

Welcome Mills Families!

We are thrilled to open the '23-24 school year as a **Community School!** Recently, Mills was selected to receive a Community Schools grant from the state of CA. A Community School utilizes an evidence-based framework to integrate all of our district initiatives. It centers around four pillars: integrated student supports, equity-centered learning, family and community engagement and shared leadership and decision making. This grant has allowed us to provide additional staffing for student and family support in the areas of social work, a behaviorist and a community school liaison.

Whether you're a returning family or new to our school, here are a few key reminders about campus life here at Mills. At Mills, we utilize restorative practices when responding to student behaviors. On a universal level, we reinforce positive behaviors through our Merit System (please see the **Mills Family Handbook** for detailed information. It is also found on this website under the 'Students' tab). All students begin the year with 100 merits. The goal is to maintain 96 or more merits to be able to participate in the activities and events on campus. If students lose merits, they can still earn them back through merit recovery! It's a win-win for everyone!

This year, we are continuing with advisory and **Flex time**. Advisory occurs two times per week, while Flex occurs three times per week. Advisory and Flex take place between second and third period each day. Advisory allows students the opportunity to develop strong connections with trusted adults on campus, practice organizational skills, team building activities, class competitions and more. Flex time is structured time within the school day to allow for intervention (ex. test retakes, make up work, guided study time) enrichment (ex. laser engraving, art projects, solar energy) and amplification (ex. history day, science fair, honors project). Check out our **Monthly Family Newsletter** as we highlight various ways Flex time is used.

We employ a variety of methods and programs throughout the year to promote a school culture of diversity, tolerance, empathy and teamwork. We celebrate positive behaviors and academic success. While there are some negative consequences for certain behaviors, our focus is on creating a positive school environment for all of our students, including teaching students how to repair the harm that was caused when a negative behavior takes place. We have renamed room 18 as the **Restorative Center** (or "RC"). This room allows students time to pause and reflect on behavior, practice mindfulness exercises and/or work on merit recovery. Parents are encouraged to regularly log into the **Parent Portal** of Powerschool to check on student progress with grades, assignments and attendance. (If you need assistance logging into this, please contact the school office).

In closing, I am thrilled to announce that this past summer, Mills was awarded Silver Recognition by the CA Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (**PBIS**) Coalition for our efforts in maintaining a positive school environment. Let's make it a great year Mustangs!

In Partnership,
Dana Carrigan, Principal