



— STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK: —

Celebrating Our Stars



A moment to recognize those who make
Ventura Unified School District a great place to work!

≡ **262** **NOMINEES** ≡



Board of Education Recognition and Resolution



Ventura Unified School District

Resolution #26-11

2026 VUSD ALL STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK

May 4-8, 2026

Whereas, classified and certificated employees of the Ventura Unified School District collectively provide an essential network of services that support student learning and school operations; and

Whereas, certificated educators, in partnership with parents, deliver quality instruction; support students' academic and social-emotional growth; foster character, critical thinking, and resilience; and are committed to the success of every student, reflecting the vital role of public education as one of society's most enduring contributions to future generations; and

Whereas, school psychologists, counselors, and mental health clinicians support students' academic, social-emotional, and mental health needs by providing counseling, assessment, and intervention services; responding to crises and supporting students and school communities following critical incidents; and collaborating with staff and families to create safe, supportive school environments that enable students to learn and succeed; and

Whereas, paraprofessionals and instructional support staff serve in classrooms and other educational settings, reinforcing instruction and implementing targeted strategies that support student learning for diverse student populations, including TK-12 students, English learners, children in early learning programs, and students with exceptional needs, while also supporting parent education programs; and

Whereas, health services employees play a vital role in supporting student health and educational success by promoting wellness, responding to student health needs, including ongoing and emergency medical care, and ensuring conditions of health and safety that are essential for learning and full participation in school activities; and

Whereas, numerous employees who support schools perform essential technical, business, accounting, human resources, communications, technology, clerical, and administrative functions at school sites and the district office that directly support operations essential to a well-functioning educational environment; and

Whereas, many school employees perform maintenance, custodial, and groundskeeping services, ensuring safe, clean, and well-maintained facilities and grounds that support access to educational environments conducive to positive learning experiences, while protecting the public's investment in school infrastructure; and



Whereas, many school employees serve as child nutrition services workers, who plan for, prepare, and serve nutritious meals and snacks that promote student health and well-being and support readiness to learn,

Whereas, many school employees provide transportation services, ensuring the safe and reliable transport of students to and from school and school-related activities, supporting school attendance and educational access; and

Whereas, purchasing, warehouse, and publications staff ensure the availability of supplies and materials essential to teaching, learning, and district operations in service to students, staff, and the community; and

Whereas, numerous school employees provide campus supervision through active monitoring of students before, during, and after school; promoting positive student behavior; supporting conflict resolution, and responding to student needs; and maintaining safe, orderly, and secure environments across school campuses; and

Whereas, through their professionalism and expertise classified and certificated school employees contribute to the establishment and promotion of a positive environment for learning and always strive for excellence in all their many jobs; and

THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Education of the Ventura Unified School District hereby recognizes the professionalism of all employees and honors their contributions to the Ventura Unified School District, and recognizes the week of May 4 - 8, 2026 as Staff Appreciation Week in the Ventura Unified School District, and designates

Tuesday, May 5th as VUSD Education Support Professionals Day; and

Wednesday, May 6th as VUSD Certificated Employees Day.

The foregoing Resolution was considered, passed, and adopted by this Board at its meeting on April 28, 2026.

AYES: 5 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT: 0

By: [Signature] Date: 4/28/2026
President, Board of Trustees
Ventura Unified School District

By: [Signature] Date: 4/28/2026
Clerk, Board of Trustees
Ventura Unified School District

Anacapa Middle School



Angela Foley

School Administrative Assistant III

"Angela is the heart of our campus. She leads with care and professionalism. Angela makes people feel welcome & valued! She goes above & beyond to support the classified & certificated staff at Anacapa. She is incredibly flexible, collaborative, and reliable."

Laurie Curtis Abbe

Teacher

"Mrs. Abbe is the gold standard of an educator. Everything she does is focused on improving the lives of students, & society in general. Mrs. Abbe expands the experiences for her students far beyond the classroom & into the real world. She is a teacher I strive to imitate. She will be forever missed from our staff upon her retirement at the conclusion of this school year."

Dawn Whiteford

Attendance Technician

"Dawn is such a warm ray of sunshine. She works incredibly hard for our school and always does so with the best disposition. She is a joy to work with!"

Anacapa Middle School



Katherine Peik

Teacher

"Mrs. Peik is a teacher who is able to meet the students where they are-she has such a big heart, incredible patience and is able to see the student beyond the behavior. She deserves to be recognized for her desire and passion to see students thrive!"



Jennifer Holland

Teacher

"Holland always goes beyond for her students. She implements procedures to help students reflect on and improve their grades and offers up her lunch. She initiated a strategy to monitor and support our D and F 6th grade students."



Heather Carr

Teacher Librarian

"Heather Carr goes above and beyond for our students, staff, and campus as a whole. She hosts House events, AVID lessons in the library, Battle of the Books, runs the library and Onraka social media accounts and is a Canva extraordinaire!"



(Anthony) Omar Thompson

Paraeducator II

"Omar is a kind and thoughtful support to our students at Anacapa. His enthusiasm and willingness to meet each student where they are at is catching! He is a great collaborator and support to our students!"

Anacapa Middle School



Angel Cornelius

Associate Clinician

"Angel exudes care and concern for our students. She goes above and beyond to support them where they are at."



Shannon Lopez

Teacher

"Shannon is a wonderful teacher, the academic rigor in her class is top notch. She sets the bar high for her students & prepares them for 8th grade & beyond. She is a fierce member of the Onraka group here on campus and her house spirit is unmatched!"



Carolina Melgarejo Perez

Paraeducator II

"Carolina is an amazing and thoughtful employee who works proactively with students and staff to provide the best support for her students. Carolina sets high expectations for the students she supports and praises their successes, she is incredible!"



Jose Rodriguez

Teacher

"Jose has a hand in EVERYTHING on campus. He is the ultimate "yes" man & is always willing to help, no matter how crazy the idea is. Students are always at the center of his plans & activities & we are lucky to have him!"

ATLAS K-8 School

Therese Palmisano

Teacher

"Therese is a wonderful teacher and very honest. I feel very easy to communicate with her, she supports colleagues in their life challenges, offers help and is always available for emergencies. For me, I feel blessed to have her around."

Jose Gonzalez

Custodian

"Jose's dedication keeps everything running smoothly. The care and effort he puts in every day makes a real difference for everyone at ATLAS. He recently completed all the set up and clean up ON TOP of his regular duties for our Leadership Night."

Allison Clarke

Psychologist

"Allison works so hard for our students! She has a huge caseload but makes sure to cover all the details and really listen to families and teachers about the students she serves. She is a force for good during what can be a scary time for families."



ATLAS K-8 School



Kim Wilkins

School Administrative Assistant I

"Kim supports EVERYONE at ATLAS - students, families, staff, visitors, and me! Even when things get crazy busy, she shows kindness and patience. We all love Kim!"



Angela Malesich

Teacher

"Mrs. Malesich makes learning exciting and creates a classroom where every student feels seen and encouraged. Her patience, creativity, and kindness leave a lasting impact that students will carry with them for years."



Diana Bullard

Elementary Intervention

"Diana has strengthened our reading intervention program. She always goes above and beyond to help students make meaningful progress towards their goals. Also, she is always willing to offer additional supports to teachers."

Behind-the-Scenes Heroes

Kim Thomas-Kelley

School Nurse

"Nurse Kim is kind and considerate of all students and families. She goes the extra mile to care for her students and colleagues."

Kerry Hornback

Payroll Coordinator

"Kerry can diffuse and explain complicated situations because he really tries to understand the questioner in order to best explain the situation so the questioner can truly understand. I am learning how to be a better human being by sitting near him."

Donald Garcia

Warehouse Supervisor

"Donald Garcia is a highly underappreciated employee of the district and deserves recognition. He is always open to working with others and assisting in solutions that benefit our community. Food and key resources would not move without his hard work."



Balboa Middle School



Amada Castaneda

Attendance Technician

"Amada is a joy in the office, she is able to do ANYTHING from Attendance to SARB to stepping in when the office manager is out on leave. BMS would not be what it is without Ms. Amada!"



Larry Anter

Teacher

"Larry has been a cornerstone of Balboa Middle School for nearly 20 years. Through yearbook, digital media, and athletics, he inspires students to be creative, accountable, and confident. As a dedicated teacher and championship-winning coach, he helps shape Balboa's culture, climate, and school spirit. His leadership, commitment, and positive impact make Balboa a better place for students and staff alike."



Bertha Torres

Paraeducator II

"Bertha has always gone above and beyond for the students and staff. She supports all students and staff academically and socioemotionally. Students feel safe to learn with her and she also celebrates them for their birthdays."



Balboa Middle School



Joanne Marshall

Teacher

"Joanne has faithfully taught our 6th & 8th graders while simultaneously leading the History Department as Chair. She generously helps others be the best teacher they can be."



Dale Lanning Espitia

Teacher

"Dale always goes the extra mile to help her students, often purchasing shoes for students with her own money. She also cares for & celebrates her colleagues."



Emily Zgliniec

Teacher

"Emily is a beloved 6th grade Language Arts teacher at Balboa. All who come in contact with her, walk away enamored with her creative lessons, her care for her students, and her willingness to help other teachers."



Nancy Cook

Teacher

"Her enthusiasm for her subject lights up the room & her ability to reach the students makes them want to come to school."

Balboa Middle School



Amber Howard

Paraeducator II

"Amber goes above & beyond in the special education classroom, showing patience, compassion, & dedication daily. She connects with each student, supports their growth, and creates an inclusive, positive environment where all feel valued and empowered."



Valeria Linares

Teacher

"Valeria has quickly become an outstanding addition to Balboa. In just her second year of Induction, she has shown herself to be a natural teacher and leader who is creative, compassionate, and dedicated to student success. She builds strong connections with students while maintaining high expectations and accountability. Her commitment to her students is reflected not only in their academic growth, but also in their growth as responsible and confident citizens"



Patricia Arcangelo

School Services Assistant II

"Patti came to us this year as a transfer and quickly became an irreplaceable part of our team. One of her many responsibilities is as ASB secretary, a cornerstone to our program's success. We are blessed to have this gem of a human at our site!"



Farah Ali

Teacher

"Farah is a dedicated professional who consistently goes above and beyond for her students, families, coworkers, and department. She is supportive, hardworking, and always willing to help others. Through her professionalism, compassion, and commitment to student success, she is a wonderful role model and a true asset to Balboa."



Balboa Middle School



Sarah Kaikaina

Health Technician

"She is always attentive and quick to respond during emergencies, showing how deeply she cares about the safety and well-being of students."



Mike Hertenstein

Teacher

"Mike has successfully taught our GATE students for years, making Math make sense to all. He helps supervise student behavior & guide our Leadership Team!"



Amelia Patterson

Teacher

"Amelia is a first-year teacher who was dealt a very challenging class schedule for her first year. She has grown, learned, adapted, collaborated, questioned, and risen to the occasion in a very challenging set of circumstances. I'm very proud of her."



Justine Thomas-Tomala

Teacher

"Justine works tirelessly to help our students reach grade-level competence in Language Arts. She also stepped up to teach AVID & coach our Soccer team!"

Balboa Middle School



Ross Bushnell

Teacher

"It has been an honor sharing students with Ross and seeing how he makes his lessons fun, intriguing, and rigorous! Shaka!"



Trinity Kibbee

School Psychologist

"Trinity has gone above and beyond in her position. She had a challenging and large caseload, especially being the only school psych on campus, she supported students and the team with integrity and professionalism. She is a strong asset to the team!"



Sean Mason

Teacher

"Sean is enthusiastic and excited to reach & teach his students. He is always the first to volunteer to help wherever needed!"



Saul Ulloa

Teacher

"Saul is a valuable asset to Balboa! He is hard working & conscientious! He is often the first to arrive & the last to leave. He is always happy and shares with others!"

Behind-the-Scenes Heroes

Joy Viado

Fiscal Specialist

"Joy is a kind, hardworking, and reliable colleague who helps build a strong sense of community within our workspace. She handles countless behind-the-scenes responsibilities with professionalism, grace, and determination, often ensuring our department runs smoothly without recognition. Caring and dedicated, she is truly the glue that connects our team, and we are fortunate for the positivity and joy she brings every day."

Laura Harris

Licensed Nurse

"Laura goes above and beyond for VUSD. She communicates well with the other nurses. She is flexible when it comes to nursing tasks or duties, and she is extremely knowledgeable in school health. I am so glad she is a part of VUSD!"

Tabitha Martin

Lead ESL Interpreter

"Tabitha has truly been our 'chaos coordinator' this year, consistently going above and beyond for our students and school community. She is incredibly involved, dependable, and takes great pride in everything she does. Through her leadership, dedication, and willingness to step in wherever needed, she has made a lasting impact and deserves to be recognized!"





Buena High School

Rikki Jimenez

School Administrative Assistant III

"Rikki is always kind, helpful, and easy to talk to. She consistently offers support whenever assistance is needed and brings a warm, positive presence to those around her"

Marcia Amegadzie

Teacher

"Her consistent positive attitude makes a great difference in a day. Always friendly and welcoming. She makes students feel seen and heard."

Samantha Radwich

Paraeducator II

"Samantha has a tireless work ethic, she is often pulled from her regular assignment to help with the ESN students and she doesn't miss a beat. She is a true team player!"

Buena High School



Eva Harris

Teacher

"Eva goes above and beyond to support her students and families with compassion, wisdom, and care. She created a student pantry and launched a weekly Food Share program, providing a safe and welcoming space where students in need can access free food and support. Her initiative and dedication have made a meaningful and lasting impact on our school community."



Evan Wallace

Campus Supervisor

"He goes above and beyond to make everyone on campus feel seen and valued. He truly connects with students, recognizing them for who they are as individuals. His positive energy impacts our campus!"



Haleh Akhavan

Paraeducator II

"She is a very helpful person and very kind!"



Kara Grabendike

Teacher

"Kara is tireless educator who works with students on not just academics but vocational skills and opportunities as well. She is never afraid of going the extra mile to make sure students feel confident and capable in all aspects of their lives."

Buena High School

Audrey Asplund

Principal

"Dr. Asplund encourages a positive work environment for students and staff. She wants to help struggling students by determining why they are making unwise choices. She's approachable and highlights the positive at Buena."

Dinh Thai

School Services Assistant II

"Dinh always has a smile on her face. She is responsive and helpful. She gets the job done. She has both the administrative skills & people skills that make her a great addition to the Buena team!"

Derek Rusk

Assistant Principal

"Derek is always willing to support the staff when we ask. He stays calm in difficult situations, and works to find solutions to problems. Buena is blessed to have him!"

Michele Burns

Teacher

"Michele is both a supportive math teacher and a track coach. She hold students to a high standard, and she has compassion for our students with disabilities. She's a gift to our Buena team."



Buena High School



Noemi Cruz

School Services Assistant II

"Noemi comes to work with a positive attitude. She is dependable and always willing to help others. She has amazing problem solving skills. She has always been my to-go to person whenever I enter a problem."



Tammy Morin

Teacher

"Tammy quietly works to be sure all of her students can succeed in high school, no matter their learning disability. She is caring, conscientious, and trustworthy. It is a joy to work with Tammy!"



Tiffany Dyer

Assistant Principal

"Tiffany doesn't just talk about problems, she actively works to find solutions. She is hard-working and available to staff. She has great rapport with students. We are blessed to have her at Buena!"



Robin Todarello

Attendance Technician

"In the face of overwhelming workload, she manages to greet students, parents and staff with a smile and bubbly presence all day, every day."

Buena High School



Crystal Cahuantzi

Teacher

"Crystal has the best energy! She always has a smile on and a positive attitude. She is kind and checks on you when she knows you are having a bad day. She is always willing to help. Most importantly, her students LOVE her because she cares!"



Monica Fierro

School Counselor

"Monica Fierro is kind, honest, absolutely amazing and is always ready to help. Thank you for all of your wonderful support!"



Leisea Cardenas

Campus Supervisor

"She helps keep the campus safe, is always present and aware, and deeply connects with the students."



Emily Hebert

Campus Supervisor

"She helps keep the campus safe and is always present and available to help. She also connects with the students and deeply cares for them."

Buena High School

Caleb Kellogg

Teacher

"Caleb has upbeat energy and engages students during class, and even outside of class. He creates opportunities for students to get excited about science through Science League Club, and even creating personal connections with students during lunch."

Laura Sandoval

Paraeducator & Campus Supervisor

"Laura is a wonderful person to have on campus because she keeps an eye on everything and takes the time to connect with students and staff. She is super helpful in the classroom and supportive all around campus. We are lucky to have her!"

Aimee Foster

Teacher

"Aimee is the go to for any questions (students and staff alike). If she doesn't have an answer she goes above and beyond to get that information to you. I feel she is the glue that holds many things together."

Buena Campus Supervisor Staff

Campus Supervisors

"They work hard to get to know ALL of the kids. Even in difficult situations, they work to find the positive to help keep the campus safe. They are proactive and persistent."

Buena High School

David Vallejo

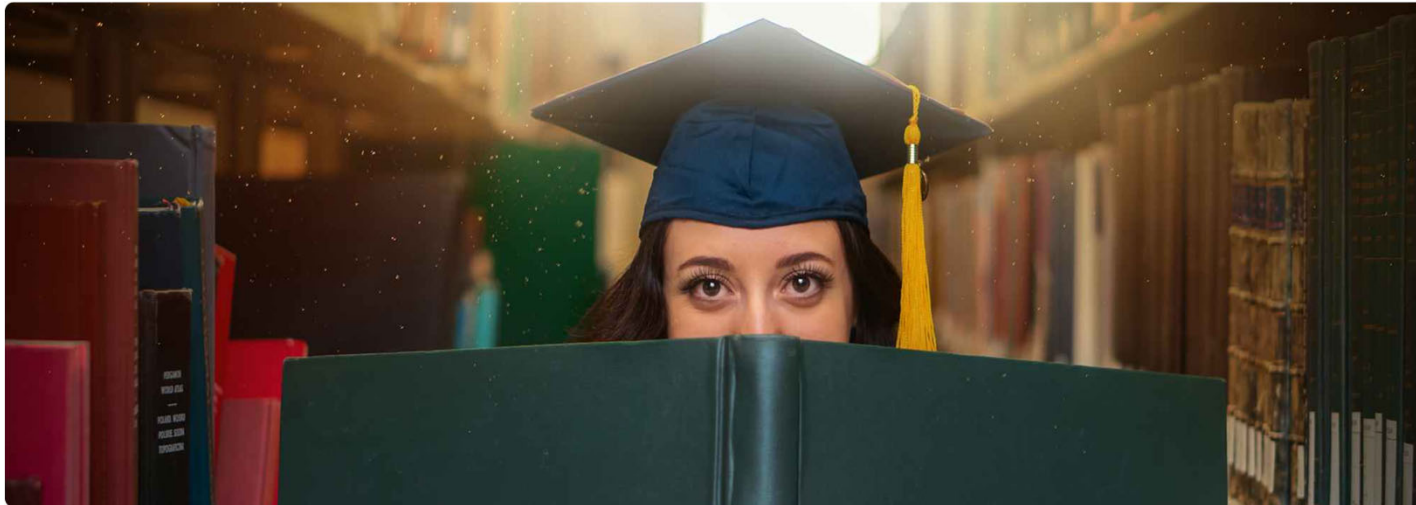
Counselor

"David truly cares about his students, provides counseling to large population, gives individual attention and gives his students the resources they need to thrive socially, academically and be successful."

Mario Velez

Custodian

"Mario is always on top of the game when it comes to making sure our school is looking and running well! I have came to him with a problem in my room, and he fixes it with no hesitation! Thank you Mario!"



Behind-the-Scenes Heroes

Sheri DeJong

Administrative Assistant

"Sheri brings a level of professionalism, dedication, and positivity without which the office of the Director of Secondary Ed wouldn't run smoothly. She is a unicorn!!!"

Sonia King

Accountant

"Everyone who works with Sonia loves her for always being kind, supportive and professional. She possesses great work ethic and positive attitude, and often goes above and beyond to help others when needed."

Danielle Montgomery

Custodian

"She brings a positive attitude and great sense of humor every day, always going above and beyond. Thanks to her dedication, our offices feel safe, clean, and welcoming, making her truly deserving of this recognition!"

Sarah Gluck-Perez

Staff Development Facilitator

"Sarah consistently goes above and beyond to support both staff and students. She is unfailingly positive, supportive, kind, and welcoming, while exemplifying the gold standard of professionalism. Through her thoughtful leadership and dedication, she works tirelessly to ensure students have access to stories that reflect and represent their lived experiences."





Cabrillo Middle School



Mario Boccali

Teacher

"Mario has been an excellent mentor to me. His planning and organization allows for Cabrillo's music program to excel at the highest standard."



Tammy Silva

School Services Assistant II

"Tammy Silva is an outstanding member of our office staff whose attention to detail, patience, and hilarious sense of humor make her a joy to work with. She's a huge Bulldogs fan, & brings both school spirit & excellence to everything she does!"



Joe Dyess

Assistant Principal, Middle School

"Mr. Dyess consistently goes above and beyond to keep Cabrillo safe, welcoming, and running smoothly each day. He supports our campus in countless ways, always stepping in wherever needed with steady care, reliability, and dedication. No matter the task, he approaches it with kindness, respect, and a positive attitude that makes students, staff, and families feel supported and valued. His strong work ethic, dependable presence, and genuine care for others help create the positive and welcoming culture that makes Cabrillo such a special place. We are incredibly fortunate to have Mr. Dyess and deeply grateful for all he does for our school community."

Cabrillo Middle School



Alyssa Knowles

Teacher

"Alyssa is one of the most compassionate, caring, and hard-working counselors in VUSD. I have the pleasure working with her professionally and as a parent of one of her students. Alyssa's students know that an adult on campus cares about them."



Jessica Wright

School Administrative Assistant III

"Jessica is such a calm in the office. Her leadership has helped so much with the transition to Aeries. She is very much appreciated here at Cabrillo."



Nina Koulakoff

Health Technician

"Nina provides supportive care for over 900 students at Cabrillo. She also cares for our diabetic students throughout the day with great care and attention. She is a tireless worker for Cabrillo!"



Nichole Gil-Roberts

Teacher

"Nichole is extremely dedicated towards student progress. She continues to go above and beyond not only for students on her caseload and in the special education department, but for all students at Cabrillo Middle School."



Cabrillo Middle School

Jessica Fernandez

Custodian

"Jessica brings energy & pride to her work every single day, tackling every task with a strong work ethic and a positive attitude. A devoted Dodgers fan, she adds a fun, spirited presence to our campus while always showing up when she's needed most."

Carly Donick

Teacher

"Carly is an amazing colleague and teacher, who works incredibly hard for her students, colleagues, principals, and the Ed Services team. She is extremely professional and knowledgeable and one of the most helpful colleagues I've worked with."

Annie Lao

Teacher

"While Annie is new to our school this year, you would not know it. She's such a natural fit and goes above and beyond to ensure students get the assistance they need. She is polite and encouraging to other teachers as well."

Cabrillo Middle School



Kristen Pekar

Teacher

"Kristen goes above and beyond to be student and teacher centered. She brings joy and life to our classrooms and campus. She is always needed at our helm."



Layne Klopfenstein

Teacher

"Layne goes above & beyond in all categories! She gets to know her students before school starts. Learns their names in the first week of school/ contacts all parents to introduce herself and share about the upcoming year. Pure gold for all reasons!"



Leslie Linton

Teacher

"Leslie has been nothing short of a hero to me this year. She has served as my mentor teacher while I am in induction. She has taught me so much about effective lesson planning, creative designs, and always shows empathy and compassion to everyone."



Scott Lehman

Teacher

"Scott Lehman is a pleasure to work with. While Scott is vigilant about student safety, he brings a lighthearted approach to teaching. He is animated, relatable and easy to talk to. He helps each student realize their potential as a unique individual."

Behind-the-Scenes Heroes

Andrea Buck

Staff Development Facilitator

"Annie is an incredibly hard-working, caring colleague who advocates tirelessly for TK-5 teachers. She is so smart and has so many good resources and ideas, and I feel very lucky to have her on the team!"

Savannah Segovia

Paraeducator II - Itinerant

"I appreciate her dedication and professionalism. She shows up every day and works hard to support a student with significant needs and challenging behaviors, integrating her knowledge with the established program to ensure consistency and progress."

Lorraine Vasquez

Health Services & Prevention Program Specialist

"Lorraine is an amazing team member who brings organization, leadership, and versatility to Health Services. A true jack-of-all-trades, she is approachable, knowledgeable, and always willing to support staff across the team. She leads with kindness, contributes thoughtful ideas, and brings a calm, easygoing presence that makes her a pleasure to work with!"



Citrus Glen Elementary School

Trisha Williamson

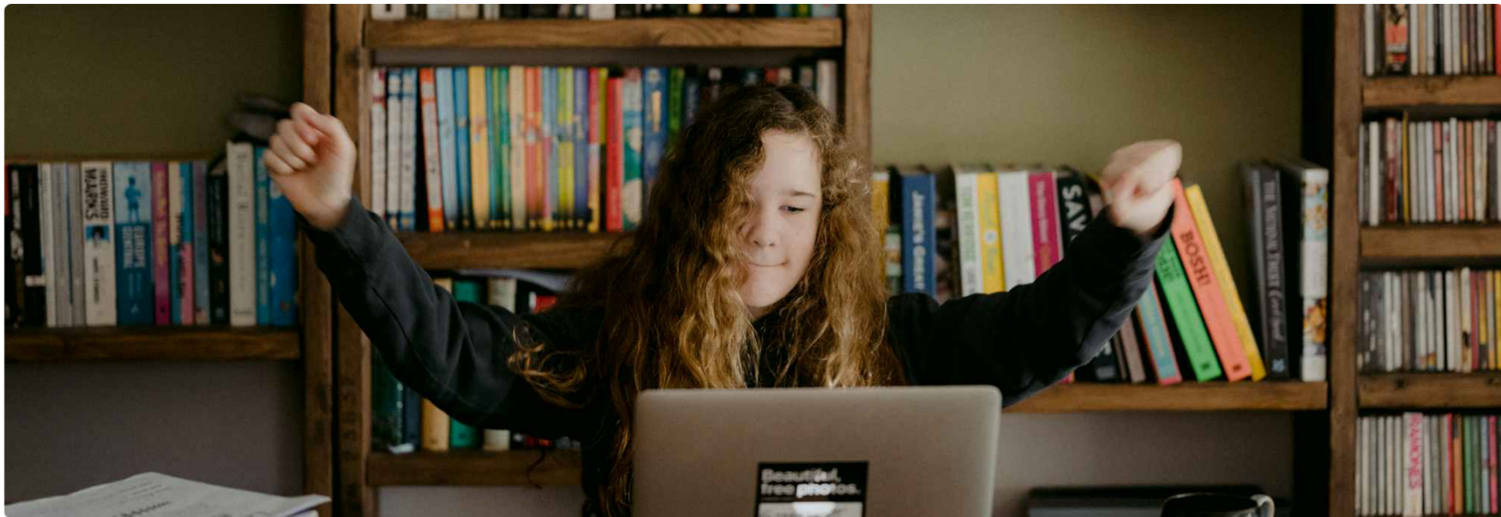
Teacher

"Trisha is a wonderful human being and a very good and experienced 5th grade teacher. I have learned so much from her this year!"

Lisa Abeloe

Principal

"Lisa Abeloe has made an incredible impact at Citrus Glen, creating a positive and supportive environment for both students and staff. She is kind, down-to-earth, and truly listens to her team, making everyone feel valued and heard. Her leadership and genuine care inspire those around her, and many have learned so much from working with her. She is truly one of a kind"





Food & Nutrition All-Stars

Nina Hernandez

FNS Operations Assistant

"Nina is reliable, kind, and always going above and beyond for staff. From preparing daily meals to frequent catering events each week, she does it all with care and thoughtfulness. A visit to the cafeteria to see Nina is truly a highlight of the day."

Kimberley Legeman

FNS Operations Manager

"She is an incredible support to the Food & Nutrition Services team, always willing to help staff and ensure operations run smoothly. Her organization and coordination of substitutes keep things running efficiently, and her positive, supportive approach makes a meaningful difference every day."

DATA Middle School

Dionisio Montanez

Head Custodian

"Dionicio is a dedicated and hardworking custodian who consistently goes above and beyond to support both staff and students, contributing meaningfully to a positive and welcoming environment."

Cara Hazard

Assistant Principal

"Cara is a ray of sunshine that lights up the classroom and office. She has implementing some powerful learning systems and DATA in just one year. Cara is a joy to be around!"

Jennifer Willis

Teacher

"Ms. Willis goes above and beyond to create a positive school culture and community through events, recognitions, dances. She brings a calm presence, builds strong relationships with students, and makes every student feel valued."



DATA Middle School



Monica Lukins

Teacher

"Monica Lukins always goes above and beyond for all her students, families and co workers. I am so grateful to have worked with her for so long and she inspires me every day with her kindness.."



Laura Batausa

Paraeducator II

"Laura always has a bright smile and a willingness to go above and beyond the required job. She also makes learning fun. She is amazing!"



Maddie Hubert

Teacher

"Maddie is the first person to help any student or teacher. She truly cares about the school and it shows in her work."

DATA Middle School

Chelsea Fahl

Counselor

"Ms. Fahl goes above and beyond in supporting our students and staff. She brings deep expertise and genuine care, making everyone feel seen, supported, and valued. Her impact extends far beyond her role, leaving a lasting difference in our community."

Laurel Davidson

Teacher

"Laurel is an exceptional educator, colleague, and friend. Staff often seek out her insight and guidance. She demonstrates a genuine commitment to her students, consistently going above and beyond to support their growth and ensure their success."

Maklynn St. Clare

Teacher Librarian

"Our teacher librarian goes above & beyond to support students & staff with dedication & care. She fosters a welcoming, resourceful space where learning thrives, supports teachers, mentors new staff, and makes a lasting impact on our school community."



Behind-the-Scenes Heroes



Shelley Harter

Staff Development Facilitator

"Shelley works extremely hard and is always curious and eager to learn more. She bears the brunt of support for ed tech, which allows the rest of the team to focus on other issues. Shelley is compassionate and advocates for teachers every day."



Nicole Rodriguez

Behavior Support Assistant

"Nicole goes above and beyond for her students. She truly makes a difference in their lives!"



Jenn Cooke

Lead Nurse

"Nurse Jenn has led Health Services for the past two years with dignity and grace. She is a thoughtful leader, who listens. She has taken on the largest nursing assignment along with her lead nurse position."



Julianna Samoff

Nurse

"Julianna is a compassionate school nurse. She advocates for her students' needs, demonstrates strong assessments skills, thoughtful planning, and communicates with professionalism. She is a valuable team member, and I appreciate her dedication.."

E.P. Foster Elementary School

Natalie Campenella

Health Technician

"Natalie has gotten to know the students and families of EP Foster well. She has cultivated relationships with a positive attitude and communication."

Tanya Arriaga

Teacher

"Tanya stepped into a new position this year with enthusiasm and a positive attitude. I enjoy collaborating with her and admire the high expectations she holds for our students!"

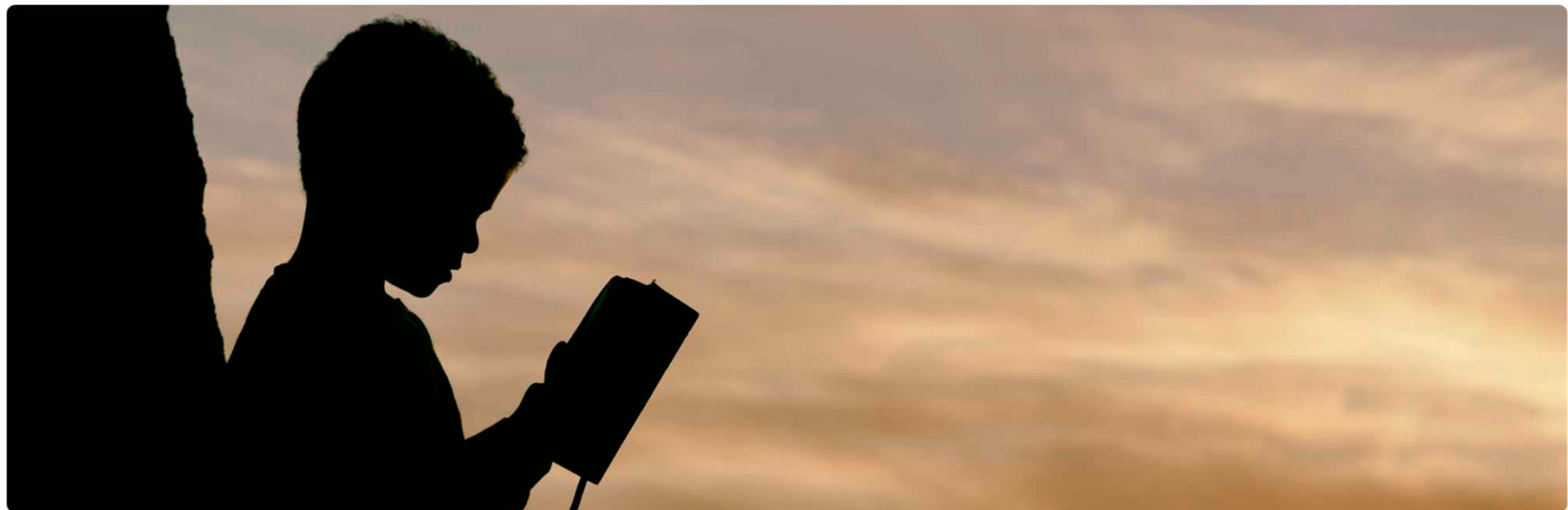


E.P. Foster Jumpstart

Pam Scheier

Child Development Site Leader

"Pam is truly the heart of our school community, and her impact is felt by every student and family she serves. For 30 years at VUSD Jumpstart, she has devoted herself to shaping young lives with kindness, empathy, and unwavering care. She builds genuine, lasting connections with children and families, creating a classroom that is creative, welcoming, and full of love. Her students feel seen, supported, and inspired—and long after they leave her classroom, they still remember her and the warmth she brought to their lives. Even years later, students stop her in the hallway just for a hug, which speaks volumes about the lasting difference she makes every single day."





El Camino High School

Tera Shrum

School Administrative Assistant II

"Tera is the heart of both school communities she serves, balancing the needs of two campuses with grace, efficiency, and unwavering dedication. She is hardworking, incredibly organized, and always ready to help students, families, and staff navigate whatever comes their way. With a heart for service and a gift for problem-solving, Tera can always be counted on to find answers, offer support, and keep things moving smoothly. Her positive spirit, steady presence, and tireless commitment make her not only the best cheerleader for both schools, but truly a one-woman band who makes an extraordinary impact every day."

Kristie Steinlicht

Teacher

"Shoutout to an incredible colleague who brings energy, fun, and purpose to ASB/Leadership while uplifting our school climate. Her insight into student success keeps us focused on what truly matters. Our campus is stronger because of her impact."

Elmhurst Elementary School

Guadalupe Gil-Lara

Paraeducator III/Paraeducator After School

"Ms. Lupe goes above and beyond each day to support our students with unwavering care and dedication. She arrives early to prepare for the day, steps in wherever needed, and never hesitates to do what is best for our SPED students. She loves and cares for our children as if they were her own, and that compassion shines through in everything she does. Her joy in working with students is evident, her positive attitude is contagious among staff, and her ability to adapt and improvise at a moment's notice makes her an invaluable part of our school community."

Jasmine Teigue

Teacher

"She has helped me understand my job more and has been very helpful to me. She is very sweet and trust worthy to talk to. She is another reason why students love coming to school."



Elmhurst Elementary School



Darlene Macias

Campus Support Assistant

"Darlene shows up ready to work and positive. She is ready to help with any task needed. She is a valued member of the staff."



Monique Vallier

Paraeducator III

"She is a para 3 & also our morning greeter at Elmhurst. She greets every student who arrives & makes sure they start their day with a smile. In our class, she also forms connections with even the most challenging students."



Sammie Lopez

Paraeducator II

"Sammie was an incredible help while I was subbing at Elmhurst. She was welcoming and so helpful in the classroom."



Victor Lopez

Paraeducator III

"Mr Victor is my quiet hero in class, with his wonderful gentle, calm manner with our SPED students. The kids gravitate to him because he is friendly and understands their individual needs. I rely on Mr. Victor in my class on a daily basis."

Elmhurst Elementary School

Karissa Hummingbird

Paraeducator III

"Karissa cultivates a happy and positive energy around the campus daily with both students and staff. She loves and cares about each kid and goes above and beyond to help coworkers. She is an outstanding employee and an even better person."

Joseph Duran

Campus Support Assistant

"He is a co worker . He works well with others and a good set of eyes when it comes to monitoring the children on the yard."

Amanda Squiteri

Paraeducator II

"Amanda is not only incredible at her job, she has this way of making every student feel seen and cared for. Whether she's pulling out her ukulele or just showing kindness, she has a way of making everyone's day better. We love that she is an Eagle!"

Ariana Gonzalez

Paraeducator III

"Ms Ariana is amazing with our SPED students, always on her toes, knowing the students' needs and wants. She loves the students and it shows in all she does for them. I couldn't run my class without her."



Educational Therapy and Behavioral Services

Heather Gisler

Licensed Clinician

"Heather consistently brings a positive, collaborative presence to the schools she serves, and goes above and beyond to support students, teams, and families."

Manuel Morales

Board Certified Behavior Analyst

"Manny is proactive and effective in supporting students and school teams with ways to address behaviors within the school setting. He provides the staff with confidence to be able to best manage behaviors and change classroom environments."

Yuridia Barillas

Clinical Supervisor

"Yuri goes above and beyond in her role. She provides thoughtful training and guidance to ensure students receive the support they need while maintaining special education compliance. She brings professionalism and care to both students and staff."

Behind-the-Scenes Heroes

Matthew Burnell

Lead Grounds Maintenance Worker

"Matt brings strong dedication, steady leadership, and a deep commitment to supporting our schools each day. Even while working short staffed and managing a wide range of tasks, situations, and personalities, he consistently finds a way to get things done. His thoughtful organization and prioritization of Grounds work have improved efficiency, streamlined workflows, and strengthened the team's responsiveness to school needs. Matt's reliability, persistence, and determination make a meaningful difference every day."

Pamela Scott

Senior Office Assistant

"Pam has shown exceptional stamina and dedication by supporting custodial scheduling and customer issues for over 8 months during the manager's leave. She is the go-to person the team relies on for help and guidance."

Mark Mayer

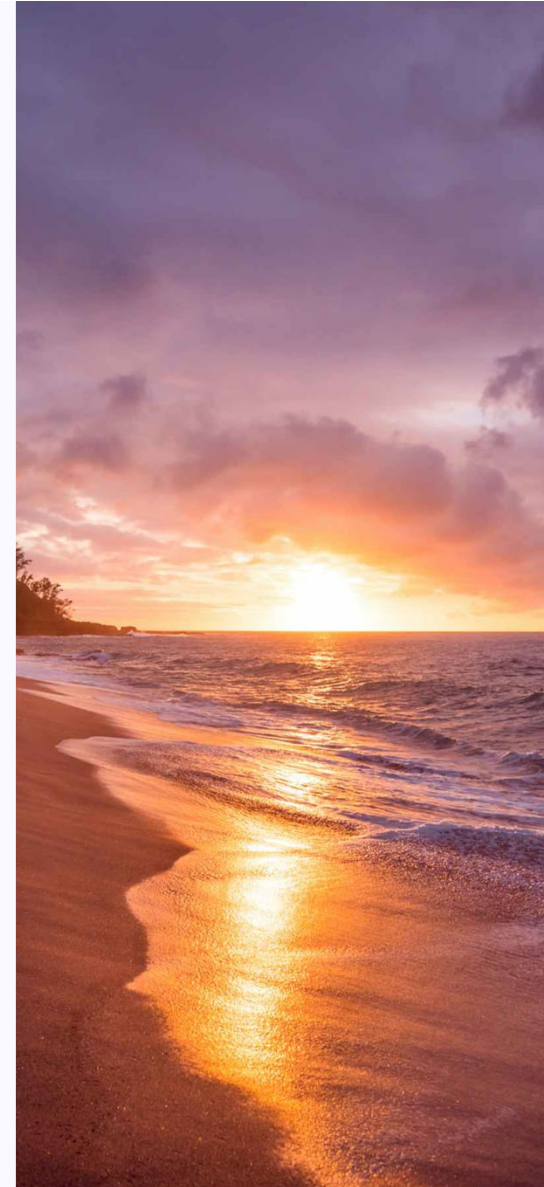
Facilities Manager

"Mark demonstrates strong dedication by responding promptly to all maintenance needs. Principals and teachers value his expertise and reliability. He consistently sets a positive example for his Maintenance team and coworkers."

Bill Renshaw

HVAC-Refrigeration Technician

"Bill is an outstanding HVAC technician whose initiative supports the Facilities program by changing AC filters, monitoring District filter logs, and scheduling with the team. He shares expert knowledge and is highly responsive during and after hours."





Foothill Technology High School

Mario Cardona

Child Nutrition Assistant I

"Mario is a very hard worker. He is dedicated to each and every student. He has a very positive and pleasant attitude And represent the department very well. Mario is exceptional and a great example for others!"

Katie Tedford

Assistant Principal

"Katie is always willing to help with anything, at any time, with such kind and mindful advice. She is professional yet welcoming, and is really one of the most supportive people I have ever worked with. She is my idol in education."

Jennifer Kindred

Teacher

"Mrs. Kindred goes above and beyond to meet every student's needs, ensuring each feels seen and supported. She engages students in literature at their level, bringing English language arts to life."

Brooke Johnson

Teacher

"Brooke is the best teaching partner anyone could ask for! She is all about the students, yet she holds them accountable in the realist way. I couldn't ask for a better work partner to collaborate with!"



Juanamaria Elementary School



Katie Sarak

School Administrative Assistant I - Interim

"Katie has filled in as the office manager for the past 6 months. She is friendly, knows our families and has learned the office manager responsibilities. She is very organized. Always ready to help teachers, parents and students with a smile."



Jessica Gardner

Health Technician/School Administrative Assistant I - Interim

"Jessica has stepped up to help us in the office for the past 6 months. She knows all of our families - friendly and helpful. She is ensuring that students are registered for next year. Always ready to help!"



Stacey Whitaker

Teacher

Mrs. Whitaker goes above and beyond for each of the 15 students in our class, creating a warm, family-like environment where students and staff feel valued and respected. She treats paraprofessionals as equal partners, fosters strong teamwork, and leads with compassion and dedication. Her leadership and advocacy for equitable and inclusive practices positively impact students, families, and staff alike.

Junipero Serra Elementary School

Andrew Hester

Custodian

"Andrew is hard working and takes initiative to go above and beyond. He subs regularly for our day custodian, which is such a blessing! He also communicates wonderfully with staff when there are needs on campus."

Alan Morales

Paraeducator II

"Alan is always willing to do whatever is asked of him. Not only is he reliable, he is kind and compassionate which is exactly what our population of students needs."

Shannon Reveles

School Administrative Assistant I

"If our school were a 30,000-piece model airplane kit, Shannon would be the specialized glue holding it all together—quietly, skillfully, and with purpose. She knows exactly where every piece fits, how it fits, and why it matters. Organized, detail-oriented, and always welcoming, Shannon greets everyone with a smile and supports students, staff, and families with kindness and care. She is a strong advocate for every student, a trusted support to Serra, and someone who has generously guided many new Office Managers over the years. Shannon's steady presence and dedication hold so much of our school community together."



Junipero Serra Elementary School



Holli Munoz

Paraeducator II

"Holli's super power is multi-tasking. She is able to supervise, answer questions, and be there for kids all at the same time. Whenever I am not available, Holli holds down the fort!"



Nikki Duran

Teacher

"She truly cares about every student and goes above and beyond. She even comes in on weekends to prepare her classroom and lesson plans"



Nayelli Topete

Paraeducator After School

"Nayelli shows up every day for her students. She is creative, dynamic and nurturing. There are few teammates better than Nayelli, and she is beyond appreciated."



Junipero Serra Elementary School

Michelle Glenn

Elementary School Services Asst./Health Technician

"Michelle is a valuable team player, dedicated, loyal and passionate about her job as a Health Technician. She cares deeply for the students and staff at J. Serra, always going the extra mile to ensure they are healthy, safe and cared for."

Amanda Jacobs

Teacher

"Amanda is a "see a need, fill a need" member of our staff! Always cheerful and helpful. A true team player!"

Anna Belitski

Principal

"Anna principal leads with kindness, understanding, and deep respect for us as professionals. She ensures staff feel supported and valued, fostering a positive environment. She stands with her staff and leads with strength and care."

Junipero Serra Elementary School

Rhonda Shreffler

Paraeducator II

"Rhonda goes above and beyond her job duties as a paraeducator in the Educational Therapeutic Program. Over the last 8 years, she has helped me build the program into what it is today. My classroom would not be as successful as it is without her."

Paloma Arroyo Munoz

Paraeducator I-TK

"Paloma is a GIFT to our TK classroom and the OCEAN afterschool program. She arrives each day with a smile and is someone who is always thinking ahead to what is next and how she can best support the students and classroom learning."

Maysao Minks

Paraeducator II

"Always ready to help and work with others. Positive attitude and always ready to work."



Lemon Grove TK-8 School



Aundrea Hanlon

Teacher

"Aundrea always goes above and beyond what is being asked of her. She is kind, polite, and a great colleague. She makes students and staff feels comfortable when they are around her."



Darcy Duffy

Teacher

"Darcy has taken it upon herself to create a collaborative, supportive, and fun workplace. She has brought in Renaissance so that this has trickled down to the students too. She is always one to volunteer to make improvements, and jumps in feet first!"



Erin Fraser

Teacher

"Erin has a skill for helping students grow tremendously in their reading and writing skills. She is passionate about treating others with respect and sacrifices her time to educate students on ABAR concepts."



Kati Padgett

Teacher

"Kati is an amazing 6th grade teacher who goes above and beyond each day for all our students. She can plan pull together details for an event on a moments notice. She keeps us laughing and having fun while doing the tough work each day."

Lemon Grove TK-8 School



Julie Crawford

Teacher

"She is a light in Education for new teachers who are emerging within the VUSD. She has been an amazing and supportive mentor teacher and Friend. She's the woman you want in your corner to carry you through even the most difficult parts of the job."



Tanya Toutz-Hager

Teacher

"Tanya consistency and dedication helps students who struggle to be their best self. Her students constantly demonstrates great growth in both ELA and Math year after year. She is a staff member always ready, willing and able to support!"



Sally Hinojosa

Teacher

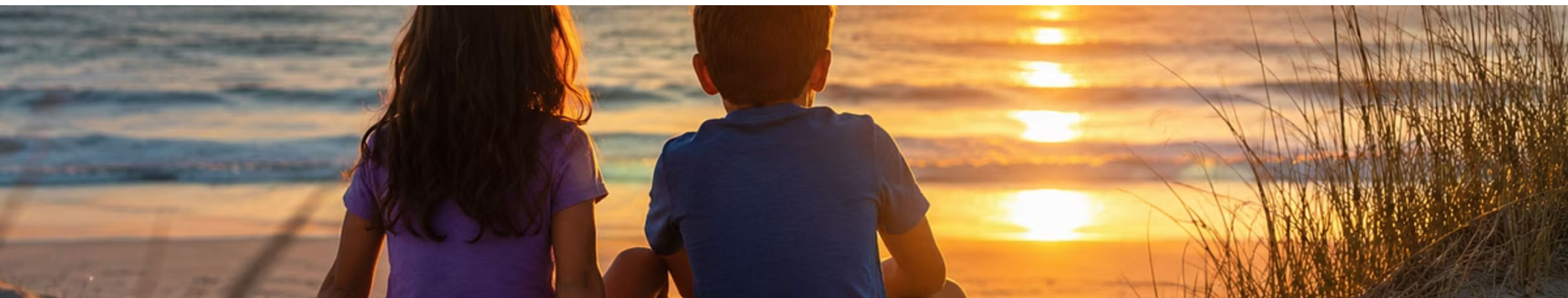
"Ms.Sally goes above and beyond in her classroom and on campus. She will step in when we need an extra hand. She stays late preparing quality work, making sure her students are getting the individualized education they deserve."



Shauna Peoples

Teacher

"Shauna's classroom is calm and steady each day. She has helped students with tremendous struggles through her consistency and accountability. She is passionate about math education and was a great participant in our elementary pilot."



Lincoln Elementary School

Jaclyn Ibarra

Counselor

"Jaclyn repeatedly goes above and beyond her job description to provide the best support for our students, staff and families. She is a unifying force at Lincoln and the Lincoln family is extremely fortunate to have her on our team!"

Francis Morales

School Administrative Assistant I

"In addition to all of the job duties tasked to school admin assistants, Francis manages to sneak in so much more! Francis quietly plays a huge behind-the-scenes role in so many Lincoln events and functions. We appreciate her so much!"

Loma Vista Elementary School

Efrain Castro

Custodian

"Efrain keeps our campus safe and clean. He also helps calm one of our TK DHH students who can struggle with transitions. Efrain will gently take his hand, and walk him back to class."

Mallory Woertink

School Administrative Assistant I

"Mallory serves our entire school community with her whole heart each and every day. With her bright smile, endless patience, and genuine kindness, she makes every person who walks through the door feel welcome, valued, and appreciated. She treats everyone with respect, warmth, and thoughtfulness, creating a positive first impression that sets the tone for our campus. Beyond her caring presence, she keeps things running smoothly with grace and efficiency. Mallory is truly a shining light at Loma Vista, and her impact is felt by everyone she serves."



Montalvo Elementary School

Elia Olmos

Teacher

"I am nominating this teacher because she gives her full effort every single day she comes to work. She is someone all staff can rely on for help and support throughout the year. Her dedication, kindness, and commitment to her work."



Mound Elementary School



Fatima Azfal

Paraeducator II

"Fatima is always smiling and so happy! She is genuine and kind. She is great to work with daily!"



Suzette Jimenez

Teacher - Substitute

"Ms. Suzette Jimenez is a dedicated teacher who takes her job seriously to teach each student to be their best! She loves teaching and it shows! She is making a difference at Mound Elementary School!"



Krestin Tidwell

Paraeducator II

"Krestin Tidwell is a hard worker. She works with each student to help them be successful. She is caring and supportive. She helps where needed. She is always a very nice person to work with!"



Mound Elementary School

Gina Young

Principal

"Gina Young is a truly exceptional principal whose kindness, compassion, and genuine care are felt throughout the entire school community. She leads with empathy, listens with intention, and consistently makes decisions with the best interests of her staff at heart. Gina has a remarkable way of making every staff member feel valued, supported, and like they truly belong. Approachable, thoughtful, and deeply caring, she creates a positive environment where people feel seen, heard, and appreciated. She is an outstanding leader and a wonderful supervisor."

Sarah Horner

School Administrative Assistant I

"Sarah is the kind of office assistant who makes an extraordinary difference in the life of our school every single day. She is kind, caring, humorous, and has a way of making everyone feel supported and appreciated. Whether she is solving last-minute problems, printing what we need when technology fails, putting in work orders, or simply bringing joy to the workday, Sarah does it all with heart and humor. Her support keeps things running smoothly, and her warmth makes our school a better place to be.."

Mound Elementary School

Lailoma Halimi

Paraeducator II

"Mina (Lailoma) has consistently shown up all school year despite challenges. She is very receptive to feedback and is a strong backbone in our autism program. My class could not function without her!"

Talynn Pedroza

Teacher

"Mrs.Talynn Pedroza is one of the best teachers ever! She is amazing to work with and cares and loves each student she teaches! She reaches each student to be their best and to never give up and to be successful!"



MultiLingual-Cultural Department



Eva Gehn

District Translator

"Eva works so hard to accommodate special education case managers. She goes above and beyond to help us in our IEP meetings prior to meetings and after to translate the IEP paperwork for families"



Rosa Salcido

Senior Administrative Specialist

"Rosa is the heartbeat of the office of Multilingual/Multicultural education. Her level of professionalism and know how, along with her deep bench of connections in the community and her work ethic ensure that the office runs smoothly and effectively."



Maria Castano

District Translator

"She juggles meetings, translations, and workshops to ensure families who do not speak English stay informed and heard. Her work keeps our community connected and is essential to making our schools accessible for all."



Robin Jacobs

Teacher Specialist- Indian Ed

"Robin brings such dedication to her position. She works to continuously build her skills and knowledge in order best serve our Native students and families. Her range of responsibilities is incredibly wide and she always rises to the challenge."



OCEAN After School Program



Angeline Bautista

Paraeducator After School

"Angeline is willing to do whatever is needed. She jumps in without being asked to handle a task and works so well with all the kids at every age/grade."



Jamie Smith

Paraeducator After School

"Jamie cares so much about the students and it shows. She often brings in her own resources to give them extra activities or to reinforce lessons. She is always For The Kids!!"

OCEAN After School Program

Paloma Arroyo Munoz

Paraeducator After School

"Paloma is 100% professional with the most kindest heart. All students feel safe and welcome in her presence."

Jeanne Cartier

Paraeducator After School

"Jeanne works hard for our students both during and after school donating time and resources in many areas. She helps with the "star cart", takes time to work with teachers on the lessons s she can help with homework and so much more."

Alexis Galensky

Paraeducator After School

"Always willing to help where ever needed and spend time working on SEL afterschool with kids that need it."

Kathryn Cox

After School Paraeducator Liaison

"Kathryn is just amazing! She is efficient, thorough, and thoughtful in partnering with the site to provide a wonderful after-school program for our students."

Nicole Cardinale

After School Paraeducator Liaison

"Beyond Nicole's daily responsibilities, she is consistently supportive of her team and Nicole's dedication, reliability, and genuine care for both students and staff make her truly deserving of recognition."



Pacific High School



Dianne Fergus

Teacher

"Dianne joined our staff this year, but has made the contributions of someone who has been here forever. From writing new curriculum for a novel study to filling in as a co-teacher for electives, she has gone above and beyond!"



Elizabeth Grande

Campus Supervisor

"Lizz is a steady and trusted presence on our campus, making students feel safe, supported, and genuinely cared for every single day. Whether she is helping maintain safety, stepping in during difficult moments, or creating meaningful opportunities for students through after-school activities, she always goes above and beyond. From making sure students feel confident and cared for at prom to being a safe place for those who need support, Lizz leads with both strength and compassion. Her deep connection with students, calm presence, and firm but gentle approach make her someone students and staff trust completely. She helps our campus feel safer, kinder, and more connected simply by being who she is."



Lorena Garcia

Counselor

"Lorena Garcia consistently goes above and beyond to support students with positivity and genuine care. Both staff and students deeply appreciate her kindness, mentorship, and inspiring presence. She truly deserves this recognition."

Pacific High School

Brandy Chappell

Child Nutrition Manager-Secondary

"Brandy has embraced her role as manager. She engages with all the students at Pacific and goes above and beyond to ensure each student is recognized and well fed. She takes pride in her work and it shows! The students admire her sweet demeanor!"

Suhey Mandujano

Paraeducator I

"Ms. Suhey is a wonderful resource for our students. She creates a safe, welcoming and supportive space where students feel they can be themselves, try new things, and be successful. She's the heart of our team, and I'm so grateful to work with her!"



Pierpont Elementary School



Linda Savard

Paraeducator II

"Linda is an integral part of the classroom community. She is kind, professional, helpful, and caring. Linda is truly dedicated to helping students succeed. optimistic!"



Cheri Colborn

School Administrative Assistant I

"Cheri is amazing! Professional, kind, caring, yet funny! Her sense of humor is contagious! I love visiting with her and laughing about the silly things that happen at school or even our personal lives."

Poinsettia Elementary School

Sarah Mitchell

Teacher

"Sarah is an exemplary professional who is truly extraordinary to work with. Her love of teaching and dedication to our TK students, families and co-workers is inspirational. It is a great pleasure to have worked beside her for the last four years. "

Melanie Morrow

Principal, Elementary

"She works so hard to do everything she can for our students/parents/staff. She is concerned with everyone at our site and has an open door policy to help with every issue brought to her. I love working with her."

Noelle Granillo

Elementary School Services Assistant

"Mrs. G is loved by all students as she is the guardian of our library. She mends them, shelves them, and recommends them. She works hard and I want her to know she is appreciated by all."

Lisa Coert

Campus Support Assistant

"Lisa is always going above and beyond. She has had her hours cut every year, but every minute she is here she is pouring her all into our campus no matter the job. She does this with a smile and wonderful attitude."



Poinsettia Elementary School

**Sara Costello, Farhana Karim,
Josselyne Pereda**

Teacher, Paraeducator II, Behavior Support Assistant

"The staff in Rooms 3, 5, and 13 at Poinsettia are truly amazing and deserving of recognition. They are always kind, patient, supportive, and welcoming, creating a positive environment for students each day. Their teamwork, compassion, and dedication to the kiddos make a meaningful difference and do not go unnoticed."

Mari Alsip

Paraeducator II

"Mari has a natural ability to connect with every child she interacts with. She is dedicated, reliable, and trustworthy, consistently going above and beyond to support her students."



Portola Elementary School

Jennifer Ellison

School Administrative Assistant I

"Without Jennifer our school would not function! Her positive attitude and her ability to stay calm and helpful under pressure is admirable. As a staff, we can always count on her to know the answer or find it!"

Julie Johnson

Teacher

"Mrs. Johnson is 'The Portola Way' personified. Her careful listening and the time she takes to connect and value her students and their families results in her students growing in every way."



Portola Elementary School



Genie Ruby

Paraeducator II

"I just wanted to say how much I appreciate your help every day. You make my job so much easier, and i'm lucky to have you on my team even if it's not in your job duties"



Tawnya O'Neil

Teacher

"Tawnya is an incredible educator and leader who consistently goes above and beyond for both her students and fellow staff members at Portola. She dedicates countless hours supporting students through Cross Country, serves as a committed VUEA Representative keeping staff informed and supported, and plays a major role in organizing Battle of the Books. No matter the responsibility, Tawnya approaches it with passion, dedication, and a genuine commitment to her school community. Her hard work, leadership, and tireless support make a meaningful impact on everyone around her."



Sheridan Way Elementary School

Rosa Santos

School Administrative Assistant I

"Rosa is always willing to help staff members, parents and students as she wears many hats throughout the day. She is genuine and kind to students in the office, and tends to all parent and staff needs with a great attitude."

Luz Perez Cruz

Custodian

"Ms. Luz is always helpful, with a great smile and kind attitude towards all of us"

Alberto Perez

Teacher

"Mr. Perez has made a positive impact on the our campus by helping with his technology skills, covering bus duty, running to figure out audio during whole school events and always with a smile on his face even after his 20+ years of VUSD service."

Irasema Jimenez

Teacher

"Irasema does so much for our school beyond the classroom. After school supervision, updating the website, Saturday Schools, and her ever famous Crafting Club. She connects with students so genuinely, which makes her a superstar on campus."

Special Education Department

Amy Sepulveda

Psychologist

"Amy stands out for her ability to build strong, trusting relationships with students, staff, and families while maintaining a thoughtful and data-driven approach to assessment and intervention.."

Megan Bojar

Speech and Language Pathologist

"Megan's outstanding commitment to student success makes her truly deserving of this. Her dedication, expertise, and compassion help others find their voices and build confidence daily. She consistently goes above and beyond, making a lasting impact."

Marie Hernandez

Paraeducator II- Itinerant

"Marie is a wonderful Paraeducator. She is so patient and kind. The students she gets to work with each day are so lucky to have her."



Special Education Department

Lisa Ayre-Smith

Speech and Language Pathologist

"She is kind and generous. She always works with a smile and shares her homemade cookies with the staff."

Lyci Turner

Program Specialist

"Lyci provides compassion and support to the students and families within the Therapeutic Programs. Parents and school teams have expressed their gratitude for her support navigating sensitive mental health crises."



Special Education Department



Heidi Alhabash

Psychologist

"Heidi is an incredibly hardworking and dedicated leader who consistently goes above and beyond to support both students and staff. Despite managing an overflowing caseload, she still makes time for meaningful individual check-ins and ensures everyone receives the support they need, often working well beyond her contracted hours to do so. She is thorough, compassionate, and a strong advocate for all students. As a mentor and supervisor, Heidi leads with knowledge, care, and unwavering dedication, making a lasting impact on those fortunate enough to work alongside her."



Diana Montes

Senior Administrative Specialist

"She consistently goes above and beyond for her department and plays an essential role in the daily functioning of Special Education. Her hard work, dedication, and reliability do not go unnoticed, and she truly deserves to feel appreciated for the meaningful impact she makes every day."



Roxanne Sonnenschein

Student Data Specialist II

"Roxanne goes above and beyond her job duties. She ensures that our special education department is in compliance so that students receive their services. She assists school teams with compliance issues/concerns with grace."

Sunset K-8 School

Wendy Clyde

School Administrative Assistant II

"Wendy has the biggest heart. Her love of life and of this school are so amazing. She excels in her job. She cares about the students and the staff. She goes above and beyond her job to make this school a community."

Nicole Parrino

Counselor

"Nicole's caring and professionalism are contagious. She makes people feel cared for and follows through. She adds such warmth to our school. She takes time to listen to others. She uplifts the spirit of our school."

Cristal Paniagua

Teacher

"Cristal Paniagua's car is always the last one in the parking lot. She puts in the extra hours to create engaging and hands-on science projects. She also early to tutor her struggling students in math. She is a superstar."

Camille Mendoza

Teacher

"She is an amazing educator, always goes above and beyond to help students. She is a huge advocate for literacy and wants to get students excited to read."





Sunset K-8



Mariam Cornejo

Paraeducator I - Bilingual

"Miriam goes above and beyond to ensure that every student and family feels seen, supported, and cared for. She is a vital part of the Sunset community and someone that students and parents consistently turn to for guidance, support, and reassurance. With her positive attitude, strong communication skills, and deep compassion, she serves as a wonderful bridge for our Spanish-speaking families. Miriam's dedication and caring presence make an immeasurable difference, and our school would not be the same without her."



Susan Guzman

Child Nutrition Manager-Elementary

"Her positive attitude and warm spirit brighten the school each day. She greets every student with a smile, creating a welcoming environment where students feel valued, cared for, and appreciated.."



Chandra Marshall

Teacher

"Chandra Marshall continuously goes out of her way to show up for her students. From organizing dances, creating engaging lessons and making her students feel loved and supported. She always goes the extra mile."

Technology Department

Sharilyn Danebrock

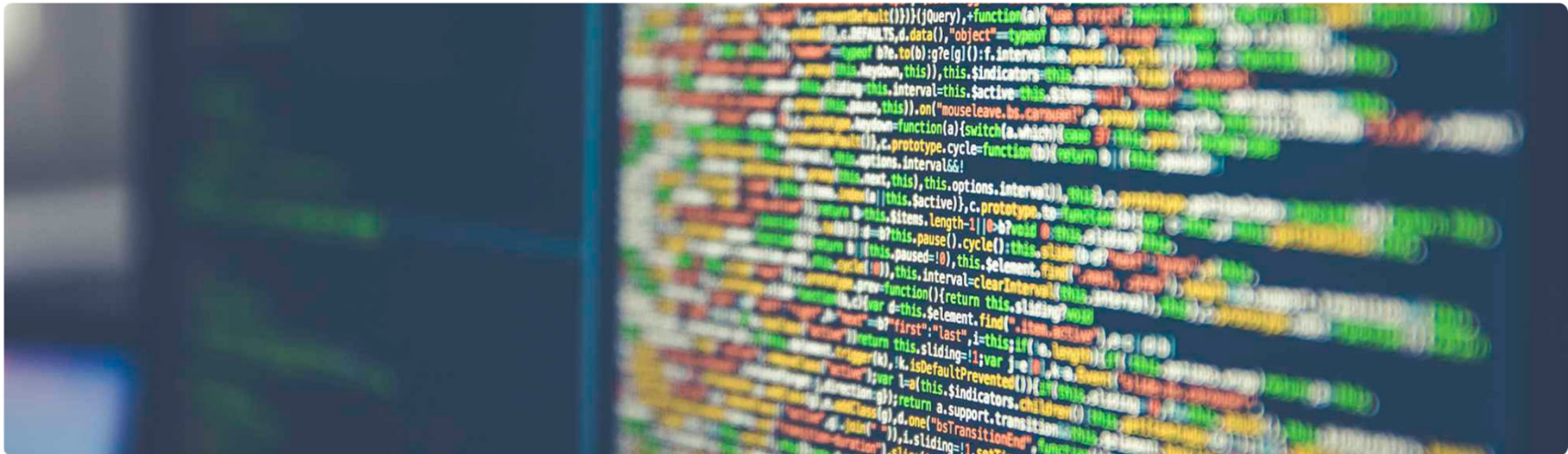
Information Systems Project Coordinator

"Sharilyn is doing the work of 5 people or more, but still finds the time to check in with Ed Services to ensure that, together, we are meeting the tech needs of teachers and students. I am always amazed at how much Sharilyn gets done."

Jesse Yant

Lead Technology Specialist

"Constant positivity, always helpful, never makes you feel your request is silly, doesn't rest until problem is solved, great human all around."





Transportation Department



Michael Hellen, Arie Wiberg, Nancy Zuniga

Transportation

"Thank you for what you do for our student-athletes! You always find a way to make it happen, which is why I deeply appreciate it when you manage to answer my calls. You are true experts at what you do! You help make my job possible!"



John Gustafson

Mechanic II

"John goes over the top to take care of the buses and drivers. He is a huge asset to VUSD and the Transportation dept."



VACE

Tim Oglesbee

Studio Production Assistant

"Tim supports livestreams, sound, and access to board meetings while serving as a strong mentor to student interns. He is always ready to help and quick to lighten the mood with his humor."

Rich Sigerist

Instructor

"Rich is always the first to offer help, even outside his usual role. He supports livestreams, sound, and interns, ensuring board meetings are accessible to those who cannot attend, and makes a lasting impact on our district."

Joslynn Browne

Instructor

"She works tirelessly to help her students, with creativity and kindness. She puts in the extra time and effort to customize learning plans for a diverse populations of ages and backgrounds. Her unique skills have helped our students thrive, succeed."

Carla Valdez

Instructor

"Carla inspires hope and possibility in every student and staff member. As Desmond Tutu said, "Hope is seeing light despite darkness." Carla helps others find that light within themselves."



VACE



Frank Gonzalez

Custodian

"Frank has treated me like a friend when I first started working, and taught me to trust myself when working with the kiddos! He deserves the best and nothing but the best"



Lisa Chapman

School Support Secretary

"Lisa is a constant source of warmth, encouragement, and positivity at VACE. She works tirelessly to create a welcoming and supportive environment where students, staff, and families feel safe, valued, and truly seen. With her nurturing spirit, professionalism, and exceptional organizational skills, she builds genuine personal connections with everyone who walks through the office doors. Lisa inspires students to believe in themselves and creates an immediate sense of belonging that leaves a lasting impact. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment," and Lisa helps make that possible for students every single day through her kindness, encouragement, and unwavering support.."



Jennie Romero

Paraeducator I

"Jennie ensures every student feels seen, valued, and welcomed. As Maya Angelou said, "People will never forget how you made them feel." With Jennie, students feel they belong--and that they can succeed!"



Leticia Murillo

Senior Office Assistant

"Leticia sees possibility where others see obstacles and turns ideas into action. She reflects Arthur Ashe: "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." With her, solutions come to life."



Ventura High School

Ray Morales

Head Custodian

"Ray always goes above and beyond for everyone and does so with a huge smile and positive attitude."

Betty Kelsch

Health Technician

"Betty is a wonderful colleague to work with every day. She is dependable, trustworthy, and excels at her job. She helps students and responds to emergency situations with calm and collaborative thinking. I couldn't ask for a better partner."

Paul Hunt

Teacher

"Paul goes above and beyond in his music program. He has grown our music classes significantly in the last decade and has won prestigious awards throughout the country. Paul also personally knows his students."

Angelina Barajas Juarez

Paraeducator I - Bilingual

"Angelina (Ms. B) is an outstanding bilingual educator who is kind, holds students accountable, shows initiative, and consistently goes above and beyond. She is a hardworking, excellent translator and a safe, trusted adult for many students."



Ventura High School



Emerald Aparicio

School Services Assistant II

"Emerald brings professionalism, kindness, and positivity everywhere she works. No matter the site, she consistently goes above and beyond to support students, staff, and families with a warm smile and a caring attitude. She is incredibly hardworking, always willing to lend a hand, and makes those around her feel welcomed and supported. Her genuine kindness and uplifting presence make her a joy to work with and a wonderful addition to the VHS front office."



Lorilee Johnson

Teacher

"Lorilee deeply cares for our department, supporting our mental health and bringing us together with thoughtful meals. She is organized, timely, and dependable. She takes excellent care of our science team, and her meetings are focused and efficient.."



Ann Griffin

Teacher

"Ann is an incredibly hardworking and flexible educator who always puts students first. She works tirelessly to support students not only in the classroom, but also through credit recovery, TPP, and Saturday School, ensuring they have every opportunity to succeed. Beyond her dedication and strong work ethic, Ann brings a wonderful sense of humor that lightens both the mood and the workload in Special Education. Her caring nature, positivity, and commitment make her a true joy to work with and an invaluable support to students and staff alike."

Ventura High School

Heather Miyata

Teacher

"Heather is an outstanding human being that deserves our praise! She is a huge support to staff and students. She is one of the reasons our school shines!"

Patricia Roberts

Counselor

"Patricia is an unsung hero whose tireless work for students and families often goes unseen. She has made a profound difference in countless students' lives. Patricia will be deeply missed; whoever follows will have incredibly big shoes to fill."



Will Rogers Elementary School



Guadalupe QuezadaFierros

Teacher

"She has made a meaningful impact on our school community through her dedication, kindness, and unwavering support for students, families, and staff. She goes above and beyond to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and encouraged to succeed. Her hard work and experience greatly benefit her students, and she treats them with patience, care, and professionalism. Each day, her students learn and grow through the positive and supportive atmosphere she creates in her classroom."



Sandra Rodriguez

Counselor

"She is an exceptional counselor whose positivity, school spirit, and caring nature uplift our entire campus. She greets everyone with a warm smile and creates a welcoming environment where students and staff feel supported and valued. Always willing to help in any way she can, she consistently goes above and beyond for students and our school community. Her leadership and dedication are also evident in the way she confidently steps up as "teacher in charge" whenever our principal is away."



Yudit Alfaro-Navarette

Teacher

"Mrs. Alfaro-Navarrete at Will Rogers shows exceptional care and dedication. She creates an inclusive space where every student feels supported, helping them build confidence, overcome challenges, and grow academically and emotionally.!"





THANK YOU

WE APPRECIATE YOU

Every role. Every day. Every student.
Thank you for your dedication, compassion,
and commitment to helping all students learn,
grow, and thrive.

YOU SUPPORT STUDENTS

You inspire, encourage,
and help every student
reach their potential.

YOU BUILD FOUNDATIONS

From early learning to
graduation, you help
build bright futures.

YOU STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY

Your teamwork and care
create a welcoming,
supportive environment.

YOU GO ABOVE & BEYOND

Your hard work behind
the scenes and in the
spotlight does not go
unnoticed.

YOU MAKE AN IMPACT

Every interaction.
Every lesson.
Every moment
matters.

Tuesday, May 5th – *VUSD Education Support Professionals Day*

Wednesday, May 6th – *VUSD Certified Employees Day*