LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENT INFORMATION PRESENTATION

Superintendent
Dr. Andrew Pulver

Board of Education:
Diana Hill, Matt Bragman, Marlys Davidson, Chris Forehan, Farnaz Pardasani

MEET THE DISTRICT TEAM



Dr. Andrew Pulver
SUPERINTENDENT



Mrs. Ondrea Reed
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT
EDUCATION SERVICES



Dr. Ryan Weiss-Wright
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
HUMAN RESOURCES

TEAM LOSAL
Igniting Unlimited Possibilities

WELCOME

Purpose of the Presentation

- Welcome families to their secondary school journey in Los Alamitos Unified
- Share District highlights and philosophy
- Introduction of the Middle School Student
- Overview of middle school program
- Middle school registration process
- Busing/Before and After-school care options
- Answer questions







Welcome Class of 2033 to the beginning of your secondary school journey!

LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT





Los Alamitos High School
Home of the Griffins



Oak Middle School
Home of the Lions

McAuliffe Middle School
Home of the Eagles

- Hopkinson Elementary
- Los Alamitos Elementary
- Lee Elementary
- Rossmoor Elementary
- Weaver Elementary
- McGaugh Elementary







One High School
Two Middle Schools
Six Elementary Schools





J. H. McGaugh Elementary



LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED

At-a-Glance...

- California Distinguished & Gold Ribbon District
- **Los Al Unified consistently ranks in the top THREE in the county of Orange on state assessments for over 20+ years**
- **94% Post-Secondary Enrollment Rate + 3% Military**
- 83% "a-g" Completion
- **Recognized by OCDE for achieving the highest growth in CTE enrollment countywide**
- Named to College Board Honor Roll for ten years
- Exemplary Athletics, Activities and Arts programs

100% Graduation Rate - **Class of 2023 & 2024**

AWARD WINNING MIDDLE SCHOOLS

National Blue Ribbon, California Distinguished and Gold Ribbon Schools

Offer the same rigorous instructional program and robust elective options for all students.



McAuliffe Middle School



Oak Middle School

MCAULIFFE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Home of the Eagles

4112 West Cerritos, Los Alamitos 90720



Shelby Olmstead
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR



Eddie Courtemarche
PRINCIPAL



Jen McGuire
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL



Julie Foot
PSYCHOLOGIST



Dr. Kirsten Jensen
WELLNESS COUNSELOR

OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Home of the Lions

10821 Oak Street, Los Alamitos 90720



Adrienne Reynolds
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR



Robert Castillo
PRINCIPAL



Stephen Segura
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL



Jerilynn Kuhar
PSYCHOLOGIST



Dr. Kirsten Jensen
WELLNESS COUNSELOR

Meet Your Middle Schooler

5 FACTS ABOUT MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

#1 Rapid Physical Development

Key Fact: Middle schoolers experience significant physical growth during this phase of adolescence, including hormonal changes, which can affect their energy levels, focus, and self-esteem.

Implications for Schools:

- Create a safe and supportive environment that normalizes the physical changes students experience. (Teachers who love the middle school child.)
- Provide regular opportunities for movement through physical education and brain breaks to channel their energy productively. (Intramurals, Lunch Activities…)

2.5-3.5 inches



3-4 inches



“LAG PHASE”



#2 Heightened Emotional Sensitivity

Key Fact: The adolescent brain undergoes rapid development in the limbic system (emotions) before the prefrontal cortex (decision-making), making middle schoolers highly sensitive to emotions and social feedback.

Implications for Schools:

- Create calming spaces (e.g., wellness centers) where students can decompress during stressful moments and learn strategies to cope with emotions.
- Establish clear anti-bullying policies and promote inclusivity through school-wide initiatives. (Challenge Success Partnership, No Place for Hate…)
- Train teachers to build strong relationships with students, using positive reinforcement and active listening.

BIRTH – Age 3

Most rapid development of the brain.



Age 11 – Age 14

Second largest spurt of brain growth. This is also what scientists call a "sensitive period" for social and emotional learning, when the **brain is primed to learn from social cues.**

#3 Developing Identity & Peer Influence

Key Fact: Middle schoolers are exploring their identities and seeking a sense of belonging, making peer relationships a central focus of their lives. Middle schoolers begin to prioritize friendships over family relationships.

Implications for Schools:

- Offer opportunities for collaboration and teamwork to foster positive peer interactions. (Focus on collaborative learning, Student Leadership
- Provide clubs, extracurricular activities, and diverse learning experiences to allow students to explore their interests and identities. (Clubs, Choice Based Electives)

Friendships are Unstable

Change frequently due to shifting interests, group dynamics, and social skills development.



Friendships Become More Intimate

Friendships often shift from being activity-based (e.g., playing together) to being emotionally supportive, characterized by shared secrets, loyalty, and trust.

#4 Cognitive Growth & Abstract Thinking

Key Fact: Middle schoolers transition from concrete thinking to more abstract and critical thinking, enabling them to understand complex concepts, question authority, and develop their own opinions.

Implications for Schools:

- Incorporate inquiry-based learning and real-world problem-solving to engage their developing critical thinking skills. (Socratic Seminar, Project Based Learning)
- Allow space for students to voice their opinions and participate in decision-making, fostering autonomy and responsibility.

Students start to question rules, authority, and societal norms as they form their own values and beliefs. They may challenge parents, teachers, or societal expectations as they develop critical thinking skills and a sense of independence.



Students begin forming their own opinions on issues such as justice, fairness, and ethics. They often enjoy debates or discussions that allow them to explore and defend their views.

#5 Need for Structure & Autonomy

Key Fact: While middle schoolers crave independence, they still need clear structure and boundaries to feel secure and succeed academically.

Implications for Schools:

- Establish clear expectations and consistent routines in the classroom while allowing flexibility for student choice.
- Teach organizational skills explicitly, such as managing homework, setting goals, and using planners, to help them navigate increased academic demands.



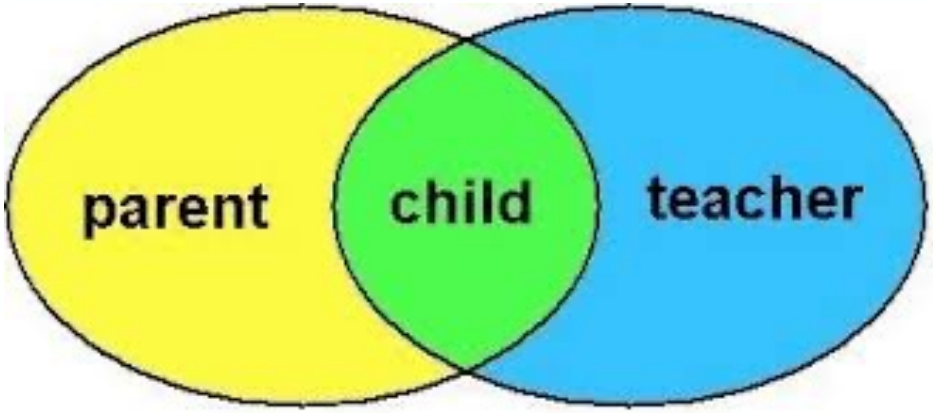
Excessive rigidity can limit students' independence, while too much freedom can lead to confusion and hinder their ability to make responsible choices.



Brains are still developing, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision-making, planning, and impulse control and is not fully developed until age 26.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN AT MIDDLE SCHOOL ?

The PARENT-CHILD-TEACHER relationship is more important than ever.





Los Al Middle School Program

Designed for Middle School Students to Thrive

- Continue to foster a love of school & learning
- **Promote behaviors of independence**
- Guide social emotional growth
- **Focus on critical thinking in academics**
- Discover and develop passion and interests
- **Build confidence and self-esteem**
- **Value student voice**
- Foster friendships
- Partner with parents





Middle School Student Day

8:50AM – 3:10PM: 6 Periods of Instruction*

8:50AM – 9:47AM	Period 1 (+Announcements)
9:52AM – 10:44AM	Period 2
10:44AM – 10:52AM	**Nutrition**
10:57AM – 11:49AM	Period 3
11:49AM – 12:19PM	**LUNCH**
12:24PM – 1:16PM	Period 4
1:21PM – 2:13PM	Period 5
2:18PM – 3:10PM	Period 6

- 5-MINUTE PASSING PERIODS
- NUTRITION
- 6th Gr. Only: 30 MINUTE LUNCH
- ACCESS TO CAFETERIA
- WEDNESDAY EARLY RELEASE

*Bell schedules are specific to each middle school. This is a sample schedule.

HOMEWORK AT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle School Homework Minutes

- Grade 6 = 0-60 minutes per night average M-Th
- Grade 7 = 0-70 minutes per night average M-Th
- Grade 8 = 0-80 minutes per night average M-Th

Undistracted Time

- Homework should consist of reading, practice and application of key skills and concepts across subject areas, application of writing skills, preparation for future classes and beginning research.

- Homework should continue to build independent study habits.

Los Alamitos Unified School District
Academics
Athletics
Activities
Arts
Igniting Unlimited Possibilities

HOMEWORK AT MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Long-term assignments should be limited in number and duration. These assignments should include clear checkpoints to monitor progress towards completion.

- No assignments should be given during a school break, and any long-term assignments should not be due during the first week back from a school break.

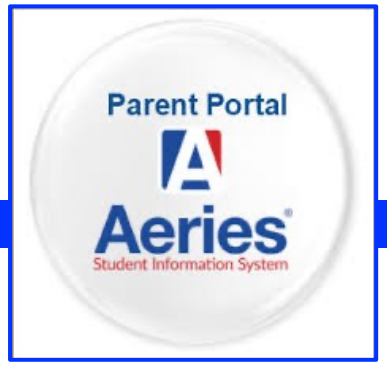
- Homework shall not be assigned during standardized testing for grades 3-8

Communicate with Teachers...

Guidance Counselor is a HUGE middle-school resource...

Student Grade Reporting

Semester Reporting



QUARTER 1: (August 12 – October 9) 9-Week Progress Report

Fall Middle School Parent Conferences October 20-22-23

QUARTER 2: (October 12 – December 18)

Semester I Report Card Issued Electronically

SEMESTER I

QUARTER 3: (January 5 – March 12) 9-Week Progress Report

Spring Middle School Parent Conferences March 23-25-26

QUARTER 4: (March 15 – June 3)

Semester II Report Card Issued Electronically

SEMESTER II

Middle school report cards should focus on growth and learning, promoting balance and meaningful reflection over grades alone.

Sample 6th Grade Schedule

6-Period Day

ZERO PERIOD 8:00AM-8:45AM

(Special Programs)

Period 1: English Language Arts (College Prep/Honors)

Period 2: Social Science

Period 3: Math (Math 6 or Math 6/7)

Period 4: Elective

Period 5: Science

Period 6: Physical Education



MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMY PROGRAM

Eagle & Lion Academies





“A” - Academic Pathway - Middle school Academies are designed to **<u>prepare students early</u>** for success in LAHS pathways, college readiness, and career exploration

- Ensure students master essential ELA and Math standards
- Build strong executive functioning skills that transfer across all classes *(Organization and planning; Time management and study skills; Goal setting and self-monitoring; Task initiation and completion; Reflection and adjustment)*
- Increase student confidence, ownership, and academic identity
- Prepare students to enter high school at or above proficiency

Academic Proficiency & Confidence by 9th Grade Matters...

Course Placement

READING & LANGUAGE ARTS

OFFER TWO PATHWAYS FOR ENGLISH INSTRUCTION

COLLEGE PREP

HONORS

Placement rubric completed for every fifth-grade student, which takes into consideration: (Potential Items on Rubric)

- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Score
- Semester I grades in Reading & Writing
- Current independent reading level
- On Demand Writing Assessment (Response to Literature) - Ability to write a clear, cohesive paragraph and analyze text
- Student work habits and organizational skills

Course Placement

FLUID ANNUAL PLACEMENT

English Language Arts

COLLEGE PREP

HONORS

ELA placements in middle school are fluid and students are evaluated annually.

6th Grade/middle school placement is not tied to high school placement.

Course Placement

MATHEMATICS "a-g" Pathways

OFFER TWO PATHWAYS FOR MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION

COLLEGE PREP: MATH 6

ACCELERATED: MATH 6/7

Both courses use the same Grade 6 Mathematics textbook.

Math 6 – Covers 10 chapters of instruction

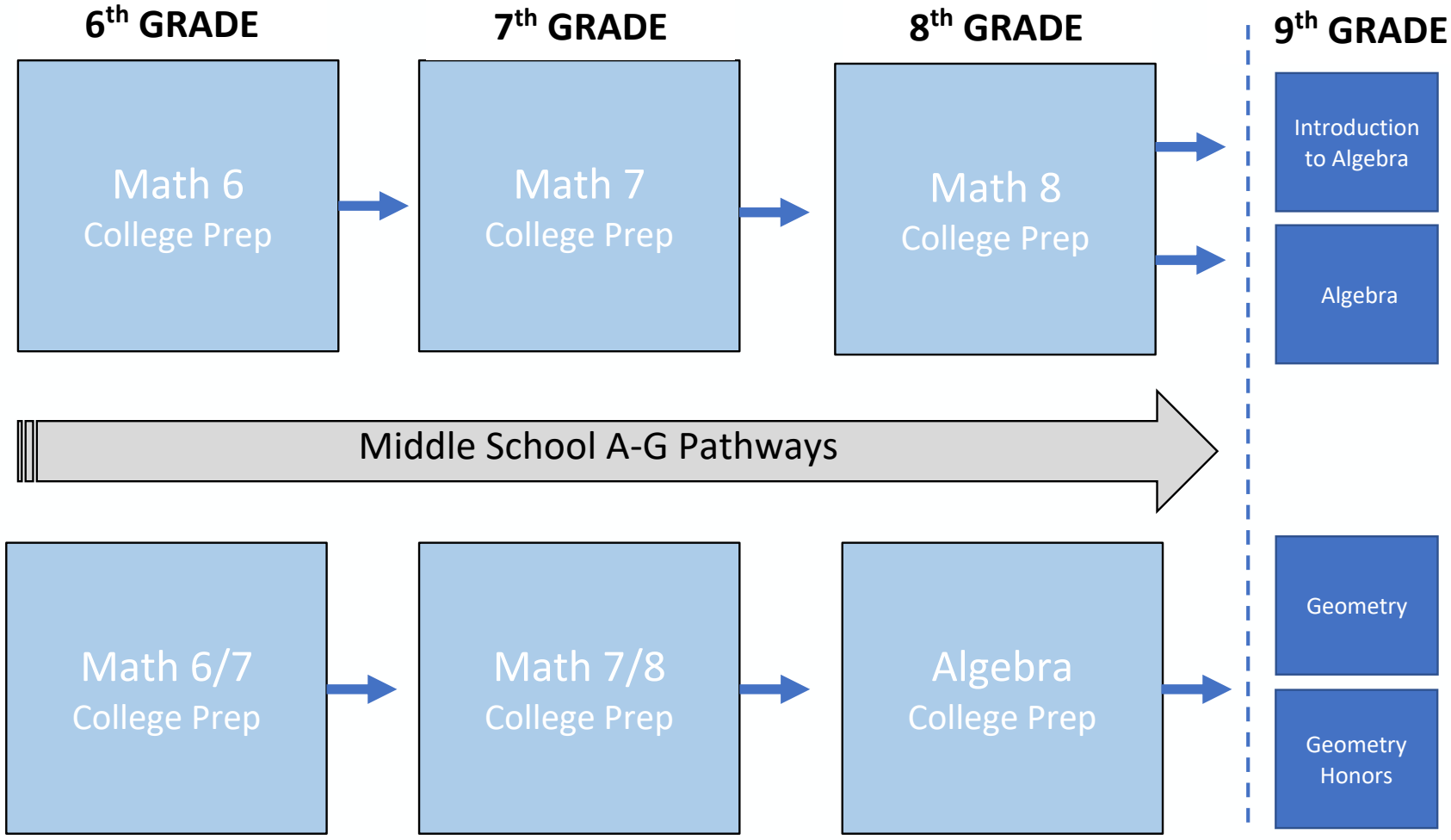
Math 6/7 – Covers 15 chapters of instruction

Placement based on: (Placement Rubric Used)

- Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Score
- Semester I grade
- Standardized testing scores (CAASPP)

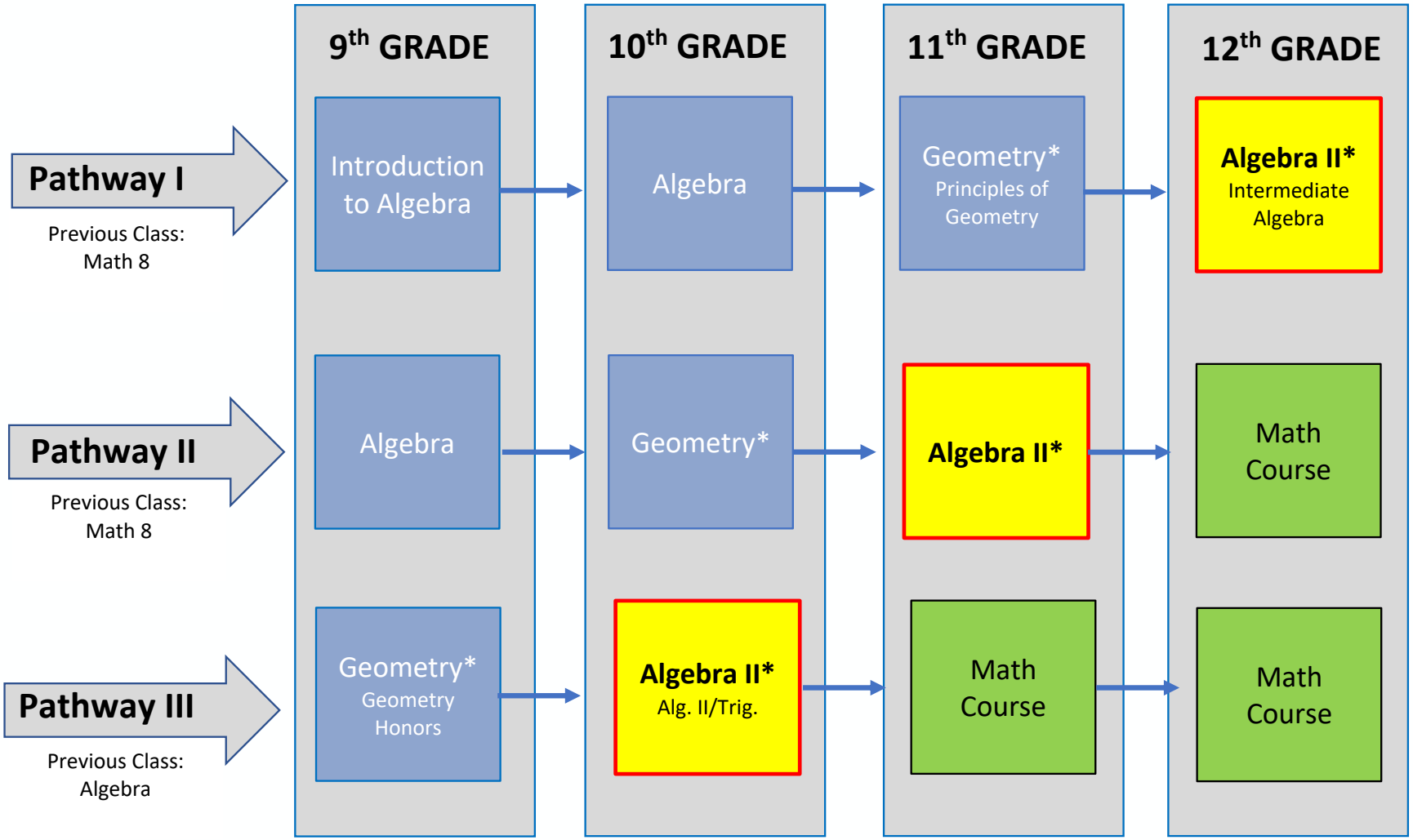
LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Middle School Mathematics College Bound Pathways



LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

High School Mathematics A-G Pathways



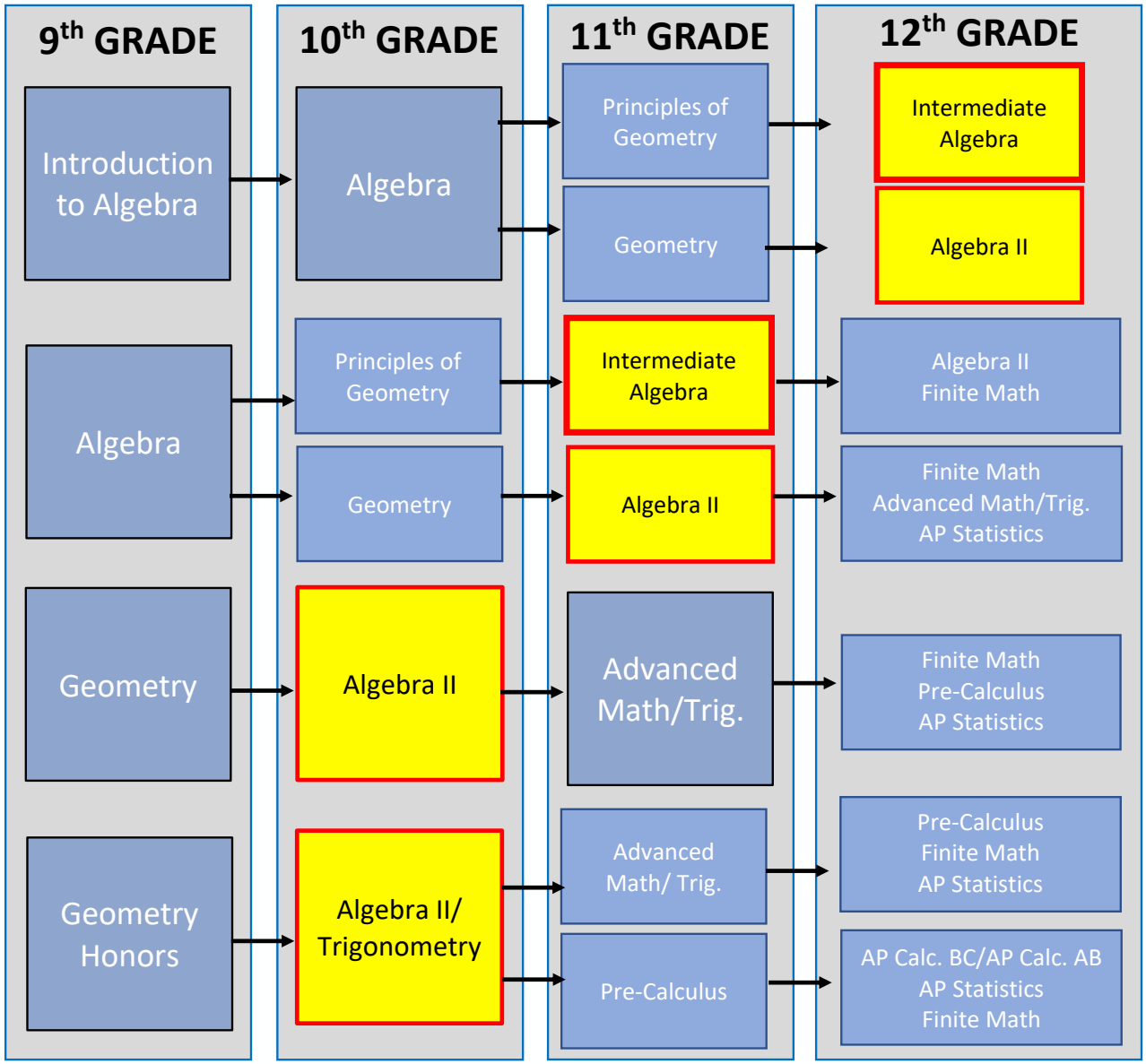
Algebra II = Meets A-G College Entrance

* Equivalent Courses

Math Course = See Back for Math Progression Option

LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

High School Mathematics Course Progressions



Algebra II

To meet UC/CSU Entrance Requirements students must complete Algebra II or an equivalent course.

CSU, UC and private university entrance requirements for math course completion vary. Please partner with LAHS guidance counselor to determine required course progression.

Math course options and progression is based on semester grades.

COURSE EQUIVALENCIES

GEOMETRY	ALGEBRA II
Principles of Geometry	Intermediate Algebra
Geometry Honors	Algebra II/ Trigonometry

COURSE PLACEMENT

ELA & Mathematics

COLLEGE PREP

HONORS

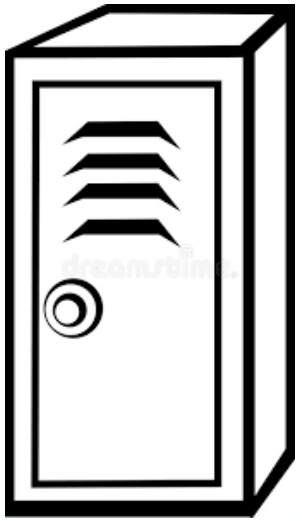


Trust the Process

NO TEARS
NO TUTORS

Physical Education

- 6th/7th Grade Students in Same Period
- Focus on the CA State Standards for Physical Education
- *Students are required to "dress out" for class each day*
  - *PE uniforms can be purchased on Registration Day*
- *Students receive a separate PE Locker*
  - *Lockers & Locks are given out to students during the first week of school*



Students do not dress out the first week of school.

6th Grade Elective Choices

- **Exploratory Wheel**: Visual Art, Drama, Leadership, STEM, etc. *(Exact rotations change year-to-year. Gives students exposure to multiple courses)*

- **Choir:** (Year-Long Elective) Beginning choir for both boys and girls.

- **Instrumental Music:** (Year-Long Elective) Band or Orchestra; Jazz Band and advanced sections of band and orchestra hold auditions in Spring.

- **STEM I:** (Year-Long Elective) Engineering & Design Process; Robotics

Special Education

Continuum of Services

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Occupational Therapy

Special Day Class

Vision/Audiology Services



Speech & Language Services

Specialized Academic Instruction

Adaptive Physical Education

Counseling Services

All services that a student on an IEP receives, transfers to the middle school setting. Specific questions are best answered by your current school psychologist.

COURSE SELECTION
Middle School Welcome Presentations

WELCOME PRESENTATIONS

MARCH/APRIL – Middle school counselors visit elementary school campuses to facilitate welcome presentations with fifth grade students. Students will come home with a registration card to indicate preference in their elective choice for sixth grade.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Fifth grade teachers complete District placement rubrics for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Counselors meet individually with each fifth-grade teacher to discuss and review each student.



Students/Parents provide input for elective course selection.



Teachers complete rubrics for academic course selection.

STUDENT CONNECTIONS



Middle School Socials
WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026
3:30PM – 4:30PM

Middle School WEB Days
AUGUST (DATES TBD)

More information and details about events will be shared as dates get closer.

ENROLLING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

All District residents are automatically enrolled in their home middle school. All residents should have received an email welcoming them to their home middle school in December.

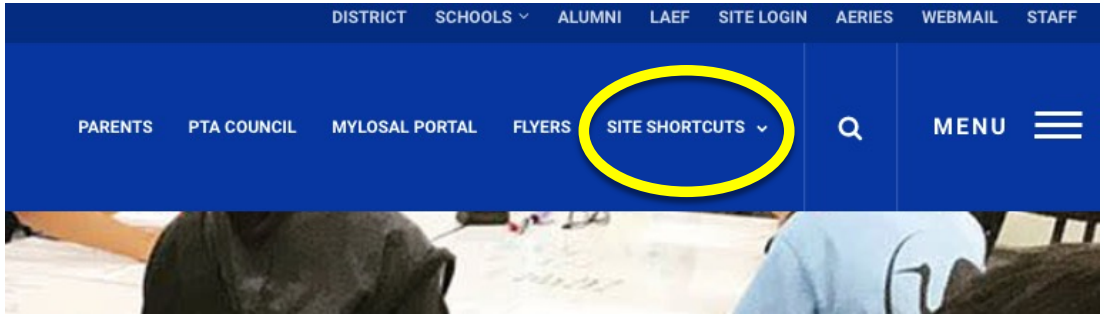
School of Residence

Home address determines school placement

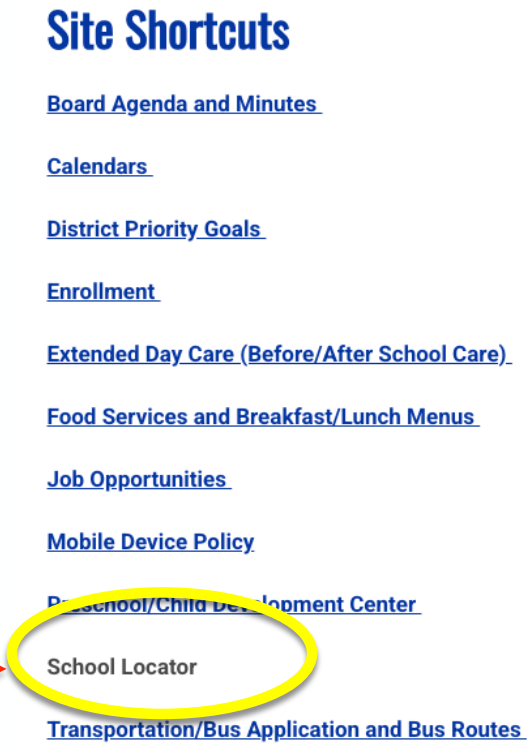
Families interested in attending a middle school other than their home school need to electronically submit an Intradistrict Transfer Request by **January 30, 2026**.

SCHOOL LOCATOR

Home address determines school placement.

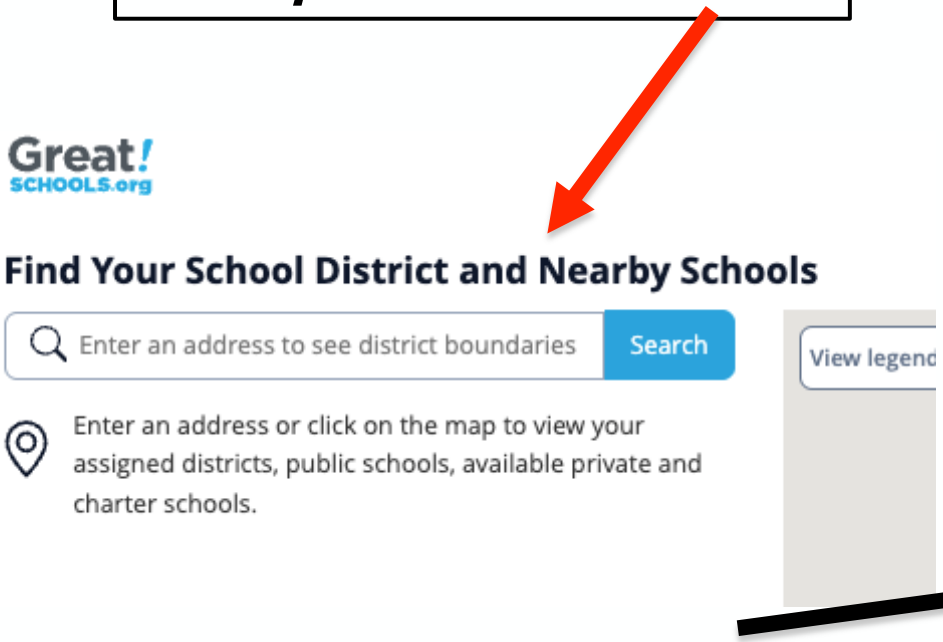


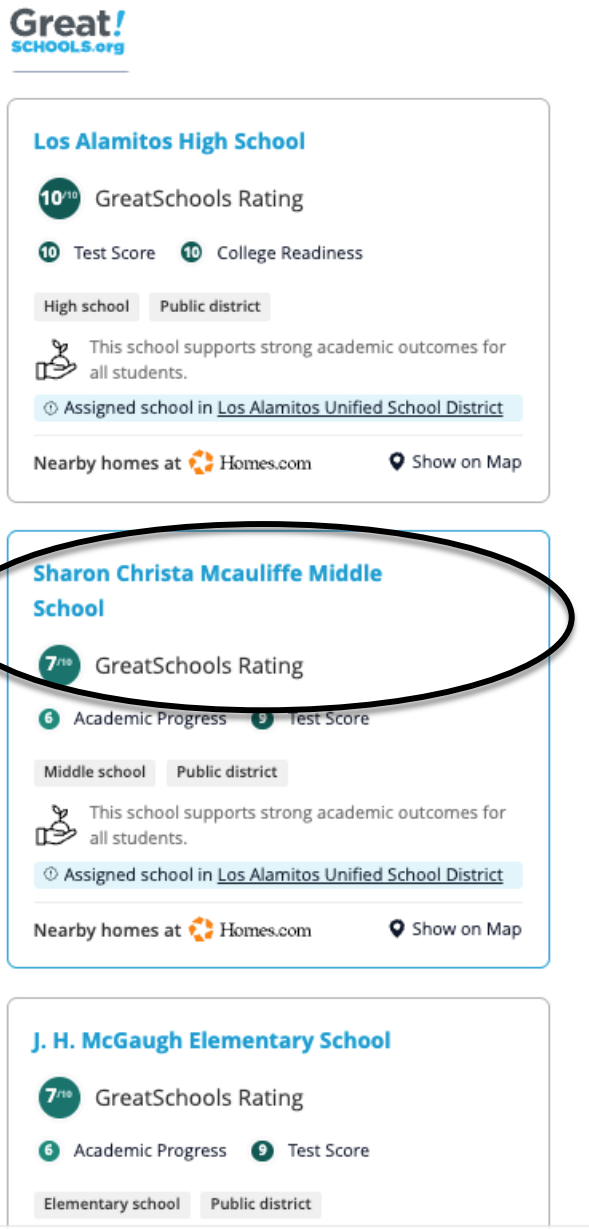
Click here to locate your school of residence.



www.losal.org

Enter your home address.





Great Schools populates a list of schools that you may attend as a district resident. The schools are listed in *order* of your assigned location.

School rankings are not verified.

SELECTING A PREFERED SCHOOL

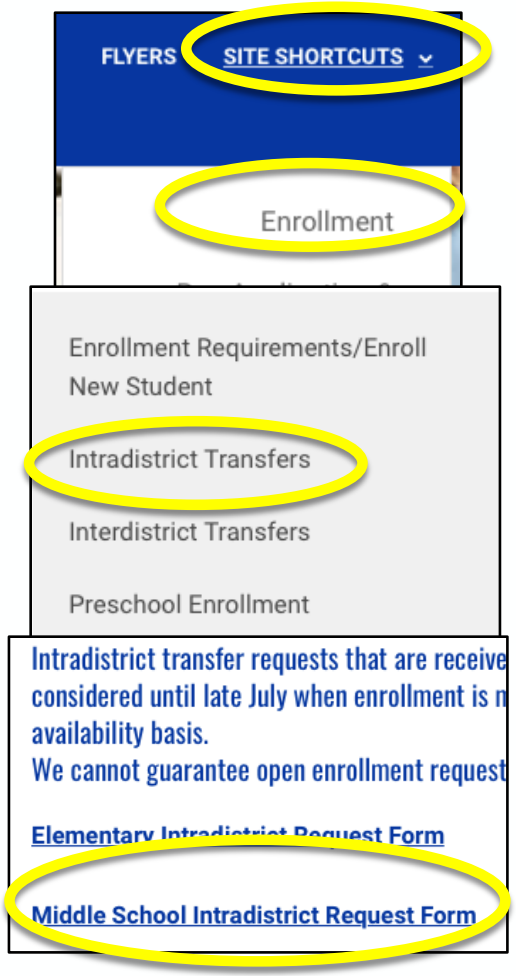
A School Other Than Your Home School

Step One: Complete the home school enrollment process that was just reviewed

Step Two: Return to losal.org

- **Site Shortcuts**
- **Enrollment**
- **Intradistrict Transfers**
- **Elementary Intradistrict Request Form**

- Complete all questions and submit before **January 30, 2026.**
  - Transfers are accepted based on space availability
  - Parents will be contacted by the end of February regarding status of transfer request



Enrollment Timeline

DECEMBER/JANUARY

District residents receive "Welcome Letter" from their home middle school.



LATE JANUARY

Intradistrict transfer request forms <u>due by January 30, 2026</u>.

LATE MARCH

Continuing students on an Interdistrict permit will receive a placement letter in Late March - Early April

How do I start the enrollment process for my upcoming middle schooler?

ENROLLMENT vs. REGISTRATION

FEBRUARY – MARCH

STEP 1: ENROLLING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Formal confirmation of which middle school a student will be attending next school year.

APRIL – MAY

STEP 2: REGISTERING AT YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL

Placement and selection of courses and verification in AERIES of all parent/guardian information.

Registration Timeline



APRIL

Students come home with a registration card to indicate preference in their elective choice for sixth grade.

JULY

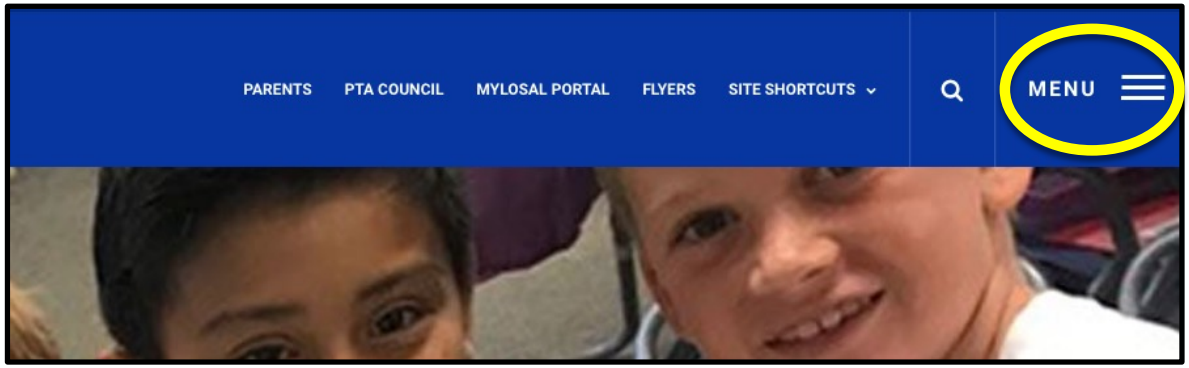
Families receive an email from their middle school providing them with information to log into AERIES and complete the registration process.

LAUSD Before & After School Care

Yolanda Mortensen, Program Supervisor



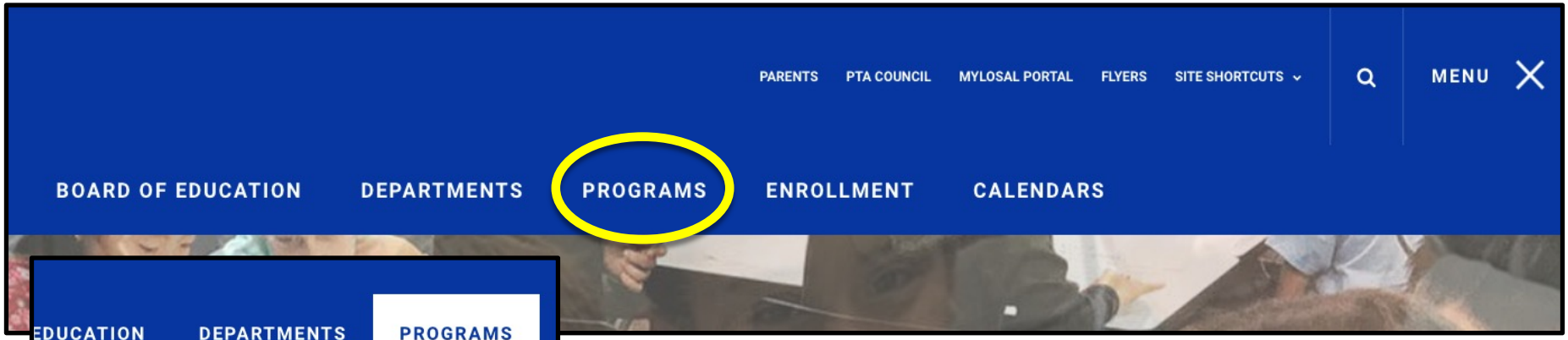
Outpost Available At Both Los Al Middle Schools.

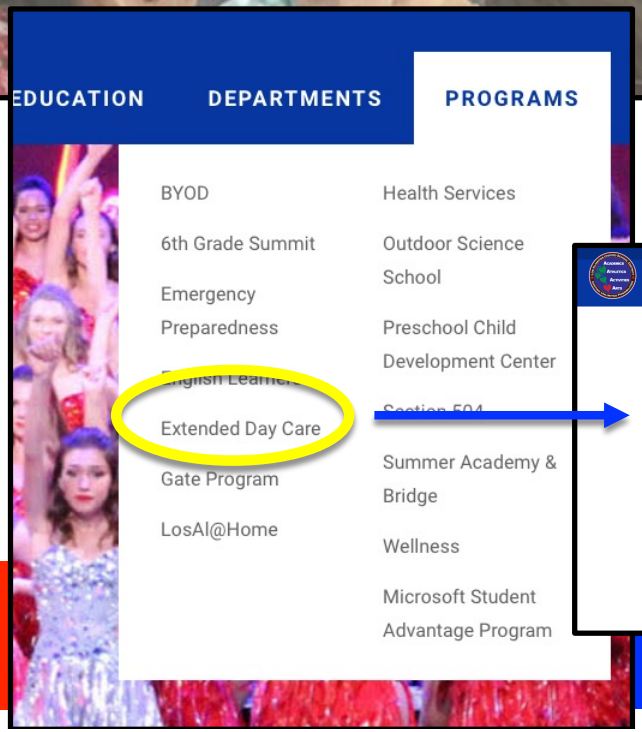


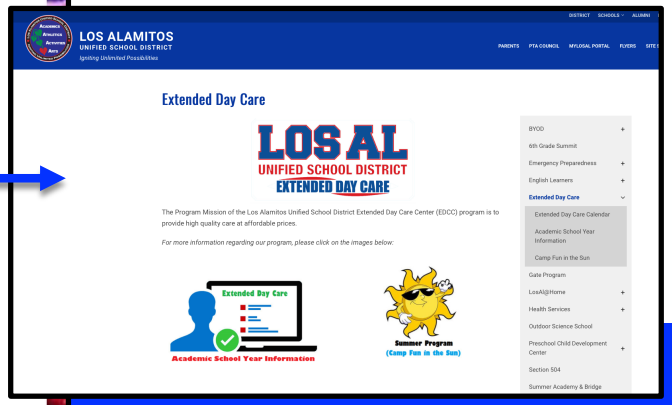
FOR EXTENDED DAY CARE

Information & Registration

www.losal.org





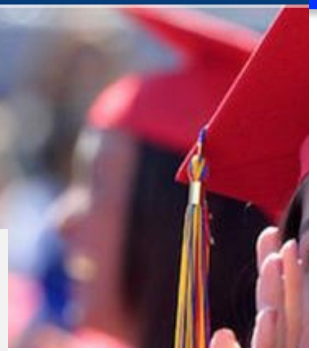


LOS ALAMITOS
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District API 922 - Igniting Unlimited Possibilities for Students!

Our District | Board of Education | Departments | School Calendars | Programs | Shape T

Los Al has a long-standing legacy of excellence in Academics, Athletics, Activities, and the Arts. All District schools have been honored as California Distinguished Schools and Gold Ribbon Schools. With a District API of 922, highly-talented teachers and staff ensure that students a unlimited possi following high s We are honore District Commu



SITE SHORTCUTS

- Superintendent Search
- My School Locator
- Board Agendas & Minutes
- District Priority Goals
- Food Services
- Los Alamitos Education Foundation (LAEF) - Donate Today!
- Job Opportunities
- School News Publications
- NEW - Bus Application and Routes
- District Attendance Boundaries

Consider Taking the bus to Middle School...



ELECTRONIC BICYCLES

Mandatory E-Bike Safety Course

To park an electronic bicycle (e-bike) on the school campus, the e-bike must have a Los Alamitos Police Department registration sticker and the rider must have taken the E-Bike Safety course. The course is offered on the middle school campuses and taught by Los Alamitos Police Department officers.

Both middle schools will offer the course prior to the school year and at the start of the second semester.



California law requires the rider of a Class-III E-bike to be 16 years of age. Therefore, no Class-III bikes can be ridden to, nor parked on a middle school campus.



Bring Your Own Device





BYOD



Los Alamitos Unified School District is committed to assisting students to pursue academic excellence using 21st Century technology tools that prepare them for college and careers in today's global economy. New technology continues to change our world and provide positive educational benefits for classroom instruction. One of our primary District technology goals is to ensure that each user's interactions with technology contribute positively to the learning environment. With this goal in mind, we are implementing Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) within our District. In this initiative, students are encouraged to bring their own technology devices to school to assist their learning experience.

New Mobile Communication Devices Policy (Board Policy 5131.8)

What Families Need to Know:

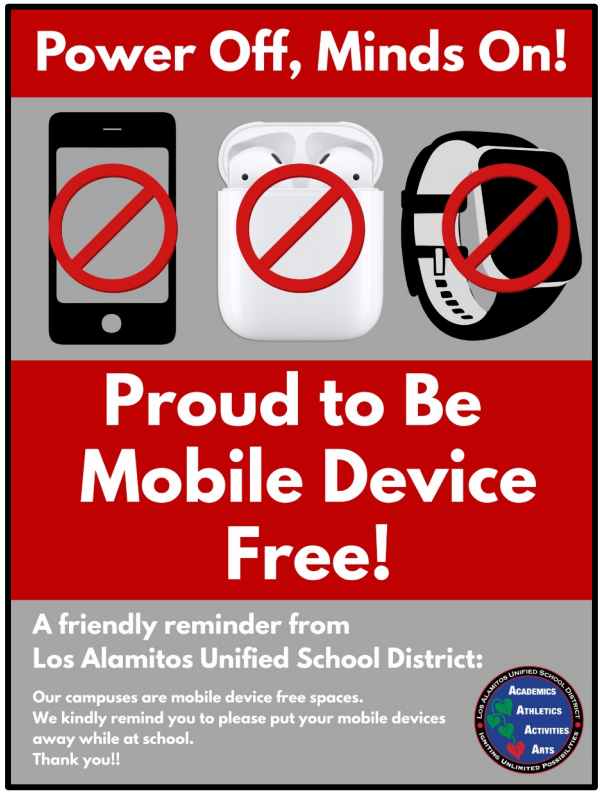
Preschool – 8th Grade (PK–8):

❌ No device use during the school day
✒️ Off and out of sight (backpacks, designated areas)

High School (9–12):

❌ Off and stored during instructional time
✅ Permitted during lunch and passing periods (per school rules)

Please note: If a student needs to get in touch with you during the school day, they are encouraged to use the main office phone. We kindly ask that families avoid texting or calling students during school hours.









www.losal.org

Tonight's presentation will be available for viewing and download on the District website at www.losal.org. Click on the **SITE SHORTCUTS** tab, then **ENROLLMENT** and then select ***Middle School Enrollment*.**

Directly following Q&A:
The Interdistrict Permit Process
LAHS College & Career

LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

IGNITING UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

ACADEMICS ★ ATHLETICS ★ ACTIVITIES ★ ARTS



INTERDISTRICT TRANSFER INFORMATION WEBINAR

JANUARY 29, 2026

REGISTER NOW

CLICK HERE

Discover why families choose Los Alamitos Unified School District. This Interdistrict Transfer Information Webinar offers an opportunity to explore our schools, learn about the transfer process, and hear directly from district staff. We look forward to welcoming your family and sharing how we prepare students for success.

JANUARY 29, 2026 **6:00PM**

REGISTER NOW **WWW.LOSAL.ORG**



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US

Welcome to the Los Al Family!

QUESTIONS?

General Q&A:
Performing Arts Center

Interdistrict Permit Process:
College & Career Center