

FREE

School News



Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the El Rancho Unified School District
covering the community of Pico Rivera

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012

Marching to a Higher Purpose

Marchando Ahora Por un Propósito Más Alto

By Tony Crocitto
Former Band Parent

The North Park Middle School Marching Band is marching to a higher purpose than before. Instead of entering marching band competitions as they did in the past, North Park has adopted a new style that they refer to as "Embracing Culture and Leaving Others Better Off."

The band began this school year by participating in the Los Angeles Korean Parade. But instead of competing like the other bands, North Park chose to embrace the Korean culture. To get started, the students researched Korea and then built group projects that they later shared with the class. They also ate at a traditional Korean barbecue restaurant. For many of the students, it was the first time they had ever eaten with chopsticks. In the parade, the band was surrounded by Korean flags while

SEE A HIGHER PURPOSE • PAGE 9



North Park Band band, surrounded by 45 United States flags, marched to the music "God Bless America."

La banda de la Escuela Intermedia North Park esta marchando ahora por un propósito más alto. En lugar de competir como lo hacian en el pasado, North Park ha adoptado un nuevo estilo que le llaman "Abrazar otras culturas y dejar a otros con un sentido mejor."

La banda comenzó este año escolar participando en el desfile Coreano en Los Ángeles. Pero en lugar de competir como otras bandas, North Park decidió el de abrazar la cultura Coreana. Para comenzar, todos los estudiantes investigaron Corea y luego compartieron con la clase en grupos. También comieron en un restaurante tradicional de comida barbacoa Coreana. Para muchos de los estudiantes fue la primera vez que habían comido usando palillos. En el desfile la banda estaba rodeada de muchas banderas Coreanas al marchar al son de la música del himno nacional de Corea por las calles del pueblo Coreano en Los Ángeles.

SEE un Propósito Más Alto • PAGE 9

SUPERINTENDENT

Welcome to the first issue of El Rancho Unified School District's *School News Roll Call* Online! With this first edition, we hope to provide you with many of the most recent events occurring in our great school district. Each school and department administrator in the district has written an article highlighting one or more aspects of our work in El Rancho. Through this online publication, we will better inform you of the many outstanding opportunities available for our students on a daily basis.

I certainly hope your 2011 winter break was restful and that you were able to spend some quality time with your children. Working together, we have accomplished a great deal since school began last August. I continue to be very proud of the work employees across the district have undertaken to ensure the success of all students.

SEE SUPERINTENDENT • PAGE 10



Dr. Myma Rivera Cote'

¡Bienvenidos a la primera edición de las Noticias Escolares en Internet del Distrito Escolar Unificado El Rancho! Con esta primera publicación, esperamos proporcionales con muchos de los más recientes acontecimientos que ocurren en nuestro gran distrito escolar. Cada escuela y administrador de departamento en el distrito ha escrito un artículo de uno o más aspectos distinguidos de nuestra labor en El Rancho. Por medio de esta publicación en la Internet, esperamos de informales mejor de las muchas oportunidades sobresalientes que están disponibles diariamente para nuestros estudiantes.

Ciertamente espero que hayan tenido un descanso durante las vacaciones del invierno 2011 y que ustedes hayan podido dedicar un tiempo de calidad con sus hijos. Trabajando juntos, hemos logrado algo grandioso desde del comienzo de clases en agosto. Continuo sintiéndome muy orgullosa de la labor

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BOARD OF EDUCATION



Rachel Canchola
Member

The Best of Times

These are the best of times indeed. The financial challenges we face today and the responsibility to educate 10,000 Pico Rivera students each year certainly are difficult, but not impossible. The challenges we face are heaped on our employees, pushing them to do their best to present well groomed schools and healthy meals, in a clean, safe environment. The librarians, nurses, instructional aides, and maintenance personnel do more with less, and they do this better than any group of people I have had the pleasure to know.

Our teachers are doing their very best at each school and are rarely recognized for their hard work, dedication and long hours of volunteering their time before school, during lunch, and after school. The independence and support our staff has provided to our students has resulted in developing the whole student. Clubs include but are not limited to: Teen Court Club; Entrepreneur Club; Women's Health Club; Gadabouts Travel Club; LINK Crew; Academic Decathlon Club; Choirleers; Chessmasters; and Compadres, just to name a few. The work of our staff is paying off and can be spotted when our students achieve their goals and are successful throughout their lives.

Let's look at just one Pico Rivera family of scholars. Gustavo and Monserrat Marguez are in their senior and junior years respectively at El Rancho High School. They have been educated within our district by attending Durfee Elementary School and North Park Middle School. They have always been at the top of their class and, at the time of this writing, Gustavo has a 4.73 grade point average (GPA) and Monserrat has a 4.62 GPA. Gustavo plays baseball for the El Rancho Dons and is also a member of the El Rancho Academic Decathlon. Monserrat is a member of the LINK Crew and participates in community clean ups and the city of Pico Rivera Christmas basket give away. Both are looking towards attending Yale and Harvard upon graduation.

Many El Rancho alumni return to our district to provide support, guidance and act as role models for our students.

Our community as a whole has not been aware of these bright stars. We have so many success stories that our legacy as an educational facility lives on.

As the budget "triggers" take effect next year and in the years to come, the impact on the education of all our students will be great. Parents, students and our community will be asked to provide more support to our students and staff. Please join our school community because these are the best of times for our community to share knowledge, time, and, yes, money in support of our future.



Kay Coop
Founder / Publisher



We are delighted to be publishing the excellence from the El Rancho Unified School District. After 12 years of publishing *School News Roll Call* I continue to be amazed at the multitude of academic choices for students today and appreciative of the dedicated educators. With the forward thinking of Superintendent Dr. Myrna Rivera Cote' you will receive information directly from the classroom. In this issue you will read of the collaboration of staff, parents and community, which is vital to a successful school district.

Also, included in this issue is a Seek 'n Find Contest on page 6. Simply follow the instructions and email your answer.

School News

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www.schoolnewsrollcall.com

Covering the
EL RANCHO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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Human Resources

9333 Loch Lomond Dr., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5216



John Lopez
Assistant
Superintendent

HR for Human Relationships

As we quickly adjust to the demands of the 21st century, we cannot lose focus on an important "R" in education—not reading, 'riting or 'rithmetic, but relationships. As a classroom teacher at Magee Elementary School, John Lopez promoted building positive relationships with students and parents. These relationships have led to many great accomplishments. He also worked as the dean of students at El Rancho High School for two years, which further solidified his belief in the importance of positive relationships and their impact on student achievement. Later as principal at both Rio Vista Elementary School and

North Park Middle School, Mr. Lopez was able to witness outstanding results through the power of great collaborations between all stakeholders.

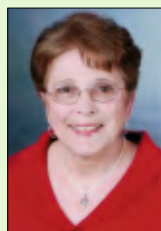
Two years ago, Mr. Lopez accepted a new challenge to serve the district as Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. "It has been a wonderful opportunity to converge all my prior knowledge in business administration as well as my 15 years of experience in education," Lopez shared. "My goal is to continue to strengthen relationships among all stakeholders. As the district moves towards aligning with the Common Core State Standards and the Framework for 21st Century Skills, we will need to give greater emphasis to communication and collaboration. These skills go hand in hand with building relationships, which are critical skills to master as we tackle new challenges in education. Together we can achieve success."

As the district moves towards aligning with the Common Core State Standards and the Framework for 21st Century Skills, we will need to give greater emphasis to communication and collaboration.



Dr. Joseph Rivera
President

BOARD OF EDUCATION



Delia Alvidrez
Vice-President



Rita Jo Ramirez
Clerk



Rachel Canchola
Member



Alfred Renteria Jr.
Member

Educational Services

9333 Loch Lomond Dr., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5208



Susanna Contreras-Smith
Assistant
Superintendent

Strategic Planning Task Force

The first formal strategic plan was developed through a comprehensive planning process that was initiated in the 2010-2011 school year. The Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services established a Strategic Planning Task Force, comprised of teachers, administrators, and staff, for developing the plan with the assistance of an external facilitator. All staff members were encouraged to contribute to the definition of a new vision and mission, which are summarized below.

Vision

Achieving excellence through servant leadership

Mission

The mission of the El Rancho Unified School District Educational Services Division is to empower all students to achieve academic success and develop into critical thinkers by committing to provide equitable educational opportunities, instructional leadership, vertical and horizontal collaboration and high expectations through a rigorous, standards-based curriculum and focused data-driven, systematic professional development.

Strategies Identified (2011-2014)

- We will develop collaborative K-12 learning communities to implement and improve research-based instructional responses guided by data analysis.
- We will develop, communicate, implement, and evaluate the Professional Development plan based on needs identified by the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Plan involving teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals.

Business Services

8910 Slauson Ave., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5294



Lydia Cano
Assistant
Superintendent

Fiscal Outlook

El Rancho Unified School District has experienced a steady decline in student enrollment since the 2003-2004 school year of 1,794 students. This is an average of 256 students a year, which results in a loss in revenue of approximately \$1.5 million each year. The upcoming fiscal year, 2012-2013, will mark the fifth year of sustained reductions in funding for public education. Overall, K-14 funding was cut by nearly 20 percent in 2008-2009, and funding for education in California has remained at or below that level through the current budget adoption for 2011-2012.

State revenue limit funding is the largest funding source for the district; it makes up about 64 percent of the total revenues. The state's fiscal crisis has negatively impacted the district, which has compounded our already reduced revenue due to declining enrollment. These reductions in funding have resulted in a loss of \$40 million over a four-year period. Therefore, the district has already made \$21 million in budget reductions in order to maintain a balanced budget. The district now awaits the revenue forecast from the Department of Finance, as required by Assembly Bill (AB) 114 in mid-December, to see if it will be as disappointing as the Legislative Analyst's Office revenue forecast. Then, under current law, the "triggers" are likely to be pulled and another round of cuts will be made to public education. Should this occur, El Rancho will be faced with an additional cut of approximately \$2.8 million this school year, creating significant funding challenges for the 2012-2013 school year.

Student Services

9333 Loch Lomond Dr., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-4810



Chris M. Gutierrez-Lohrman, Ed.D.
Director

New Director of Student Services

El Rancho Unified School District (ERUSD) is pleased to welcome and introduce Dr. Christopher Gutierrez-Lohrman as the new Director of Student Services. Dr. Lohrman comes to ERUSD from the Orange County Department of Education, where he was the Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA) coordinator.

Dr. Lohrman brings impressive credentials to his new job of overseeing the large and diverse aspects of student services for the district. His academic training includes a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California, Irvine and a masters degree in educational psychology from Arizona State University. Just recently he graduated from the University of Southern California with a doctorate in K-12 leadership in urban settings. Fight on!

Dr. Lohrman hit the ground running in September when he was hired and will bring his expertise to numerous areas of the Student Services Department, including counseling, health and nursing services, educating students with disabilities, child welfare, attendance, and the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative. He is very excited to lead a department that, in the words of Dr. Lohrman, "is dedicated to removing barriers and creating opportunities for students with a variety of needs" in order that they may have the resources for success not only in school, but in their home lives and the community.

The district is privileged to have someone with Dr. Lohrman's educational background and experience. He will serve the district's students and their families well as El Rancho strives to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for some of its most vulnerable children.

Safe Schools, Healthy Students

El Rancho Unified School District (ERUSD) is a 2009 recipient of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Grant Initiative. ERUSD is one of 29 recipients of this highly competitive grant and joins five other school districts in the state of California in receiving the 2009 award. Four hundred and twenty-two school districts around the country applied for this coveted grant.

The initiative focuses on: safe school environments and violence prevention activities; alcohol and other drug prevention activities; student behavioral, social, and emotional supports; mental health services, and early childhood social and emotional learning programs. Through the implementation of SS/HS programs and activities, the district's goal is to reduce truancy, decrease disciplinary actions, and improve student academics. The SS/HS grant is geared towards creating a safe and healthy learning environment for students and their families.



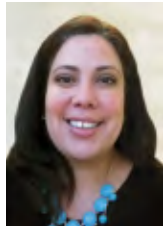
**Students representing the six pillars of Character Counts:
Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship**

The SS/HS initiative draws on best practices of education, justice, social services, and mental health systems to provide integrated and comprehensive resources for prevention programs and pro-social services for youth. ERUSD and its community partners have implemented an integrated, comprehensive, community-wide, and community-specific plan to address the problems of school violence and alcohol and other drug abuse.

For more information please visit our Web site, which can be accessed through the Student Services Department home page or <http://www.spsg-software.com/elrancho/>.

Birney *Elementary*

8501 Orange Ave., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5153 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/birney/default.html



Gisela Castañon
Principal

A Culture of Collaboration

The Birney Elementary School staff members, parents, and community believe “young minds are doing great things,” and everyone is working together so that our challenging curriculum impacts students’ achievement and fosters academic and social growth. We want to see all students achieve. Teachers collaborate to reach this goal.

When teachers are able to meet regularly and collaborate, students benefit. On our weekly modified days every Wednesday, our teachers

meet and discuss student goals, create lesson plans together, and fine tune the instruction that the students are receiving based on data analysis. Teachers also discuss student work with each other and make collective decisions about how to best ensure a high level of learning for each child.

Our school culture began to change due to the continued implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI).

Research has shown that the collaboration among teachers has been identified as one of the factors that has the highest impact on a school’s ability to improve student learning. All the stakeholders at Birney, including students, staff, parents, and the community, benefit from our culture of collaboration.



Teachers working together.



Durfee *Elementary*

4220 S. Durfee Ave., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5070 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/durfee/index.htm



Gloria Lopez
Principal

Setting the Stage for Change

Durfee Elementary School opened its doors to students in 1951. From that time to the present, the greater community has been extremely active. Over the last seven years, Gloria J. Lopez, has been the principal at Durfee. Having been at North Park as assistant principal years before, Ms. Lopez was overjoyed to return to the northernmost part of Pico Rivera. Her connection with many of the families now spans three generations.

Current California Standards Test (CST) results, as well as in previous years, have been disappointing. Holding the community’s hopes and expectations in their hands, the results darkened what the staff had previously achieved. Ms. Lopez and the staff realized they would have to make specific plans for change to occur.

Inspired by the book *Our Iceberg is Melting* by John Kotter, the staff set the stage for change by restructuring instructional delivery and increasing student engagement. Increasing student participation in the learning process will achieve desired student achievement. Moreover, creating a new culture will ensure Durfee will succeed.

Burke *Middle School*

8101 Orange Ave., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5059 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/burkemiddlesch/homepage.html



Mark Matthews
Principal

Great Accomplishments

Mark Matthews was born and raised in Pico Rivera and is a graduate of El Rancho High School and the University of California, Irvine. He taught at Burke Middle School from 1986 to 1993 and at El Rancho High School from 1993 to 2005. In 2005, Mr. Matthews returned to Burke as the assistant principal. Mr. Matthews became principal of Burke in 2007.

Burke Middle School started the year on a high note after learning that our Academic Performance Index score (API) increased from 749 to 771—a total increase of 22 points! Not only did we raise our API, we also made our Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) goals, meeting all federal requirements. This was a great accomplishment by our students, staff, and parents.

In September, Burke Middle School welcomed a multitude of parents and students at the annual Back to School Night. During this event, our teachers introduced the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program to parents. Later that month, the program was kicked off school-wide. Teachers and students have regular class meetings to discuss anti-bullying rules and any concerns students may have.

During the month of October, parents were invited to attend the first Parent Math Night and student-led conferences. During Parent Math Night, parents were given tools needed to assist their children with math at home. Every Monday afternoon, seventh- and eighth-graders model respect and caring by reading books to special needs students at our school. This story time is a truly wonderful event.

El Rancho *High School*

6501 S. Passons Blvd., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5355 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/elrancho/default.aspx



Sam Genis
Principal

Exciting Events

Mr. Sam Genis is enjoying his 31st year in education. His experience includes 12 years as an elementary school teacher, eight years as a middle and high school teacher, and 11 years in administration. He has served the El Rancho Unified School District as teacher, high school dean, and middle school principal, and he presently serves as the principal of El Rancho High School (ERHS).

The year began with lots of great news and exciting events. All 32 students who were administered the Advanced Placement exam in calculus earned passing scores. This was an exciting first for El Rancho High School! Our annual College Night was a great success, with over 1,500 in attendance.

On September 23, ERHS dedicated the athletic field to legendary football coach Ernie Johnson, who coached at the school from 1956 to 1968. Many of Coach Johnson’s former players attended and participated in the ceremony.

On October 11, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan visited ERHS as part of a California tour promoting President Obama’s jobs bill.

Band members Karla Bouche and Paul Espitia were selected as members for the 2012 Tournament of Roses Honor Band.

The Del Rio League honored El Rancho coaches Stacey Salway and Tirrell Wynn as coaches of the year. The girls and boys varsity teams captured a Del Rio League Championship.

Most importantly, ERHS continues to demonstrate improvement in academic achievement.

School News 
Our next issue is March 15, 2012

Magee *Elementary*

8200 Serapis Ave., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5000 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/magee/index.htm



Rudy Ramirez
Principal

Bears On the Prowl

Welcome to the 2011–2012 school year! My name is Rudy Ramirez, and I am entering my second year as the principal of Magee Elementary School, where we are planning for a highly successful school year.

My wife and I have three beautiful children, and we live in the city of Arcadia. My wife is also a school principal, so, as you can imagine, educational issues are constant topics of conversation in our household. I hold a master's degree in education from Claremont Graduate University, as well as a master's degree in educational administration from California State University, Los Angeles.

Magee has literally hit the ground running this year. While our wonderful Magee staff is hard at work ensuring that we deliver the most effective and efficient standards-based instruction, the Magee Cross Country Team kicked off the school year with a very successful school-wide jog-a-thon.

North Ranchito *Elementary*

8837 E. Olympic Blvd., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5031 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/NorthRanchito/index.htm



Cynthia Alvarez
Principal

New Successes

This is my fourth year as principal of North Ranchito Elementary School. It has been an amazing experience getting reacquainted with the school community as the administrator of the same school that I attended as a child. I have had the pleasure of working with students and parents of the El Rancho Unified School District for the past 16 years.

This school year started with many new initiatives. We have revised our District Pacing Guide, implemented new standards-based online report cards, introduced weekly modified days for teacher collaboration, entered our second year of Response to Instruction (RtI), and have put valuable school safety programs in place.

As part of our School Safety Grant, we are in the first year of implementation of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program, which is designed to improve peer relations and make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop. On October 28, we held our program kickoff with our student population, school and district staff, and more than 200 parents. The staff and I are looking forward to the full implementation of this program with the support of our entire school community.

We have hit the ground running and look forward to a successful school year.



Student Council members led our school community in a rally to kick off the Olweus Bully Prevention Program.

North Park *Middle School*

4450 S. Durfee Ave., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5137 • www.northparkms.org/



Kendall Goyenaga
Principal

Preparing Students for Success

In my third year as North Park Middle School's principal, I continue to be humbly honored for the opportunity that has been entrusted to me. For the last 15 years I have called North Park home. Beginning as an instructional aide and science teacher, I have been able to experience firsthand many of the accomplishments of our students and staff. I have been able to see the growth and development that has shaped North Park into a great learning community. Challenges lie ahead of us with the fiscal situation in our state and country; however, I know that we will continue to meet any challenges we face and provide our students with the best education possible. Today more than ever we are faithful in continuing our efforts to become a stronger, more committed, more accountable, and more responsible learning community.

We began the 2011–2012 school year with several goals in mind. First, we want to continue the academic growth and achievement of our students. It is our desire to equip our students with the necessary academic tools to be successful during the middle school years and also to be ready for the grade levels ahead. Secondly, we will carry on with the improvement of our character education programs. We want our students to have the necessary social and emotional resources to function productively in the community. Lastly, we will continue engaging our stakeholders in order for them to become active participants in the achievements of our students. With effort and dedication, we will be able to accomplish and move forward with our objectives and goals.

Rio Vista *Elementary*

8809 Coffman-Pico Rd., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5049 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/RioVista/index.htm



Dean Cochran
Principal

A Successful Start

Dean Cochran received his bachelor's degree in education from the University of New Mexico in his hometown of Albuquerque. Upon moving to California, Mr. Cochran first joined the El Rancho Unified School District as a middle school teacher while earning a master's degree in educational management from the University of La Verne. He later served as an instructional coach and middle school assistant principal prior to his current position as principal of Rio Vista Elementary School.

This December, Rio Vista was as busy as ever. First on the list was to celebrate the learning that had taken place. Rio Vista recognized the hard work of our teachers and students with the first trimester report cards and student awards.

Next, Rio Vista geared up for celebrating the holidays, thanks to a partnership with the Hispanic Student Business Association (HSBA) from California State University, Long Beach. Member Christina Perez, a Rio Vista alumna, contacted the school on behalf of HSBA, which sponsored the kindergarten and first-grade students with a special holiday event, complete with lunch, crafts, gifts and, of course, Santa.

PTO also finished a strong start to the year and sponsored the second- and fifth-grade student evening performances for parents and families.

A special thank you to everyone who made 2011 a success.

Are you
looking for me
for the contest
on page 6?



Rivera *Elementary*

7250 Citronell St., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5095 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/RiveraElem/Welcome.html



Part of the Community

Prior to becoming the principal of Rivera Elementary School, Barbara Keenoy was the district technology resource teacher, a middle school teacher at Rivera Middle School, and an elementary teacher at Valencia Elementary School. Other teaching experience includes Whittier College, College of the Desert, Cerritos College, and Coachella Valley Unified School District.

Barbara Keenoy
Principal

Mrs. Keenoy is a longtime resident of the community, attending elementary, middle and high school in the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District, then college at Cerritos College and California State University, Long Beach. She has two adult children, a daughter and a son.

Congratulations to the students, parents and staff at Rivera for raising the Academic Performance Index (API) to 821. Rivera is the highest achieving elementary school in the El Rancho Unified School District.

Rivera is a technology rich school with this year an iPad2 cart added to the resources available to the teachers.



Rivera students use iPads2 to enhance their education

Ruben Salazar *High School*

9115 Balfour St., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5021 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/slzz/index.htm



Hello and Welcome

I am Reynaldo Reyes, proud Principal at Ruben Salazar High School. Ruben Salazar High School has just completed its second year in its new home at 9115 Balfour Street, formerly the Meller Elementary School campus. Our new, larger location has allowed us the opportunity to expand the curriculum and class offerings. New classes and programs include Apex On-Line Learning, video production, Web design, and Rio Hondo Bridge classes, to name a few. Technology upgrades for both students and instructors include three learning labs, a wireless lab, interactive whiteboards and document cameras for teacher use, and upgrades on technology equipment.

Reynaldo Reyes
Principal

Students have hot lunches with full cafeteria services. The active Associated Student Body (ASB) includes a spokesperson who provides monthly updates to the Board of Education.

Ruben Salazar received a six-year accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and was recently approved as a Model Continuation High School.

On a personal note, I have been employed with the El Rancho Unified School District for 28 years. My experience includes all levels of education: middle school; high school; adult school; and alternative school. I have been the principal at Ruben Salazar for 12 years.

Rivera *Middle School*

7200 Citronell St., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5088 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/Rivera/index.htm



Solution Oriented

I am very proud to have been given the honor of being Rivera Middle School's principal. We work hard at making Rivera Middle School a place that is good for kids. We have been recognized as a California Distinguished School and are all very proud of our students' accomplishments and look forward to many more.

Rivera Middle School has made the following commitment:

- We will not let students off the hook for failing to learn
- We will make students do what is necessary to succeed
- We will not give students the easy way out
- We will give students extra time and support

Andrew Alvidrez
Principal

At Rivera, we are solution oriented. With the assistance of parents, teachers, staff, and students, we provide a safe learning environment that promotes success in all curricular and extracurricular programs. Our goal is to prepare our students for success in a complex society. This requires dedication to being the best we can be. We provide a challenging curriculum based on the state standards, teachers who are dedicated to improving the profession and administrative staff that is focused on supporting the learning community.

South Ranchito *Elementary*

5241 Passons Blvd., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5177 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/sranchito/index.htm



A Positive Environment for All

I am proud to begin my sixth year as the principal of South Ranchito Elementary School. I have a total of 35 years in the field of education, the last 21, as a school administrator in the El Rancho Unified School District.

The South Ranchito community of parents, students, teachers and support staff is an amazing group of dedicated individuals who work together to create a positive environment for all to learn and grow.

Margaret Norman
Principal

Our students have completed their first trimester of a year-long journey to develop themselves as productive citizens and lifelong learners. There are many things to be proud of at South Ranchito, as we are one of two schools in the district implementing full-day kindergarten this school year. In addition, our students are well on their way to achieving their Accelerated Reading goal of one book and one test per week, and the number of parent volunteers in the classroom, as well as in PTA, is at an all-time high.

The surrounding businesses have also reached out to us. A local credit union has selected our school for its annual holiday event, and an international chocolate manufacturer and a local grocery store are donating \$1,000.

We are off to a great start!

Contest!!



This drawing is hidden two times in this publication. When you find it, email the page numbers to: kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com

(Please put **ERUSD** in the subject line)

Your entry must be received by February 15, 2012. From the correct entries, we will draw a winner to receive a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes and Noble. Thank you for reading *School News Roll Call!*

Valencia *Elementary*

9241 E. Cosgrove St., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5079 • www.erusd.k12.ca.us/valencia/ValenciaIndex.html



Roxane Fuentes
Principal

Destined for Great Things

It is my pleasure to say that this is my 16th year working for the El Rancho Unified School District. I began my career as an Advancement Via Individual Determination tutor at El Rancho High School, became a teacher at South Ranchito Elementary School, and have since been an instructional coach and site principal at Valencia Elementary School. I am thrilled to return to Valencia for my eighth year as principal! I am so proud of the many efforts of our staff and parents in providing an academic program based on rigor, relevance, and application so that our students become successful lifelong learners.

In addition to Valencia's focus on academics, our character education program continues to be an integral part of our curriculum. We have implemented Character

Counts! for four years now and have really begun to see changes in our school climate and student behavior. Our students practice their six pillars diligently. As a result, our fifth-grade class had the opportunity to show their caring nature by participating in



Junior/Senior Olympics at Smith Park



Students wearing yellow for the "Respect" pillar during Anti-Bullying Awareness Week.

the Junior/Senior Olympics with residents of El Rancho Vista Convalescent Center this past September. Valencia staff members are also preparing to launch the Olweus anti-bullying program in early spring. We have already begun anti-bullying conversations with our students and held several activities during National Anti-Bullying Awareness Week in November. We are enthusiastically anticipating much success addressing these issues.

I am looking forward to a productive year and know that the Valencia Lightning Bolts are destined for great things!

WINTER WORD SEARCH

- Blizzard
- Boots
- Chilly
- Fireplace
- Freezing
- Frost
- Gingerbread
- Holidays
- Hot Chocolate
- Ice
- Ice Skates
- Icicle
- Marshmallow
- Mittens
- Mountains
- Olympics
- Popcorn
- Rain Coat
- Scarf
- Sled
- Snowboarding
- Snowflake
- Snowman
- Solstice
- Soup
- Toboggan
- Umbrella
- Vacation

E	G	Z	W	S	T	M	S	D	P	M	S	S	Y	E
T	S	N	S	L	D	O	R	R	O	A	B	O	L	L
A	T	A	I	E	A	U	A	A	P	R	Q	U	L	C
L	V	G	S	D	E	N	I	Z	C	S	E	P	I	I
O	F	G	C	J	R	T	N	Z	O	H	K	H	H	C
C	V	O	I	E	B	A	C	I	R	M	A	O	C	I
O	Y	B	P	C	R	I	O	L	N	A	L	L	C	F
H	N	O	M	A	E	N	A	B	R	L	F	I	V	N
C	A	T	Y	L	G	S	T	M	W	L	W	D	A	A
T	F	S	L	P	N	D	K	X	D	O	O	A	C	M
O	R	I	O	E	I	M	I	A	Q	W	N	Y	A	W
H	A	M	I	R	G	B	O	O	T	S	S	S	T	O
P	C	G	N	I	Z	E	E	R	F	E	J	X	I	N
T	S	O	R	F	R	K	E	C	I	T	S	L	O	S
A	L	L	E	R	B	M	U	M	I	T	T	E	N	S

Early Learning Program

Adult School - Room 5, 9515 Haney St., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-2239



Roberta Gonzalez
Principal

Providing the Foundation

On behalf of our preschool teachers and staff, I would like to welcome you to El Rancho Unified School District's Early Learning Program. As a former student, teacher, and elementary school principal in ERUSD, I am so very pleased to return for my fourth year as principal of the preschool classrooms in El Rancho.

As an early educational program, our goal is simple; each day we strive to provide children with a world class preschool experience that will provide them with the foundation to excel academically and become absolutely anything or anyone they desire.



Proud preschooler shares Kandinsky inspired artwork.

This year, we are particularly pleased to undertake the second year of implementation of our new fine arts curriculum. Over the course of the school year, preschool students study the lives and masterpieces of several great artists. To promote oral language development and critical thinking, children participate in "art talks" with their teachers in which they discuss and analyze great works of art from such notable greats as Vincent Van Gogh, Pierre Auguste Renoir, and Wasily Kandinsky.

After learning about the artists and studying their work, children then roll up their sleeves and get to work producing their own masterpieces. Using a variety of materials- such as oil pastels and clay-children produce original work inspired by the style and techniques of the masters they have studied. From three dimensional Native American inspired sculpture, to formal floral still life paintings in the style of Van Gogh,



Preschool students display Native American Kachina dolls

the children's work has been nothing short of phenomenal! As a staff, we are extremely enthusiastic about our fine arts curriculum and are confident that these artistic experiences will help our students develop the oral language and creative skills needed for success in kindergarten!

El Rancho Adult School

9515 Haney St., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/801-5009 • www.elranchoadultschool.com



Chuck Collings
Principal

Welcome

I was born and raised in Pico Rivera, graduating from El Rancho High School in 1972, and serving as a proud educator for this district over the past 16 years, I can say with certainty that El Rancho Unified School District is one of the finest districts in the county. I am equally honored to have been given the opportunity to serve as principal for the district's adult school where I have enjoyed witnessing Pico Rivera's adult community achieve their academic and career transitional goals. Ultimately, the common desire all our students share is to become more productive citizens, and make a better life for themselves and their families.



Mr. Collings congratulates GED recipient, Skyler A. Soltero at the El Rancho Adult School's 2011 Commencement.

New academic and career transitional programs and services are being added every month. Please visit us on our website: elranchoadultschool.com and get "linked to opportunity."

I look forward to seeing you on our campus.

If you are looking for a quality education at an affordable cost, you just found it at El Rancho Adult School!

Are you interested in training or retraining for a new career? Did you know that those with a high school diploma or GED certificate in their hands have a better chance for success in today's competitive work

force? Be ready, be prepared! Our experienced staff can assist you in realizing your academic and career goals.

We are your local neighborhood Adult School. Check us out by making an appointment with our counselors. We look forward to serving you!

The Adult Education Strategic Plan entitled Linking Adults to Opportunity: Transformation of the California Department of Education Adult Education Program is now available at <http://www.otan.us/strategicplanning>. Check it out! Let us know what you think!

APEX Program

3300 Sandoval Ave., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 • 562/463-0258

at Obregon School



James Templin
Coordinator,
Special Education

Dual Enrollment Invaluable

Dual enrollment has proven to be an invaluable tool for our campus which is comprised of students who have unique needs and who are working hard to prepare themselves to return to their home schools. We currently have four amazing students who spend a portion of their day at El Rancho High School while also attending our program for the remainder of their day. This arrangement allows them to experience the activities and culture of a typical high school setting with over 3,000 students while still being able to benefit from the multiple supports and therapeutic nature of our campus. We are grateful for the teamwork and collaboration we share with our neighboring schools and very proud of our students who are working so hard to achieve success in their educational pursuits.



A successful dual enrollment student serving as a role model for our younger students at Obregon.

they marched to the music of the Korean National Anthem through Los Angeles' Korea Town.

In October the band began working towards the Veteran's Day Parade. In groups of four, the students sought out and visited veterans in the community. They wrote reports and created poster-board projects about their visitations. The students were amazed to discover that there are many heroes living in their immediate community. The group presentation day included guest speakers, one of whom was a former drum major of the United States Army Band. The day ended joyfully with an all-American hot dog, lemonade, and apple pie party.

That Wednesday the band split into two concert bands and visited the West Los Angeles Veterans Hospital, where they performed two concerts simultaneously at two nursing homes. The concerts ended with meaningful visitations between the students and the patients. On the following Saturday, surrounded by 45 United States flags, the band marched to "God Bless America." At one point on the parade route, the band stopped for a lonely looking Viet Nam veteran. They turned and faced him and told him that this performance was "just for him." The band students could see tears pouring out from behind his sunglasses.

The fall parade season ended with the band's annual parade at Disneyland. Included in the parade was a very special guest that the band met in 2010. The young girl from Haiti was a victim of the famous Haitian earthquake of 2010. She was crushed by a collapsed building and thought to be dead. But when she was discovered still alive, she was rushed to the nearest hospital available, which happened to be all the way in Philadelphia. In conjunction with the 2010 Carnegie Hall Concert, the North Park band had developed music outreach programs on the East Coast in Harlem, Brooklyn, Baltimore and Philadelphia. They performed at the same hospital where the girl was taken, and after quickly learning the music, she was invited to join the North Park band in the Carnegie Hall concert.

When she was first invited to travel to Pico Rivera, the band thought that she would be pushed in a wheelchair, but the girl bravely insisted that she could march the whole parade route with her artificial leg. So this brave young lady was flown to California at the expense of the North Park Band and proudly marched in the Disneyland Main Street Parade, carrying a Haitian flag, while the band paraded flags from 45 other countries and performed "It's a Small World."

Also included in the parade were children from North Park's extensive community outreach project, in which the students give music lessons to children in homeless shelters, a children's hospital, and facilities for abused children. Included were two homeless children who had survived a kidnapping.

North Park was once acclaimed as a leader in band competitions. They went on a 17-year streak of perfectly undefeated parade competitions. They are the only middle school band to ever march in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade, and they have performed in New York City's Carnegie Hall four times. In 2009 members of the band travelled to China, where they performed and taught music lessons in orphanages. Now, instead of competitions, the band embraces culture through its parade activities, and they leave others better off through their extensive community outreach projects, which include peer teaching and concerts at shelters, hospitals, and senior centers.

There are three key goals of the North Park Band:

1. To enhance the moral foundation of every student.
2. To awaken a sense of life purpose.
3. To call every heart to a higher level of unselfish love.

The El Rancho Unified School District is extraordinarily proud of the message these young students send to all who are lucky enough to have been touched by their three goals.

En octubre la banda comenzó a trabajar para el Desfile del Día de los Veteranos. En grupos de cuatro los estudiantes buscaron y visitaron a Veteranos en su comunidad. Escribieron informes y hicieron proyectos de las visitas que hicieron. Los estudiantes estaban asombrados de descubrir que hay muchos héroes viviendo en la comunidad cerca de ellos. El día de la presentación en grupo incluyó oradores especiales, uno de ellos fue el jefe de la banda del Ejército de los Estados Unidos. El día se terminó alegremente con una fiesta tipo Norteamericana con "hot dogs", limonada, y pastel de manzana.

Luego vino la semana del desfile. Ese miércoles la banda se separó en dos bandas de concierto y visitaron el Hospital de Veteranos en Los Ángeles donde llevaron a cabo dos conciertos simultáneamente en dos clínicas de reposo. Terminaron los conciertos con visitas significativas entre los estudiantes y los pacientes. Y el sábado, rodeados de 45 banderas de los Estados Unidos, la banda marchó a "Que Dios bendiga a América." Mientras la banda marchaba en la ruta del desfile se fijaron en un veterano de Vietnam que parecía muy solo. Los estudiantes pararon, voltearon hacia él y le dijeron que esta obra era "solo para él." Al tocar "Que Dios bendiga a América," todos los estudiantes de la banda veían las lágrimas que salían detrás de las gafas.

La temporada de desfiles de otoño se terminó con el desfile anual de la banda en Disneyland. En el desfile incluyendo una invitada muy especial que la banda conoció en el 2010. La jovencita era de Haití. Atrapada en el famoso terremoto Haitiano en el 2010, quedó aplastada por un edificio derrumbado y la dejaron por muerta. Al descubrirla todavía viva, la llevaron rápidamente al hospital disponible más cercano – asta Filadelfia. Para el Concierto de Carnegie Hall en el 2010, la Banda de North Park desarrolló programas de alcance musicales en la costa del este, específicamente Harlem, Brooklyn, Baltimore y Filadelfia. Tocaron en el mismo Hospital Infantil donde habían llevado la niña Haitiana, y ocurrió que rápidamente le enseñaron a tocar la música y luego acompañando a la banda de North Park en el concierto de Carnegie Hall.

Cuando de primero fue invitada a Pico Rivera, la banda pensó que tenían que empujarla en la silla de ruedas, la niña Haitiana valientemente insistió que ella podía marchar toda la ruta del desfile con su pierna artificial. Trajeron a esta valiente jovencita a California a costo de la banda de North Park y orgullosamente marchó en el Desfile Main Street en Disneyland, llevando la bandera de Haití, mientras la banda llevaba 45 banderas de otros países y tocando la música "Es un mundo pequeño."

También incluido en el desfile fueron niños del proyecto extensivo para el alcance comunitario de North Park en el cual los estudiantes dan lecciones de música a los niños en alberges para los desamparados, en hospitales infantiles y en instalaciones para los niños maltratados. Participaron también dos niños desamparados quienes sobrevivieron un secuestro.

North Park fue aclamada en tiempo por ser un líder en competencias de bandas. Tuvieron la buena suerte por 17 años perfectos de ser invictos en competencias de desfiles. Es la única banda de escuela intermedia que ha marchado en el Desfile del Torneo de Rosas de Pasadena y han desempeñado obras en el Cargenie Hall de la Ciudad de Nueva York cuatro veces. En el 2009 los miembros de la banda viajaron a China donde desempeñaron obras y dieron lecciones de música en orfanatos. Ahora, en lugar de competencias, la banda abraza cultura por medio de sus actividades de desfile, y dejan a otros con un sentido mejor por medio de sus proyectos extensivos para el alcance comunitario que incluyen enseñar a sus compañeros y conciertos en alberges, hospitales, y centros para la gente de tercera edad.

Hay tres metas claves de la banda de North Park:

1. Aumentar los cimientos morales de cada estudiante.
2. Despertar el propósito del sentido de la vida.
3. Llamar al corazón a un nivel más profundo de amor sin egoísmo.

El Distrito Escolar Unificado El Rancho está extraordinariamente orgullosamente del mensaje que estos jóvenes mandan a todos quienes son afortunados de haber sido tocados por estas de sus tres metas.



Young girl from Haiti

We also appreciate the support of our PTAs, PTOs, parents, and community members. Together we are making an incredible difference for our students.

With the November elections over, I am pleased to welcome Mrs. Delia Alvidrez back to our Board of Education. She has served the district extremely well for many years in many different capacities. I would also like to welcome Mr. Alfred Renteria, Jr. to our Board of Education. Mr. Renteria has been an active participant in numerous district activities for a number of years and is an excellent addition to our governing Board. Saying farewell to Board President Mr. Vincent Chavez has been challenging. We will miss his strong and steady guidance, a guidance we have all depended upon during times when difficult decisions have had to be made. We wish him many years of good health and happiness in all he does.

The El Rancho Unified School District currently educates approximately 10,000 students in eight elementary schools, three middle schools, El Rancho High School, Salazar Continuation School, El Rancho Adult School, and our Special Education campus, APEX. The El Rancho Unified School District has a strong commitment to academic excellence. It is our belief that all students attending our schools can and will learn, achieve and improve scholastically. Our motto, "Quality Education Today for a Better Tomorrow," exemplifies our belief that our students will achieve academic proficiency, acquire interpersonal skills, and develop the expertise to contribute as productive citizens in our society.

El Rancho Unified School District is proud that the primary factor contributing to our success is a shared vision of continuous improvement throughout the organization—from the Boardroom to the classroom and in every department and office. We strive to become a data-driven organization throughout the district—looking at past performance, measuring against internal and external benchmarks and analyzing results. To accomplish this vision, our teachers have taken on a number of new and challenging initiatives this school year. Their hard work and determination are a tribute to their dedication to our students and to their profession. The ultimate goal, of course, is to align our district's policies and our classroom practices to a vision of excellence in all areas.

Unfortunately, California's budget crisis continues to threaten fiscal solvency for many school districts. As we begin 2012, the El Rancho Unified School District faces familiar fiscal challenges. As you know, the funding of public education by the state of California falls short of providing for all of our students' needs. Now we are ringing in 2012 with another declaration of "fiscal emergency." On behalf of the Board of Education, parents and students, I extend my sincere and deep appreciation to all of our employees for their sacrifices. In these difficult budget times, we must continue to all work together to provide our students with the educational programs they both need and deserve. The El Rancho Unified School District never loses sight of its primary focus to center on "students first" decision making and fiscal responsibility in light of the current difficult economic times.

I wish you a very peaceful and productive second half of the 2011-2012 school year!



**Dr. Myma
Rivera Cote'**
Superintendent

que los empleados que a través del distrito han emprendido para asegurar el éxito de todo estudiante. También aprecio el apoyo de nuestros PTA, PTO, padres de familia, y miembros de la comunidad. Juntos estamos haciendo una gran diferencia para nuestros estudiantes.

Al término de las elecciones de noviembre, tengo el placer de darle la bienvenida a la Sra. Delia Alvidrez de nuevo a nuestra Mesa Directiva. Ella ha servido al distrito sumamente bien por muchos años en diferentes capacidades. También le quiero dar la bienvenida al Sr. Alfred Renteria, Jr. a nuestra Mesa Directiva. El Sr. Renteria ha sido un participante activo en varias actividades del distrito por muchos años y es una excelente adición a nuestra Mesa gobernante. Decirle adiós al Presidente de la Mesa Directiva, Sr. Vincent Chavez, has sido difícil. Extrañaremos sus liderazgo fuerte y firme, un liderazgo que todos hemos dependido durante los momentos al tener que hacer decisiones difíciles. Le deseamos muchos años de buena salud y alegría en todo lo que hace.

Actualmente el Distrito Escolar Unificado El Rancho educa aproximadamente 10,000 estudiantes en ocho escuelas primarias, tres escuelas intermedias, Escuela Preparatoria El Rancho, y Escuela de Segunda Oportunidad Salazar, Escuela Para Adultos, y nuestro Plantel Escolar de Educación Especial, APEX. El Distrito Escolar Unificado El Rancho es un distrito con un compromiso firme a la excelencia académica. Creemos que todo estudiante que asista a nuestras escuelas pueda y aprenderá, logrará y mejorará académicamente. Nuestro lema, "Educación de Calidad Hoy para un Mañana Mejor" demostrar nuestra creencia que nuestros estudiantes lograrán la competencia académica, aprenderán destrezas interpersonales, y desarrollarán la pericia para contribuir como ciudadanos productivos en nuestra sociedad.

El Distrito Escolar Unificado El Rancho tiene el orgullo que el factor primario que contribuye a nuestro éxito es la visión compartida del mejoramiento continuo a través de la organización – desde la sala de la Junta Directiva al salón de clases y en todo departamento y oficina. Procuramos de ser una organización basada en datos a través del distrito – fijándonos en el desempeño, midiendo contra los puntos de referencia externos e interiores y analizar los resultados. Para cumplir con esta visión, nuestros maestros han tomado varias de iniciativas nuevas y desafiantes este año escolar. Su labor rigurosa y determinación son un tributo a su dedicación a nuestros estudiantes y su profesión. La meta final, por supuesto, es el de alinear las políticas del distrito y las prácticas del salón de clases con una visión de excelencia en todas las área.

Lamentablemente, la crisis del presupuesto en California sigue con la amenaza para una solución fiscal para muchos distritos escolares. Al partir 2012, el Distrito Escolar Unificado El Rancho se presenta con retos fiscales conocidos. Como se han dado cuenta, la provisión de fondos de la educación pública por el Estado de California no alcanza para proporcionar las necesidades para todos nuestros estudiantes. Estamos por recibir el 2012 con otra declaración de "emergencia fiscal." En nombre de la Mesa Directiva de Educación, padres de familia y estudiantes, les extiendo mi más sincero y gran agradecimiento a todos los empleados por sus sacrificios. En estos tiempos difíciles del presupuesto, debemos continuar trabajando juntos para proporcionar a nuestros estudiantes con programas educativos que merecen y necesitan. El Distrito Escolar Unificado El Rancho nunca pierde de vista el enfoque primario centrado en hacer la decisión que los "niños son primero" y la responsabilidad fiscal en vista de estos tiempos actuales económicos difíciles.

¡Les deseo que el resto del año escolar 2011-2012 sea productivo y lleno de paz!



Visit our website at
www.erusd.org

El Rancho Unified School District

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