



ALUM ROCK UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Russo/McEntee Elementary Receives \$700,000 Award from State Outdoor Equity Program

SAN JOSÉ – Alum Rock Union School District (ARUSD) is proud to announce that Russo/McEntee Elementary School has been awarded \$700,000 through the State of California Outdoor Equity Program (OEP), which was established in 2019 to increase the ability of residents in low-income urban and rural communities to participate in outdoor experiences at state parks and other public lands.

This four-year grant to support Russo/McEntee’s “Nature Pals” program was among only 125 of 386 applications to receive funding through a highly competitive process. The majority of the funding will help students from transitional kindergarten to 5th grade and their families join field trips to 11 different natural locations in and around the Greater Bay Area.

Additional funding will support a school garden where students can learn to grow their own food, a therapeutic garden to improve student mental health, an environmentally-focused curriculum, and a part-time administrator to oversee the program.

“In August 2021, the ARUSD Board of Trustees approved a request from our teachers and staff to redesign Russo/McEntee into an environmental education-focused school,” said Principal Tanu Kohli, M.S. “The OEP grant provides us with a unique opportunity to give our students and families real-life environmental experiences.”

OEP grants are designed to improve the health and wellness of Californians by connecting underserved communities to natural areas. For more information, visit this [webpage](#).

“Many of these families would never have had the chance to visit some of these wonderful natural places right here in our backyard,” added Superintendent Hilaria Bauer, PhD. “We are thrilled to bring a new level of educational excellence for students in East San José.”

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About ARUSD

Nestled in the foothills of the Santa Clara Valley in the San Francisco Bay Area, Alum Rock Union School District works with stakeholders to provide Alum Rock students with high-quality, 21st century learning that builds upon our culturally diverse community to prepare our students to be lifelong learners and compete for the careers of the future.

Hilaria Bauer, Ph.D., Superintendent

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