

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation



Covering the Newport-Mesa Unified School District

Volume 20, Issue 106

February 2024

Now Enrolling for the 2024-25 School Year!



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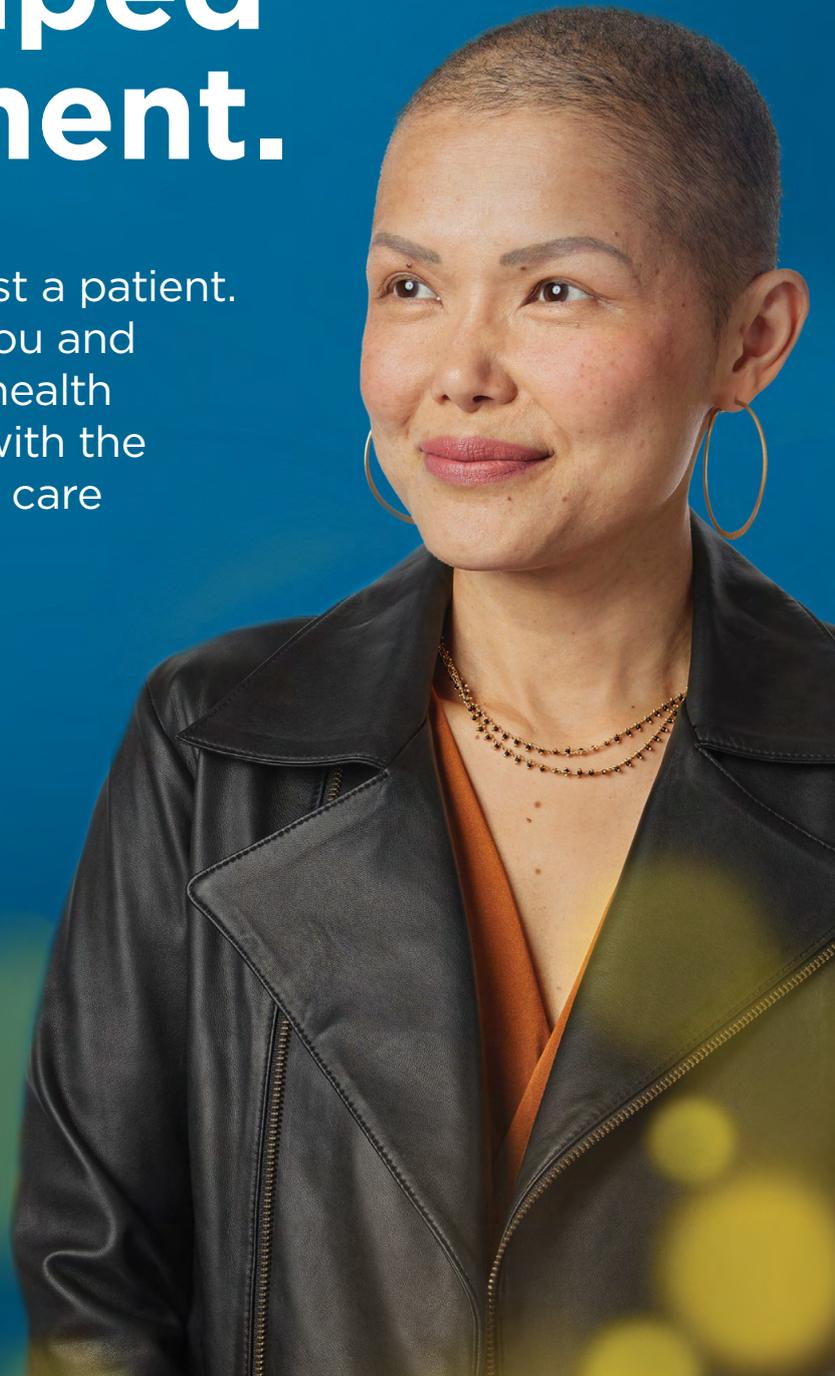
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Open Enrollment Underway at Newport-Mesa



Dr. Wesley Smith
Superintendent

Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is underway at Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD). Every year, we welcome approximately 18,000 students to our 33 schools that offer positive learning environments and engaging academic and extracurricular programs in grades TK-12.

Our staff is committed to consistently improving our excellent academic record. Newport-Mesa students continue to perform above state and county averages on state testing in English, math, and science. In our elementary grades, we are seeing up to 10 percent improvement in reading, with more students reading at or above grade levels. In math, we see similar improvement, with up to 10 percent growth in test scores. We've also seen a strengthening connection between our hands-on science labs and classroom science instruction evident in rising science scores.

While our goal is 100 percent, we have an impressive high graduation rate of 97 percent, with our graduation rates for students with disabilities and other student populations continuing to rise, thanks in part to the efforts of our dedicated teachers, aides, therapists, specialists, and school site leaders.

We are fortunate to have strong community partnerships that augment our robust Expanded Learning Programs, including enrichment classes ranging from arts to sports to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) that challenge students while stretching their creative muscles.

We recently launched a mobile maintenance crew that provides dedicated support to spruce up schools one campus at a time, while additional hard-working Maintenance & Operations staff continue to focus on ongoing renovations and safety improvements.

While we continue to learn and grow this school year, we are also enthused about what's to come. We are excited to welcome families to our amazing schools. Enroll today: www.nmusd.us/enrollment.

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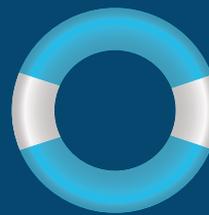
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City of Costa Mesa



John Stephens
Mayor

E-bikes have become immensely popular, especially with our youth. Many students use e-bikes to ride to and from school.

Travel along any Costa Mesa street (and our neighboring cities) and you will see e-bikes have become the preferred means of transportation for many people. But along with that popularity comes safety concerns.

I and the City Council have requested our Police Chief, Ron Lawrence, to address e-bike safety by working on municipal code provisions and safety programs in consultation with the Newport Mesa Unified School District. Our Police Department is scheduled to bring the new ordinances to the City Council in March.

One important aspect of the ordinances, from my perspective, is that they provide uniform rules that are compatible with our neighboring cities, Newport Beach and Huntington Beach.

The plan for enforcing these ordinances will also be addressed by the PD in the coming months.

What do you think our ordinance should cover? What are your thoughts on enforcement? Please send your suggestions to me at my email address at john.stephens@costamesaca.gov or via text at 714-337-1872.

City of Newport Beach



Will O'Neill
Mayor

Looking for the 'Helpers'

One of Mr. Rogers's most famous quotes came in response to an interviewer asking him how he handles the hard realities of this world. He responded: "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

Here in Newport Beach, we have a whole lot of people who are helpers. People who run toward the danger, who aid the marginalized, who sit and hold the grieving.

We have people who experience loss and tragedy and wake up looking for ways to make the world a better place.

We're not just looking for the helpers in 2024, we're honoring them. My hope is that you will help identify the Helpers who deserve our recognition.

If you have folks who fit the bill, then let's talk. You can reach me by email at woneill@newportbeachca.gov or by phone at 949-644-3004.

100 Civic Center Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/644-3004
<https://www.newportbeachca.gov>

We are Hiring!

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On site campus locations are in **Orange County**, from **Huntington Beach to Irvine**.
Teaching positions include working weekday afternoons at private preschools and early education sites.

Candidates must have:

- Early childhood classroom experience
- A passion for teaching children
- A strong interest in creativity and the arts
- Exceptional organizational skills

Our Studio is located in Rolling Hills Estates, with visits and meetings approximately 2x a month.

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Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue



Dan Stefano
Fire Chief

The Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Department has opportunities for Student Interns, Volunteers and Fire Cadets! Our programs provide opportunities for students to gain personal confidence, learn about personal responsibility, become a member of a team, learn life skills, and share the skills you have with others. This is an incredible opportunity to learn about public safety and local government.

If you or someone you know between the ages of 16-25 (*16-21 for our Fire Cadet Program) who may be interested in any of our Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Student Programs, please contact us at lora.ross@costamesaca.gov or call us at (714) 754-5106. We encourage you to consider any of our valued student-based program opportunities today. **THE TIME IS NOW!**

P.O. Box 1200, Costa Mesa, CA 92628 • 714/754-5106



Newport Beach Fire Department



Jeff Boyles
Fire Chief

Are You Disaster Prepared?

The Newport Beach Fire Department invites residents to join the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program to learn how to help themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods following unexpected disasters. Get involved with your community and learn what it takes to be prepared.

Take Classes in: Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Medical Operations, Light Search & Rescue, Fire Suppression, Disaster Psychology, Team Organization, Hazard Mitigation, Risk Assessment
Sign up for classes this Spring by visiting www.nbcert.org

P.O. Box 1768, Newport Beach, CA 92658 • 949/644-3104



Newport Beach Public Libraries



Christine Chapel
Children's Librarian,
Mariners Branch,
Newport Beach
Public Library

Are you looking for something fun to do after school? If so, The Newport Beach Public Library has a wide range of fantastic afternoon programs!

Tuesday and Thursday afternoons are full of engaging activities at the Central Library.

- On the first Tuesday of the month from 4:00 to 5:00, practice reading aloud to a friendly BARK dog. This program is a great way for children to increase their reading skills with a non-judgmental reading companion in a calm environment. For children ages 6-11.
- On the second Tuesday of the month from 4:00 to 5:00, take part in "Crafter-noons" where kids can get creative with rotating DIY crafts. Arts and crafts provide opportunities to practice fine motor skills, imagination, critical thinking, and more!
- On the third Tuesday of the month from 4:00 until 5:00, join us for an afternoon of family fun with board games and puzzles. Relax after school, meet new friends, and play new games at the library! For children ages 6-11.
- On the fourth Tuesday of the month from 4:00 to 5:00, there is an enjoyable activity that varies from month to month, such as Family Paint Afternoon or Build a Cardboard City.

Thursdays are also fun at the Central Library!

- On the first Thursday of the month from 4:00 to 5:00, enter our Makerspace for an hour of open-ended creating with various art materials and techniques. Recommended for ages 8-11.
- On the third Thursday of the month from 4:00 to 5:00, our 4th through 6th grade Book Club meets to discuss a book followed by a fun activity to go along with that month's pick. Registration required.

The branch libraries have great afternoon programs too!

- Every Wednesday from 3:00 to 4:00, drop into the Mariners Library to create with LEGO! From buildings to action figures - design and build at this casual and creative program.
- Balboa, Corona del Mar, and Mariners Branch Libraries have afternoon crafts and fun activities on various days during the month. Check out our calendar of events: <https://www.newportbeachlibrary.org/children/children-s-calendar-21016>

We hope to see you at some of these enriching after-school activities!

Central Library 1000 Avocado Ave., Newport Beach, CA 92660
949/717-3800 • www.newportbeachlibrary.org/kids
Mariners Branch 1300 Irvine Ave., Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/717-3838
Balboa Branch 100 East Balboa Blvd., Balboa, CA 92661 • 949/644-3076
Corona Del Mar Branch 410 Marigold Ave., Corona Del Mar, CA 92625
949/644-3075

Costa Mesa Public Libraries



Sarita Dangond
Branch Manager,
Costa Mesa
Donald Dungan
Library



Vivian Strabala
Branch Manager,
Costa Mesa
Mesa Verde
Library

Costa Mesa Libraries, part of OCPL, are community hubs, connecting people to essential services and resources and building communities of lifelong learners.

OCPL helps our communities learn, explore, connect and have fun!

LIBRARY OF THINGS
– You have access to much more than books with OCPL's Library of Things collection,

including games, backpacks and more:

Boardgames – Host your own game night or have a jigsaw puzzle party with 100's of choices.

California State Library Parks Pass Backpacks – These backpack kits include a California State Parks Pass, pocket guides, and a set of binoculars.

Binge Ready Books Backpacks – approximately 10 children's titles from a selected series or author's works stored in a backpack such as I Survived books by Lauren Tarshis or Magic Tree House books by Mary Pope Osborne.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS OC Public Libraries has compiled resources and designed programs to support our families in getting ready for school.

DISCOVER & GO Explore Orange County museums and attractions through this exciting partnership between OC Public Libraries and local cultural institutions.

Please visit your branch in person or online at www.ocpl.org/events for current programming information, including storytimes, author events, book clubs, and fun events for children, teens, and adults!

Donald Dungan Library Calendar



Mesa Verde Library Calendar



OC Public Libraries

www.ocpl.org

Costa Mesa-Donald Dungan Library

1855 Park Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/646-8845

Hours: Mon – Thurs 10am – 7pm

Fri - Sun 9am – 5pm

Check the calendar for all events

<https://ocpl.org/events?type=All&location=721>

Costa Mesa-Mesa Verde Library

2969 Mesa Verde Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/546-5274

Hours: Mon – Thurs 10am – 7pm

Fri – Sun 9am – 5pm

Check the calendar for all events

<https://ocpl.org/events?type=All&location=1021>

Adams *Elementary (K-6)*

2850 Club House Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7935 • adams.nmusd.us



Dr. Joe Erven
Principal

The Power of Collaboration

On the evening of Friday, January 19, the Arts and Learning Conservatory, in collaboration with Project Kids Connect, transported our Adams Elementary Community into the heart of the jungle with a mesmerizing musical theater production of *Jungle Book*. Held at Adams Elementary, the lively cast of 28 talented students brought Rudyard Kipling's classic tale to life through vibrant singing and captivating dance performances.

Their energy and enthusiasm radiated from the stage as these young performers embraced their roles, embodying beloved characters like Mowgli, Baloo, and Bagheera. One notable aspect of the production was the collaboration with Estancia High School's Design, Media, and Visual Arts class. Their contribution elevated the experience for both the performers and the audience by capturing the magic on film.



The *Jungle Book* musical was not just a showcase of artistic talent, it was a testament to the power of collaboration across different educational institutions. The seamless coordination between the Arts and Learning Conservatory, Project Kids Connect, Adams Elementary, and Estancia High School created an enriching cultural experience for the entire Adams Elementary School Community.

Roy O. Andersen *Elementary (K-6)*

1900 Port Seabourne Way, Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/515-6935 • andersen.nmusd.us



Dr. Tiffany Lewis
Principal

Laughter and Learning

Andersen Elementary's Transitional Kindergarten (TK) class recently marked a memorable milestone as they joyously celebrated the 100th day of school with a whimsical twist. To honor the occasion, our young learners donned attire that transformed them into centenarians complete with canes, spectacles, and silver-streaked wigs, bringing laughter and cheer to the classroom.

The festivities started with an air of anticipation, as students arrived adorned in their creative interpretations of what a centenarian might look like. From oversized spectacles perched precariously on their noses to shuffling steps mimicking the gait of elders, the TK class embraced the spirit of the celebration with gusto. The playground echoed with giggles and chatter as the children admired each other's costumes, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared excitement.

Inside the classroom, the day's activities unfolded with a blend of fun and educational engagement. Miss Day and Miss Smith orchestrated interactive lessons centered around the number 100, fostering numeracy

skills and critical thinking in a playful manner. From counting exercises using arrays of items to crafting 100-piece puzzles, the students enthusiastically immersed themselves in the learning process, their enthusiasm undimmed by the passage of a hundred days of schooling.

Beyond the revelry, the 100th-day celebration served as a poignant reminder of the resilience and adaptability inherent in the educational journey. It affirmed the enduring capacity for joy and discovery, even amidst the rigors of academic pursuit. As the TK class bid farewell to their centenarian personas, they carried forth cherished memories of a day filled with laughter, learning, and the timeless magic of childhood.



Back Bay/Monte Vista *High School*

390 Monte Vista Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6900 • backbay.nmusd.us



Dr. Kirk Bauermeister
Principal

Students take Learning into Their Own Hands

By the Back Bay High School Journalism Class

This school year, BBHS introduced a new elective.

Students have the opportunity to take a mixed-media arts class. The students learn graphic design, digital

photo and video, animation, game design and much more. This quarter the students are focusing on digital plans and gardening.

Students at Back Bay High School are taking a hands-on approach to learning. With the guidance of Mr. Chris Ziebarth, students in the Media Arts Class are learning about growing plants and finding out how hard it is to grow your own food. Ivan Palafox describes the

class as “a chill approach to learn how to draw up plans and plant strawberries, cilantro, tomatoes and onions”. They hope to eat their harvest as chips and salsa!



California *Elementary (K-6)*

3232 California St., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7940 • california.nmusd.us



Dr. Jason Kuncewicki
Principal

California Show Choir Performs Another Hit

California Elementary School takes pride in creating a well-rounded experience for all students. One aspect that has been a focus for the school is the dramatic arts. Each

year, students in 1st – 6th

grade get an opportunity to audition to audition for the “show

choir,” a program sponsored by the California School Educational Foundation (CSEF). Students that audition are cast into musicals such as this year’s Seussical Jr. for our 4th – 6th graders, or Annie, Beauty and the Beast, the Lion King, and the Little Mermaid. Students spend up to 60 hours after school over a three-month period

getting ready for the three performances of the musical for parents and friends in the MPR. Coming up for California’s show choir will be Wonka Jr! We can’t wait to see what they produce. A huge thank you to the foundation for sponsoring staff to teach our Cougars to perform.



College Park *Elementary (K-6)*

2380 Notre Dame Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7960 • collegepark.nmusd.us



Alice Formanek
Principal

Expanded Learning Opportunities

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) here at College Park offers a wide variety of afterschool enrichment programs. This program is responsible for all of our afterschool and enrichment programs for transitional kindergarten through sixth grade. So far this year we have been able to

offer the following enrichment opportunities: STEM, Chess, Art, Mandarin, Sports, and Musical Theater. On January 18th, our College Park Cougars did an amazing job performing the musical *Annie* to a packed house! Musical theater offers our students the opportunity to develop confidence, self-esteem, social skills, and relationship building. Our students' dedication and hard work paid off in making this year's production the best one yet!



Corona del Mar *High School (7-12)*

2101 Eastbluff Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/515-6000 • cdm.nmusd.us



Dr. Jake Haley
Principal

Freedom is Ringing

An observance of the echoes that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. left in his wake
Jessica Miramadi, 12th-Grade Student

After a centuries-long struggle to make reparations to the United States' moral code, Jan. 20, 1986, was the first Martin Luther King Jr Day officially observed by the American federal system, with President Ronald Reagan signing the legislative order three years prior. While the history of racial inequality stems far deeper than the late 20th century, the matters of discrimination and justice were heightened extensively by the post-war response and pronounced surge of protests, many of which were led and influenced by a notable leader—American minister and civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In 1944, he won a local oratorical contest for his authoritative speech on the chains still worn in black America. His father, another minister who spoke in the

name of civil rights, instilled in King a principle he carried with him in subsequent years: "I don't care how long I have to live with the system—I will never accept it."

King was one of the founding members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This group promoted moral authority and nonviolent protests and stood among the strongest organizations dedicated to this cause during this time. It was under their belief that nonviolent protest against Southern segregation systems would reach mass audiences and assist in the fight toward equality.

Setting a precedent for protests to follow in later decades, student advocate and HRC member Katherine Popper noted, "The Civil Rights Movement was groundbreaking—really set the framework for what we have come to expect, at least in America, of civil rights."

Approaching the 80s, though, 6 million signatures petitioned for the holiday honoring King. By 1983, the documents were signed. By 1986, the holiday was celebrated, and by 2000, the nation made vast strides toward a greater nation, one by its very creed.

Costa Mesa High School / Middle School (7-12)

2650 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-8700 • cmhs.nmusd.us



Dr. Dipali Potnis
Principal

Battle of the Bell

Our student section at our Battle of the Bell game was charged with positive energy. Battle of the Bell is a long standing tradition in which Costa Mesa and Estancia High School compete. We love the friendly rivalry, and we know that our student section energizes our team.

Our students came out in full force. We had our band, choir, and student section cheering on the players. And while we were not victorious with the bell, we did with the second game against Estancia, and we were recognized by the OC Student Section for being spirited and positive. We know that our boys basketball team is impressive, and we also know that when you have people in your corner supporting you, magical things can happen. And they are. We love everything that our student body stands for and their love for the Mesa Nation!



Davis Magnet (K-6)

1050 Arlington Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7930 • davisagnet.nmusd.us



Stacy deBoom-Howard
Principal

Arts & Music at Davis!!

At Davis Magnet, the Davis Ducks explore diverse art forms to express themselves. Our dynamic music program, under the guidance of the outstanding Mr. Hacker, showcases

83 students in the band and 70 students in the choir. Orchestra and Choir perform multiple

times throughout the year in zone concerts with major performances at the Balboa Island Parade for the band and an Angels game for the choir scheduled for this spring.

In October, a group of energetic and talented students performed our school musical "Shrek" for our school community. This fabulous production was made possible by the support of

PTA, THANK YOU! This spring we are partnering with Segerstrom's Art Teach program to bring workshops and assemblies to Davis. We look forward to continuing to bring Arts Education to our Ducks this year and for many years to come!!



Early College *High School (9-12)*

2990 Mesa Verde Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7990 • earlycollege.nmusd.us



Accolades and Accomplishments

The beginning of 2024 was a chance to reflect upon how incredible a year 2023 was for ECHS.

A number of new high marks and accomplishments were achieved by our

students and staff members. Until ECHS, never before did a school in California earn both the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and the National Blue Ribbon Award.

The Class of 2023 established a new high in the number of graduates earning an IGETC and at least one associate degree, which our Class of 2024 may eclipse this May. ECHS also received its third PBIS Platinum Award, and saw four seniors receive four-year full Los Angeles Angels Scholarships. This is the most for any one school to receive in one year, which gives us a total of nine to date since 2019.

Our students' first semester accomplishments in the areas of Outstanding Citizenship (three or more Outstanding Citizenship marks achieved), Principal's



Honor Roll (3.5 or higher unweighted academic grade point average) and the California Scholarship Federation (based on the number of As and Bs in college preparatory high school courses and college courses taken), were noteworthy. Among the entire student body, 33 percent earned the Outstanding Citizenship

Award, 45 percent earned the Principal's Honor Roll Award, and just over 50 percent earned the California Scholarship Federation Award.

ECHS will hold events on campus for 2024-2025 applicants in the coming weeks and months. Prospective applicants and their families are invited to attend our Open House on February 15th. Prospective students are also invited to take part in either of our two ECHS Student Shadow Days occurring on February 23rd and April 12th.

Our 2024-2025 ECHS application is available online at <https://earlycollege.nmusd.us>. The 2024-2025 application deadline is May 3rd. Please call 714-424-7990 on Mondays-Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. if you have any questions.

Eastbluff *Elementary (K-6)*

2627 Vista del Oro, Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/515-5920 • eastbluff.nmusd.us



Learning and Laughter at Eastbluff

"I can't wait to do this again!" - these words are music to teachers' ears! As the recent Imagination Machine assembly wrapped up, students cheered for their friends while catching their breath after nearly an hour of laughing and being captivated by seeing students' stories brought to

life before their eyes. Students across Eastbluff Elementary School submitted short stories with hopes of their entries being selected by the hilarious improvisation troupe. In their paint-spattered overalls and the simplest of props, the group acted out slightly embellished versions of stories about Taylor Swift looking for Travis Kelce, a banana who wanted to be famous, a unicorn sent to the human world to help teens have Christmas spirit,

and a pickle-loving girl who learns to follow her heart. There were stories about bears, quiet green beans, lost girls, and first graders playing hide-and-seek.

With great thanks to the Eastbluff PTA, our Otters are already thinking about the stories they want to submit next year!



Imagination Machine performers celebrating some of Eastbluff's "otterly" awesome authors!

Horace Ensign *Intermediate (7-8)*

2000 Cliff Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92663 • 949/515-6910 • ensign.nmusd.us



Samantha Payne
Principal

Getting Prepared for Testing

Ensign is getting prepared for ELPAC testing March 18th to the 29th. Our ELD coordinator, Sarah Tum, along with our community facilitator, Ilse Taborga, are working tirelessly to organize this crucial process that will allow our students to reclassify. Through their dedication, the hard work of our students, and the support

of their teachers, fourteen students have reclassified this year already. The ELD program here at Ensign is strong and provides broad support for our English learners. Our ELD 1 classes will often visit the office on special interactive assignments to practice their English with the office staff and we enjoy getting to know them and watch them progress in their abilities. We are proud of this very important program and proud of the hard work we see in our students and staff.



Estancia High School

2323 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6500 • estancia.nmusd.us



Michael Halt
Principal

Eagles Preparing for Future Employment

In January and February, approximately thirty students in Estancia High School's Building Industry Technology Academy (BITA) and Design, Visual, and Media Arts (DVMA) pathway participated in a series of six workshops focused on the development of employability skills. The workshops were presented through Vital Link of Orange County, a non-profit organization which is dedicated to

preparing students for their future careers through experiential learning opportunities. Over the course of three weeks, students in attendance learned about topics including career mapping, time management, entrepreneurial mindset, adaptability and teamwork, financial literacy, and resume building and interviewing skills. The workshops were facilitated in partnership with professionals from various industry sectors with the goal of participants gaining transferable skills that are valued by employers and essential for effective performance in the workplace.

Harbor View Elementary (K-6)

900 Goldenrod Ave., Corona del Mar, CA 92625 • 949/515-6940 • harborview.nmusd.us



Randy Lempert
Principal

Career and College Awareness Week

Harbor View Elementary School had an exciting and engaging Career and College Awareness Week. The week was designed to provide an excellent opportunity for students to express and explore their passions, discuss their goals, and envision their bright futures.

Students participated by engaging in week-long activities that included having students dress in their future careers, come to school in something they would wear to an interview, and dress up representing their favorite college. Staff shared with students their path to their careers by highlighting the college they attended and sharing memorable experiences and advice with the students. The goal of the Career and College Awareness Week was another example of how Harbor View continues to strive to develop a love for learning and empower our students to dream big and reach for the stars!



Heinz Kaiser Elementary (3-6)

2130 Santa Ana Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6950 • kaiser.nmusd.us



Matt Broesamle
Principal

Student Council

At Kaiser Elementary School, one group stands out as a beacon of student empowerment and leadership: the Student Council. This dynamic group plays a pivotal role in shaping the school's culture,

fostering community engagement, and amplifying the voices of our student body.

Composed of representatives from various grade levels, the council advocates for student interests and spearheads initiatives aimed at enhancing the school experience for all. Through open communication and regular meetings, council members actively solicit feedback, suggestions, and concerns from their peers, ensuring that student perspectives are heard and valued.



Student Council president and vice president leading Flag Deck.

The Student Council also plays a vital role during the Flag Deck ceremony which takes place in the heart of the campus every Friday morning. This weekly event promotes fellowship and fosters community building. Council members lead the charge with the pledge of allegiance, providing announcements and awarding student and classroom successes. In essence, the Student Council at Kaiser Elementary School embodies the spirit of student leadership, collaboration, and service.

Killybrooke Elementary (K-6)

3155 Killybrooke Ln., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7945 • killybrooke.nmusd.us



Laura Taylor
Principal

Flag Deck Ceremony

In a heartwarming Flag Deck ceremony held on January 19th, the Killybrooke school community came together to celebrate the remarkable achievements of 13 students spanning grades 1-6. The joyous occasion marked the recognition of these hardworking

students for attaining the designation

of Fluent English Proficiency. Earning the title of bilingual is no small feat, and the road to achieving Fluent English Proficiency is paved with years of dedicated effort and hard work. Parents, teachers, and fellow students joined in the celebration, creating a supportive atmosphere that encourages and recognizes the value of

bilingualism. To add to the celebration, students were treated to a pizza and brownie lunch. These 13 students serve as an inspiration for others embarking on the journey to becoming Fluent English Proficient. The school remains committed to nurturing a learning environment where every student can thrive and excel, fostering a community that celebrates success in all its forms.



Reclassification poster highlighting individual achievements created by Killybrooke's Student Government.

Abraham Lincoln Elementary (K-6)

3101 Pacific View Dr., Corona del Mar, CA 92625 • 949/515-6955 • lincoln.nmusd.us



Dr. Kristin DeMicco
Principal

Spotlight on Musical Theater

Lincoln 4th-6th grade students took to the stage in January to wow our Lincoln community with their production of *The Lion King Jr.* Rehearsals for the show began in October, with students committing to staying after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays to learn about musical theater and to prepare for the show. For

many of our Leopards, musical theater was a completely new endeavor, and I am proud of our cast of students for participating in this incredible production. We have so much talent here at Lincoln, and we are grateful for the opportunity to add musical theater to our arts offerings for students. Between musical theater, band, chorus, school-wide music classes, and our visual arts program, Lincoln students have multiple opportunities to see themselves as artists and to express their creativity.



Mariners *Elementary (K-6)*

2100 Mariners Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/515-6960 • mariners.nmusd.us



Antoinette Coe
Principal

A Celebration to Remember

Our 6th-grade tradition, the Oral History Celebration, is a unique event that brings generations together. As part of the celebration, each student dedicated time to interviewing their special adult honoree and prepared a slide presentation that not only introduced the honoree but also illuminated the important impact these individuals have had on the students' lives.

The celebration itself was adorned with beautiful decorations and featured a catered breakfast, creating a heartfelt tribute to these remarkable individuals. The highlight of the occasion was the outstanding musical performance put on by our talented 6th-grade students which created an emotional and memorable experience for everyone.

This tradition stands as a testament to the vital importance of learning from others. Our gratitude extends to all who contributed to making this celebration a resounding success and ensuring that our students carry forward a legacy of appreciation for those who positively impact their lives.



Monte Vista Independent Study(7-12)

<https://montevista.nmusd.us>



Dr. Racquel Stephens
Principal

New Year at Monte Vista

Our campus is vibrant and active as we begin a new year at Monte Vista! Our staff is proud of Monte Vista as a viable independent study educational option for students in the NMUSD.

Families who have considerations for independent study are enthusiastically joining our Monte Vista Mountaineers! Our teachers have designed a robust and rigorous curriculum to engage students in the independent study environment. Our campus has also recently celebrated the accomplishment of having our independent study courses approved through the National

Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). All courses are now approved at Monte Vista.

Our Monte Vista middle school and high school students have an exciting opportunity this spring to participate in art workshops with a resident artist from the Segerstrom Center for the Arts. Students will be able to unlock the four treasures of Chinese Brush Painting through a series of sessions in March and April.

Monte Vista middle school students will also have an opportunity to participate in 12 weeks of STEM coding in March, April, and May, which culminates in a showcase during the last week of May.

We look forward to building our community of independent study scholars at Monte Vista. Go, Mountaineers!



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Newport Coast *Elementary (K-6)*

6655 Ridge Park Rd., Newport Coast, CA 92657 • 949/515-6975 • nce.nmusd.us



Heather Darrow
Principal

Developing a Love for Music

Under the direction of orchestra teacher Rebecca Herron, our NCE students have a unique opportunity to develop a strong foundation in, and love for, the orchestra.

With the support of our generous PTA, students in TK through the sixth-grade are learning about music through a partnership with the Pacific Symphony. The Class Act program joined with NCE again this year, and our students are now learning about “Musical Balance” with the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart!

In addition to this partnership, and with the help of the NCE Foundation, our students are able to select their first choice of instrument, as well as work with a professional string coach each year. As the students move through the program they can then choose to join our outstanding NCE Orchestra, which is the largest string orchestra in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District. We currently have 100 students participating in this group, and have a waiting list of other students who are interested!



We are proud to be offering this program, which introduces students to classical music and also builds a strong foundation for the love of the arts, and at a very early age. Way to go, Coyotes!

Newport *Elementary (K-6)*

1327 W. Balboa Blvd., Newport Beach, CA 92661 • 949/515-6965 • newportel.nmusd.us



Amanda Estrada
Principal

Kindness Counts

Newport EI participated in the Great Kindness Challenge January 22-26. For the challenge, students are encouraged to complete as many acts of kindness as possible from the list on the challenge card. All week long, students participated in activities that focused on spreading kindness and empathy throughout the school community. Our school counselor and 6th grade Student Leadership Crew decorated the campus with kindness posters, started each day with a morning message about kindness, and organized daily activities during recess. Each day in their classrooms, teachers and students discussed a quote about kindness, read a book with the theme of kindness, and did a related activity. Student Leadership Crew also organized a coin drive to donate to the Kids for Peace School in Kenya. We also collected personal hygiene items to donate to a local homeless shelter. The challenge week may be over, but we know that the kindness and empathy shown will continue to have an impact on our school community.



Newport Harbor *High School (9-12)*

600 Irvine Ave., Newport Beach, CA 92663 • 949/515-6300 • nhhs.nmusd.us



Sean Boulton
Principal

The Puzzle Master

By Jack Alvino, Senior

Kiran Kumar taught at Costa Mesa High School for 20 years before transferring to Newport Harbor, where he now teaches math and computer science. He also advises the school's new esports team. In this excerpt from the Beacon Broadcast podcast, Mr. Kumar talks to me about his path to the classroom and the benefits of learning math.

How did you become a high school teacher?

Complete accident. I turned on to math maybe my junior or senior year of high school, and I loved solving puzzles. Puzzles are a safe place in a world that's full of a lot of great ideas, and it's hard to put your feet down anywhere. Math is like, you just know where you put your feet down. There's no questioning as to whether the logic makes sense. It's a class purely on logic in a closed system.

How do the subjects you teach here at Newport Harbor relate to real life?

Math, I would say, is kind of the language of science. Math is divorced from its context. And so, how does it help in real life? In and of itself, the way it's taught? It's not. But does it have these byproducts? Are there virtues that we can learn? Sure, because we form a community of math learners, right? There's all kinds of virtues that can be had through math. And the ones that I like are the community that we can form. Through puzzling together, we support each other and we walk the ups and downs of that process in this closed system where it's safe and it's not emotional. So, there are [benefits]—they're just not these immediate real-life things. They're things that if you tend to as a young person, as a student, you experience those byproducts later. It's manipulation. It's logic. It's argument. There's so many deeper things.

Newport Heights *Elementary (K-6)*

300 E. 15th St., Newport Beach, CA 92663 • 949/515-6970 • newportheights.nmusd.us



Terri Clarke
Principal

Celebrating Kindness

This January, Newport Heights Elementary School celebrated our 5th year participating in The Great Kindness Challenge. Students made commitments to show kindness through the checklist challenge, were greeted in the mornings with positive chalk art messages & Shark Squad members with kindness

reminders, made chainlinks of kindness that were hung for the whole school to see, wrote kindness cards to pass out to classmates & staff, plus messages of kindness were sprinkled throughout the week with books and positive t-shirts. We ended the week by painting kindness rocks for our rock garden. The week was a HUGE success in our kindness movement. Congratulations to NHES for being a 2024 Kindness Certified School!



Paularino *Elementary (K-6)*

1060 Paularino Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7950 • paularino.nmusd.us



Annalisa Schwartz
Principal

Family Nights

Family involvement in elementary school is a cornerstone of a child's educational journey, and will help foster a sense of community, support, and collaboration between home and school. Engaging our families in their children's education will create a strong partnership that can enhance academic success and overall student well-being. At Paularino, we have reintroduced Family Nights as a way to bring our family members back to campus to learn and engage with their students in a fun and inviting atmosphere.

We started with our first Family Literacy Night in the fall. At this event, our families were able to rotate through five stations to help support literacy at home, such as alphabet pop, ladder word puzzles, Mad Libs, and story boards. The OC Public Library also had a station that offered prizes and incentives for getting a library card, and introduced everyone to the many resources they have available. We even had our staff and Paularino librarian support the event!

Our students were able to interact with letters, words, and stories to increase their fluency skills and reading

comprehension, and our parents were also able to participate with their students to learn new ways to help support reading at home.

In January, in conjunction with the Paularino PTA, we hosted a Family STEM Night that focused on science, technology, engineering, and math activities. Utilizing a similar format, students and families rotated through five activities such as paper airplanes, coin boats, marshmallow towers, coffee filter colors, straw rockets, and telescope night viewing. It was a fun evening that ended with the students racing their paper airplanes across the MPR.

Family involvement can take many forms, from volunteering in the classrooms to attending parent-teacher conferences and school events. Family involvement in the elementary school will not only strengthen academic outcomes, it will also cultivate a supportive network that can nurture the academic and social development of children, thus laying a solid foundation for future success in school and life.

We are so fortunate at Paularino to have re-established our Family Nights, and are excited about having more of these opportunities to help bring our families together on campus. Go, Panthers!

Pomona *Elementary (K-6)*

2051 Pomona Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6980 • pomona.nmusd.us



Cindy Pedroso
Principal

Enrichment Opportunities

In December, families had a wonderful opportunity to enjoy holiday musical programs in all grade levels. Our students in fourth grade through sixth grade wowed us all with the musical production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Many students and their families enjoyed special holiday events—one of my favorites was Shop with a Cop. A lucky student was selected to enjoy a huge breakfast at a local restaurant, with a surprise visit from Santa. Then, they went on a shopping spree with a cop buddy to a department store. This always warms the heart and brings smiles to everyone's faces!

The holidays have come and gone, and we are ramping things up to end the year strong. Students will have more opportunities to participate in many enrichment programs after school that include STEAM, sports, and dance. These enrichment opportunities will allow our students to engage in different ways of thinking and self-expression. At Pomona, it continues to be our goal to have a whole-child approach. I look forward to our students continuing to grow and thrive!



Everett A. Rea *Elementary (K-6)*

661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6905 • rea.nmusd.us



Dr. Lorie Hoggard
Principal

Working Together for the Future

The AVID Family Nights at Rea promote individual family involvement in each of our student's journeys to college. These parent-child events are designed to strengthen the bond between school and family as well as build knowledge and motivation for college and career.

The theme for our Winter AVID Family Night was "College Night." The evening began with a family dinner fundraiser for the Rea School PTA. Rea families started the event with a scavenger hunt activity that was designed to explore the 60+ college boards which were displayed around the MPR. As a culmination of their individual college research projects, each sixth-grade student created a unique college board to showcase the information about their selected college. Each TK- to fifth-grade classroom also created a classroom college board.

After the scavenger hunt, there was a procession of student ambassadors holding college flags. Each flag represented the college that was featured in the individual classrooms across our school. Costa Mesa City Council Member Manuel Chavez and former Rea

Elementary student Victor Jimenez served as guest speakers for this special event.

Our families then worked together on their own "Road to College and Career" project to reflect upon their student's journey from elementary to middle school and then on to high school, college, and careers. Our next AVID Family Night will be held in March, and the focus will be on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).



Sonora *Elementary (PK-6)*

966 Sonora Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7955 • sonora.nmusd.us



Mia Doidge
Principal

Seussical Jr

Sonora Eagles performed a magical musical, Seussical Jr. They debuted on January 18th at the Costa Mesa High School theater, and it was packed with more than 150 people in the audience!

Beginning in October, students in grades 1st – 6th had the opportunity to audition for the play. 70 students were chosen to have roles in the play, 15 with lead roles! The students must show commitment and determination for rehearsals that are 2 – 3 times per week from October through the beginning of January. Students spend lots of time memorizing their

lines, choreography, and placement on stage. Our parent volunteers design and build the sets and sew costumes, which all make the production come to life. The Sonora PTA is a huge support of the play as well. We are so proud of our Eagles!!



Charles W. TeWinkle *Middle School (7-8)*

3224 California Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7965 • tewinkle.nmusd.us



Dr. Ixchel Sanchez
Principal

Riding For Focus

TeWinkle Middle School is proud to announce that we received a grant from Outride: Riding with Focus to incorporate bicycles into our physical education curriculum. Riding For Focus is a middle school-based cycling education and safety program. Research has demonstrated that cycling as an outlet for students improves their cognitive, physical, and social-emotional well-being. The grant provided



us with thirty-five bicycles of various heights and forty helmets. The curriculum is implemented during a six-week period, it includes lesson objectives, review of previously taught skills, introduction of new skills, and health and wellness components and time to assess students on their skill development to ensure that they are learning how to ride a bike safely. Our TeWinkle students are enjoying the new experience of riding bikes during physical education. We are harnessing the power of cycling to support our students to stay active, engaged, and to feel wind on their faces and fresh air in their lungs.



Victoria *Elementary (K-6)*

1025 Victoria St., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6985 • victoria.nmusd.us



Dr. Aaron Peralta
Principal

A Long Standing Tradition

Victoria Elementary is proud to be a Class Act School! The Frieda Belinfante Class Act program strives to enhance our already existing school music program by providing additional musical experience through the Pacific Symphony. Focusing on six main “contact points” with schools, the program works to increase awareness of and involvement with symphonic music for our students, their families and educators.



All of our students have been able to form a relationship with a Symphony musician, Ted Sugata, who serves as our “Class Act teaching artist.” Ted plays the oboe and has been a Class Act musician for a number of years. Ted comes to Victoria Elementary and provides classroom lessons, ensemble performances, and assemblies to help expose our students to the theme of the year “Musical Balance”. To culminate the program, our older students get to experience a Youth Concert at Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, while our younger students get to participate in an Interactive Performance that is on-site. All activities this year feature the music of the Class Act Composer of the Year: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.



Whittier Elementary (K-6)

1800 Whittier Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6990 • whittier.nmusd.us



Dr. José Montaña
Principal

Beyond Athletics and Whittier's Dual Language Immersion Program

Recently, Whittier students were recognized for their hard work and dedication with a medal from Beyond Athletics. The program played a crucial role in providing our students with an opportunity to participate in an after-school program focused on practicing and improving their soccer skills, while also fostering sportsmanship and dedication.

Additionally, the staff of the Whittier Dual Language Immersion program utilized a release day to collaborate on mapping, vertical articulation, and sharing best practices. This release day is vital to the success of establishing a robust and effective Dual Language Immersion program at Whittier Elementary School. We extend our gratitude to our Whittier DLI Staff, as well as Laura Dale-Pash from NMUSD's Multilingual Programs, for their support and guidance in providing this opportunity.



Wilson Elementary (K-6)

801 Wilson St., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6995 • wilson.nmusd.us



Lorena Rubio
Principal

Fostering Unity and Kindness in Our School Culture

Our student leadership team is at the forefront of cultivating a positive school culture through monthly spirit days. These events, celebrated by both students and staff, are designed not only to showcase creativity but also to emphasize kindness and unity. In January, Pajama and Plushie Day enveloped our school in comfort and camaraderie, with everyone participating in a cozy and fun-filled day.

These spirit days, carefully planned by student leaders, go beyond surface-level enjoyment. They incorporate kindness activities, fostering compassion, unity, and teamwork. Looking ahead, we are enthusiastic about the continual impact these events will have in strengthening our school community and creating an environment where every student feels valued and motivated to contribute positively. The success of Pajama and Plushie Day serves as a shining example of the positive influence these student-led initiatives can have on our school culture.

"Wildcats are Kind."



Woodland *Elementary (K-2)*

2025 Garden Ln., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6945 • woodland.nmsud.us



Kim Maxwell
Principal

Math Intervention Now, Too!

The teachers at Woodland are dedicated to differentiated instruction, a method that can meet where our students are in their learning and also support their progress to grade-level proficiency and beyond.

While some students are already challenged beyond proficiency with enrichment and extension activities, many others are supported with our robust

intervention program. Through this collaboration between the intervention team and our grade-level teachers, these students work in small groups to practice and master the specific skills that are necessary for a strong academic foundation. Until now though, these intervention methods have just focused on reading and literacy skills. But this year we are fortunate to be incorporating a math intervention program as well!

Our phenomenal reading intervention teachers, Melissa Guerin and Jennifer Ramirez, have been working with the students since August, and in January we were excited to welcome our new math intervention teacher, Vi Fardig.

Ms. Fardig wasted no time in creating a schedule that provided in-class support for math instruction, and she also worked with our teachers to identify students for her small groups. With this math intervention currently underway, we are now strategically and intentionally supporting those students who need help with their basic number sense and foundational math skills.

In both reading and math intervention models, the students are grouped together based upon their specific academic needs. Assessments administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year provide benchmark data to measure student growth. Regular progress-monitoring throughout the year ensures that the instruction is strategically aligned to student needs. It also allows for added flexibility in the small groups, depending upon individual student growth.

Students also receive core instruction from their classroom teacher, and many of them receive differentiated small-group instruction in class as well. Our reading and math intervention programs provide an additional layer of teaching and learning to ensure that all Woodland students are able to achieve excellence.

Early Childhood Education

2985 Bear St., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-5000



Michelle O'Neill
Coordinator

Building a Petting Zoo

Playing with blocks provides the opportunity for our preschool children at Pomona Elementary to learn elements of science and math, like problem solving, counting, adding, and subtracting. This also helps them build both gross and fine motor skills. Block play supports

preschoolers' learning language as children talk and discuss the structures they are building with the adults and children around them. Mrs. Vogler, the preschool teacher, encourages her students to use their creativity and imagination. The block center also provides a natural context for exploring the physical world. Like little architects, children experiment with structures and observe the outcomes of their buildings. Through this process they learn about size, weight, proportionality, and balance, and can use their new concepts to plan and predict outcomes, in this case building a petting zoo.



Nutrition Services

2985 Bear St., Building B Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-5000 • web.nmusd.us/departments/nutrition-services



Todd Hatfield
Director

Trends for 2024

*By Pam Williams, MPH, RD
Nutritionist*

Every year, companies and experts share their thoughts on the trends for the new year. This is true even for school food services. Here at NMUSD Nutrition Services, we watch these trends and we find ourselves on the cutting edge for 2024. Based on our review, here are a few practices that have made our meals fun, healthy, and delicious.

Keeping it small: Our students have joined others who want to see and taste their food in mini-bites. Instead of big waffles on a plate, the “waffles on a stick” offer small bites. By coupling these small whole-grain waffles or whole-grain mini-pancakes with fruit and milk, students get a healthy start to their day.

Then there are the mini-pizza bites, the mini-cheeseburgers, and the mini-double dogs. Eating a serving

of these provides the same amount of protein and other nutrients required for lunch, but it embraces the cuteness of mini-bite foods.

Adding noodles to the menu of our middle and high schools is another enjoyable addition. We use whole-grain noodles in our chow mein dish. We couple these noodles with protein and vegetables to help students meet their nutrient requirements. And the food tastes great!

We keep it fresh. We love crisp and ready-to-eat produce for our meals. Our salads and sandwiches are made fresh, and they are a regular part of our menus. We also serve an array of fresh fruits and vegetables such as jicama, crunchy cucumbers, baby carrots, bananas, plums, and apples.

These practices help us meet nutrient requirements. They will carry us through 2024 while giving the students excellent choices to help them keep healthy. And that is our goal. We believe, and the experts agree, that healthy students engage when it is time to learn.

Whole Health Everyday 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 NMUSD in the subject line)

Entries must be received by **March 15, 2024**

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

Thank you Barkate / Nehi Orthodontics for sponsoring our word search contests

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|----------|------------|
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