

# Conejos Connections

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## Thoughts from the Principal

### ☀️ Welcome Back, Chamiza Community! ☀️

Welcome back and happy new year! We hope winter break offered time for rest, connection, and joy—however your family chooses to observe this season. At Chamiza, we value the many traditions and experiences that make our community unique, and we are excited to begin the new year together.

As we settle back into routines, we're looking ahead to an exciting month of learning and growth. One highlight we're especially excited about is the launch of Genius Hour! Beginning this month, students will participate in biweekly Genius Hour sessions on Friday mornings.

### 💡 What Is Genius Hour?

Genius Hour is dedicated time for students to explore their passions and interests through inquiry-based learning. Students choose topics they are curious about, ask questions, create projects, and share their learning with others. Genius Hour encourages creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and a love of learning—all skills that support success both in and out of the classroom.

### 🎉 Spirit Week This Month

We're also looking forward to Spirit Week this month—a fun opportunity for students to build community and school pride. We want to remind families that Spirit Week is meant to be optional and joyful, not an extra stressor. It is always okay for students to participate in some days, all days, or not at all. Students are welcome at school exactly as they are, every day.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. We're grateful to be back with our students and families and look forward to a wonderful start to the new year at Chamiza!

~Heidi Dudley, Principal

## 7 Mindsets to support SEL

The 100% Accountable Mindset teaches that we are in control of our own story and outcomes. It helps students understand that their success in school and life depends on the choices they make and the actions they take every day. With this mindset, students learn to improve their skills, tackle challenges with a problem-solving attitude, and take responsibility for achieving their goals. Research indicates that students who believe their abilities can improve through effort are more resilient and achieve higher academically.

## Parent Teacher Association

JOIN CHAMIZA PTA - The Chamiza PTA plays an important role in supporting our students, staff, and school community through family events, classroom support, and enrichment opportunities. Joining PTA is a simple way to stay connected and have a voice—whether you can volunteer often or just cheer us on from the sidelines. Every level of involvement makes a difference, and we'd love to have you be part of our Chamiza community.

## 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

"This year, give your child a gift that never runs out: a few minutes of reading together each day. In a world full of screens and busy schedules, shared stories build language, imagination, connection—and memories that last far beyond the page."

## Attendance

Attendance Matters - From the Voice of your Students  
"When I come to school, I don't miss out on learning or time with my friends." Being at school helps students stay connected, build confidence, and keep up with what they're learning each day. We know some days can be tough, but every day a student is here makes a difference.

## Upcoming Calendar Events

1/6/26 - First Day Back for Students  
1/7 - Instructional Council @ 7:30 am  
1/8 - PTA General Monthly Meeting @ 7 pm  
1/9 - Student Expectations' Assembly  
1/14 - TEAM Meetings @ 8:00 am  
1/16 - Genius Hour Sessions' Begin  
1/19 - MLK, Jr Day - No School  
1/21 - Instructional Council @ 7:30 am

## Parent and Community

### Involvement

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

