

Conejos Connections

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Principal - Mrs. Heidi Dudley Dean of Students - Ms. Kara Sanchez Teaching & Learning Coach - Ms. Mary Kathryn Brudos

Thoughts from the Principal

Dear Chamiza Families,

As we enter the final three weeks of the semester, I want to thank you for your continued partnership and to gently remind everyone how important daily attendance is for student success. Each day in class matters—academically, socially, and emotionally—and your efforts to get students here on time make a real difference.

I also want to share some guidance on how best to advocate for your student when concerns arise. The strongest first step is always to reach out directly to your child's teacher with any questions or worries. Approaching conversations in a professional, courteous, and collaborative manner helps ensure we are all working toward the same goal—supporting your child. One of the best pieces of advice I ever received came from my daughter's 3rd-grade teacher: "If you believe half of what she tells you happens at school, I'll believe half of what she says happens at home." Children sometimes mix up details or miss the bigger picture, and often the truth lies somewhere in the middle. The best way forward is always a calm, open conversation so we can problem-solve together.

On Friday, December 12th, we will be conducting an ALICE drill with our students and staff. This drill will focus only on initiating the ALICE communication system, helping students become familiar with the format and vocabulary used during an emergency. Teachers will then facilitate age-appropriate discussions about what choices students might consider in a real situation—such as whether it would be safest to lock down or evacuate—based on the information available. Many students have participated in our three-week ALICE lesson in the past, and we will be providing that instructional support again this year to help them feel prepared, not scared.

We are thrilled to announce that we have secured the Performing Arts Center at Volcano Vista High School for our annual Winter Musical on Thursday, December 18th at 6:00 p.m. Students who are performing should plan to arrive by 5:45 p.m. We look forward to celebrating their hard work and talent with you!

As we move into the holiday season, we wish all of our Chamiza families a safe, warm, and peaceful December. If your family needs any support during the holidays, please remember that we are truly an extension of your family and are here to help. You may contact our school counselor, Nancy Luna, at luna_n@aps.edu for confidential assistance.

With gratitude,

Principal Dudley

7 Mindsets to support SEL

The Attitude of Gratitude Mindset teaches students the power of gratitude by helping them focus on what's going right instead of what's going wrong. It encourages them to recognize the good things in their lives—what's working, the supportive people around them, and the parts of themselves they value most. By focusing on these positive aspects, students can build a strong foundation for growth and happiness. Research shows that students who practice gratitude regularly tend to feel more optimistic and happier, while experiencing less stress and anxiety.

Parent Teacher Association

Thank you to our amazing PTA for the ongoing support you provide to our students, staff, and families. Your dedication, countless hours, and creative efforts truly make a difference in the daily experience of every child at Chamiza. We are so grateful for the events, resources, and encouragement you bring to our school community. We also welcome all families to join the PTA and help continue the incredible impact they make throughout the year. Email ptachamiza@gmail.com for more details on how to join and get involved!

Chamiza Mission Statement

At Chamiza Elementary, our mission is to instill the love of learning to create lifelong learners who are academically, socially, and emotionally strong and who know how to advocate for themselves. We achieve this through purposeful communication, consistent teaching, and providing life experiences that help our students grow.

Sharing Love

We will be collecting new or gently used stuffed animals, toys, children's clothes to donate to a local women's shelter. A box will be up front in the entry corridor of the school for any donations you all can make.

Attendance

As we enter into the colder months we often see a slip in attendance. Please remember that regardless of the reason your student is absent, it counts as an absence because it takes on average three days to make up for the one day missed. Please help your students be the best version of themselves by supporting their daily attendance.

Upcoming Calendar Events

12/3 - Instructional Council @ 7:30 am
12/11 - PTA General Monthly Meeting @ 7 pm
12/12 - Emergency Drill #7 - ALICE Drill
12/12 - NDI Family Performance @ 6:00 pm in gym
12/15-12/19 - Chamiza's Winter Spirit Week
12/18 - Winter Musical @ 6 pm at VVHS PAC
12/19 - Last Day of the Semester
12/22/25-1/5/26 - Winter Break - No School
1/6/26 - First Day Back for Students

Parent and Community

Involvement

Please complete the [Chamiza Volunteer Sign Up survey](#) if you would like to volunteer on a regular basis.

