

School News

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Covering the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District



Volume 1, Issue 2

February 2025

Transformative Learning, Pathways for Student Success!





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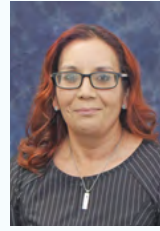
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As we begin the spring semester, we reflect on a successful first half of the 2024-25 school year and look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead.

Our College and Career Fair was a great success, offering students valuable opportunities to explore post-secondary pathways. Additionally, our Career Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Council dinner brought together educators, students, and industry leaders to discuss key themes for

California's CTE state plan, ensuring we remain at the forefront of empowering students for career success.

We've made significant progress on our 2025 Strategic Plan, with invaluable feedback from administrators, associations, parents and our five high school student board representatives, who helped shape its direction.

Another highlight was the ribbon-cutting of the inclusive playground at Lassalette Elementary School, a key milestone in creating accessible and inclusive

spaces for all students. This is just one of many facilities upgrades across the District aimed at enhancing learning environments.

We're also proud to announce that 10 elementary schools and five middle schools have been named among the Best Schools for 2025 by *U.S. News & World Report*. Special recognition goes to Wedgeworth Elementary, ranked in the top 1% of California elementary schools, and Mesa Robles Middle School, ranked in the top 2% of middle schools statewide.

Our Community Schools Initiative, supported by a \$21.3 million grant from the California Community Schools Partnership Program (Cohort 3), continues to expand, providing valuable resources, support, and events for students and families at 18 school sites.

We look forward to even more achievements in the second half of the school year and remain committed to providing every student with the resources, opportunities, and support they need to succeed.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Adult Education

14101 E. Nelson Ave., La Puente, CA 91746 • 626/933-3915 • <https://www.hlp schools.org/community/adult-education>



Dr. Gregory Buckner
Executive Director

Hacienda La Puente Adult Education Announces Expansion of Combination Welder Program

Hacienda La Puente Adult Education (HLP AE) is proud to announce the launch of a new evening Combination Welder program at the Willow Center. With the daytime section full and a waiting list in place, this new night offering aims to meet the growing demand for welding education. The class will be held from 4:00 PM to 8:30 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"Welding is an in-demand career with strong job prospects and competitive wages" said Dr. Gregory Buckner, Executive Director of HLP AE. "This expansion of programming reflects our commitment to providing the community with low-cost career technical education training programs for a better future."



Interested individuals are encouraged to visit HLP AE. com to complete an interest form. A counselor will follow up to assist with enrollment. Don't miss this chance to join a well-paying, high-demand trade!

Child Development

15801 Sierra Vista Ct., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-6544 • <https://www.hpschools.org/district/preschool-child-development>



Abigail Querubin-Villareal
Director

Head Start Family Night: Celebrating Cultural and Ethnic Diversity

Our Head Start Family Night was enriched with cultural and ethnic diversity on December 17th, 2024, at the Willow Conference Center. There were more than fifty Head Start families in attendance. The students and their families enjoyed a delicious turkey meal dinner, listened to a story, and participated in an engaging activity. Our special guests who attended were Dr. Mark Anderson, Executive Director

of High School of Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, and Mr. Ron Espiritu, Coordinator of Ethnic Studies of Hacienda La Puente Unified School District.

This year, we are excited that Child Development and Early Education is partnering with Mr. Espiritu and his team to bring ethnic studies and cultural awareness to our preschoolers. Mr. Espiritu expressed with enthusiasm, “Our goal of our Ethnic Study Program is to celebrate the diverse student, family, and staff population in our district. Early Childhood is the right place to start. The more we expose the students to cultural diversity, unique stories, and funds of knowledge, these lead our students to become better communicators, have cultural understanding and engagement, and instill empathy.”

Ms. Delia Castro, our Teacher-On-Special-Assignment, who is collaborating with the district’s Ethnic Studies Program, did a read aloud of *What’s That?* by Karen Chan, a heartwarming story about the foods that make up who we are and how the meals we eat bring us closer together.



Not only did the families enjoy listening to the story, it served as a great starting point for our Head Start families to be part of this journey in embracing cultural identity, inclusion, and celebrating our unique culture with the foods we eat, traditions we practice, and languages that make us who we are.

As our culminating activity, students were invited to draw and create self-portraits using “Colors of the World” crayons which celebrated the diverse range of skin tones of our students and the power of diversity of our Head Start families. After the students drew their self-portraits, they were asked to display their self-portrait on one of the three banners. We had a bridge banner which symbolized creating bridges in our community, a world banner which symbolized coming together in this world and appreciating each other’s culture, and a rainbow banner which symbolized a tapestry of different identities, cultures, and values in our communities.

In reflecting upon the event, Ms. Cynthia Guerra, our Coordinator and Director of Head Start shared, “Since the inception of Head Start in 1965, one of the core values that have been carried out throughout the decades has been the foundation of embracing diversity. A father shared about the positive experience of the activity and how his daughter was matching the crayons to the skin tone to hers and her parents. The skin tone doesn’t distinguish who we are, it empowers each of us to see the individual differences and similarities that will unite us all.”





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Debra Duardo,
M.S.W., Ed.D.
Superintendent

October is National Dropout Prevention Month, underscoring the critical importance of ensuring that all students can complete their education. National Dropout Prevention Month is a crucial awareness campaign that emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies to keep students engaged in their education and help them achieve their full potential. As the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, I am deeply committed to fostering a school environment

where every student is valued, supported and equipped to succeed.

The decision to drop out of school is often influenced by a complex interplay of factors, which might include academic challenges, personal difficulties and economic hardships. Preventing students from dropping out of school is a multifaceted endeavor requiring a range of supports and resources, including school-based supports, social and emotional support, parental and family engagement, community-based supports and policy and systemic supports. To address these issues proactively, we must implement strategies that promote student and family engagement and wellbeing, provide essential wrap-around services and forge strong partnerships within the community.

The Vital Importance of School Attendance

Regular school attendance is the foundation of academic achievement. Chronic absenteeism is a strong predictor that a student may drop out of high school. Every day a student is present in the classroom is an opportunity for learning, growth and building essential social and academic connections. When students consistently attend school, they are more likely to:

- Develop stronger social connections, including relationships with peers and adults
- Achieve higher grades and test scores
- Build and practice good study habits, relational skills and routines that are required in work and life
- Graduate and pursue higher education or career opportunities

Our goal is to ensure that every student can benefit from the advantages and promise of a high-quality public education.

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Baldwin Academy (TK-5)

1616 Griffith Ave., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-3701 • baldwin.hipschools.org



Kelly Arena
Principal

Earning Top Honors

Baldwin Academy, led by Principal Kelly Arena, continues to set the bar high, earning recognition as one of the Best Schools for 2025 by U.S. News & World Report. The school was also honored as an Honor Roll School by the Educational Results Partnership for its success in closing achievement gaps.

Beyond academic accolades, Baldwin is committed to family engagement and student support. Community Schools Site Specialist, Jose Pina, recently hosted a successful Literacy Night, providing parents with tools to support their child's literacy growth. Later this month, Baldwin will host an event to unite and empower father figures, highlighting their influence on student success.

Meanwhile, the school's Science Olympiad team is hard at work preparing for the spring competition, with hopes of bringing home a medal.

Baldwin Academy's achievements reflect its dedication to excellence, equity, and community involvement.



Baldwin Academy students building literacy skills.

California Elementary School (TK-5)

1111 N. California Ave., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-5201 • california.hipschools.org



Yesenia De La Peña
Principal

Science Olympiad Preparation in Full Swing

Preparing for the Science Olympiad is an exciting and rewarding journey, where students explore a variety of scientific disciplines and grow both intellectually and personally. Under the guidance of our dedicated coaches Mrs. Sanchez and Mrs. Martinez, participants

gain a deeper understanding of workings collaboratively, critical thinking, and explore new areas in the field of science. Mrs. Sanchez and Mrs. Martinez help foster an environment of curiosity, encouraging students to ask questions, experiment, and work together as a team. Through rigorous after-school practices, students develop problem-solving skills, and the ability to collaborate effectively in hopes of winning a gold medal. The preparation process is not just about mastering scientific concepts, but also about building

confidence. With the support of Mrs. Sanchez and Mrs. Martinez, students are equipped to face the challenges of the competition, all while discovering the joy of learning and exploring the wonders of science.



Cedarlane Academy (K-8)

16333 Cedarlane Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-8001 • cedarlane.hlschools.org



Kim Lee
Principal

Celebrating Our School's Vibrant Community

This fall, our school has been bustling with meaningful events and celebrations that highlight the richness of our school. We kicked off September with a heartfelt Patriot Day ceremony led by our dedicated Scouts, setting the tone for a reflective tribute to 9/11. The ceremony featured a stirring guest speaker who shared words of remembrance and resilience, reminding us of the importance of unity. Shortly after, we embraced the beauty of cultural traditions with a lively Chuseok Festival & The Mid Autumn Festival. Students enjoyed vibrant dances, and engaging activities,



deepening our appreciation the heritage in our Korean and Mandarin Dual Language classes.

October and November brought even more opportunities to come together. During Hispanic Heritage Month, we welcomed special guests and were serenaded by a lively mariachi band, celebrating the contributions of Hispanic cultures through music, storytelling, and art. To cap off this season of celebration, we hosted our very first school-wide Friendsgiving, where students and staff shared laughter, pie, and ice cream, embracing the season of friendship and gratitude. These events not only showcased the diversity of our school community but also fostered joy, connection, and shared memories that we'll cherish throughout the year.



Fairgrove Academy (K-8)

15540 Fairgrove Ave., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-8501 • fairgrove.hlschools.org



Sherri Franson
Principal

Fairgrove Academy: Pioneering Visual and Performing Arts CTE Opportunities for Middle School Students

Fairgrove Academy in the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District (HLPUSD) offers an exceptional Visual and Performing Arts Career Technical Education (CTE) program for middle school students. The program stands out as the only middle school in the district with three CTE-certified teachers, specializing in Broadcast, Advanced Dance, and Show Choir. These specialized courses give students a head start in developing valuable skills in the arts while preparing them for high school-level pathways.

Students at Fairgrove have access to career-focused opportunities, aligned with all four HLPUSD high schools, allowing for a seamless transition into further education and career exploration. With certified CTE teachers guiding students,

the program fosters creativity, discipline, and teamwork, while offering a hands-on learning environment. This unique opportunity enriches students' artistic potential, providing a solid foundation for future success in the arts or related careers.



Glen A. Wilson *High School*

16455 Wedgeworth Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/934-4416 • wihs.hlschools.org



Dr. Danielle Kenfield
Principal

Congressional APP Challenge

Glen A. Wilson High School students Alvin Cheng, Ethan De La Cruz, Juliana Liu, and Nolan Huang have been named the winners

of the 2024 Congressional APP Challenge for California District 38.

The Congressional APP Challenge is a nationwide event that allows high school students from across

the country to compete against their peers by creating and exhibiting their software application, or "APP." Wilson High School's APP, titled FOCAL, was created to scan and predict the likelihood of malignant skin tumors. Congresswoman, Linda T. Sanchez will recognize the students and teacher, Mrs. Courtney Bushyeager, on Thursday, January 30th. The team will then travel to Washington D.C. in April to attend #HouseofCode, located at the U.S. Capitol. Wilson High School's CODE and Cyber teams reflective

Wilson's comprehensive computer science program of courses consisting of AP Computer Science Principles, AP Computer Science A, iOS APP Development, and, being piloted next year, AP Cybersecurity.



Grandview *College Preparatory Academy* (6–8)

795 N. Grandview Ln., Valinda, CA 91744 • 626/934-5801 • grandview.hlschools.org



Theresa Lei
Principal

Griz Botz 67625 Shine at First Lego League Competition

Grandview College Preparatory Academy is proud to recognize the achievements of the Griz Botz 67625, our dedicated First Lego League team. This talented group of eight 6th-8th graders showcased their research, innovation, and robotics skills at the Regional competition in December.

The Griz Botz 67625 focused their research on an environmental issue related to fishing, conducting in-depth research through interviews with scientists, social media personalities, and educators. They applied their classroom learning in writing, listening, teamwork, collaboration, creativity, and engineering to design and build a sophisticated robot.

The team's hard work and dedication exemplify the spirit of inquiry and innovation that Grandview College Preparatory Academy fosters in all our students. Congratulations, Griz Botz 67625!



Grazide *Elementary School (TK-5)*

2850 Leopold Ave., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-6100 • grazide.hipschools.org



Amy Moss
Principal

Grazide Elementary School is a Wonderful Place to Learn and Grow!

Rooted in KFC2 – Kindness, Fairness, Caring, and Compassion, our Rams are members of a positive community committed to working together. We seek to show KFC2 in all we say, in all we do, with everyone we meet, even when it's hard. KFC2 is central to fostering and maintaining a culture of mutual respect and care for others and we work hard to celebrate this care. Through our PTA-led Grazide Bucks and Rewards Store opportunities, students are honored for KFC2 success by receiving a Grazide Buck. Grazide Bucks are saved and spent during one of four Rewards Store opportunities. We are gearing up for our second store, and are looking forward to seeing the decisions students will make regarding spending or saving their hard-earned Bucks. We are proud to help shape the leaders and caretakers of our future through KFC2.



Kwis *Elementary School (TK-5)*

1925 S. Kwis Ave., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-2101 • kwis.hipschools.org



Vivienne Thomas
Principal

A Wonderful Winter Celebration

As we reflect on the many highlights of 2024, our recent Winter Holiday Program stands out as a truly magical event! It was an honor to celebrate the season together and share the spirit, talent and joy with our students, staff, and families. Our Kwis community transformed our elementary auditorium into a warm and welcoming atmosphere complete with festive decorations, sounds of the season and holiday cheer. Each grade level presented a special performance that celebrated the season. Our primary grade students captured hearts with celebratory songs, colorful props and enthusiastic smiles. Our upper grade students

captivated the audience with a holiday performance skit leaving everyone in awe of their talent. We are incredibly grateful for the contributions of everyone who made this program so memorable and unforgettable. I look forward to more opportunities to celebrate, grow, and succeed together in 2025!



La Puente *High School*

15615 E. Nelson Ave., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/934-6797 • lphs.hipschools.org



Dr. Lisa Lopez
Principal

Lights, Camera, Action!

La Puente High School is proud to be the exclusive high school in the district offering students the opportunity to work in collaboration with professionals from the film industry. Students in the Youth Cinema Project learn script writing, cinematography, set & costume design, movie directing and producing, camera operating, and acting.

Our partnership with the Latino Film Institute brings movie making into the

classroom. Mentors in the film industry work directly with our students preparing them to create their own movies from inception to completion. Students gain the tools & knowledge to assist them with exclusive creative control of their movies. They develop ideas, write the script, produce, act, and direct movies through postproduction. The program culminates with students and their families celebrating with renowned actor Edward James Olmos during a red-carpet premiere at the Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles! That's a wrap. See you at the movies!



Lassalette School (*K-5*)

14333 Lassalette St., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-3001 • lassalette.hipschools.org



Lisa Mannino
Principal

Lassalette's Baile Folklórico Program Dances into Students' Hearts

Lassalette School's Baile Folklórico program is more than just a celebration of traditional dances—it's a vibrant opportunity for students to connect with culture, history, and one another. Through learning traditional dances from various regions of Mexico and beyond, students gain a deeper appreciation for the beauty and diversity of different cultures.

This program also provides physical benefits, promoting coordination, balance, and fitness, while fostering teamwork and discipline. Students take pride in showcasing their hard work during school and community events, building confidence and a strong sense of accomplishment.

"Baile Folklórico inspires our students to embrace cultural traditions while building valuable skills like teamwork and perseverance," said Principal Lisa Mannino. The program continues to enrich students' lives, strengthening their cultural awareness and community connections. Lassalette School is proud to support this enriching experience, where every step tells a story.



Los Altos *Elementary School* (TK–5)

15565 Los Altos Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-2301 • losaltos.hlschools.org



Shawn Harrington
Acting Principal

STEM Program

As a proud member of Los Altos Elementary, I am thrilled to share the remarkable opportunities our STEM program provides to our students. Through dynamic hands-on experiences in robotics, programming, engineering, and STEM education, our students build essential technical skills that serve as a solid foundation for future innovation and success.

Our program also places a strong emphasis on communication, encouraging students to refine their ability to present ideas clearly and confidently using a variety of formats. Collaboration is a core value, and students learn to work effectively as a team, sharing ideas and solving problems together. This fosters teamwork skills that extend well beyond the classroom setting.

Critical thinking is a key focus, and by applying the scientific method—hypothesizing, testing, evaluating, and concluding—students are taught how to approach challenges systematically. This process helps them develop



important personal qualities such as resilience and confidence, equipping them with the mindset needed to navigate complex situations.

I am proud to announce that our teams have advanced to the LEGO Spring Showdown, which will take place on May 3rd at Bosco Tech (1151 San Gabriel Blvd., Rosemead, CA 91770). This accomplishment highlights the incredible success of our students, thanks to the dedication of our Amazing Scholars, the unwavering support of our families, and the guidance of our caring coaches, the Lin Family. We are excited to see our teams continue to grow and succeed in this incredible journey!

Los Altos *High School*

15325 E. Los Robles Ave., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/934-5418 • lahs.hlschools.org



Jeffrey Hess
Principal

Los Altos High School Leadership Creates a Unique Culture

The Los Altos High School Leadership Program, under the guidance of Mr. Chris Reeder, is a beacon of positivity and recognition within the school community. The program encompasses the Renaissance, ASB, and Freshmen Leadership Programs, each with a unique focus on celebrating achievements and fostering a supportive environment.

The Renaissance Program highlights the accomplishments of students, staff, and community members, ensuring that every success, big or small, is acknowledged. This initiative helps to build a culture of appreciation and motivation throughout the school.

The ASB (Associated Student Body) plays a crucial role in organizing events and activities that bring the school community together. From spirit weeks to charity drives, ASB ensures that students have ample opportunities to create lasting memories and develop leadership skills.

The Freshmen Leadership Program is dedicated to helping new students transition smoothly into high school life. By providing guidance and support, it empowers

freshmen to become active and engaged members of the school community.

Together, these programs create a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere at Los Altos High School, making it a place where everyone feels valued and inspired.



Los Molinos *Elementary School (TK-5)*

3112 Las Marias Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-2201 • losmolinos.hipschools.org



Erika Terrazas
Principal

Performing Arts Program

We are excited to share the performing arts program that has been occurring here at Los Molinos.

Our program consists of dance, art, and music. Our students participate once a week!

We also had a theater group work with our 2nd grade students. The theater group was Southland Singing group. One of their

coaches worked with our 2nd grade classes where each class was able to create a story, write the story and then perform it for their families. It was perfect! Students learned about stage presence, projection of voice, and staging. Our students had so much fun acting and creating sets for their performance. Parents, teachers, and staff community were very impressed! This has been such a wonderful experience and great addition to our school community



Mesa Robles *School (TK-8)*

16060 Mesa Robles Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-6001 • mesarobles.hipschools.org



Octavio Pérez
Principal

Character Education

Mesa Robles strongly emphasizes character education, recognizing its vital role in shaping well-rounded individuals. The program is designed to instill core values such as respect, responsibility, integrity, and empathy in students. Students learn to apply these values daily through various activities, discussions, and community service projects. This holistic approach fosters a

positive school environment and prepares students to be conscientious and active members of society.



Character education is integral to Mesa Robles' goals of maintaining high student expectations. By promoting strong moral principles, the program supports academic achievement and personal growth. Students who embody these values are likelier to exhibit perseverance, collaboration, and a commitment to excellence. This alignment of character education with academic goals ensures that students are academically proficient and equipped with the ethical foundation necessary for lifelong success.

Nelson Elementary School (TK-5)

330 N. California Ave., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-8401 • nelson.hipschools.org



Collin Miller
Principal

Nelson has Heart!

Nelson teamed up with the American Heart Association and learned how to have happy and healthy hearts and brains, while raising lifesaving donations to help others with special hearts. The school-wide assembly brought students together to gain a better understanding of how to make healthy choices and support others. Principal Miller even surprised the students with a performance sharing that music makes his heart happy and healthy. Through this service-learning program, families participate in engaging activities and have the opportunity to give back through charitable donations. In just one week after our assembly, Nelson families have already raised over \$1,200 with a school goal to raise \$2,000 by February 14th. Additional activities help students practice kindness, gratitude and learning ways to de-stress. Students continue to demonstrate their commitment by giving back strengthening a sense of community, responsibility, and volunteerism and leaving a positive footprint within the positive school-going culture.



Newton Middle School (6-8)

15616 Newton St., Hacienda Heights. CA 91745 • 626/933-2401 • newton.hipschools.org



Ann Hanson
Principal

Newton Middle School Showcases Excellence at Open House

Newton Middle School's Open House was an unforgettable event, bringing the community together to celebrate its vibrant programs on campus. Families explored the school's remarkable clubs and activities, with special emphasis on its standout Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways: Aviation, Medical Core, and Engineering. These programs give students a head start and align perfectly with the advanced CTE opportunities at Los Altos High School.

The evening sparkled with performances by the Newton Middle School Band, Color Guard Team, Dance Team, and Cheer Squad, captivating the audience with their talent and energy. "Our students and staff truly shine," said Principal Ann

Hanson. "This night is a celebration of the opportunities Newton offers, and we are so proud to share it with our community." Newton's Open House was a testament to Newton Middle School's dedication to inspiring students and building bright futures.



Orange Grove *Middle School* (6–8)

14505 Orange Grove Ave., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-7001 • ogms.hlschools.org



Elizabeth Kane
Principal

Math/Science Conference for 8th Grade Girls at Whittier College

In collaboration with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) – Whittier Branch, twenty Orange Grove girls attended the Math and Science Conference at Whittier College. Our twenty Ocelots got to attend three sessions each on career presentations from professional women

in the Math and Science industries. The conference included exposure to the beautiful Whittier College campus as the presentations were held in various buildings on the campus. Sessions included careers in veterinarian, video game design, gynecology, forensic science, interior design, law enforcement, and food industry. Our girls returned to campus empowered and encouraged by the endless possibilities for their college and career future!



Palm *Elementary School* (TK–5)

14740 E. Palm Ave., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-7401 • palm.hlschools.org



Sandy Carbajal
Principal

Winter Performance

Palm Elementary students diligently prepared for their Winter performance of “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” throughout the fall months. Our Junior musical comprised of TK-2nd graders and Senior Musical comprised of 3rd-5th graders. Palm’s 3rd grade students also performed a spectacular Winter Program singing 8 songs for our parents

and community. Our community partners and families donated various toys making our Christmas Toy Drive very successful. Palm Panthers also began their coding season with Lego League for this year allowing to host 5 teams, introducing our Discover League including our Kindergartners and 1st graders.



Sierra Vista *Middle School* (6–8)

15801 Sierra Vista Ct., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-4001 • svms.hlschools.org



Samuel Yi
Principal

Drone Club

Sierra Vista Middle School's Drone Club is taking the skies by storm! This innovative group of students is combining technology, creativity, and teamwork to explore the exciting world of drone flight. Under the guidance of our dedicated teacher, Mrs. Name, the club offers students the chance to learn about aerodynamics, and drone safety, while learning to fly their own drones.

The club, which meets weekly after school, has quickly gained popularity among students passionate about technology. Meeting weekly after school, students collaborate on projects that test their skills in navigation and control. As interest in STEM careers grows, the Drone Club is providing

students with valuable hands-on experience that could inspire future engineers, pilots, and technology innovators. The sky's the limit for Sierra Vista's talented young flyers!



Sparks *Elementary School* (TK–5)

15151 E. Temple Ave., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-5101 • sparks.hlschools.org

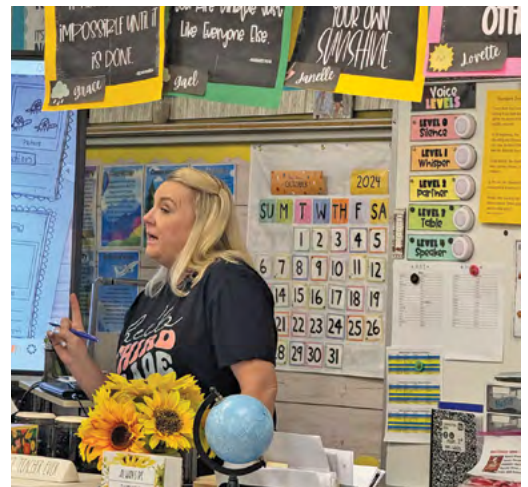


Gilbert Barraza
Principal

STEM Program

In Mrs. White's class at Sparks Elementary, the UC Davis C-STEM program has become a cornerstone of learning. Mrs. White has been guiding her third-grade students through the intricacies of coding, using math skills to program robots to navigate various coding mats. This hands-on

approach not only enhances their coding and math abilities but also fosters critical thinking and communication skills. Impressively, these third graders have advanced to mentoring second-grade students, embodying the NPDL pedagogy by mastering a topic and then teaching it to others. The students take great pride in their learning and creations, showcasing their growth and enthusiasm for STEM education.



Sparks Middle School (6–8)

15100 E. Giordano St., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-5001 • spms.hlpsschools.org



Dr. David Nieto
Principal

Sparks Middle School, A Schools to Watch

On January 22, 2025, Sparks Middle School was visited by the Director of the Schools to Watch program, Scott Steele, along with 8 other Schools to Watch administrators and counselors. The Schools to Watch program is a middle school program that focuses on continuous improvement, academic achievement, social equity, organizational effectiveness, and

developmental responsiveness. The team spent the entire day on campus, visiting every classroom, every elective class, and interviewed cohorts of students, teachers, and on site teams. The site principal, Dr. David Nieto, shared best academic practices, MTSS supports provided to at risk students, academic intervention opportunities, the wide variety of electives, and parent-community supports within the school. By the end of the day, the Schools to Watch team consulted with each other and ultimately nominated Sparks Middle School as a Schools To Watch site.



Valinda School of Academics (TK–5)

1030 Indian Summer Ave., Valinda, CA 91744 • 626/933-4701 • valinda.hlpsschools.org



Elizabeth Bermejo
Principal

The Robolts

Valinda's Robotic Team, "The Robolts," showcased their exceptional skills and creativity at the FIRST Lego League Explore competition in December 2024. Their impressive performance earned them a coveted spot to advance and compete at the California state tournament. The Robolts excel

in various areas, including Problem/Solution Presentation on the Submerged theme, Robot Design, Robot Game, and Core Values. Their dedication and teamwork have been evident throughout the competition, and their innovative approach to solving challenges has set them apart. As they prepare for the state tournament, the excitement and anticipation are palpable. The entire community is eager to see how far The Robolts will go this season, and there is no doubt that their hard work and passion will continue to drive them towards success. Go Robolts!



Valley Alternative *High School*

15430 Shadybend Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-3401 • valley.hlschools.org



**Joaquin
Martinez**
Principal

Empowering Students through Tilly's Life Center at Valley and CDS

Tilly's Life Center (TLC) is a transformative nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering teens to overcome challenges, build self-confidence, and lead purposeful lives. Through its life skills workshops, TLC focuses on promoting self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and resilience, enabling students to navigate personal and academic hurdles with confidence.

At Valley and CDS, the TLC program has been successfully embedded within our leadership class, emphasizing social and emotional learning (SEL) and leadership skills. This class provides students with a foundation in emotional intelligence, effective communication, and responsible decision-making, preparing them to become empathetic and self-aware leaders. Kiki has been instrumental in implementing TLC's impactful curriculum, enhancing the SEL focus of the class.

The results have been profound, with students reporting improved relationships, heightened self-esteem, and better conflict-resolution skills. Integrating TLC into our leadership class has empowered students to grow as leaders while building the emotional resilience necessary for success in all aspects of life.



Wedgeworth *Elementary School (K-5)*

16949 Wedgeworth Dr., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 • 626/933-8101 • wedgeworth.hlschools.org



Dr. Paulina Cho
Principal

Future Engineers and Coders Excel in Their First LEGO League Competition

On December 15, 2024, two teams comprised of fourth graders from Wedgeworth Elementary School arrived at Warner Middle School eager to participate in their first ever First LEGO League (FLL) Explorer competition.

The twelve students on the teams meet regularly after school with their FLL Coaches, Ms. Chou and Ms. Lee, to design, code, and prepare presentations for the competition. Students researched the ocean layers, the species that live in each zone, and discovered a new species that contributes to ocean eco-system. Students collaborated to code games, build prototypes, and team models, while focusing on the core values of teamwork, innovation, inclusion, impact, and fun! The Wedgeworth

Warrior Teams came away with the Coding Award, the Team Poster Award, and the Robot Game Highest Score Award. Both teams advanced to the Super Festival on January 19, 2025 where 40 Explorer teams will be competing. Go Warriors!



Wedgeworth robotics teams code their way to victory!

William Workman *High School*

16303 E. Temple Ave., City of Industry, CA 91744 • 626/933-8801 • [wohs.hlpsschools.org](https://www.wohs.hlpsschools.org)



Timothy Espinosa
Principal

Together in 2025

The end of the semester provided memorable celebrations for Workman High. On November 6th, WoHS hosted its annual Dia de Los Lobos community event, a showcase of our wonderful academic, extracurricular, and athletic programs. Students, families, staff, and the community visited department and program booths, savored delicious foods, and engaged in activities like lotería and crafts. This year's event featured student art, performances from Speech and Debate, and the talented song stylings from sophomore, Ian Candelas. We also had



face painting by HLPUSD's Adult Education cosmetology program as well as a panel from our WE CAN dual enrollment program, discussing their experiences earning college credit with Mt. SAC.

We ended the year with a holiday Spirit Week and the Administration Team dressed up as Santa Claus and his elf to celebrate the season with future Lobos at the feeder elementaries. We look forward to bringing the Workman Quad community together in 2025!



Wing Lane *Elementary School (TK-5)*

16605 Wing Ln., Valinda, CA 91744 • 626/933-5901 • [winglane.hlpsschools.org](https://www.winglane.hlpsschools.org)



Tabitha Hernandez-Blanton
Principal

Sharing Traditions

Last month, the students of Wing Lane Elementary embarked on an exciting journey around the globe, exploring holiday traditions from diverse cultures. The highlight of the week was their hands-on experience with Las Posadas, a traditional Mexican celebration, thanks to the creativity and dedication of the school's booster parents.

The students learned about Las Posadas, a nine-day festival reenacting Mary and Joseph's search for shelter. To bring the tradition to life, the booster parents provided colorful, hand-crafted piñatas, a staple of the festivities.

Excitement filled the air as students took turns breaking the piñatas, cheering as candy and treats spilled out. Teachers praised the activity for its interactive approach to cultural education.

"This was a wonderful way for the kids to connect with global traditions," said Principal Blanton. "We're grateful to our booster parents for making this experience so special."

The week-long program left students with a deeper appreciation for the world's rich holiday traditions.



Workman Elementary School (TK-5)

16000 Workman St., La Puente, CA 91744 • 626/933-4201 • workman.hipschools.org



Erika Valenzuela
Principal

Workman Elementary Celebrates 100th Day of School with Creative Flair

By Rosette Holmes, Acting Principal

Students at Workman Elementary recently celebrated the 100th Day of school with a burst of creativity and enthusiasm. The hallways were filled with laughter and excitement as students showcased their homemade

t-shirts adorned with 100 items, ranging from buttons, and stickers to pom-poms and beads. Others embraced the spirit of the day by dressing up as centenarians, complete with canes, glasses, and gray wigs.

The event was a delightful mix of fun and learning, as students and teachers enjoyed the imaginative displays. Mrs. Garibay, a TK teacher, shared her thoughts on the celebration: "I'm amazed with my students' creativity when we celebrate 100th day. I love how much they enjoy it!". January 21, 2025 was our 100th day and it not only marks a milestone in their academic journey, it also encourages our sense of community with all our families.



Transitional Kindergarten students and Ms. Monica Villarreal, bilingual instructional aide

The 100th day of school celebration at Workman Elementary was a memorable occasion, highlighting the students' creativity and the supportive environment fostered by the school. Here's to many more days of learning and fun!

LACOE CONTINUED *from page 6*



Debra Duardo,
M.S.W., Ed.D.
Superintendent

Resources

LACOE has partnered with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to take a deeper dive into chronic absenteeism and its impact and to develop an Attendance Playbook. The playbook focuses on assisting school districts and charter schools with navigating school attendance from a systems perspective, providing resources and supports to keep students in school, engaged, and connected. Parts one

and two have been released and parts three and four will follow soon. This comprehensive resource offers practical guidance and best practices for school districts to assess and improve attendance rates and mitigate the impacts of declining enrollment. By implementing the strategies and recommendations outlined in the Attendance Playbook,

schools can create a more positive and engaging learning environment that fosters student success and prevents student dropout.

Part One of the School Attendance Playbook provides valuable insights and resources to promote effective services and best practices in bolstering attendance efforts. In Part Two, educators will find practical strategies to address attendance challenges, foster a culture of engagement and ultimately enhance the learning experience for every student. From understanding the root causes of absenteeism to applying relevant interventions, Part Two aims to equip educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to cultivate a school environment where attendance is not just a statistic but a gateway to a brighter educational future. Visit our website laoe.edu to access Parts One and Two of the Attendance Playbook along with additional resources. We will be releasing the playbook in its entirety in the next few months.

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