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Covering the Palo Alto Unified School District



Volume 8, Issue 22

November 2025





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The mid-point of a school year is a good time to reflect about where we have been and what is still ahead of us. For our youngest students, the changes that occur are easy to spot. The shoes you bought for the first day of school may no longer fit. New pants may look a little shorter. The learning that has taken place will start to jump out as kids start reading for pleasure and forming their own thoughts about things. Our older students may have made progress in social areas including dating, driving, and

attending activities after school. Our seniors are checking off the “last” time they do certain things before heading off to whatever the world has in store for them. It’s a fun time.

The second half of the year will have more of those things as well. It will also have some predictable challenges and some bumps in the road. Now that my own children are adults, it’s easier for me to say, “Enjoy the process.” I was guilty of wanting my kids to get the awards at the end of seasons, demanding all A’s (even as their principal), and wanting everything to go smoothly for them. It’s a natural thing for parents who obviously love their kids.

See **SUPERINTENDENT** • Page 4



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SUPERINTENDENT • From Page 3



Dr. Donald B. Austin
Superintendent of Schools

PAUSD has a tremendous amount of things to be proud of. Our students are served by amazing teachers and support staff. Our community supports our schools at the highest level. We have a depth and breadth of programs that is unparalleled. Students leave us prepared to do great things. I hope we can all enjoy the high points, manage the bumps, and keep an optimistic eye to the future. Thank you all for being a part of what makes us special.

School News

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SCHOOL NEWS ROLL CALL, LLC

P.O. Box 728, Seal Beach, CA 90740 • 562/493-3193

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VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

Addison *Elementary School*

650 Addison Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301 • 650/322-5935 • addison.pausd.org



Jeff Downing
Principal

Embracing the Addison Spirit: A Community of Learners and Leaders

Addison Elementary stands out as a special place within the Palo Alto Unified School District, a sentiment echoed by parents who value its unique qualities. While Palo Alto itself is a desirable location, home to Stanford University and at the heart of the tech industry,

it's the community within Addison that truly sets it apart.

Parents consistently highlight Addison's welcoming community, its cultural and socioeconomic diversity, and the abundant opportunities for families to actively participate in their children's education. These opportunities range from one-time events like the 3rd-grade bike rodeo to ongoing volunteer roles with Project Cornerstone, art classes, or the library, ensuring everyone can contribute. Alumni families even come back every year to share their knowledge and experiences with a new generation of students.

What truly differentiates Addison is its ability to transform these elements into a vibrant, supportive learning environment. This is achieved through the active involvement of its diverse families, the dedicated efforts of its staff, and the innate curiosity of its students. The result is an exceptional school where every child can flourish and every family feels a strong sense of belonging.



Judge Audra Imarra presenting on Constitution Day to 5th Grade Students



Just a few of the volunteers for the 3rd grade Bike Rodeo

Barron Park *Elementary School*

800 Barron Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/858-0508 • barron.pausd.org



**Claudia
Corpus**
Principal

Where Radical Generosity Sparks Joy, Connection, and a Buzz of Positivity

At Barron Park Elementary, we don't just follow Dr. Austin's vision, we live it. Inspired by his call to lead with heart, our team has fully embraced the spirit of Unreasonable Hospitality: acts of radical generosity that surprise, delight, and uplift everyone who walks through our doors.

It's about giving more than expected not because we must, but because it brings joy, builds connection, and defines who we are. From the moment you step onto our campus, you can feel the positivity, purpose, and warmth that make Barron Park shine.

The Heart of Barron Park: Our Extraordinary Team

School Clerk

Always going above and beyond, she ensures every student and family feels cared for, greeting all with encouragement and a smile that makes our front office feel like home.



School Clerk



School Psychologist

School Psychologist

A pillar of compassion and expertise, she nurtures emotional wellness and guides students toward success through her deep care, collaboration, and commitment.



Mental Health & Wellness Associate

Mental Health & Wellness Associate

With empathy and creativity, she builds safe spaces for growth and belonging. Through Social Emotional lessons and Lunch Bunch sessions, she helps students connect and thrive.

School Secretary

The bright, welcoming face of our campus, she shares joy in countless ways from helping families to wearing our Honey the Bee mascot suit to spread school spirit!



School Secretary

A Culture that Shines

Together, this remarkable team embodies the best of Barron Park; a community rooted in kindness, connection, and heart.

Reflection from Our Principal, Claudia Corpus

“What makes Barron Park special is our people. Every smile, call home, and act of care builds a culture of joy and connection. Unreasonable Hospitality reminds us that greatness lives in everyday kindness—and our team brings that spirit to life daily.”

Duveneck *Elementary School*

705 Alester Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94303 • 650/322-5946 • duveneck.pausd.org



Brittany Gardner
Principal

Duveneck: A Thriving Part of a Destination District

Curiosity, Creativity, and Care in Action
At Duveneck Elementary, we are proud to contribute to our district's reputation as a destination district where learning, inclusion, and connection come alive each day.

Duveneck students enjoy a rich variety of programs that make learning meaningful and joyful. Monthly hands-on science lessons with the Junior Museum and Zoo ignite curiosity through real-world exploration. The annual school play, produced in partnership with the Children's Theatre, brings stories to life on stage. And this spring, our 2nd and 3rd graders will dive into the Joy of Musical Theater classes, a new opportunity that builds confidence, creativity, and teamwork.

Our community events celebrate what makes Duveneck special. The International Potluck brings families together to share food and traditions from around the world, while

our Unity Day picnic celebrates inclusion, kindness, and the strength of our diverse community. Project Cornerstone brings parents into classrooms to read books and ignite active conversations around belonging and self-value.

Supporting the whole child also means tending to emotional well-being. Our school therapist has created calm corners in every classroom and teaches social-emotional lessons tailored to the needs of each class. Students can also join Mindful Mondays, an alternate lunch activity that helps them reset and refocus through guided mindfulness practices.

This year we introduced a Student of the Month program aligned with our district's Promise goal of Serving and Celebrating Others. Each month, we recognize students who embody empathy, respect, and community-mindedness.

At Duveneck, curiosity, creativity, and care come together to help every child flourish. We are grateful to our families, staff, and district partners for making Duveneck a true destination for joyful, inclusive learning.



Palo Alto Police Officers help Duveneck third graders practice the rules of the road at our annual Bike Rodeo.

El Carmelo *Elementary School*

3024 Bryant St., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-0960 • elcarmelo.pausd.org



Leonel Argumedo
Principal

El Carmelo Elementary: Empowering Every Child to Shine

At El Carmelo Elementary, we take great pride in being part of the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD), a district known for its commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and whole-child education.

Our school community exemplifies this mission

through the many supports and opportunities we provide to our students academically, socially, and emotionally.

El Carmelo's strong system of support begins with our dedicated staff, which includes our academic specialists, school-based therapist, family engagement specialist, school psychologist, and many others all working collaboratively to ensure every student thrives. Our multilingual and caring teachers and staff foster an inclusive environment where each child feels valued and supported.

Beyond academics, we offer programs that nurture curiosity, creativity, and social-emotional growth. Students benefit from enrichment opportunities such as visits from the Palo Alto Junior Museum, which brings science learning to life for grades TK–5. Our Children's Theater Program, run by Palo Alto for grades 2–5, inspires imagination and teamwork through the performing arts.

A cornerstone of our community is our supportive and engaged PTA that partners closely with our teachers, funding classroom resources and programs that enhance student learning. In addition, the El Carmelo PTA hosts a variety of family-centered events throughout the year, which include our ice-skating party, community picnics, the annual talent show and auction gala, all designed to bring families together and strengthen the sense of belonging that defines El Carmelo.

At El Carmelo, learning extends beyond the classroom. Our programs, people, and partnerships embody what makes PAUSD a destination district and El Carmelo a truly special place to learn and grow.



Ellen Fletcher *Middle School*

655 Arastradero Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-9810 • fletcher.pausd.org



Ellen Fletcher Middle School: A Caring and Connected Learning Community

At Ellen Fletcher Middle School, we are proud to be part of a district deeply committed to fostering a positive school climate, a strong sense of belonging, and meaningful learning experiences for every student. Our goal is to ensure that every child feels seen, supported, and valued as a member of the Fletcher community. We strive to create an environment where students thrive both academically and socially.

Belonging is what drives who we are. Programs like WEB (Where Everybody Belongs) help our 6th graders feel welcomed and supported by trained 8th-grade student leaders, building lasting connections across grade levels. Our spirit days and schoolwide activities, lunchtime events, spirit games/sports, and dances bring our students together and celebrate the energy, diversity, and pride that help mold and create Fletcher.

Learning at Fletcher is alive in and out of the classroom. Our co-taught and team-taught classes ensure that all students have access to inclusive, engaging instruction

that supports a range of learning styles and needs. Our teachers and staff are dedicated to their craft and share their passion for teaching and learning with our students and with each other.

Students also extend their learning through hands-on, real-world, and sustainability-focused projects as well as field trips that connect classroom lessons to the world around them. Whether exploring science, engaging in service, or expressing creativity, students learn to think critically, act responsibly, and make a positive impact in their community.

Finally, our active PTA and strong partnerships with families and community organizations enhance the Fletcher experience through events, volunteer opportunities, and celebrations that strengthen our shared sense of purpose. We recognize and respect the partnership with our families in knowing they help us provide special learning experiences for our students.

These shared commitments are what make Ellen Fletcher Middle School and the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) destinations of choice for families seeking a community where students are inspired to learn, grow, and belong.



Ellen Fletcher Unity Day 2025

Escondido *Elementary School*

890 Escondido Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94305 • 650/856-1337 • escondido.pausd.org



Leslie Crane
Principal

Escondido: A Destination School for Learning and Belonging

Across our district, each school site contributes to making our community a true destination district—a place where families know their children will thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Our Spanish Immersion Program stands as a hallmark of innovation and excellence, offering students the opportunity to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. This program not only enriches academic achievement but also fosters global awareness and appreciation for different cultures—skills that prepare students for success in an increasingly connected world.

Equally important is our commitment to high-quality education. Our teachers design rigorous, engaging instruction that challenges students to think critically, collaborate, and problem-solve creatively. This learning extends beyond the classroom through hands-on activities and meaningful field trips that connect curriculum to real-world experiences. Whether exploring local ecosystems, museums, or historical sites, our students learn by doing—making education both exciting and relevant.

At the heart of our schools is a deep belief in diversity, inclusion, and unity. We cherish the many backgrounds, languages, and perspectives represented in our community. Our classrooms are places where every child is seen, valued, and supported.



We are also proud of our veteran and new teachers, whose experience, care, and dedication ensure that each student grows to their fullest potential. These educators create nurturing environments that blend tradition with innovation, inspiring lifelong learners.

Finally, we take time to celebrate our community. From cultural showcases and family engagement nights to recognition events that highlight student and staff achievements, we honor the unique contributions that make our schools vibrant and strong.

Together, these elements—academic excellence, cultural celebration, and a spirit of belonging—make our district a destination where every student can learn, grow, and shine.



Fairmeadow *Elementary*

500 E. Meadow Dr., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-0845 • fairmeadow.pausd.org



Trebor Winslow
Principal

Fueling Student Achievement

At Fairmeadow Elementary, we believe every student belongs, and that commitment is part of what makes PAUSD a destination district. From early intervention and specialized supports to inclusive programs, our school ensures that every student can thrive.

Our educational specialists collaborate with general education teachers to deliver individualized instruction, while calibrated literacy practices extend into our two TK classrooms, building a strong foundation from the start. Classroom aides in every classroom, along with special education aides supporting our three learning centers, provide hands-on support to help all students succeed.

Fairmeadow also has a full complement of specialists to enhance student achievement, including a full-time librarian, occupational therapist, reading specialists, an EL specialist, a Spectra Art teacher, traveling music teachers for 5th grade, a music teacher, a PE coach, an

SEL specialist, health technician, campus supervisors and an amazing front office staff. These professionals provide resources, enrichment, and guidance to help students excel academically, socially, and emotionally.

We prioritize mental health and wellness for students and staff, supported by our school psychologist, school therapist, and daily behavior support team. Inclusive experiences, from Special Olympics events and our inclusive playground to Bike Palo Alto, ensure every child feels seen and valued.

Fairmeadow fosters community and student engagement through garden club, noon sports, monthly assemblies, student council, safety patrol, and lunch clubs for TK-5 students. Our supportive PTA amplifies these efforts, providing resources, volunteers, and enrichment opportunities. Recent campus updates, including fresh paint and new flooring, create a welcoming environment where students and staff feel a genuine sense of belonging.

At Fairmeadow, our programs, staff, and community come together to create an inclusive, supportive, and engaging learning environment. Our Firebirds don't need to migrate; they're already where they belong.



Greendell School

4120 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94303 • 650/856-0833 • greendell.pausd.org



Dr. Judy Argumedo
Early Childhood Administrator

Greendell Autumn Joy

Greendell Preschool and Preschool Family offer young children a warm, engaging, and developmentally appropriate introduction to school through play-based learning. These programs focus on nurturing the whole child, socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively, while creating a joyful and welcoming environment for both children and their families.

At Greendell, students experience a wide range of hands-on activities that spark curiosity and encourage exploration. Whether it's learning about animals through stories, songs, and sensory play, or discovering the wonders of science with exciting activities like pumpkin volcanoes, children are immersed in meaningful learning experiences. These playful, interactive moments are designed to build foundational skills while keeping learning fun and engaging.

Field trips and seasonal events further enrich the curriculum. A visit to the pumpkin patch, for example, allows children to connect with nature, practice observational skills, and share in the excitement of autumn traditions. These shared experiences help create a sense of community among students and their families.

Preschool Family, a unique parent participation program within Greendell, emphasizes family involvement as a key part of early learning. Parents attend alongside their children and participate in both classroom activities and parent education, building strong partnerships between home and school. This collaborative approach supports children's development while also offering parents valuable insights and support.

Ultimately, Greendell Preschool and Preschool Family are places where children thrive and where school becomes a safe and exciting place to play, discover, and grow. By fostering creativity, curiosity, and connection, these programs lay the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.



Pumpkin Volcano

Frank S. Greene Jr. Middle School

750 N. California Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94303 • 650/494-8120 • greene.pausd.org



Courtney Carlomagno
Principal

Beyond Basics: Why Greene Middle School's Co-Teaching Model Defines a Destination District

Frank S. Greene Jr. Middle School's robust commitment to Co-Taught Courses in core academic subjects like ELA and Math is a primary factor elevating the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) as a destination for families. This model pairs a general education content teacher with an Education Specialist in the same classroom. This isn't just a basic support structure; it's a fully collaborative approach where both educators share a common preparation period and dedicated planning time. This synergy ensures truly integrated instruction, leveraging the expertise of two highly trained professionals to benefit every student.

The co-teaching environment significantly strengthens the school's inclusive practices and dedication to student success. By adopting this model, Greene is able to serve students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in the least restrictive environment, a vital measure of educational quality. The inclusion is holistic: the Education Specialist's expertise in differentiation, flexible pacing, and evidence-based interventions is applied across the entire classroom population. This systemic commitment ensures that all students, regardless of their learning profile, have guaranteed access to the grade-level curriculum within their neighborhood school, a key draw for prospective residents.



Signage indicates two teachers for co-taught ELA class.



Teacher provides support in co-taught ELA class.

The benefit extends beyond mere compliance, establishing a superior, integrated system of academic support. With two teachers, the class gains flexibility for team-teaching, small-group instruction, and individualized check-ins. This seamless delivery of specialized instruction accelerates learning for a diverse student body, minimizing the need for isolated pull-out programs. This high-level, embedded support system demonstrates a proactive, high-quality standard for instruction that distinguishes the district.

Ultimately, the Co-Taught model at Greene provides a powerful value proposition for families. Parents of students with IEPs know their children will receive expert, integrated support without being separated from their peers. For all families, this practice signals that PAUSD invests in structural equity, high-quality staff, and proven best practices to ensure both academic rigor and deep support for every learner. It confirms the district's dedication to quality inclusion and instructional excellence across its entire student range.



Teacher Supporting a Small Group in Co-Taught Math Class



Instruction Happening in Co-Taught Math Class

Henry M. Gunn High School

780 Arastradero Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/354-8200 • gunn.pausd.org



Dr. Wendy Stratton
Principal

Gunn: A Destination School Within a Destination District

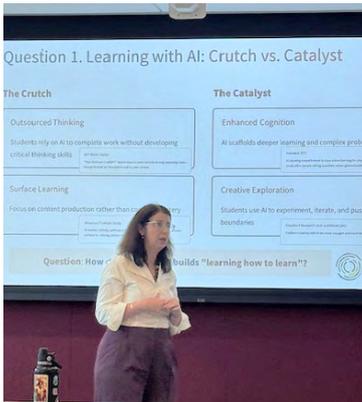
Palo Alto Unified is a destination district in every sense of the word, where learning is dynamic, innovation is encouraged, and community partnerships are part of the fabric of who we are. At Gunn High School, our students and staff are uniquely positioned to benefit from the rich relationships PAUSD has cultivated with Stanford, Foothill, De Anza, and many others. These opportunities, among others, are what make Gunn High School stand out as an exceptional place to teach, learn, and lead.

Our ongoing partnership with Stanford University is a great example. Through Stanford's AI Accelerator Program, PAUSD educators are exploring how artificial intelligence can enhance teaching and learning in meaningful, responsible ways. The Stanford Principal Fellows Network, where local school leaders meet throughout the year to share ideas and strengthen the bridge between K-12 and higher education, provides me with an amazing network of thought partners. Many of our teachers are Stanford

alumni or participants in academic symposia, enhancing our capacity to learn from one another and continuously stretch.

Among other examples, our science and music departments partner with the Monterey Bay Aquarium, UC Davis, NASA, and Stanford Live to create rich, hands-on experiences that inspire curiosity and deepen learning. These experiences are not just about learning, but about engaging our students in real world learning opportunities. We're also fortunate to collaborate with Foothill and De Anza Colleges, giving students early access to college-level courses, visiting lectures, research opportunities, and career pathways.

And these are just a few examples. Across our district, countless partnerships with local institutions, nonprofits, and community organizations expand learning in every direction. But it's not just these external partnerships that make PAUSD-and Gunn great. Our incredible parent community, whose energy and commitment bring so much heart to our work, is a vital part of our success, and a key reason why we are a true destination for students, staff, and families alike.



Isabelle Hau presenting research on Learning with AI.



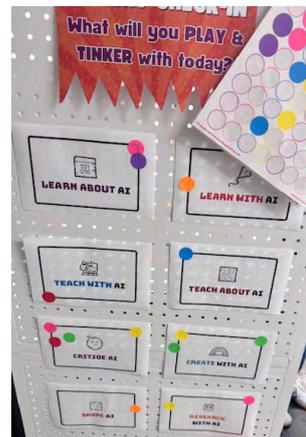
Tara Firenzi's Social Justice Pathways Class visiting Foothill to hear Dolores Huerta speak earlier this month.



Dr. Wendy Stratton, Gunn Principal, Dr. Jeong Choe (PAUSD Asst. Superintendent of Innovation and Agility), and Isabelle Hau (Executive Director of Stanford Accelerator for Learning).



Tara Firenzi's Social Justice Pathways Class visiting Foothill to hear Dolores Huerta speak earlier this month.



Stanford's Tinkery Space



PAUSD Visit to Stanford's Makers Space

Herbert Hoover *Elementary School*

445 E. Charleston Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/320-8106 • hoover.pausd.org



Nikole Manou
Principal

Hoover: A Choice School in Palo Alto's Destination District

Herbert Hoover Elementary is one of the many reasons the Palo Alto Unified School District continues to be known as a destination district—a place where innovation, belonging, and academic excellence come together to create meaningful learning experiences for every student.

Guided by the Palo Alto Promise, Herbert Hoover Elementary is dedicated to ensuring every student feels a deep sense of belonging and is prepared to thrive both academically and emotionally. This commitment is reflected in the school's focus on innovation, equity, and strong teacher-student relationships that nurture each learner's academic and social-emotional growth.

In January 2026, Herbert Hoover Elementary will open the doors to its brand-new, state-of-the-art campus—a milestone that represents Palo Alto Unified's continued commitment to excellence and its forward-looking vision for education.

The new campus has been thoughtfully designed to support learning in every form. Light-filled classrooms, flexible learning spaces, an Innovation Lab, a music room, and a dedicated art space are complemented by outdoor areas that inspire curiosity, creativity, and teamwork—fostering both intellectual and emotional growth.

Even while operating at a temporary campus, Hoover has maintained a strong focus on belonging. Recent student survey results highlight continued improvement in teacher-student relationships and students' sense of connection to school. These outcomes reflect Hoover's commitment to knowing each child deeply and creating classrooms where students feel supported, confident, and inspired to take ownership of their learning.

As a choice school within the district, Hoover continues to strengthen community partnerships and expand opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and innovation. The move to the new campus marks an exciting new chapter in Hoover's story—one where every student belongs and the PAUSD promise thrives.





Christopher Grierson
Principal

PRIDE in Community

Palo Alto is known as a destination for exceptional education, and at JLS Middle School, academic rigor is powerfully paired with a commitment to character. This foundation of mutual support and community building is encapsulated in the school's mascot and motto.

As the JLS Panthers, students and staff follow the “PRIDE” creed: Panthers Respect, Include and Depend on Each other. This isn't just a slogan; it's a living philosophy that ensures students are developing into responsible, empathetic, and independent citizens.

The PRIDE ethos is woven into all facets of middle school life, from informal, fun events to vital enrichment experiences. On a lighthearted day, a Puzzle Palooza competition challenges student teams to collaborate, fostering positive inclusion and mutual dependence under the guise of friendly play.

More profoundly, the school integrates its values into critical learning. A recent visit from the Mobile Museum of Tolerance provided a powerful, guided experience where students analyzed racist social media examples. This engagement challenged them to practice respect, inclusion, and a stand against hate, applying the PRIDE principles to real-world social justice issues.

Throughout all learning, JLS is committed to nurturing individuals who are both intellectually sharp and socially conscious. This holistic approach ensures graduates become:

- Independent thinkers who own their learning.
- Responsible contributors to their community.
- Empathetic peers who value diverse perspectives.
- Agentic people who are empowered to take positive action.

By cultivating this strong community culture, JLS Middle School not only upholds Palo Alto's reputation for excellence but, more importantly, prepares students to thrive in a complex, changing world.

Panthers **R**espect, **I**nclude, and **D**epend on **E**ach other.



Juana Briones *Elementary School*

4100 Orme St., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-0877 • briones.pausd.org



Kathryn Bimpson
Principal

Building a Connected, Creative, and Caring Community

Juana Briones School is proud to be a cornerstone of what makes our district a true destination district. Our vision, “Learning and thriving as an inclusive community every day.”, along with our commitment to connection, community, and whole-child development sets us apart.

A hallmark of our approach is our research-based Wellness Center, which welcomed over 3,000 student visits last year and is being used regularly again this year. The Wellness Center provides critical support for emotional health and well-being. Alongside this, we prioritize academic and creative growth. Our NGSS-aligned garden program with Living Classroom brings science to life, offering hands-on learning rooted in nature in our robust school gardens.. Weekly visual art classes ensure every student has the opportunity to explore their creativity.

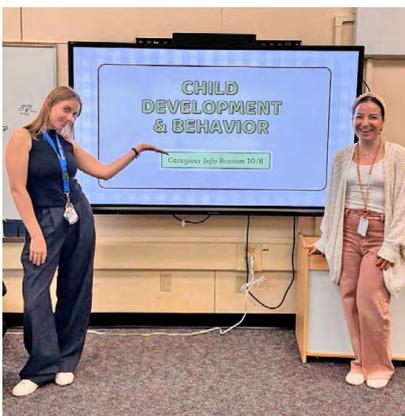
Our thriving presentation arts program, including regular assemblies and a beloved 5th-grade play, helps students build confidence and find their voice. This year, we are deepening student-staff relationships through monthly interest-based clubs hosted by our staff members, creating even more avenues for connection across our campus.

Our buddy program also strengthens schoolwide bonds by pairing students across grade levels: K with 3rd, 1st with 4th, and 2nd with 5th. These relationships foster empathy, leadership, and a sense of belonging.

Family engagement is another key focus. Through Caregiver Sessions, we partner with families on topics like child development, behavior strategies, bullying and harassment prevention, and how to best support learning at home. The Wellness Center is also open daily before school for caregivers and students. Caregivers can check

out adult resources and spend time with their students in the space.

At Juana Briones, connection isn't just a goal—it's how we grow. Together, we're creating a community where every child, caregiver, and staff member feels seen, supported, and inspired.



Our Wellness Therapist and School Psychologist Host a Caregiver Session



Wellness Center



Spectra Art program - Weekly lessons K-5



Living Classroom

Lucille M. Nixon *Elementary School*

1711 Stanford Ave., Stanford, CA 94305 • 650/856-1622 • www.lmnixon.org



Amy Sheward
Principal

The Dolphin Community

What makes Palo Alto Unified a destination district? At Nixon, the answer is easy - it's our people! Every day, our teachers, staff, students, and families create a community where everyone feels seen, supported, and inspired to do their best work.

Our dedicated educators bring learning to life through engaging, high-quality instruction that sparks curiosity and creativity. They get to know each student, nurturing both academic growth and social-emotional well-being. Nixon is also proud to offer a rich array of programs—art, music, library, and PE—that help students discover their talents and build confidence in every area of learning.

Just as important as what we teach is how we care. Our focus on mental health and connection ensures that students learn in an environment grounded in kindness, empathy, and belonging. Our mental health associate connects with students through lunch bunches and individual counseling sessions. Our teachers implement the Second Step curriculum and now Project Cornerstone to help our community build common language and understanding around kindness, empathy, and inclusion.

At Nixon, we are proud to reflect the diversity and inclusivity that define PAUSD. Our families and staff bring a wide range of cultures, experiences, and perspectives that make our school community vibrant and strong.

In short, it's the people—the teachers, the staff, the students, and the families—who make Nixon a truly special place to learn and grow.



Joyous Nixon Dolphins at Play

Ohlone Elementary School

950 Amarillo Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-1726 • ohlone.pausd.org



Elsa Chen
Principal

Farm, Mandarin Immersion, and Multiage

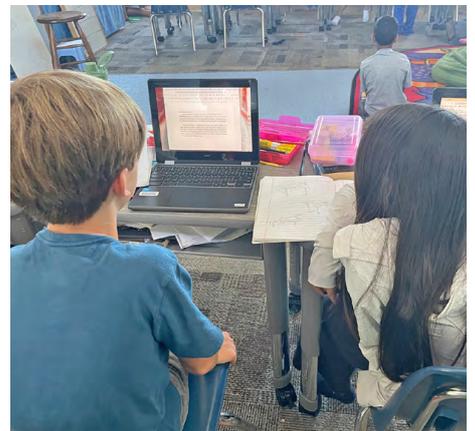
A school community is a group of people who come together with a common goal of supporting and enriching the learning experiences of the students they serve. At Ohlone, we add a farm, Mandarin immersion, and multiage classrooms to make that already rich experience unique.

A school farm filled with animals transforms abstract lessons into hands-on experiences, teaching responsibility, empathy, and environmental stewardship. Students learn where food comes from, care for living creatures, and see the direct impact of their actions—lessons that nurture both the heart and mind.

Mandarin immersion adds another layer of richness, giving students the gift of bilingualism and cross-cultural understanding. Through daily exposure to language and culture, children become global thinkers who see the world through multiple perspectives.

Multiage classrooms complete the picture by creating a true community of learners. In these classrooms, older students model leadership and kindness while younger ones gain confidence and motivation from their peers. The result is a supportive, collaborative environment where every child is both a teacher and a learner.

Together, these elements—farm, language, and multiage learning—build a school that celebrates curiosity, connection, and compassion, preparing students not just for academic success, but for thoughtful, engaged lives beyond the classroom.





Jim Sherman
Principal

The Power of Lifelong Learning: How Palo Alto Adult School Elevates Our Community

For more than a century, the Palo Alto Adult School has been a quiet but powerful contributor to what makes the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) a true “destination district” — a community recognized for its culture of lifelong learning and excellence.

Founded in 1921, the Palo Alto Adult School was built on the belief that education should be accessible to everyone, at every stage of life. Today, it continues to serve that mission by offering programs that help residents learn new skills, advance careers, and enrich their lives. From English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to technology, parenting, and professional development, the school provides resources that strengthen families and, in turn, support student success across PAUSD.

Many families begin their connection to the district through the Adult School’s ESL program. Parents not only improve their language skills but also learn how to navigate local schools and engage in their children’s education. This bridges cultural and communication gaps, creating stronger home-school partnerships that benefit students and teachers alike.

Career and enrichment classes further enhance the community by helping adults adapt to a changing economy and explore creative interests. Seniors, parents, and young adults often learn side by side — modeling for students that learning never stops.

When families and educators look at PAUSD, they see more than high-achieving schools. They see a community that embraces education as a lifelong pursuit. The Palo Alto Adult School embodies that spirit, helping to make PAUSD not just a great district for children — but a destination for learners of all ages.

Learn more at paadultschool.org.





Brent Kline
Principal

Paly's Social Justice Pathway: Learning with Purpose

At Palo Alto High School, the Social Justice Pathway (SJP) stands as a model of what makes PAUSD a true destination district—a place where students are encouraged to think critically, act compassionately, and connect learning to the world around them.

SJP is a three-year interdisciplinary program that integrates English and History through the lens of social justice, beginning sophomore year. Students explore real-world issues, engage with local organizations, and complete capstone projects that inspire both personal growth and community impact. Through research, creative expression, and activism, students move beyond memorization to mastery—learning to analyze systems, tell powerful stories, and advocate for change.

From documentaries submitted to the national C-SPAN competition to public art like the “Same Moon, Same Stars” mural honoring Indigenous histories, SJP students bring their learning to life. Field experiences, mentorships, and strong classroom communities help them discover their voices while building empathy, resilience, and leadership.

What sets SJP apart is how it embodies PAUSD's commitment to meaningful, student-centered education. The program's small cohort model fosters deep relationships between students and teachers, while its project-based approach connects rigorous academics with authentic action. It's learning that matters—and that prepares students to lead with purpose.



Camp SJP—Annual Overnight Camp

By nurturing critical thinkers and compassionate citizens, Paly's Social Justice Pathway reflects the district's larger mission: to make Palo Alto Unified not just a high-achieving district, but a destination for those who believe education can change lives and strengthen communities.



SJP 10th Graders Poetry Performance



**SJP Sponsored Mural: “Same Moon, Same Stars” Mural
Honoring Indigenous Histories**

Palo Alto Middle College *High School*

12345 El Monte Rd., Los Altos Hills, CA 94022 • 650/849-7955 • mc.pausd.org



Emily Garrison
Principal

Choice Leads to Success

Educators have long recognized that a one-size-fits-all education fails to meet the diverse needs of learners. This philosophy applies not only to pedagogical practices but also to the structure of schools themselves.

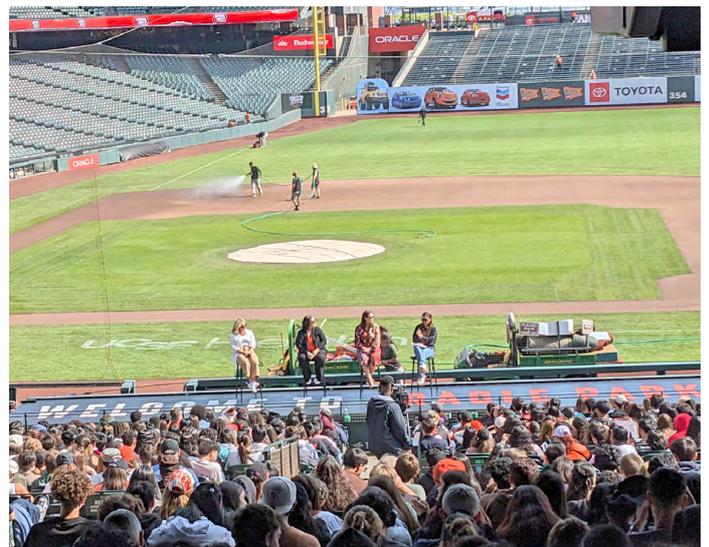
While Palo Alto High and Gunn High are phenomenal comprehensive high schools, Palo Alto Unified is proud to offer an additional option: Palo Alto Middle College High School (PAMC). PAMC is the district's third high school, designed to provide an innovative opportunity for motivated, responsible, and independent students seeking a non-traditional high school experience.

Located on the Foothill College campus (recently ranked the #1 Best Community College in America by Niche), PAMC allows students to be both high school and college students concurrently. PAMC is an intentionally small, supportive program with a target enrollment of just 200 students. The school enjoys a diverse student body that

includes transfers from private and home schools. PAMC also provides essential college support for students who may be first-generation or face financial barriers to higher education and can benefit from access to college for free. The admission process prioritizes applicants demonstrating intellectual curiosity, maturity, commitment to a positive community, and a strong interest in the college experience.

PAMC students gain access to extensive college courses, quality professors, clubs, and campus activities, fostering a deep, practical understanding of college success. By demystifying college and building confidence, PAMC prepares students for their future academic careers. The outstanding opportunities available to PAMC students are examples of what makes the Palo Alto Unified School District a destination district for students and families.

Palo Alto Unified's commitment to educational choice through its diverse high school models—two outstanding comprehensive schools and one specialized middle college—ensures every student can participate in a school that leads to their success and sense of belonging.



Palo Verde *Elementary School*

3450 Louis Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94303 • 650/856-1672 • paloverde.pausd.org



Annora Lee
Principal

A School that Feels Like Home

At Palo Verde Elementary, we proudly contribute to the PAUSD Promise in a multitude of ways. Our school embodies the district's values of academic excellence, innovation, equity, and whole-child development—through a warm, inclusive, and collaborative school culture.

One of our greatest strengths is our sense of community. We prioritize strong relationships among students, staff, and families, ensuring every child feels seen, supported, and empowered. This connectedness fosters a safe and nurturing environment where all students can thrive.

Academically, Palo Verde is committed to high standards and joyful learning. Our dedicated teachers design engaging, rigorous instruction that meets diverse learner needs. From strong foundational literacy and

math instruction to hands-on science and STEAM integration, our students are encouraged to think critically, explore creatively, and develop a love of learning.

We also embrace innovation and continuous improvement. Our staff collaborates regularly to reflect on data, implement best practices, and support student growth. There's room to tinker and experiment, whether it be in the classroom or at the Innovation Lab.

Family and community partnerships further enrich our school culture. Parent volunteers, PTA programs, and school-wide events help build a vibrant and supportive environment that benefits all students.

At Palo Verde, we believe in the power of connection, creativity, and care. Every decision is made with our commitment to nurturing the whole child in mind. We are home to the eagles, with the shared goal of helping every child soar.

Walter Hays *Elementary School*

1525 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94301 • 650/322-5956 • hays.pausd.org



Iris Wong
Principal

Support and Enrichment Opportunities

Walter Hays Elementary stands out as a true destination school within our district, where every child is supported, engaged, and inspired to thrive. Our commitment to excellence extends beyond the classroom, ensuring all students feel connected and empowered to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

At Walter Hays, our Core Values of Respect, Responsibility, Kindness, Inclusion, Integrity, Cooperation, Empathy, Leadership, and Perseverance guide everything we do. These values, along with our focus on unity and teamwork, are woven into daily learning, interactions, and schoolwide activities, helping students build strong character and a deep sense of community.

Students also enjoy top-notch support and enrichment opportunities that foster curiosity and joy. During lunch, they can join our Mindfulness Club, Youth Community Service Club, Arts and Crafts Cart, visit the Library, or explore innovation in the Maker's Space.



With caring staff, vibrant programs, and shared values that inspire excellence, Walter Hays truly is a place where students love to learn, grow, and belong.