

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Westminster School District



Volume 20, Issue 117

May 2024

WSD Reaches New Heights with Vietnamese Dual Language Immersion Program!



Westminster SD Board members, staff, and Westminster High School partner to continue VDLI program.

SUPERINTENDENT



Dr. Gunn Marie Hansen
Superintendent

As we welcome the arrival of spring, I am filled with excitement and the WSD INSPIRES! mentality to continue working hard for the last stretch of the school year. March has been a month of vibrant celebrations and remarkable achievements within our district, and I am honored to share these updates with you.

First and foremost, I want to take a moment to recognize the outstanding achievements of our staff and students.

This month, we held our annual Foundation Awards ceremony, where we celebrated the exceptional accomplishments of our students and their road to success. It was truly inspiring to see our community come together to honor the hard work, dedication, and passion that our students and staff put into their work every day.

During this month, WSD partnered with Westminster High School (WHS) in the Huntington Beach Union High School District to bridge our Vietnamese Dual Language Immersion Program (VDLI) at Demille and Warner.

The collaboration between WSD and WHS represents a significant milestone in promoting linguistic diversity and cultural Proficiency within every VDLI students' academic journey. The VDLI program at WSD garnered a myriad of publicity for being the first VDLI program in the state of California. Now, with the partnership with Westminster High School, WSD is the first Vietnamese Dual Immersion Program Pre-K through 12th Grade program in the nation. Cementing us as one of the premier districts in Orange County and nation.

These incredible achievements are a testament to the vibrant, inclusive, and supportive community we have built together. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has played a role in making our district a place where academic excellence, diversity, and community are recognized.

As we look ahead to the remainder of the school year, I am excited for the upcoming events, celebrations, and ongoing community collaborations we cultivate. Let's continue to aspire to inspire our students and the WSD community.



The Annual Foundation Awards bring students, staff, and families together to recognize our incredible scholars.

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Powerhouse Districts Collaborate to Launch Ground-Breaking Vietnamese Dual Language Immersion Program

By Frances Nguyen, President, Board of Trustees

As the proud Board President of Westminster School District, I am thrilled to share that Westminster School District continues to lead the pack with our Vietnamese Dual Language Immersion Program. WSD's first cohort VDLI cohort will promote to high school after this school year. Where will they go next?

Well, Westminster High School has students covered – WSD and WHS have joined forces to create the nation's first Pre-K to 12th grade Vietnamese Dual Language Immersion (VDLI) program, set to launch in the fall of 2024.

The new program was unveiled at a recent WHS Lion Showcase, where students showcased their talents and

highlighted key aspects of the innovative curriculum. This program will provide our students with invaluable bilingual and bicultural skills that will serve them well in our diverse society.

WSD and WHS have worked tirelessly to develop a customized curriculum and secure the necessary resources to make this program a reality. With the support of the community, they are confident the VDLI program will be a premier educational experience for all who participate.

WSD was the first in the state to start a VDLI program back in 2015 and once again our district is the first to pioneer a program that reaches new heights for our students, families, and staff. It's an incredible process to be a part of and we are thrilled to provide this opportunity to our academic community.



WHS gives staff, students, and families the rundown of the VDLI program during the Lion Showcase.



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



School News

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This school year may be coming to a close, but the excitement in the district continues. Superintendent Dr. Gunn Marie Hansen highlights the district's achievement on page 2 and the Frances Nguyen, President, Board of Trustees, shares information about the ground-breaking Vietnamese Dual Language Immersion Program.

There are so many interesting topics in this issue ranging from Science Olympiads, Media Club, After-School Club, Harvest of the Month, AI Programs, and so much more...Enjoy!

Thank you to Westminster Mayor Chi Charlie Nguyen for his article on page 5. Collaborations are important.

Our next issue is June 5.



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**Chi Charlie
Nguyen**
Mayor

The school year is coming to a close within the next month, and in looking back, the collaboration and partnerships between the school districts and City have made the past school year an exciting, positive, and meaningful year in our community.

We wrapped up our Safe Routes to School efforts and a final report is in the works; this provides a blueprint for citywide improvements for our students to walk and bike safely to school. Our city leaders and staff supported events such as Walk to School Day, Read Across America Day, and other educational outreach events or drives. Our school resource officers have made impacts with their presence throughout the schools, which is a testament to our commitment to public safety in schools.



City of
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Westminster School District provided invaluable support for our community events, including the Tet Parade and Fall Festival. Their students participated in many events to showcase their talents and academic achievements. Students from Westminster High School, La Quinta High School, and Bolsa Grande High School also participated in many volunteer efforts and performed at events, including serving on the Youth Committee.

As a City Council, we were proud to highlight more of our youth's accomplishments throughout the year and invited them to be recognized for their achievements. With many of them graduating high school this year, we wish them well as they are our future leaders, scholars, and educators.

Congratulations to the Class of 2024!

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The Health Impact of Bullying in Kids

In today's world, 1 in 5 children experience bullying online or in person. As a frequently reported disciplinary problem in schools, it encompasses behaviors such as being the subject of rumors or lies, being made fun of, being called names, insulted, threatened with harm, experiencing physical harm, and social exclusion.

Bullying is characterized by deliberate and persistent behavior aimed at asserting power over others. Categorized as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), it represents potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on a person's development.

Bullying can impair cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development, and increase the risk of various health problems such as depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and substance abuse.

Often, bullying is dismissed as a childhood rite of passage. Children may feel reluctant to tell adults due to feelings of embarrassment, which is why recognizing the early signs of bullying is instrumental in preventing the potential long-term effects on a child's development. Research shows that early and consistent parental involvement and support is a protective factor against bullying and long term consequences.

Signs of bullying parents can look for in children include:

- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide
- Planning to "get back" at those who've wronged them

Caregivers recognizing the impact of bullying is often the first step. Open communication and creating an environment where children's feelings are acknowledged and expressed freely help build resilience and emotional well-being. Further, caregivers should initiate conversations with teachers to discuss concerns regarding a child's well-being.

Addressing bullying requires collaborative efforts between caregivers, educators, and health care professionals. Child psychologists and school counselors can provide interventions suited to a child's well-being.

Want to learn more? Please call (714) 377-6993 or visit millerchildrens.org/stramski.



Pablo, Age 6

At 11 months, Pablo was fighting for his life.

Today, he's got six candles on his cake.

Failing organs. Eight months in a coma. Fighting for every breath. At 11 months old, this is what Leukemia brought Pablo. The one bright spot, he was at MemorialCare Miller Children's & Women's Hospital where a team of top doctors, nurses, and specialists helped save his life. For over a year in the PICU, our highly-trained staff never stopped caring for Pablo and his family. **Caring is our calling.**

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Anderson Elementary (K-6)

8902 Hewitt Pl., Garden Grove, CA 92844 • 714/894-7201 • anderson.wsdk8.us



Kim Breckenridge
Principal

Science Olympiads

Congratulations to the Anderson Science Olympiad Teams! The Anderson teams consisted of 4th, 5th and 6th grade students who worked together to compete against other Orange County elementary schools in a variety of science events. The competition was held at a middle school in Anaheim. The events included both knowledge and engineering, hands-on

events. Egg Drop, Balloon Racer, A for Anatomy and Anemometer were just some of the activities. Working together after school, under the direction of coaches, Mrs. Bui, Ms. Dodosh, Mrs. Okura-Schooley, Ms. Ta and Mrs. Greene, the teams prepared for each event through study, practice and hands-on activities. With the goals of increasing science knowledge, creating of love of science, and having fun, the Anderson teams really worked hard and earned Bronze Medals. Great work Anderson Science Olympiads!



Clegg Elementary (TK-5)

6311 Larchwood Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647 • 714/894-7218 • clegg.wsdk8.us



Mark Murphy
Principal

After-School Clubs

Clegg School prides itself on offering a vibrant array of after-school clubs designed to cultivate creativity, teamwork, curiosity, and resilience among our students. These clubs, organized and overseen by our dedicated staff, aim to enrich the educational experience by providing avenues for exploration and growth.

In our Gardening Club, students cultivate more than just plants; they nurture a sense of responsibility, environmental stewardship, and appreciation for the natural world. Through hands-on activities, they learn valuable lessons in sustainability and teamwork.

The Cursive Club offers a unique opportunity for students to refine their fine motor skills and dexterity while mastering the art of elegant penmanship. Beyond pen and paper, they develop patience, focus, and a deeper connection to language.

Strategy takes center stage in the Checkers Club, where students engage in friendly competition while honing their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Each game becomes a lesson in planning, adaptability, and sportsmanship.

Recognizing the importance of mental well-being, our school counselor spearheads the Wellness Club, guiding students through yoga and meditation practices to foster emotional resilience and inner balance.

For those with a passion for movement, our Running Club provides a platform for physical fitness and personal growth, encouraging participants to set and achieve their fitness goals while fostering a sense of accomplishment and camaraderie.

The Boredom Busters Club is a hub of exploration, offering a diverse range of activities spanning from culinary adventures to scientific experiments and artistic endeavors. Here, students unleash their creativity, curiosity, and imagination in a supportive and stimulating environment.

In addition, the Piano Club provides a harmonious space for students to explore the magic of music. Through lessons and group sessions, they develop not only musical proficiency but also discipline, focus, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

And let's not forget the harmonious melodies of our school choir, which meets weekly to prepare for the eagerly anticipated end-of-year performance. This event not only showcases the talents of our students but also fosters connections with neighboring schools, uniting communities in the joy of music.

At Clegg School, our after-school clubs are more than just extracurricular activities; they are invaluable opportunities for students to discover, grow, and thrive in both mind and spirit.



DeMille *Language Academy*

15400 Van Buren St., Midway City, CA 92655 • 714/894-7224 • demille.wsdk8.us



April Derr
Principal

Vietnamese Culture Club

DeMille Language Academy is proud to have an amazing Vietnamese Culture Club (VCC)! This club meets after school and has two groups: cultural appreciation and performance. Over 100 students from first through sixth grades participate each week. Parents at our site volunteer to oversee these clubs and plan events. We are also able this year to use funds to find outside vendors

to come and help support the students' learning and performances.

On April 19, our students presented our first annual VCC Showcase. A packed house of parents, friends, and family came to support our students. The performance groups sang a variety of songs in Vietnamese, played traditional instruments, and danced. These performances highlighted their love for Vietnamese culture and their family heritage. The students in our cultural appreciation group shared a slide show of all their amazing activities, which included cooking, calligraphy, and traditional games and instruments. We are so proud of all the hard work and dedication that went into making the VCC showcase spectacular!



Eastwood *Elementary* (K-6)

13552 University St., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/894-7227 • eastwood.wsdk8.us



Kathryn Cox
Principal

Empowering Students through Media

EMC News, also known as the Eastwood Media Club at Eastwood Elementary School, is a dynamic program that is funded through ELOP programming. It offers our students a creative space to learn the art of editing by creating newscasts that use digital video editor programs.

Led by the dedicated Mr. Nakatsu and Miss Delany, our Eastwood students can dive into the world of journalism by interviewing individuals on campus, crafting scripts, and then planning the various segments for each engaging newscast. This innovative club not only hones our students' technical skills, it also nurtures their self-confidence and enhances their speaking and listening abilities.

The newscasts produced by EMC News cover a wide range of topics, including weather updates, sports discussions, and highlights of campus events, thus providing a platform for our students to showcase their talents and share important information with their peers.

Mateo Densmore, our student body president, expressed his enthusiasm for EMC News. He highlighted the opportunity it gives him to interact with friends in an after-school setting while also learning editing programs with the help of supportive teachers. Zohar Shamoiei shared a similar sentiment, emphasizing how EMC News has equipped him with valuable technology skills and the ability to create captivating videos, thus making the experience both educational and enjoyable for all involved.

EMC News stands as a testament to the power of creativity and collaboration in education.



Finley Computer Science Magnet School

13521 Edwards St., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/895-7764 • finley.wsdk8.us



Pam LeMueix
Principal

Designing Theme Parks

Student Council members from Finley Computer Science Magnet School recently participated in a unique educational experience at an educational workshop campus, focusing on theme park design. This program mirrors the innovative thinking processes of our own Finley Innovation Academy, challenging students to devise creative solutions and envision engaging experiences for theme park visitors. Throughout this immersive experience, our students explored the complexities of theme park design, from storytelling to ride engineering.

Under the guidance of campus educators, they learned about the meticulous planning required to create memorable visitor experiences. Students formed teams, chose a theme, and assumed roles critical to designing a theme park, including creating and managing family rides, thrill rides, shops, dining, and entertainment areas. This hands-on experience highlighted the significance of each student's role in achieving the team's overall objectives.



"Our theme park was based on *Lilo and Stitch*," said fourth-grader Kylie Alvarez. "We designed a tropical-themed water park with a giant alien waterslide."

The program not only enhanced their technical skills but also emphasized the importance of teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving—skills essential for future success. Returning with a deeper understanding of the intersection between creativity and technology, our students are better prepared to be the innovators and problem solvers of tomorrow, embodying the core values of the Finley Innovation Academy.



Fryberger *Elementary School of Environmental Science*

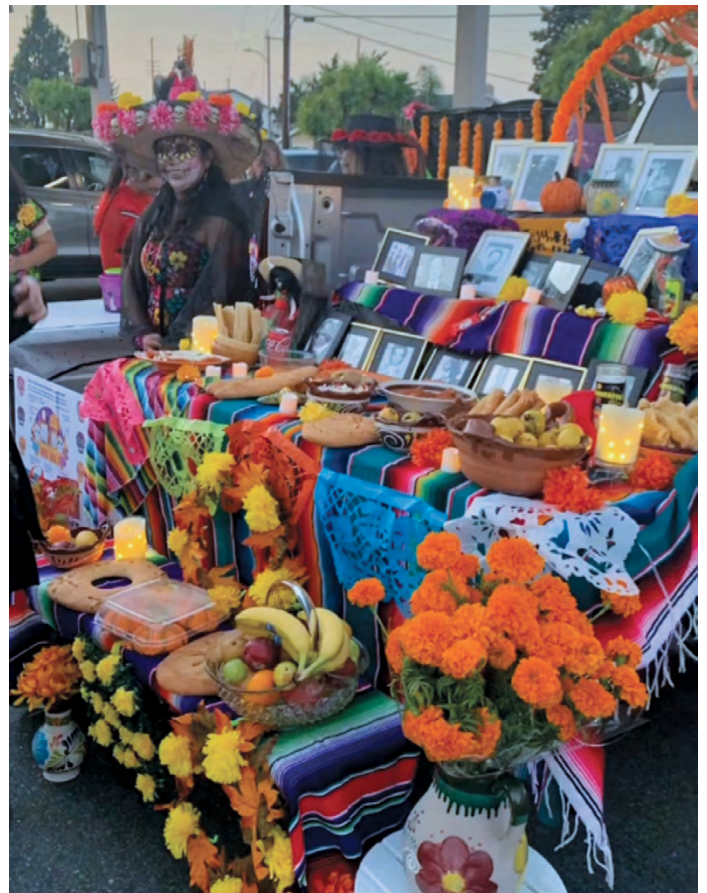
6952 Hood Dr., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/894-7237 • fryberger.wsdk8.us



Laura Urquhart
Principal

Fryberger's Fabulous PTA: A Pillar of Support and Excellence

Fryberger's PTA is second to none! This remarkable group of parents and staff members stands out as the epitome of excellence, fostering a vibrant school community through its remarkable commitment and support. The Fryberger PTA's dedication is evident through events like Trunk or Treat, which brings Halloween fun to families, Coco and Cookies with Santa, spreading holiday cheer, and Skate Night, offering exciting bonding opportunities. The Fryberger Annual Car Show showcases classic cars and camaraderie, while the Spring Carnival brings fun and games to all. These events not only entertain but also raise crucial funds for the school, enriching educational experiences for students. Fryberger's PTA embodies the spirit of community and collaboration, enhancing the school's culture and making it a beacon of excellence in education.



Hayden *Elementary* (K-5)

14782 Eden St., Midway City, CA 92655 • 714/894-7261 • hayden.wsdk8.us



Wendy Baird
Principal

Spring Time Fun

Hayden Elementary School is more than just a place of learning. It's a vibrant community where students, families, and staff come together to celebrate achievements, build relationships, and

create lasting memories. Our school is committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment that nurtures the well-being of the whole student.

We recently hosted a series of engaging events that brought together our school community. At Lunch on the Lawn, our families joined their students for a picnic-style lunch on the campus. This well-attended event offered a relaxed atmosphere for our families to connect with one another and share quality time with their children.

Our school community also came together to celebrate those outstanding students who exemplify our core values of respect, responsibility, and readiness to learn. It was a moment of pride for many students as we celebrated their personal achievements, grit, and outstanding character.

At the Imagination Machine assembly, our scholars were delighted to see their very own stories come to life as acted out by a performance troupe. Another exciting highlight of the school year was the Bubble Run, which proved to be a tremendous success. The students smiled from ear-to-ear as they gleefully dashed through the obstacles of bubbles alongside their friends. But perhaps the most unforgettable moment of the day came when students had the opportunity to pie the principal in the face and playfully silly string her!



Spring Egg Hunt



Lunch on the Lawn

At Hayden, each day presents new opportunities for learning, laughter, and unforgettable experiences. Our school will continue to prioritize community engagement and remain dedicated to providing enriching experiences that inspire, uplift, and unite our diverse community.



Principal Pie in the Face



Imagination Machine Assembly



Bubble Run

Johnson Middle School (6–8)

13603 Edwards St., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/894-7244 • johnson.wsd8.us



Daniel Owens
Principal

Johnson Middle School Celebrates 2023-2024 Sports Season

In a show of positive school spirit and teamwork, Johnson Middle School will soon bid farewell to the 2023-2024 Sports season.

Throughout the year, students participated in various sports including flag football, soccer, volleyball, badminton, basketball and track. These competitions provided opportunities for students to showcase their athletic abilities while also emphasizing teamwork and school pride.

Organized team sports offer numerous benefits to students. Firstly, they promote physical health and

fitness, encouraging regular exercise and active lifestyles. Participating in sports also teaches important life skills such as teamwork, communication and leadership. Students learn to work together towards a common goal, communicate effectively with teammates and coaches, and take on leadership roles both on and off the field. Sports can also boost self-esteem and confidence as students achieve personal and team success.

As the school year ends, the memories and lessons learned from sports seasons will continue to resonate with students. Many will go on to compete in High School sports, but even if they don't they will remember the competition and excitement they had as a Johnson athlete.



Members of the 2024 Johnson Girls Basketball Team

Land School

15151 Temple St., Westminster, CA 92683 • land.wsdk8.us • 714/894-7311 Student Services • 714/898-8389 Child Development

Darcy Spicer, Coordinator Early Education

Young Learner Showcase

Land School hosted the annual Open House event on Wednesday, April 17, with a great turnout! The night was dedicated to showcasing the hard work of our youngest learners in WSD, with children's work samples from infants to children 5 years old on display.

The evening began with a parent meeting that included messages from our school readiness nurse, Francie Lagman, about health and safety practices for young ones. Resource sharing from the Westminster Family Resource Center was also included. Parents learned about the California Preschool Learning Foundations (CPLF), which teachers use to guide instruction in preschool classrooms. CPLF includes domains in the areas of social-emotional development, language and literacy, mathematics, physical



development, and English language development. Teachers prepare learning experiences for children based on these domains, with the purpose of continually moving them upward in their understanding and skills development.

During the Open House event, classrooms displayed children's projects and posted informational notes next to them, highlighting the specific CPLF domains that were associated with the learning. While most people know that preschool comprises learning through play and artistic creativity, understanding how these activities fit with the CPLF helps parents see the intentional learning experiences happening throughout the year.

Most importantly, the young students at Land were extremely proud to show off their work and excitedly shared their hands-on experiences with family and friends who came to the event.



Meairs *Elementary* (K-5)

8441 Trask Ave., Garden Grove, CA 92844 • 714/372-8800 • meairs.wsdck8.us



Dr. Kathy Kane
Principal

Harvest of the Month

The 2023-24 Harvest of the Month Program provides engaging lessons and sample taste tests for seasonal, California-grown, fruits and vegetables each month. This year the students at Meairs have been able to participate in this wonderful program sponsored by the Orange County Department of Education. The program provides teachers with standards aligned lesson plans, slide presentations, activities and workbooks for the students, and a take home newsletter for families. Students learn all about the fruit or vegetable for the month, where it comes from, how it grows, uses for it, and then they get to taste it. The take home newsletter includes much of the same information along with a recipe for families to try. This year students were able to taste kumquats, rainbow carrots, figs, baby bok choy and grapes. For many students kumquats, figs and baby bok choy were new flavors, some they liked some they didn't! Harvest of the Month has been a great learning experience for the students and the teachers at Meairs.



Fourth graders trying rainbow carrots from Harvest of the Month

Schmitt Elementary (K-5)

7200 Trask Ave., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/894-7264 • schmitt.wsdk8.us



**Sarah
Nead-Rendon**
Principal

The 7 Habits

At Schmitt Elementary, we're thrilled to announce an exciting new initiative that's going to shape our school culture and empower our students like never before! We're embarking on a transformative journey by incorporating the FranklinCovey Leader in Me program into our curriculum. This program is based on the timeless principles outlined in Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, adapted specifically for children.

So, what does this mean for our students? It means they're going to learn valuable life skills that will serve them well beyond their academic years. Each habit—Be Proactive; Begin with the End in Mind; Put First Things First; Think Win-Win; Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood; Synergize; and Sharpen the Saw—will be introduced in an age-appropriate manner, allowing our students to grasp these concepts and integrate them into their daily lives.

Through engaging activities, discussions, and practical applications, students will develop leadership qualities, critical-thinking skills, and emotional intelligence. They'll learn to set goals, manage their time effectively, communicate assertively, and collaborate with others. These skills aren't just essential for academic success—they're also essential for success in all aspects of life.

As a school, we're committed to nurturing not just academic excellence but also personal growth and character development. The Leader in Me program aligns perfectly with this vision, providing a framework for fostering leadership potential in every child. We believe that by instilling these habits early on, we're empowering our students to become confident, responsible, and compassionate individuals who will make a positive impact on their communities and beyond.

We're excited to embark on this journey together with our students, parents, and staff. Together, we'll create a school environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential. We will embrace the 7 Habits and inspire greatness in every student at Schmitt Elementary!



Lions are Leaders

Schroeder College & Career Academy

15151 Columbia Ln., Huntington Beach, CA 92647 • 714/894-7268 • schroeder.wsdk8.us



Robert Murdock
Principal

Impressive Open House

Schroeder Academy welcomed families and community members to its annual Open House on April 17, offering a glimpse into the vibrant and innovative learning environment that students and teachers have cultivated throughout the year. Visitors were treated to beautifully decorated classrooms, each displaying the creativity and hard work of the students.

Walking through the halls, guests could see colorful artwork, detailed science projects, and engaging literature presentations, all highlighting the talents and accomplishments of Schroeder Academy's students. Teachers were on hand to guide visitors through the exhibits, explaining the concepts behind each project and sharing the learning journey of their classes.

Schroeder is proud of the high level of enthusiasm and dedication shown by both students and teachers, who are committed to excellence and the collaborative spirit that drives the school's success. The Open House was not only a celebration of academic achievements but also a testament to the supportive community at Schroeder Academy.

Parents and family members turned out in force, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The event provided an opportunity for parents to visit their children's classrooms, engage with teachers, and learn about the curriculum and activities that have shaped their school year.

The parents' interest and active participation underscored the close-knit relationship between the school and its families. Many parents took the time to speak with teachers about their children's progress and to express



their appreciation for the educators' hard work. These conversations highlighted the collaborative approach to education at Schroeder Academy, where parents and teachers work together to foster student success.

The evening concluded with a lively gathering on the school grounds, where a lunch truck served delicious burgers and a shaved-ice stand and provided sweet treats for attendees. Families mingled and enjoyed the festivities, marking a memorable end to a night of celebration and community at Schroeder Academy.



Sequoia Academy *GATE Magnet Elementary*

5900 Iroquois Rd., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/894-7271 • sequoia.wsdk8.us



Alisha Tardif
Principal

Showcase Celebrates Academic Excellence

Sequoia Academy hosted its annual Open House event that showcased our school's exceptional programs and opportunities for student enrichment. This event, which welcomed our families and community members, spotlighted our renowned GATE program (Gifted and Talented Education), AVID program (Advancement Via Individual Determination), and our STEA³M Academy (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts/Academics/AVID, and Mathematics). It actively highlighted the diverse array of learning experiences that we have available to our students.

The attendees were treated to interactive displays, presentations, and demonstrations that celebrated Sequoia Academy's commitment to academic excellence and innovation. From an advanced and enriching GATE curriculum designed to challenge and inspire gifted learners, to AVID strategies fostering college readiness, and STEA³M initiatives promoting interdisciplinary exploration, Sequoia proudly showcased its dedication to nurturing well-rounded and forward-thinking scholars.

This event also emphasized the vital role of family involvement in the educational process, with parents and guardians engaging in discussions



Eagle families learned about their students hard work.

with teachers, staff, and administrators about our students' progress towards their academic goals, as well as lifelong skill acquisition. Through collaborative partnerships between home and school, Sequoia Academy continues to foster a supportive learning environment that empowers its students to thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Principal Tardif expressed gratitude for the enthusiastic turnout, stating that, "Sequoia Academy is proud to provide a dynamic educational experience that prepares students for success in our ever-changing world. Our Open House celebrates the incredible achievements of our students and the unwavering support of our families and community. Way to SOAR, Eagles!"

Sequoia Academy looks forward to building upon the success of this year's Open House and Showcase. We will continue to both inspire excellence and foster a lifelong love of learning among our Eagle students, families, and community.



Eagle students displayed their learning through projects.



Eagle families explored classrooms.



Preschool Eagles showed off their classroom.



Eagle classrooms were packed with community members.

Stacey Middle School

6311 Larchwood Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647 • 714/894-7212 • stacey.wsdk8.us



Rick Nichols
Principal

Preparing for the Future

Stacey Middle School recently hosted two significant events focused on enhancing student leadership and preparing them for future academic and career challenges. The first event was an all-day session dedicated to college and career readiness, organized in collaboration with the school's AVID team. The day began with engaging

three-part rotations featuring a motivational assembly led by Keith Hawkins, a comprehensive College & Career Fair, and a schoolwide practice ACT. The afternoon activities were tailored to different grades, with 8th graders participating in presentations by Westminster and Marina High Schools about A-G requirements. In contrast, 6th and 7th graders engaged in team-building and homeroom activities.

Following closely, a special session called the Day of Understanding took place, featuring Keith Hawkins once again. This workshop brought together Leadership classes from Johnson and Stacey Middle Schools and 5th-grade leadership students from Clegg and Finley. The focus was on empowering these young leaders to be the catalysts for positive change within their schools, fostering an environment of support and inclusivity. This event provided valuable training on becoming effective, empathetic student leaders, emphasizing the importance of creating a unified school community.



Warner Middle School (6–8)

14171 Newland St., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/894-7281 • warner.wsdk8.us



**Dr. Kenneth
Lopour**
Principal

Enabling Success

Again this year, Warner Middle School participated in the Orange County Science and Engineering Fair (OCSEF) with 20 students and eight total projects submitted.

Warner ended up being the most decorated middle school in Orange County for the second year in a row, with a total of 20 county awards! Additionally, we also have seven students with three projects moving on to the California State Science and Engineering Fair. The subjects of their projects spanned a variety of fields, from botany to behavioral science to engineering and applied mechanics.

Our students' powerful achievements in the STEM field is a direct result of their participating in the Mentor Match program with Westminster High School

MERIT students. Each Warner OCSEF project group was matched with multiple junior/senior mentors to help guide, motivate, and engage them through the entire OCSEF journey from project selection to completion. Having a mentor as a project coach helped our students by building equity and access for everyone, despite parent language ability, economic status, or education levels. This was a "for student by student" approach that enabled their success.

For the second year in a row we have also had two Warner students win the "Broadcom Coding Commitment Award" for creating an engineering project with a focus on global sustainability and which incorporates coding. This is a prestigious award, and these student recipients also won a large cash prize and a computing device.

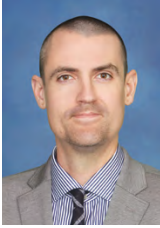
We are so proud of our amazing Warner students and their dedicated science teachers!



Warner Middle School's student award recipients May Nguyen and Jaelene Salinas with their Science teachers.

Webber Elementary (K-6)

14142 Hoover St., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/894-7288 • webber.wsdk8.us



Jonathan Edelman
Principal

Cutting-Edge AI Programs

In an innovative move toward personalized education, Webber Elementary School has introduced an opportunity for their sixth-grade students to engage with artificial intelligence to foster a love for reading. The program, designed to revolutionize the classroom experience, incorporates various AI technologies aimed at enhancing learning outcomes and student engagement.

As a part of the program, students took on the role of budding authors, crafting characters with the help of AI that would later take center stage in their own narratives. This hands-on approach not only allowed students to explore their own creative potential but also enabled them to connect with stories that resonated with their personal interests and experiences.



The integration of AI as a personalized reading tutor further amplified the learning experience for these scholars. By infusing technology into the art of storytelling, we're not only enhancing literacy skills but also nurturing a passion for reading and writing. This isn't just about teaching students to read—it's about empowering them to become proficient storytellers by cultivating creativity and curiosity in the classroom.

As Webber Elementary leads the charge in embracing AI technology, it sets a shining example for all schools. By leveraging AI to ignite creativity and inspire a love for learning, educators are not only preparing students for the challenges of tomorrow but are also equipping them with the skills and resilience needed to thrive in an ever-changing world.

With AI as a partner, Webber continues its mission to provide a nurturing and innovative educational experience, where every student has the opportunity to meet their full potential and embark on a journey of lifelong learning.

Willmore *Language Academy*

7122 Maple St., Westminster, CA 92683 • 714/895-3765 • willmore.wsd.k8.us



Tieumi "Domi" Ellis
Principal

Exploring the Vibrant After-School Clubs at Willmore Language Academy

At Willmore Language Academy, education extends far beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. Through a diverse array of after-school clubs, students have the opportunity to explore their interests, develop new skills, and forge lasting friendships. Let's take a closer look at some of the exciting clubs available to students:



1. **Choir Club:** For upper-grade students in grades 4 to 6, the Choir Club offers a harmonious journey into the world of music. — by Orchid Rocha and Lucy Cordova
2. **Danza Club:** A group of dedicated students who practice hard all year to perform different Mexican folklórico dances culminating in our Cinco de Mayo celebration. — by Natalie Juan-Tapia, Evelyn Gomez Pulido, and Lulu Pedraza
3. **Mind Masters Club:** Our exciting club is called Mind Masters, where our 3rd graders come together every week to play awesome strategic games and solve puzzles after school. — by Tracey Cu
4. **Graphic Design Club:** In the Graphic Design Club, students unleash their creativity and technical skills to visually represent the spirit of Willmore Language Academy. — by Michelle Magpile
5. **Engaging Struggling Readers Club:** Recognizing the importance of literacy, this club provides targeted support to students striving to improve their reading skills. — by Kristin Pyle
6. **Test Prep Club:** Equipping students with essential test-taking strategies, the Test Prep Club prepares them for success in standardized assessments. — by Michelle Shook



7. **Reading Comprehension Club:** Fostering a love of literature and strengthening reading comprehension skills, this club provides upper-grade students with a supportive environment to explore diverse literary works. — by Greg Van den Ordell
8. **Crochet Club:** The Crochet Club at Willmore is where students have a safe space to plan projects, chat with friends, relax, and persevere, all while learning to hone their English and Spanish! — by Natalie Juan-Tapia
9. **Spanish Literacy for All:** This after-school tutoring and reading club caters to students eager to enhance their Spanish literacy skills. — by Patricia Rangel
10. **Spanish Poetry Club:** Delving into the rich tapestry of Latin-American culture, the Spanish Poetry Club offers students a unique opportunity to explore the beauty of Spanish poetry and music. — by Orchid Rocha
11. **Environmental Club:** With a passion for preserving our planet, students in the Environmental Club embark on a mission to address pressing environmental issues, starting with pollution. — by Lucy Cordova

These after-school clubs embody the spirit of Willmore Language Academy's commitment to holistic education. By nurturing talents, fostering cultural awareness, and promoting academic excellence, these clubs empower students to thrive both academically and personally. With each club, students embark on a journey of discovery, growth, and enrichment, shaping them into well-rounded individuals ready to make a positive impact on the world.



Orange County Department of Education

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Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent



Dr. Ramon Miramontes
*Deputy
Superintendent
of Instructional
Programs*

Once confined to science fiction, artificial intelligence has broken through to our reality, flashing its potential to transform industries and our society in ways never before imagined. And schools are no exception.

AI isn't just

knocking on classroom doors anymore, it's inside, and we are already discovering how it can make learning more engaging, interactive and tailored to the needs of each student. At the same time, it's clear that there must be safeguards in place, along with proper guidance from educators to ensure we're leading students along the path to becoming responsible digital citizens.

At the Orange County Department of Education, we are not spectators in the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence — we're active participants. Through strategic partnerships, pioneering initiatives and professional development, we're striving to harness AI's potential to uplift our schools, districts and communities. We've also committed to acting intentionally and responsibly to ensure the use of this powerful technology aligns with our core values and serves the best interests of students.

Our work in this digital arena began last year with the launch of OC AI Forward, a countywide initiative with support from Dr. Sabba Quidwai of Designing Schools and our local district superintendents. Monthly sessions have promoted the exchange of knowledge and best practices among local education leaders, creating a unified and collaborative approach to AI.

In 2023, OCDE also hired two new administrators of artificial intelligence and innovation. Wes Kriesel, a former high school English teacher, and Kunal Dalal, an education technology advocate from Silicon Valley, are working with our staff and the districts we

serve, envisioning a future where AI assists in customizing educational content to enhance engagement and improve learning outcomes.

As Kriesel and Dalal shared in a recent interview, their work goes beyond simply showing other educators how to use new tech. Instead, they want to shift perspectives by changing the way teachers view and embed AI into their lessons.

"We are in the business of humans," Dalal said. "That means we have the opportunity to reconnect with the human element of what we do and let the bits and bytes be managed by the AI model."

Looking ahead, OCDE is gearing up to host its first "Student AI Summit: For Youth, By Youth" on April 25 in Anaheim. This event, which will feature dynamic presentations and interactive sessions, is expected to draw more than 600 students who will get to share their views on AI's evolving role in their lives and education.

Through this surge of innovation, it's important that we are vigilant about the potential for misuse and abuse — and remember that these considerations aren't exclusive to AI. In fact, similar challenges emerged with the introduction of other educational tools, from calculators to computers. Even something as innocuous as notebook paper can become a distraction when folded into an airplane and sent aloft.

But here's the thing: These tools aren't going away. That means we must be deliberate and thoughtful in our approach to using and teaching them, relying on shared ethical values and standards for what is right and wrong.

Using AI wisely transcends merely learning new technical skills. It's about fostering good digital citizens who approach technology with integrity and character. While AI-enabled personalized learning has the potential to transform education, our responsibility extends beyond academics. We also have an obligation to keep students safe and help them grow into responsible and caring humans.

That vision is what drives us forward at the Orange County Department of Education, and it's a future we're committed to building together.