



Ida Jew Academy and Valle Vista Elementary

Ms. Marisa Peña, Student Advisor

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Hello! My name is Marisa Peña and I am so excited to serve as the Student Advisor at Ida Jew Academy and Valle Vista Elementary (IJAVVE). I look forward to meeting, learning, connecting, and collaborating with each of you this year!

I was born and raised in San José with roots that spread far and wide in this city and the Bay Area. I attended Cedar Grove Elementary and Quimby Oak Jr. High in the Evergreen School District right next door and I graduated from Notre Dame High School. My family has always valued education and instilled in me a personal sense of responsibility to care for those around me and do right by the communities in which I live. I have worked in other industries, but none give me the joy and sense of purpose that education gives me.



My path to become an educational leader was not linear by any means. I left San José after high school graduation to attend college at San Diego State University, but eventually made my way back to San José to complete my undergraduate degree at San José State. In 2001, I moved to San Francisco and lived there for nearly 12 years. During this time, I completed a credential and master's program in Special Education at San Francisco State University. I completed my internship at a pregnant minors program (I LOVE alternative education programs) and eventually ended up at a school founded by parents with students with disabilities in the Western Addition.

In 2013, I moved south to Rosarito, Baja California/San Diego and accepted a job in the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego where I taught and led in the areas of special education, college and career, dual enrollment, intervention, CTE, and restorative practice. This fall, I will complete my doctoral program at San Diego State University where I am researching dual enrollment and its potential impact on increasing Latina/o/x attainment of higher education degrees.

And now...I'm back where it all began. The amount of gratitude I have to be back in the foothills I used to roam as a young person gives me chills. I am grounded in equity and providing access to career and college pathways and opportunities for all students and I have always had a vision of becoming a leader in education because of the inequities I witnessed growing up and that still persist today. My hope is that my story, your story, our stories, will inspire our students and families to see how we are all connected, to see the beautiful things we can create when working in collaboration for a common goal, and to see the Ida Jew Academy and Valle Vista Elementary (IJAVVE) community continue to grow and thrive! This is going to be an exciting year and I cannot wait to start growing with you!

¡Siempre adelante!

Ms. Marisa Peña

