

THE PINER PROSPECTOR

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Santa Rosa City Schools Says Construction of Building for 7th, 8th Graders at Piner Is on Schedule to Be Ready by Aug. 11, 2026

By Evelyn Sanchez, Alex Hicks, Sophie Rodriguez and Aylin Montiel

Santa Rosa City Schools said the construction of the new \$26.9 million, two-story, 12-classroom building for 7th and 8th graders at **Piner High School**, which began Sept. 11, is expected to be finished in time for the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year.



Artist rendering of new building for 7th and 8th graders at Piner, from the Santa Rosa City School District

To be sure, the school year starts Aug. 11, 2026, leaving only 11 months to finish a project originally expected to take 12 to 14 months.

The project is being managed by a general contractor named **Blach Construction**, which recently completed a classroom building for **Sunnyvale Middle School**, a so-called Voyager building for **Lynbrook High School** and a Performing Arts Center for **Hayward Unified School District**.

To expedite the completion of the new class room building in time for the new school year, the Santa Rosa School Board opted for an “Alternate Design-Build that required Design-Build Entities (DBEs) to have a DSA pre-checked building.”

According to the agenda for an Aug. 27 Santa Rosa School Board meeting, “failure to achieve Beneficial Occupancy by August 11, 2026, shall subject the Design-Builder to assessment of Liquidated Damages in the amount of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) per day until Beneficial Occupancy is achieved.

The contract also stipulates what happens if the contractor fails to complete so-called “punchlist items,” which include a checklist of items deemed required for occupancy.

“Failure to complete all Punchlist Items within the required time shall subject the Design-Builder to assessment of Liquidated Damages in the amount of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) per day until all Punchlist Items are completed.”

As such, Blach Construction could face liquidated damages of up to \$4,000 a day if the building is not ready by Aug. 11, 2026.

Both Blach Construction and the district said in statements that “at this time, there are no delays in the district being able to occupy the new building by August 11, 2026.”

If the new building is not completed in time for the beginning of the school year in mid August, Principal **Andrea Correia**, the teachers and students in 7th and 8th grades and the rest of Piner will be left in a kind of limbo.

“My concern is the building not being ready in time for the 7th and 8th graders and that we will need more space than we already have,” said **Maureen Cecil**, a French teacher at Piner.



Piner Principal Andrea Correia



Piner French Teacher Maureen Cecil

Students also expressed concern that the building will not be finished in time.

“They took way too long for the Fulton Street construction so imagine how long they’re going to take with a whole new middle school building,” said **Aaron Torres**, a Piner junior.

Asked what would happen at Piner if the construction gets delayed beyond Aug. 11, 2026, Ms. Correia said in an interview, “I don’t know. When we get there we’ll know.”

“It’s a huge job and a massive amount of construction,” Ms. Correia said.

Ms. Correia said the cost of the new building is comparatively less than the \$80 million cost of a new building at **Montgomery High School** and a \$50 million warehouse at the District Office.

Blach Construction started fencing off the area for the new building on Sept. 11, though material and equipment has not been brought in as of yet and ground has not been broken.

Ms. Correia said the foundation is expected to be laid in late December, and steel framing will begin in January. The timing of everything will depend on the weather, especially the seasonal rains in January.

“When you pour concrete you have to wait for it to dry.”

One of the biggest reasons for the cost is the extra building requirements for schools.

Ms. Correia said she learned growing up in Los Angeles and living through the Northridge earthquake, which in 1994 caused \$50 billion of damage, that rules for constructing schools and hospitals make them among “the safest places to be during an earthquake.”

“Any time you build a school the construction standards for building are stronger,” she said.

The cost of the new building is being funded by one of many bond offerings being paid for by property owners in Santa Rosa over 30 years.

Ms. Correia said the last bond offering was for \$500 million, out of which funds were earmarked for Piner’s new building, the building at Montgomery High School and for the warehouse at the district office.

She said inflation and the use of union construction workers also has increased the cost of construction in recent years.

“We use union construction workers and union workers charge higher hourly rates. All that makes construction more expensive than a few years ago.”

For example, she said the J Building which cost about \$4 million to build, originally, would cost \$60 million today.

Perimeter Fencing

The construction site is being fenced to prevent access at all times, but especially at night.

“We have a large homeless population that lives and works around the Piner campus and has an encampment behind the park,” Ms. Correia said. “A lot of them come to Piner’s campus at night because they know we have outlets to charge their devices and alcoves to protect them from the weather.”

Ms. Correia said Piner soon “will have fencing around the entire campus. Montgomery already has fencing.”

“One of the things that has been brought up by parents is the lack of security at Piner,” Ms. Correia said. “Where are the fences, they say?”

“I grew up in LA where schools were fenced and you had to walk through metal detectors. We will be getting perimeter fencing, which I support though I don’t think metal detectors are coming.”

Once the building is complete, 7th and 8th graders will effectively have their own school within Piner High School.

“The rules for Piner students will remain the same. There will be a ton of rules for 7th and 8th graders. But Piner students will not be able to go into the area where 7th and 8th graders are.”

Ms. Correia said not much will change for 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th graders, though 7th and 8th graders will notice some big changes.

When 7th and 8th graders transition to high school they will have to get used to different expectations than in middle school. No longer can they fail classes and still be promoted. If they want to graduate they will have to earn enough credits to do so.

Ms. Correia said for the first group of 8th graders who become 9th graders, high school rules and expectations may be an abrupt adjustment. For seventh graders the transition will go smoother because they will have two years to adjust.

While high schoolers will have the same bell schedule (8:30 am to 3:27 pm on Monday, Tuesday and Friday and 8:30 am to 3:00 pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays), middle schoolers will have an earlier bell schedule starting at 8 am and letting out at 2 pm.

Ms. Correia said the difference in bell schedules is because of the California Education Code, which requires high schoolers to have 65,000 minutes of school a year. Middle schoolers must have 54,000 minutes of school a year.

A typical high school day has about 360 minutes. Multiply that by 180 days to get to 65,000 minutes.

Ms. Correia said Piner will likely restrict middle schoolers to Physical Education class during first period and second period and set aside third, fourth, fifth and sixth for high schoolers.

Bathrooms and Bullying

One of the biggest challenges to bringing 7th and 8th graders onto a high school campus is how to deal with bathrooms and the threat of bullying.

"For some reason, I don't understand, boys don't like using urinals in the bathrooms," Ms. Correia said. "They would rather pee their pants than use a urinal."

That means they often hang out in the bathroom waiting for a stall to open up. When students congregate like that bullying can happen.

"If I was a mother of a 13 year old going to the bathroom next to a 12th grader, I'd be a little worried about it," Ms. Correia said. "We will have to think about how to keep the 7th and 8th graders safe. They will not be sharing bathrooms with high schoolers."

Ms. Correia said she is grateful that Piner wasn't part of the first wave of Santa Rosa high schools converting to 7-12 schools.

"One of the positives of Piner being in the second wave of schools is that other schools had to scramble to make room for 7th and 8th graders," she said. "We have time to study how things worked at other schools."

-with reporting by Emily Moreno

Piner's Betsy Guillen and Jocelyn Uraje Gallindo Say ASB Taught Them How to Overcome Their Fears Through Teamwork

By Jacky Cruz and Rossie Rodriguez

For **Betsy "BJ" Guillen** and **Jocelyn Uraje Gallindo**, the president of **Piner High School's Associated Student Body** and president of the senior class, respectively, joining ASB wasn't easy at first.

"When you walk into the class, you don't really know what to expect," said Ms. Guillen in an interview. "There's a lot of responsibility, from showing school spirit to staying organized and planning events. ASB is a huge commitment because it's almost like running the school."



ASB President Betsy Guillen



Senior Class President Jocelyn Uraje Gallindo

Ms. Guillen said ASB leaders are the ones “organizing activities, planning events, and encouraging spirit.

“At first, it feels overwhelming, but with time you learn to adjust,” she said.

Ms. Uraje Gallindo explained that when she first joined ASB, she had a hard time being herself.

“I felt like everyone's eyes were on me and I worried about being judged,” she said.

Over time, she said she grew more comfortable and confident.

“I realized that everyone was focused on their own journey, and that made it easier for me to relax and enjoy the experience.”

Ms. Uraje Gallindo said her sister played a big role in encouraging her to participate in school events.

She said she always loved Spirit Days, and with her sister's support, she grew more confident in how to lead..

“I started getting more involved, hyping up others, and enjoying the energy of being part of something bigger.”

Ms. Guillen overcame her own challenges.

She joined ASB as a freshman, which meant she had to figure things out quickly without much guidance.

“It was difficult at first,” Ms. Guillen said. “I struggled with being organized and often felt overwhelmed. But ASB taught me valuable lessons about leadership and teamwork.”

Ms. Guillen said she learned that even though things can feel stressful, stepping up and asking for help makes a huge difference.

Both Ms. Uraje Gallindo and Ms. Guillen agreed that ASB comes with a lot of stress, but it also brings incredible benefits.

“It teaches leadership, helps you meet new people, and gives you opportunities that can look great on a resume or college application,” Ms. Guillen said.

“Being in ASB pushes you out of your comfort zone, you have to talk to others, plan, and lead, but in the end, it helps you grow into a more confident and open person.”

Ms. Uraje Gallindo said the Covid-19 pandemic made everything harder for her and other students in ASB.

“When students came back to campus, it was difficult to feel the same momentum as before,” she said. “Events didn’t feel the same at first. But as new classes joined, like the Class of 2027, school spirit began to rise again, and ASB helped bring that energy back to life.”

In the meantime, ASB is planning the following events: Homecoming on October 4, Varsity Boys Football games, the Food Fair on September 26, the Monroe Toy Drive, and Spirit Week September 29.

—with reporting by **Serena Smith.**

Piner’s New Vice Principal Ryan Partika Is Eager to Find His Spot in a Familiar Place After a Tumultuous Year at Slater Middle

By Yaretzy Sedano Olvera and Samuel Bautista

For **Ryan Partika**, the new vice principal at **Piner High School**, the 2025-2026 school is an opportunity to find “his spot” in a familiar place after a tumultuous year.

Mr. Partika served as principal of **Slater Middle School** during the 2023-2024 school year and the 2024-2025 school year. Prior to serving at Slater, he spent three years 2020 to 2023 as principal of **Pennycook Elementary School** in Vallejo. Before that he worked 13 years as a teacher and administrator in the **Glendale Unified School District** in Los Angeles.

His first teaching jobs were in **Santa Rosa City Schools**, teaching history at **Comstock Middle School** and **Santa Rosa Middle Schools**.

Mr. Partika's time as principal of Slater Middle School coincided with an ongoing budget crisis in the Santa Rosa City School District, which required the closure of middle schools and led to Slater being shut down.

"It was terrifying in a personal sense," Mr. Partika said. "All the way up to May 15, I had no idea if my family would be able to pay our bills. I was also sad because most of the teachers and staff at Slater Middle School were in the same boat.

Mr. Partika said most of the teachers and staff "were secure but half of my office staff were let go and hadn't procured a job by the end of the year."

He said the teachers and staff "pulled together to help each other through the school closings."

"There was also a sense of sadness for the school itself, which had been around for 70 years," he said. "It was a great institution. We were the last of Slater Middle School."

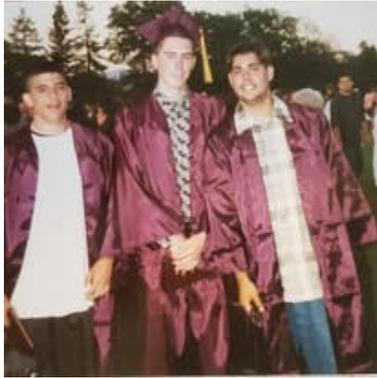
Given his experience at Slater, it is not surprising that Mr. Partika has high hopes for his time at Piner, especially since he graduated from Piner in 1995.

"When I first found out I was coming to Piner I was really excited," Mr. Partika said. "My reason for becoming a teacher and an administrator started at Piner."

"I was a really bad student," Mr. Partika said. "If it wasn't for a counselor, Mr. Hansen, and my teachers I wouldn't have graduated. I didn't find out until the day of graduation that I had enough credits."

Mr. Partika credits Mr. Hansen with crafting a strategy to take classes at the Santa Rosa Junior College, the Lewis Adult Academy and summer school to cobble enough credits together to graduate.

"What I do remember best was [Mr. Hansen's] shoulder death grip when he was driving home a serious point," Mr. Partika said.



Mr. Partika on the right at his Piner HS graduation in 1995.



Mr. Partika and his daughter Kai.

“I love it here,” Mr. Partika said. “Everybody has been welcoming and caring. It’s interesting to walk around. The memories flood back. My 30th high school reunion is coming up in October.”

After graduating from Piner in 1995, Mr. Partika went to the Santa Rosa Junior College for two years before transferring to Sonoma State University, where he earned a BA in History.

After that he also earned his teaching credential in History from Sonoma State. He also earned a Master’s in European Colonial and Latin History from California State Los Angeles and a Master’s in Education Administration from California State Northridge.

Currently, he’s working on his dissertation for a doctorate in education administration on making trauma informed practice culturally relevant at Loyola Marymount University

He said he expects to finish his dissertation by the end of 2025.

“I’ll be working on it late at night so if I seem tired that’s why.”

Mr. Partika and his wife Elizabeth have been married since 2006 and have a 7 year old daughter named Kai who is named in honor of his family’s ties to Hawaii.

He said the name Kai means seawater or ocean in Hawaiian.

“My grandfather from Poland moved to Hawaii (Oahu) as a missionary in the early 1900s,” he said.

Asked what his favorite Hawaiian island was, he said “Maui is my favorite island because it’s a nice balance between Kauai, which is verdant untouched beauty and Oahu’s urbanisation.”

“There’s natural beauty but also plenty of towns that provide for a good time that aren't too large. It's a great balance for everything one would need from a Hawaiian Island.”

Mr. Partika said so far most of his time has been spent in the administrative offices making connections with the other administrators and staff.

“My goal is to get into classrooms and create the opportunity for connections. I plan to go to as many games and events as possible and meet as many people as I can.”

Mr. Partika said he wants “to be as useful and helpful as possible at Piner. As a new administrator you don’t come in looking to make changes. This is a proud school. My job is to listen and learn and find my spot.”

Piner High’s Brand New Girls Flag Football Team Shows Mettle in Its First Five Losses Against Much More Experienced Teams

By Anahi Moreno and Eva Rodriguez

Piner High School’s brand new **Girls Flag Football team** has been showing its mettle in defeat through the first five games of the season after hard fought games against much more experienced squads that’ve been playing for years.

To be sure, this is the third or fourth year for teams like **Casa Grande High School, Analy High School, Rancho Cotate High School** and **Petaluma High School**, giving them all a huge advantage over a brand new Prospector’s team, **Coach Nico Gaytan** said.

“If they’ve been playing for 3 years that means they’ve played 60 games” and these “are our first,” said **Jim Flores**, an assistant to Coach Gaytann who also coaches track and cross country at Piner, trying to put the games in perspective.

In their fifth game against **Montgomery High School**, the Lady Prospectors lost by a respectable score of 20-13.

“The team is beginning to get what I call ‘the football mind and football instinct, and once they understand that I truly believe they will be 10 times better,” Coach Gaytan said in an emailed statement.

In other games, they previously lost 39-6 to Casa Grande, 20-0 against **Maria Carrillo High School**, 59-19 to **Analy High School**, 31-6 against **Rancho Cotate High School** and 42-6 against **Petaluma High School**.

Coach Gaytan said the team has a tough game coming up against Windsor High School followed by a game against Santa Rosa High School.

“We’re looking forward to a good showing and some wins.”

So far the team’s standouts are **Cambria Weerts (10)**, one of the team’s three quarterbacks, and wide receiver **Brisa Cibriani (7)** who together accounted for most of the team’s touchdowns in the first six games..

“We’ve been developing as a team,” Ms. Weertz said in an interview. “Learning how to work better together. Learning each other’s strengths and weaknesses. I’m proud of how we’ve come together on and off the field.”

Coach Gaytann also expressed how proud he is of the team and how much they’ve improved over the first five games.

“It’s going to take a few games for our team to truly get their football wits about them.”

The coach said the team has made “many more explosive plays on offense and much better defense” in the most recent games

“Everybody was flying around making plays. The energy was really high.”

Unfortunately, Ms. Weerts has had some “costly interceptions” which stopped drives and allowed the other team to score, the coach said..

“But she is getting better,” Coach Gaytann said. “The game is starting to slow down a little bit for her.”

The Piner team has 22 players including four quarterbacks: Ms. Weerts, **Kira Bourland**, **Aliah Mitchel** and **Lena Prak**).



Starting quarterback Cambria Weerts on the left and backup Kira Bourland on the right.

Ms. Weerts, Ms. Bourland and Ms. Mitchell also play defense.

The other offensive standouts of the first six games include **Dahlia Cullon (1)** who showed promise running the ball and moving the chains. She ran for several first downs during the first game.

Annabella Magana (16) also caught a pass for a first down.

Coach Flores said Ms. Cibriani, Ms. Cullon, Ms. Magana and **Amy Alvarez (5)** are all standouts on the team.

“Brisa is the fastest girl on the team and the track team as well,” Coach Flores said. “Annabelle is a flag pulling machine.”

Ms. Alvarez, who intercepted a Trojan pass to halt a drive in the first game, is a standout on the defensive side of the ball, he said.

Lynn Cibriani, the mother of Ms. Cibriani, said during the game against Petaluma that only a few of the players have ever played Girls Flag Football before.

Ms. Cibriani said the veterans include **Addie Roberts**, Ms. Magana, **Ngozi Ogbonna**, Ms. Bourland and **Beilul Solomon**.

Ms. Cibriani said her daughter runs track but has never played before.

Other girls who are new to the sport include **Nalleli Sandoval (12)**, who plays defense.

“Nalleli has taken a leadership role on the team,” Ms. Cibriani. She said Nalleli “is the team cheerleader. She gets the team hyped up and keeps their mindset positive.”

Other family members at games to show their support included Ms. Weerts’ father **Vernon Weerts**, **Steve Lee**, father of freshman **Amanda Lee**, **E.J. Magana**, the brother of Ms. Magana and **Cole Bourland**, the brother of Ms. Bourland.

“It’s the first year and the first game,” said Mr. Magana, a Piner junior at the game in Petaluma. “It’ll be cool to see how the team grows and develops.”

“It’s great. It’s amazing” how they are learning a new sport together, said Mr. Bourland, a sophomore at Piner.

During the game, Coach Gaytan kept telling his team not to worry about the score.

“It’s our first game. Now it’s out of our system. Now we know what we have to do.”

Asked what he learned about his team in the first game, the coach leaned into their excitement and energy.

“It’s exciting to be out here with these girls,” said Coach Gaytan. “I love their energy. We have 19 more games left, a long way to go. We have to work on our defensive alignments, and, on offense. Catch the ball.”

–with reporting by Anahi Moreno

Piner Varsity Boys Football Game Against Willets High Was Interrupted by Accidental Collision That Injured a Willets Staffer

By Gian Almorado, Xavier Coello and Inoke Seviua

The Varsity Boys football game between **Piner High School** and **Willets High School** on Friday September 5 was interrupted by an unfortunate incident in which a Piner athlete accidentally collided with a Willets staff member on the Willets side of the field.

The collision happened when Willets High was leading Piner 35-14 just before half time. After the collision, play was halted.

In a statement to the Piner community sent out on Parent Square, Piner Principal **Andrea Correia** said “one of our athletes accidentally made contact with an adult on the opposing team’s sideline.”

Initially the collision “did not appear serious,” though moments later, the individual experienced a medical emergency,” Ms. Correia said.

“Our athletic trainer immediately responded, directing bystanders to begin CPR and retrieving our mobile AED device,” Ms. Correia said.

Santa Rosa Police Department officers, who were on site, “called 911, and paramedics were dispatched right away.

Within minutes, Sonoma County's Henry 1 helicopter arrived and landed on the field to provide additional support.”

Ms. Correia’s note explained that the school recognizes “that this event may have been very difficult and even traumatic for some of our students and families.”



Sonoma County Henry 1 touched down on Prospector football field at the game.

As a result, she said the school would make counselors available for any student who would like to talk or receive support.

“I want to sincerely thank our leadership class, student body, faculty, and staff for remaining calm, respectful, and supportive throughout this emergency. Their composure and quick action were commendable.”

Finally, Ms. Correia extended Piner’s thoughts and sincere hope for the well-being of our friends from Willits. She said the Piner community wishes the injured person a full recovery.

‘Routine Play’

Piner Varsity Boys Football Coach **Adam Rosenstein** said in an email that the incident occurred on what he called “a routine play.”

“It was a sweep. I got the ball and the first down and was going out of bounds,” said **Kam Kerr Cobb, (No. 6)** a junior running back involved in the collision. “I was stepping out and a Willets defender pushed me out. I was out of control. I hit his shoulder and then his head. I turned and ran to the sideline to get Daniel.”



**Piner Junior
Running Back
Kam Kerr Cobb**

Daniel refers to **Piner Athletic Trainer Daniel La Touelle**, who also earned praise from Ms. Correia and Coach Rosenstein.

Mr. Kerr Cobb said the injured Willets staffer seemed okay until the third quarter started when he had a seizure. He said the man's heart stopped beating for a short time until the paramedics treated him.

'His pulse stopped'

"It was a very scary experience, knowing I caused it, or had some part in him dying," Mr. Kerr Cobb said. "His pulse stopped."

"

Mr. Kerr Cobb said he went to visit the injured Willets staffer in the hospital the next day to pay his respects and wish the man well.

"It was a little awkward," Mr. Kerr Cobb said. "He told me it wasn't my fault."

Asked what it was like to see the helicopter land on the field, Coach Rosenstein said: "That was a first for me in twenty years of coaching."

The game ended up as a loss for Piner, Coach Rosenstein said.

"I agreed to allow the score as it was," the coach said. "Willits was not happy if it resulted in a forfeit. So I took the high road and so did our kids."

Piner Varsity Boys Football Team Remains Optimistic Despite Tough Losses Against Willits High and Maria Carrillo High

By Gian Almorado, Xavier Coello and Inoke Seviua

The Piner High School Varsity Boys Football Team is counting on the return of team leaders such as Quarterback **Soso Prak**, offensive and defensive line leader **Jarod Fata**, to overcome early season jitters and lead the team back to the playoffs this year.

"We have a bunch of returners," said **Coach Adam Rosenstein** in an interview. "We've got a lot of returners on the offensive and defensive line. We got a returning quarterback, so there's no reason why we can't have another successful season."



Piner QB Soso Prak



**Offensive lineman
Jarod Fata**



**Head Coach Adam
Rosenstein**

Last year, a successful season meant a trip to the playoffs and a tough loss. So far this season is off to a slow start in its first two games. The game against **Willits High School** ended in a 35-14 loss after it was called due to an injury on the sidelines involving a Piner athlete colliding with a Willits staff member. The team also suffered a tough 35-10 to **Maria Carrillo High School the week before.**

To be sure, Willits and Carrillo were expected to be among the team's toughest opponents at the beginning of the season.

Coach Rosenstein said other tough opponents will include **Analy High School** and **Sonoma Valley High School**, which is the reigning league champion.

After those tough games the coach expects the season to be "wide open" for the team.

"The team was down at halftime but we had our moments where we felt that we should be in the game better than we were," Coach Rosenstein said, referring to the game against Willits.

"Against Carrillo we felt like the first game is always going to have a learning curve. We played well on defense for a good portion of that game. Against Willits we played good defense as well with errors that cost us."

"Success for the team is working together and executing," Coach Rosenstein said. "As long as they are doing that they will have success."

If the team has a weakness, it's the defense and the receiver corps, because many of last year's standouts graduated.

"On defense it's more of an experience thing," the coach said. "The more experience the new guys get, the better I feel we will be. We have to be better at the defensive back position and limiting the big play. We play really well, limiting the big play."

Asked what he learned about the team after the first two games, Rosenstein said "we have a good group of players that need to believe in themselves. We play really good defense and our intensity on defense needs to carry over to offense. Confidence is everything in any sport and right now we teeter between confidence and figuring things out."

"The receiver corps is different this year," Coach Rosenstein said. "Last year we had the best

receivers that Piner has ever had.”

This year’s team of receivers is “younger, but with a lot to prove.”

“We need to develop reliable options in the passing game,” Coach Rosenstein said. “Success depends on who steps up to fill that role.”

As such, Mr. Prak, the team’s quarterback, who said he can throw the ball “about 50 yards,” may have his work cut out for him learning to work with his new receivers.

“Injuries are affecting the team’s morale,” including ACL tears and shoulder injuries, Mr. Prak said in an interview without elaborating.

Asked about how he deals with the stress of working with new receivers, Mr. Prak said “I just sit down, try to breathe, and calm myself down.”

For his part, Mr. Fata said he expects the team to “bounce back.”

“The defense is doing really good, but the offense needs work.”

When preparing for different types of opponents the team uses a football technology platform called “Huddle.”

The coach said the platform allows the teams to trade game films and the players to study opposing offenses and defenses for weaknesses.

“When they watch the films they break it down and write the plays and use their knowledge about the plays and use it against the other team.”

Players said they were positive about their prospects this season because of the team’s chemistry.

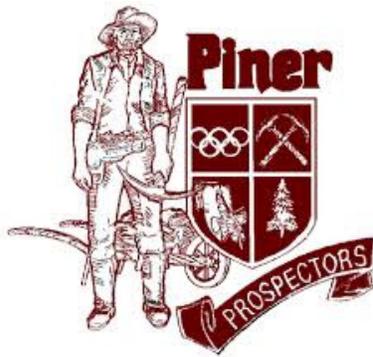
“I wouldn’t say I’m worried about playing any teams,” said Mr. Fata, a senior in an interview. “I just line up anywhere, get in, and play the game.”

Although last year’s team’s playoff run grew out of team chemistry built over the season, Mr. Fata said the chemistry is even better this year.

“A lot of us hang out inside and outside of school,” he said. “We’re more like a brotherhood now.”

–with reporting by Marcos Espinosa and Adan Lopez.

**TO SUBMIT A TIP ABOUT AN EVENT THAT THE PINER PROSPECTOR SHOULD COVER,
PLEASE EMAIL JOURNALISM TEACHER DAN LONKEVICH AT
DLONKEVICH@SRCS.K12.CA.US**

<p>REPORTERS/EDITORS Gian Almorado Sam Bautista Xavier Coello Jacky Cruz Raul Diaz Marcos Espinosa Jordyn Gregg Alex Hicks Adan Lopez</p>	<p>Angel Mondragon Aylin Montiel Anahi Moreno Gael Paramo Eva Rodriguez Rossie Rodriguez Sophia Rodriguez Evelyn Sanchez Yaretzy Sedano Inoke Seviua Serena Smith</p>	 The logo for Piner Prospectors is rendered in a dark red color. It features a central illustration of a prospector wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a jacket, standing next to a wheelbarrow. To the right of the prospector is a shield divided into four quadrants: the top-left contains three interlocking rings, the top-right contains a pickaxe, the bottom-left contains a dog's head, and the bottom-right contains a pine tree. Above the shield, the word "Piner" is written in a bold, serif font. Below the shield, a banner curves across with the word "PROSPECTORS" written in a serif font.
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