the interconnectedness of our school through acts of kindness. Each student and staff member contributed by adding a link to the chain, highlighting our collective effort towards building a stronger, more compassionate school environment.

In addition to these collaborative endeavors, Kindness Week also featured daily challenges that were designed to encourage individuals to spread kindness in unique ways. From compliment circles to random acts of kindness, our students embraced the challenges with open hearts, thus fostering a sense of unity and understanding among their classmates.



Walter Elementary School's commitment to cultivating kindness extends beyond the week-long celebration. The activities served as a catalyst for ongoing discussions about the impact of kindness on individuals and the community as a whole. Students learned valuable lessons about empathy, compassion, and the power of small gestures in making a positive difference.

As the echoes of Kindness Week linger in the air, the spirit of camaraderie and goodwill continues to thrive at Walter Elementary. Our school's dedication to fostering a culture of kindness proves that a focus on compassion can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all.



Juliette Low School of the Arts

215 N. Ventura St., Anaheim, CA 92801 • 714/533-2673 • low.magnoliasd.org



Dr. Roger Nguyen
Principal

Empowering Communication

American Sign Language (ASL) Club, spearheaded by Jody Lemmel, provides a platform for students to learn and appreciate ASL. It offers a nurturing environment where students can immerse themselves in the rich world of sign language. From beginners to advanced learners, all are welcomed with open arms and encouraged to explore this beautiful form of communication. Mrs. Lemmel's passion for ASL is inspiring and motivates students to engage wholeheartedly in learning this vital skill.

The club meetings are not just about learning the mechanics of sign language—they are also about fostering a sense of community and empathy. Through interactive activities, games, and discussions, students not only enhance their proficiency in ASL but also develop a deeper understanding of Deaf culture and the challenges faced by the Deaf community.

During a recent Spirit Rally, the ASL Club showcased their talents by performing a song in sign language in front of the whole school. The entire school was in awe of the



performance as it showcased the dedication and talent of the students in the club. It was a powerful moment, demonstrating the beauty and importance of sign language in our diverse community.

In a world where communication is paramount, the ASL Club at Juliette Low School of the Arts stands as a shining example of the power of language to unite, empower, and transform lives. It continues to inspire students to embrace diversity, celebrate differences, and strive for a more inclusive future.



Lord Baden-Powell School

2911 W. Stonybrook Dr., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/761-5442 • bp.magnoliasd.org



Kathleen Chammings
Principal

Spreading Kindness

February was not just about red hearts and valentines—it was also the month of kindness at Lord Baden-Powell School. Kindness Month is an initiative that encourages students to go above and beyond in spreading love, empathy, and positivity throughout the school community.

One of the highlights of Kindness Month is the multitude of acts of kindness performed by the students. From simple gestures like holding the door for a classmate to more elaborate deeds like writing Valentines to seniors in the community, students actively engaged in acts of kindness that create a warm and inclusive atmosphere.

Kindness wasn't just within the school grounds. Staff and students participated in projects that involve showing kindness to parents, whether by thoughtful notes, morning drop-off shout-outs, coffee and pastries in the cafeteria, or a parent painting class. The aim was to reinforce the importance of kindness not only within the school but also within the students' families.

As part of their commitment to giving back, Lord Baden-Powell School partnered with the American Heart Association for the Kids Heart Challenge. This initiative encouraged students to engage in activities that promote heart-healthy living while also raising funds for a noble cause. Through events like jump rope competitions, exercise challenges, and health-education sessions, students not

only took care of their own hearts but also contributed to the well-being of others.

Kindness Month at Lord Baden-Powell School was not just a calendar event but a mindset that the school hopes to instill in its students throughout the year. By fostering a culture of compassion and empathy, the school is shaping future leaders who understand the importance of kindness in building strong, supportive communities.



Students and staff can find hand-painted kindness rocks around campus as kindness keepsakes during the month of February.

Mattie Lou Maxwell School

2613 W. Orange Ave., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/527-2217 • maxwell.magnoliasd.org



**Alicia Jackson
Weston**
Principal

Energy Sources

Fourth grade is an exciting time to explore the world of science and technology. Our students, at Mattie Lou Maxwell Elementary have had an opportunity to engage in lessons that focus on energy sources (wind, solar, hydro, biofuels) using our newly adopted science program. Students built circuits, solar ovens, and windmills during their science lessons.



They were encouraged to think critically, analyze problems, and develop solutions. Students also learned how to collaboratively work together and foster good communication and interpersonal skills. By providing students hands-on activities, our students learned essential skills needed for success in both academic and real-world settings.





Dawn Bakker
Principal

That Is Who We Are

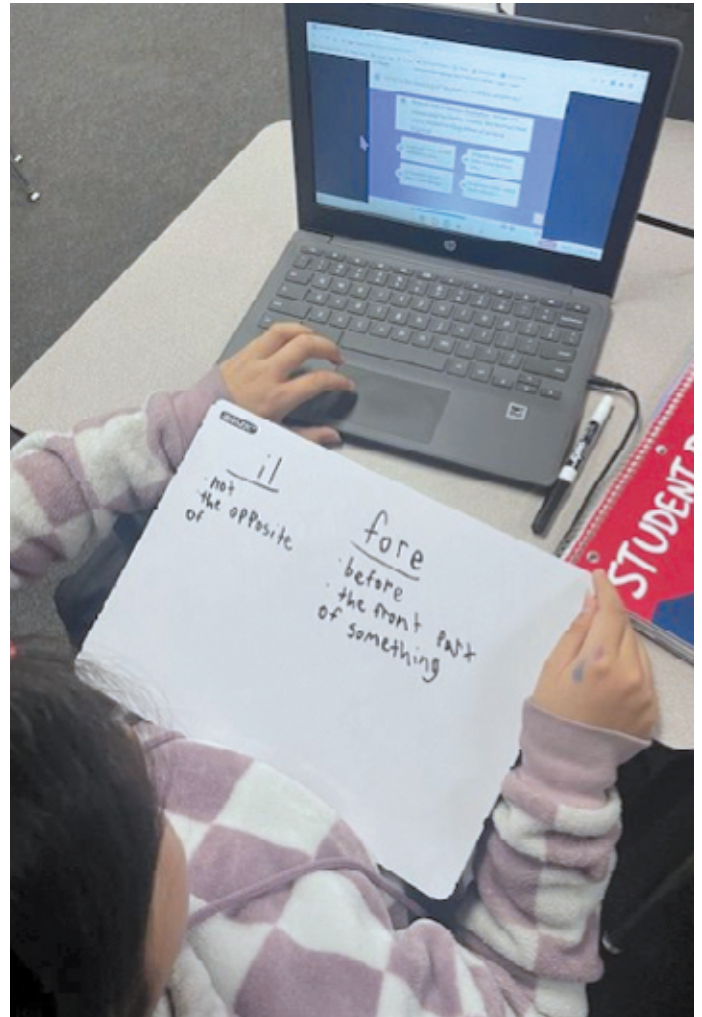
One of our missions at Pyles STEM Academy is to build independent learning communities. As a collaborative group of educators, we strive to consistently gauge our current learners and their progress. During a three-year-long focus on our data dialogues, our instructional practices coach and administrators have been working with grade-level teams to analyze formative and summative data and then evaluate appropriate action plans to increase positive student outcomes.

In a recent dialogue meeting, each grade level examined the current trends and patterns. This culminating work built the following themes: STEM scholars are independent self-starters, they have autonomy, they are capable, they have ownership, they are producers and doers, they persevere through hard things, and they believe to achieve.

We now utilize these themes in our weekly STEM Scholar Spotlight. Each week we focus on a particular theme. Posters are made for the classrooms, definitions and examples are given during morning announcements, and each classroom focuses on specific examples of this vision that week.

Our teachers play an intricate role in creating these collaborative and independent learning environments. This student-centered approach develops the skills and traits for school, grade-level, and student goal-setting. The teachers also work diligently to build structure and foundation as they promote and celebrate independent thought and action in our students. These themes bring awareness to and advance self-regulation to help create strong, independent, and driven learners.

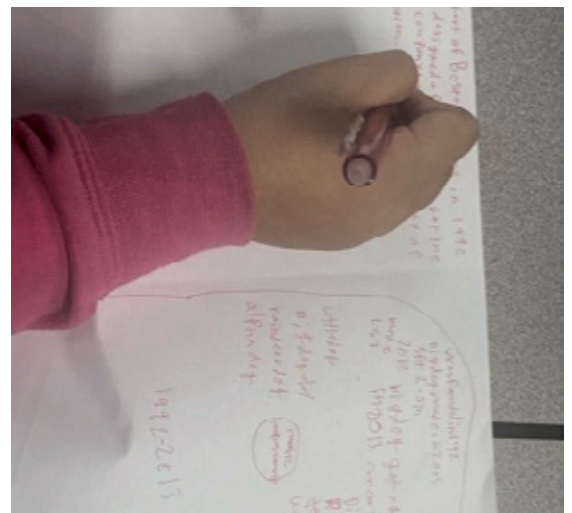
We are proud to be STEM Scholars. That is who we are!



A student exercising ownership of her independent work.



Science inquiry creates Producers and Doers.



Showing autonomy and ownership, a student utilizes Thinking Maps and note taking.

Walt Disney School

2323 W. Orange Ave., Anaheim, CA 92804, CA 92804 • 714/535-1183 • disney.magnoliasd.org



Kindness Always Rocks At Walt Disney School!

Regina End
Principal

As a Kindness certified school, Walt Disney Dragons embraced the 2024 Great

Kindness Challenge with the theme Kindness Rocks. To excite and motivate our community, the week began with a fun “Rock Star” dress-up day the Friday before. During this exciting week, PAL (Peer Assistance Leadership) students painted rocks with kind messages and hid them around campus. Each day, TK



through 6th graders enjoyed “hunting” for KIND rocks to share with their friends. During the morning announcements, famous quotes from individuals such as Walt Disney and Anne Frank were read to remind students of the importance of being kind to all. Our students also participated in infinite acts of kindness and were caught making posters, thank you cards, and helping others throughout the week. Most importantly, the message that Kindness is important daily rather than just during a certain time of year was the focal point of the week. As always, Walt Disney students are committed to being kind not just during one week a year but on a daily basis towards all members of the school and community.

Winter Words Word Search Contest

Rules! One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to:
SchoolNewsKay@gmail.com (Please put Magnolia in the subject line)

Entries must be received April 15, 2024

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win
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| FROST | POPCORN | UMBRELLA |
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| HOLIDAYS | SCARF | |
| HOT CHOCOLATE | SLED | |



Going Green! Word Search Contest

Rules! One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

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Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent



Dr. Ramon Miramontes
Deputy
Superintendent
of Instructional
Programs

This spirit of evolution and adaptation has been the hallmark of the Orange County Department of Education since its inception almost exactly 135 years ago.

On March 11, 1889, California Gov. Robert Waterman signed a bill that led to the formation of Orange County — and the office that would become OCDE. An annual report

from 1890 documented a combined enrollment of 3,426 students, served by a total of 34 districts — though some operated less than six months out of the year. Total annual expenditures for the entire county were less than \$65,000.

Fast forward to today. Under the leadership of current County Superintendent Dr. Al Mijares, our department now supports nearly half a million students and approximately 600 schools as a cornerstone of Orange County's educational community.

Our role is multifaceted, yet it can be understood through two primary functions:

First, we provide direct instruction to our county's most vulnerable student populations through our Alternative

Education and Special Education divisions, the latter of which includes our newly rebranded "Connections" schools.

Second, OCDE offers a comprehensive suite of services to local school districts. These range from meaningful training opportunities and high-speed internet access to legal and fiscal guidance, payroll systems, Local Control and Accountability Plan assistance and approval, student enrichment and much more.

When districts face hurdles in meeting specific performance goals on the California School Dashboard, OCDE and other county offices of education are also called upon to provide targeted support. This process, known as differentiated assistance, complements districts' own efforts to ensure that students' needs are met.

As we continue to grow and adapt, it's important to underscore that OCDE's core principles have remained unchanged. Driven by a commitment to empower all learners, we approach our roles not merely as administrators of the Orange County Department of Education but as stewards of a legacy of service and continuous improvement that dates back over a century.


Change is more than a chapter in our history. It is the very essence of our DNA. And it will be the engine that propels us forward, fueling our journey toward a brighter, more innovative and prosperous Orange County.

School News



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Covering the
MAGNOLIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOUNDER/PUBLISHER: Kay Coop
562/493-3193 • schoolnewskay@gmail.com
ADVERTISING SALES: 562/493-3193
CONTENT COORDINATOR: Barbra Longiny
GRAPHIC DESIGNER/PRODUCTION:
Emily Ung and Mie Kawamura
COPY EDITORS: Kate Karp, Anna Zappia
SOCIAL MEDIA: Nancy Lueder
Netragrednik by Neta Madison

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