

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Anaheim Union High School District



Volume 6, Issue 11

February 2025



Redesigning Schools





Tailored retirement plans to pursue your needs

For more than 30 years, we've helped school employees with their retirement plans, bridging the gap between what their CalSTRS/ CalPERS pensions provide and their retirement needs.

Our SchoolsFirst Retirement Builder Plan offers:

- Traditional 403(b) and 457(b).
- Roth 403(b) and 457(b).
- Complimentary consultations, as many times as you need.

SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION:

Call

(800) 462-8328, ext. 4116, opt. 1

[Book online →](#)



Gary G.
Music Professor

Securities and advisory services are offered through LPL Financial (LPL), a registered investment advisor and broker/dealer (member FINRA/SIPC). Insurance products are offered through LPL or its licensed affiliates. SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union (SchoolsFirst FCU) and SchoolsFirst Retirement Planning **are not** registered as a broker dealer or investment advisor. Registered representatives of LPL offer products and services using SchoolsFirst Retirement Planning, and may also be employees of SchoolsFirst FCU. These products and services are being offered through LPL or its affiliates, which are separate entities from and not affiliates of SchoolsFirst FCU or SchoolsFirst Retirement Planning. Securities and insurance offered through LPL or its affiliates are:

Not Insured by NCUA or Any Other Government Agency	Not Credit Union Guaranteed	Not Credit Union Deposits or Obligations	May Lose Value
---	------------------------------------	---	-----------------------

Board of Education



**Brian
O'Neal**
President



**Jessica
Guerrero**
Clerk



**Annemarie
Randle-Trejo**
Assistant Clerk



**Ron
Hoshi**
Member



**Katherine
H. Smith**
Member

Superintendent

Redesigning California Schools: Elevating Student Voice and Purpose in a Time of Declining Enrollment



**Michael B.
Matsuda**
Superintendent

California's public education system is facing a profound challenge: massive declines in enrollment. Between 2020 and 2024, the California Department of Education reported a loss of over 400,000 students statewide. While the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, expensive housing, changing demographics, and the rise of alternative education models are often cited as causes, these shifts call for a fundamental rethinking of how we approach schooling.

School closures and consolidations may seem like an inevitable response, but these short-term measures should not define our path forward. Instead, this moment presents a unique opportunity to engage in a comprehensive redesign of our schools—one that centers on elevating student voice, ensuring a sense of belonging, addressing adolescent mental health, and cultivating for students a greater sense of purpose. By empowering students not only to participate in their education but to connect their learning with personal goals and career aspirations, we can build schools that are more engaging, more inclusive, and more future-ready.

The Learning Policy Institute (LPI) offers a roadmap for this redesign. In its report, "Redesigning High Schools-10 Features for Success," LPI emphasizes the importance of creating schools that address the whole child—academically, socially, emotionally, and developmentally. These principles align with the work we are doing at the Anaheim Union High School District (AUHSD), where we've embraced an integrated approach that amplifies student voice, promotes mental health, and helps students discover and pursue their purpose through college and career pathways. As we approach a merger of two of our secondary schools, we are using the Ten Features report as a guide to move from a factory model design to one that creates new opportunities for students to be well known and well supported as they engage in deeper learning.

LPI stresses that declining enrollment is not just a logistical problem—it is a chance to rethink the role and structure of education. LPI recommends several evidence-based strategies for redesigning schools, including personalized learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and the integration of social-emotional learning (SEL). These are made possible by the creation of smaller learning communities within schools; teaching teams that take responsibility for a shared group of students with collaboration time to focus on their needs; and advisory systems that ensure every student has a close advisor and advocate, every family has a strong connection to the school, and all students receive the academic, social, and emotional care and attention they need. These strategies provide a path forward for both large schools and schools with smaller student populations to offer more individualized, student-centered learning experiences.

In addition, partnerships with higher education, including community colleges that offer relevant dual credit courses aligned with career pathways, also play a crucial role in supporting these redesigned educational environments. These strategies provide a path forward for both large schools and schools with smaller student populations to offer more individualized, student-centered learning experiences. Alongside these structures for more effective caring, the focus should shift from standardized testing to nurturing critical thinking, creativity, applied problem solving, and emotional well-being.

When we reopen a single school as a merger of two previously separate schools, we expect it to have many of these features implemented in logical sequence over time. The specifics will be worked out by planning teams of educators in collaboration with parents and students. At AUHSD, we see student voice as the foundation of school redesign. By engaging students in the transformation of their schools, we empower them to shape their educational experiences.

See **SUPERINTENDENT** • Page 4



Michael B. Matsuda
Superintendent

The power of student voice goes beyond engagement—it is crucial for addressing the growing mental health crisis among adolescents. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over 40% of teenagers have experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness since the pandemic. Addressing this emotional crisis requires a response that integrates mental health supports alongside academics.

At AUHSD, we've implemented mental health supports across our schools, drawing on the work of Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, a neuroscientist who explores the connection between emotion, social relationships, and learning. Immordino-Yang's research shows that learning is not purely cognitive—it is deeply emotional. When students feel emotionally safe, valued, and connected, they engage more fully in learning.

This insight drives our commitment to creating emotionally supportive environments where mental health services are integrated into everyday school life and class instruction. However, mental health support is just one element of redesigning schools for the whole child. For many students, mental well-being is tied to their sense of purpose—their understanding of how their education connects to their personal interests, goals, and future careers.

Redesigning education also means helping students link their purpose to college majors and career pathways. In today's rapidly changing world, students need more than just a diploma; they need direction and the skills to pursue their passions. Aligning student interests with academic and career opportunities boosts engagement and provides students with the tools they need to succeed beyond high school.

At AUHSD, we've pioneered career pathways programs that allow students to explore fields like cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, digital media, and more. These

programs do more than teach technical skills; they help students connect learning with real-world careers. Through internships, mentorships, and partnerships with local businesses and higher education institutions, students gain hands-on experience in fields that interest them. This helps them understand how their education leads to future opportunities.

In addition, AI-assisted support for teachers as well as students enhance this student-driven approach to instruction and learning, enabling students to take ownership of their education and make informed decisions about their futures.

Redesigning schools in light of declining enrollment is not about scaling down—it's about scaling up innovation, empowerment, and purpose-driven learning. The Learning Policy Institute's recommendations, coupled with AUHSD's experiences, make it clear that the future of education must focus on integrating student voice, mental health, and career readiness into new structures that allow for greater community building and effective caring on the part of adults.

By creating environments where students feel heard, supported, and connected to their purpose, we can address the challenges posed by declining enrollment and lay the groundwork for a more engaged, motivated, and resilient student population. Working with UCLA's Center for Community Schooling and the \$4.1 billion funding from the governor's community school initiative, schools across the state have a unique opportunity to reimagine what schools can be.

California's education system stands at a crossroads. The way forward requires bold thinking, innovative design, and an unwavering commitment to the needs of students. By elevating student voice, supporting mental health, and aligning learning with purpose, we can build a more adaptive, inclusive, and future-ready education system that prepares every student for success in life, college, and career.

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

FOUNDER/PUBLISHER: Kay Coop
562/493-3193 • schoolnewskay@gmail.com
ADVERTISING SALES: 562/493-3193
CONTENT COORDINATOR: Barbra Longiny
GRAPHIC DESIGNER/PRODUCTION:
Emily Ung and Mie Kawamura
COPY EDITORS: Kate Karp, Anna Zappia
SOCIAL MEDIA: Nancy Lueder
Netragrednik by Neta Madison



SCHOOL NEWS ROLL CALL, LLC
P.O. Box 728, Seal Beach, CA 90740
562/493-3193

www.schoolnewsrollcall.com

Copyright © 2006, School News Roll Call, LLC
Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Opinions expressed by contributing writers and guest columnists are their views and not necessarily those of *School News Roll Call*. This publication is privately owned and the right is reserved to select and edit content. The Anaheim Union High School District does not endorse the advertisers in this publication.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION (EC §§200, 220, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973):

The Anaheim Union High School District Governing Board is committed to providing equal opportunity for all individuals in education. District programs, activities, practices, and employment shall be free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, or genetic information; the perception of one or more of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

A copy of the District's nondiscrimination policy is available from the District office or on the District website under Board Policies (Board Policy 8900).

A copy of the District's sexual harassment policy is available from the District office or on the District website under Board Policies (Board Policy 8708).

A copy of the District's Section 504 policy is available from the District office or on the District website under Board Policies (Board Policy 8200).

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Complaints alleging noncompliance with the District's policy of nondiscrimination should be directed to:

Nondiscrimination Compliance Coordinator

Brad Jackson
Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Anaheim Union High School District
501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801
jackson_b@auhsd.us

Complaints alleging noncompliance with the District's sexual harassment policy (Title IX) should be directed to :

Title IX Coordinator (Students)

Lorena Stout
Anaheim Union High School District
501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801
stout_l@auhsd.us

Complaints alleging noncompliance with the District's Section 504 policy should be directed to:

Section 504 Coordinator

Amy Kwon
Director, Learning & Development
Anaheim Union High School District
501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801
kwon_a@auhsd.us



Don't let me go.

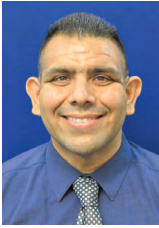
Keep mylar balloons secured and out of power lines.



ANAHEIM
PUBLIC UTILITIES

AUHSD Alternative Education Programs

501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801 • 714/999-3511 • www.auhsd.us



Jose Lara
Coordinator

Peace Mural

Students at Gilbert High School promote peace and unity within the Anaheim community with the celebration of their newly completed CITYarts “Peace Mural” (2024).

The peace wall project began two years ago in an ethnic studies class as a dialogue between students and

their teacher Janelle Frese. Fueled by their investigation of social justice issues inherent in the Leonard Peltier clemency case, students wrote letters, signed petitions, gave speeches, and embraced the opportunity to participate in CITYarts “50 States of Peace” initiative to design a public mural depicting their vision of peace. Students created art defined as “Pieces for Peace” and hosted an exhibition that generated a peace movement.

They enlisted artist Jamie Kough to create their mural which features original artworks from the first exhibit. The story within the mural is a beautiful blend of students’ ideas of peace and hope for a better future. This peace wall represents California in the nationwide CITYarts peace initiative. The ribbon-cutting ceremony held Nov. 14th was a well-attended community celebration highlighting the creativity of Gilbert students.



Educational Services

501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801 • 714/999-3511 • www.auhsd.us



Dr. Jaron Fried
Assistant
Superintendent

AUHSD... Leading the Way!

As the Assistant Superintendent of the Anaheim Union High School District (AUHSD), I am thrilled to share the groundbreaking strides we’re making in education! Our district is revolutionizing learning by seamlessly blending cutting-edge pedagogy, advanced technology, and dynamic learning environments to create interactive and adaptable classrooms. We’re transforming traditional spaces into agile,

technology-rich hubs that support diverse instructional methods, embodying the belief that learning can happen anywhere. At the heart of our educational strategy is an assets-based approach that celebrates community strengths and nurtures each student’s unique potential. This philosophy aligns perfectly with our core values, promoting systems thinking over isolated efforts and highlighting the pivotal role of public schools in strengthening democracy through the amplification of

student voices and the development of critical problem-solving skills.

In our commitment to forward-thinking education, AUHSD proudly hosted the AI K-12 Deeper Learning Summit, bringing together leading national AI experts and K-12 educators from over thirty states. This event explored how artificial intelligence can enhance whole-child education, underscoring our dedication to preparing students for the future. Moreover, as one of California’s pioneering Arts Equity Districts, we are steadfast in our commitment to arts education. In 2017, our Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution ensuring equitable access to the arts for all students, fostering creativity and expression across our diverse student body.

By embracing these innovative approaches, AUHSD is not just redefining teaching and learning—we’re empowering our students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. The future is bright, and together, we’re leading the way!

AIME

501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801 • 714/999-3794 • www.auhsd.us



MJ Cooke
Program Director

Launching Events and Internships

As the New Year unfolds, AIME (Anaheim's Innovative Mentoring Experience) is looking forward to events and internships launching in 2025. One exciting reminder for all students is their ability to earn a custom AIME pin as part of their graduation regalia. This pin symbolizes above and beyond student participation in real-world career experiences and internships provided through the AIME Program.

Open to all Anaheim Union High School District students in grades 7-12, AIME offers a range of work-based learning events designed to help students navigate their future. The events are organized into tiers: Tier 1 consists of a single event, Tier 2 includes a series of two or more events, and Tier 3 offers internships available in Fall, Spring, and Summer. This tiered structure allows students to explore a wide variety of industry sectors, enabling them

to make informed decisions regarding their college and career paths.

AIME's mission is to connect students with local businesses through mentorship and internship opportunities, fostering a community of confident, career-ready, and college-minded individuals. To earn the AIME pin, students must engage in four or more AIME-related events or complete an internship during their time in grades 7-12. Those who meet these eligibility requirements will proudly wear the AIME pin at graduation, with all students receiving AIME participation noted on their AUHSD transcripts.

The AIME pin serves to not only acknowledge students' achievements but also empowers them to delve into their passions, acquire vital professional skills, and embark on successful career journeys. AIME is committed to bridging the gap between education and the workforce, ensuring students are well-prepared for the challenges of the 21st century.

Visual & Performing Arts

501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801 • 714/999-3794 • www.auhsd.us



Brian Belski
*Director
Arts Education*

Strategic Arts Plan

Anaheim Union High School District (AUHSD) is poised to take arts education to new heights with its bold Strategic Arts Plan, set for formal adoption later this school year. This comprehensive, five-year roadmap is the result of collaborative

efforts by nearly 50 stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, board members, students, parents, and community members.



Anaheim HS Band and Colorguard at the AUHSD Band Spectacular.

The plan focuses on three key areas: Content, Infrastructure, and Sustainability. It aims to ensure every student has access to high-quality arts education that fosters creativity, builds transferable skills, and prepares them for success in California's \$650 billion creative economy. Already in progress are efforts to align arts curricula across all grade levels and foster partnerships with professional organizations such as Backhaus Dance, Chance Theater, the Save The Music Foundation, and Laguna Art Museum.

Superintendent Matsuda captured the essence of this vision, stating, "This plan ensures that arts education is not an extra, but an integral part of preparing students to thrive in life. It transforms our students into creators, thinkers, and leaders who contribute to their communities and the broader world."



District dancers at the Collaborative Nutcracker show.

CTE

501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801 • 714/999-3511 • www.auhsd.us



Scott Reindl
Coordinator,
21st Century
Career Readiness

Educating for the Future: Career Readiness in Every Subject

Can an English class shape tomorrow's leaders in cybersecurity or biotechnology? In AUHSD, the answer is a resounding yes, thanks to our approach of embedding career learning across the curriculum.

While all students build career readiness through our focus on transferrable skills, including the 5 Cs (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and character), we are also embedding

skills connected to careers into subject areas such as math, English, and science so students can see how these disciplines are applied to specific industries. This holistic approach ensures that students develop a balance of technical expertise and foundational skills needed for the future.

For example, at Magnolia High School, students in the cybersecurity pathway take Cyber English classes, reading literature and nonfiction connected to the industry and

exploring the ethical concerns around cybersecurity through writing, speaking, and listening. At Anaheim High School, students in the biotechnology pathway take a product development English class in order to better understand the engineering processes behind life-saving biotechnology inventions, as well as science classes focused on lab skills.

At Katella High School, students in the Film and Digital Arts Academy take English classes focused on the film industry, while Walker Junior High School offers art, music, and STEAM classes focused on the impact of Artificial Intelligence, preparing students to continue in the pathway at Kennedy High School. And, at Savanna High School, students take English, science, and history classes focused on the medical field to complement their career pathway learning.

Through these innovative programs, AUHSD is embedding career learning across the curriculum, not only preparing students for career pathways but also equipping them with the versatility to excel in an ever-changing workforce, setting them up for success in their future careers and beyond.

Plurilingual Services

501 N. Crescent Way, Anaheim, CA 92801 • 714/999-3511 • www.auhsd.us

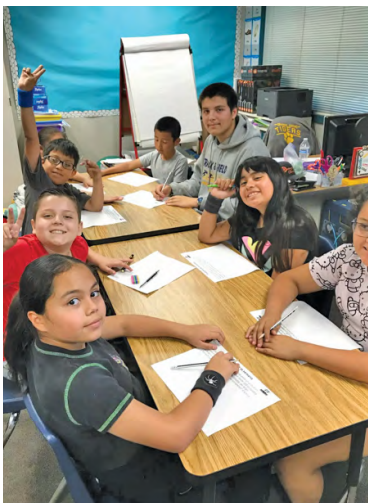


Dr. Renae Bryant
Director

Spanish Dual Language Immersion Rising Seniors as Plurilingual Instructional Assistant Interns

Thanks to a partnership between the City of Anaheim and AUHSD, eight rising seniors from Anaheim HS Dual Language Academy (DLA) served as paid Plurilingual Instructional Assistant (IAs) Interns at Anaheim ESD and Westminster SD. The IAs facilitated small group instruction, read to the small scholars, and assisted wherever

they were needed. Teachers commented on how impactful it was to have the interns there. The elementary scholars shared how "cool" it was to have the interns there as another caring educational figure to assist. The interns all spoke about how significant experience was to serve and use their Spanish skills. These DLA interns are language ambassadors who encourage "the littles" to stay in dual language immersion and keep honing their Spanish expertise, to earn the Pathways to Biliteracy, State Seal of Biliteracy as seniors, and go on to use their Spanish skill in college and careers.



Eight rising seniors from Anaheim High School Dual Language Academy served as Plurilingual Instructional Assistant Interns at Anaheim Elementary School District's Summer Camp and Westminster School District's Summer School.

Anaheim High School

811 W. Lincoln Ave., Anaheim, CA 92805 • 714/999-371 • anaheimhs.org



Ruben Calleros
Principal

Diverse Learning Opportunities and Growth for All Anaheim Students

We live and breathe our school's vision at Anaheim High School, and when it comes to "providing diverse learning opportunities", our special programs are knocking it out

of the park! Need a caffeine boost? The Big 'A' Cafe has you covered! Coffee, tea,

or treats, this coffee cart is 100% student-run. Communication and Collaboration are centered as they put orders together, handle sales, and deliver goods to staff. Across campus, our Autism Focus program welcomes incoming 9th graders in their own version of 'A' Town Arrival. Future students get a glimpse of life at AHS through student-led tours in this unique mentoring program. Speaking of collaboration, the Super Friends,

a collaboration between students from our Independent Learning Center and Special Education classes, meet every Thursday to build bonds and leverage their assets through art and field trips, truly embodying the spirit of Anaheim. At Anaheim, we're proud of each of these amazing, student-driven, programs that bring our vision to fruition!



Ball Junior High School

1500 W. Ball Rd., Anaheim, CA 92802 • 714/999-3663 • ball.auhsd.us



Maryanna Lee
Principal

Design Tech Program

At Ball Junior High School, students are turning ideas into reality through the Design Tech and Essentials of Technology programs. These innovative courses combine art, math, and science to teach students how to bring concepts to life using cutting-edge tools and techniques. By integrating the 5Cs— Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, Critical Thinking, and Character— the

programs prepare students to thrive in a rapidly changing world while building strong connections to their school and community.

The Design Tech program emphasizes both creative design and product creation, allowing students to explore their imagination while gaining hands-on technical skills. Students begin with digital design software to create their ideas, learning the principles of design and real-world tools to refine their concepts into production-ready creations. They bring their designs to life in materials like wood, plastics, and paper, working with advanced tools such as 3D printers and laser cutters.

Last semester highlighted the program's focus on merging culture, technology, and community engagement. Students celebrated Día de los Muertos by designing

decorative skulls and festive artifacts, showcasing their technical and artistic skills while honoring cultural traditions. These projects connected students to their heritage and enriched school-wide celebrations, fostering Citizenship and a deeper appreciation for diversity.

As the holiday season approached, the program shifted focus. Students designed and produced custom ornaments, holiday decorations, and personalized gifts, combining their creativity with technical know-how. The process involved brainstorming, planning, and executing designs collaboratively, while also honing communication and time management skills to fulfill customized orders.

The semester culminated in a holiday sale where students showcased their creations to families and staff. This entrepreneurial experience gave them sales, customer service, and money management experience while reinforcing the importance of giving back—proceeds were reinvested into the program and used to provide Christmas gifts for students in need.

Through the Design Tech program, students at Ball Junior High gain more than technical expertise; they develop compassion, leadership, and a sense of pride in their work. By combining technology with the 5Cs, the school ensures students are equipped to dream big, collaborate effectively, and contribute meaningfully to their community and beyond.

Brookhurst *Junior High School*

601 N. Brookhurst Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801 • 714/999-3613 • brookhurst.org



Gilbert Amancio
Principal

Effective Reading Support

Our peer-based reading program, SPEARs (Spartan Peers Engaging All Readers), was born out of the need for effective reading support, as identified through our school's assets and needs survey, site mapping, and community voice circles. Through shared leadership, the Community

Schools Site Team explored peer reading as a possible strategy to help support our struggling students, while also uplifting our quiet leaders on campus. Together, we brainstormed ideas on recruitment, incentives, and sustainability. Student mentors were recruited from honors English and Book Club. Potential mentees were personally contacted by staff and invited to join. Program completion has more than tripled since last year's

pilot program which is attributed to the relationships students foster with each other that ensures consistent participation. They simply do not want to let each other down. Thus far, 93% of our mentees have reported that their English reading has improved as a result of joining SPEARs and 100% want to participate again.



Cambridge Virtual Academy

830 S. Dale St., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/999-7757 • cambridge.auhsd.us



Hilda Vazquez
Principal

Let's Change the World

Cambridge Virtual Academy is not just ranked as the #2 Best Online Public High School in California and #4 in the nation—it's also leading the way in fostering real-world science experiences that ignite students' passion and curiosity. While many online programs focus solely on academics, CVA goes above and beyond by offering unique opportunities for students to dive into hands-

on activities that apply their knowledge in impactful ways.

This year, CVA students took part in the Forestry Challenge, an immersive four-day experience where they explored forest ecology, identified tree species, and developed strategies for forest restoration. Their teamwork and critical thinking were on full display as they crafted a comprehensive plan to address California's environmental needs.

In addition to in-person experiences, CVA students are making waves virtually through the National Geographic Slingshot Challenge. This dynamic competition allows them to create one-minute videos that tackle urgent environmental issues like forest fires, coral bleaching, and microplastics. Collaborating with experts like Dr. Beck,

a National Geographic Explorer, students are showcasing their innovative ideas for protecting our planet.

At CVA, students don't just learn—they apply their knowledge to change the world.



CVA Students participating in the Forestry Challenge

Cypress High School

9801 Valley View St., Cypress, CA 90630 • (714) 220-4144 • cypress.auhsd.us



Jennifer Brown
Principal

Wellness Center

Cypress High School has inaugurated a dedicated wellness center to support students' mental and emotional well-being. This initiative, driven by student advocacy and supported by district and community partners, addresses adolescents' growing mental health challenges. Mental health challenges among youth have been steadily rising, with the Centers for Disease Control reporting that 37% of adolescents experienced poor mental health during the pandemic years.

Our students expressed a clear need for a space to step away from daily pressures and focus on their well-being.

This wellness center is a testament to their determination and the collaborative efforts of our community. The wellness center offers a tranquil environment for activities such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and quiet reflection. A student-designed check-in and check-out system ensures accessibility, and trained staff, including social workers, are available to assist students in processing

their emotions. Students may visit the space for various reasons—be it personal struggles, academic stress, or feeling overwhelmed; this center provides them with comfort and a chance to reset.

This development builds upon earlier efforts, where a temporary space with minimal resources was utilized. The transformation into a comprehensive wellness center was made possible through partnerships with organizations like Waymakers and the support of the Anaheim Union High School District.

The wellness center aligns with Cypress High School's Veni, Vidi, Vici motto: "I came, I saw, I conquered." At the ribbon cutting, Principal Brown expressed, "My hope is that our students will come to this space, see their

emotions clearly, and conquer the challenges those emotions bring, stepping into each day with the resilience and confidence they need to thrive."

"This space represents our commitment to supporting our students' holistic health," Principal Brown concluded. "It's a gift that promotes true wellness."



Dale Junior High School

900 S. Dale Ave., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/220-4210 • dale.auhsd.us



Rafael Santiago
Principal

Community Collaboration: Monthly Food Distributions at Dale Junior High School Provide Support to Hundreds

Dale Junior High School has partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank to help fight hunger in the local community by holding monthly food distributions. This collaboration aims

to support families struggling with food insecurity by providing them with access to important nutrition. Each month, staff, students, and volunteers come together to prepare for these events, during which they serve hundreds of families by offering fresh produce, pantry items, and other necessities.

This initiative not only addresses immediate hunger but also builds a sense of community and support among residents. By working with Second Harvest Food Bank, Dale Junior High School demonstrates the importance of community involvement and social responsibility. Students participating

in this program gain valuable lessons about empathy and the importance of helping others, creating a positive impact in their community. Together, they are making a difference, building a healthier and more connected future for everyone.



Students, parents and staff participate in the monthly food distributions at Dale Junior High School.

Hope School

7901 Knott Ave., Buena Park, CA 90620 • 714/220-4199 • hope.auhsd.us



Louie LeMonnier
Principal

Hope Cheerleading Program: Building Lifelong Memories and Milestones

At Hope School, we pride ourselves on providing students with enriching and empowering opportunities that set us apart as the #1 special education school in America. One standout experience is the opportunity for our students to join the Hope Cheerleading Team. This program fosters personal growth, teamwork, and confidence as students engage in dynamic practices, build lifelong friendships, and perform at a variety of events throughout the year. From thrilling performances

at Homecoming and the Hope Cup to energizing the crowd at school celebrations, our cheerleaders shine as ambassadors of school spirit. Most recently, on Saturday, January 11, 2025, the Hope Cheer team competed at the USA California Regional IV-Cheer competition in Yorba Linda, showcasing their skills and determination in front of an audience of 3,000 people and earning a well-deserved trophy. This incredible milestone is just one of the many ways our students experience growth, joy, and a sense of accomplishment during their time at Hope School. Through programs like cheerleading, we ensure every student has the chance to learn, thrive, and create unforgettable memories that embody the essence of our school's exceptional community.



Katella High School

2200 E. Wagner Ave., Anaheim, CA 92806 • 714/999-3621 • katella.auhsd.us



Chuck Hernandez
Principal

Welcome Freshmen

Katella's Link Crew works hard to make sure their freshmen feel welcome and supported on campus. During the fall semester, Link Crew hosted a freshmen orientation, 2nd quarter freshmen math pull out day, and a December freshmen science cocoa and crafts check in. During the freshmen pull out days, 125 Link Crew Leaders meet with their freshmen to provide a check in on their freshmen's progress in their classes, encouragement to attend school events and games, as well as activities to build community. Katella's Link Crew looks forward to hosting the annual Cruise to Katella for students from South Junior High and Sycamore Junior High. During this amazing event, South and Sycamore students will get to see what Katella has to offer them.



Kennedy High School

8281 Walker St., La Palma, CA 90623 • 714/220-4101 • kennedy.auhsd.us



Poppy Hill-Bonales
Principal

Where the Arts Thrive

Kennedy High School boasts a rich tradition of excellence in Visual and Performing Arts, and the spirit of creativity continues to flourish.

Our Visual Arts department offers a diverse range of courses, from introductory Photography to AP Studio Art. Photography students are pushing creative boundaries with experimental techniques like sandwiched negatives, while honing their digital editing skills. Drawing & Painting, 3D Design, and AP Studio Art classes encourage students to explore diverse mediums and develop unique artistic voices.

The Blarney Stone Theater, revitalized four years ago, has returned to the stage with captivating productions. Following the triumphant runs of “Little Shop of Horrors” and “Mamma Mia,” the troupe is gearing up for the upcoming production of “HadesTown.” This student-driven organization prioritizes personal growth, fostering a supportive environment where students can discover their true selves and translate that self-discovery into powerful performances.

Kennedy’s acclaimed Choir program offers a variety of ensembles, including Concert Choir, Show Choir, and Choir Ensemble. Recent successes include a sold-out “A Frozen Christmas” performance and a highly acclaimed Fall Broadway Show. Our talented students are now preparing

for competition season, with the goal of continuing the tradition of excellence that defines Kennedy’s Show Choir.

The Kennedy Shamrock Regiment Band has enjoyed an historic marching season, achieving numerous first-place awards and qualifying for the Southern California School Band and Orchestra 6A Championships. The band achieved its highest score in over two decades at the Arcadia Festival of Bands and garnered significant recognition for visual performance and color guard excellence. This remarkable success is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our students, staff, and the entire Kennedy community.

For students in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, the arts offer unique opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. IB Film 1 and 2 provide a dynamic platform for students to explore the multifaceted world of cinema. In IB Film, students develop a deep understanding of film as a powerful form of artistic expression, learning to analyze films critically, develop creative filmmaking skills, and apply IB learner profiles such as critical thinking and collaboration. These skills are invaluable not only for aspiring filmmakers but also for students pursuing any academic or professional path.

The Visual and Performing Arts at Kennedy High School provide opportunities for students to develop essential skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration – all crucial for success in college, career, and life.

Lexington Junior High School

4351 Orange Ave., Cypress, CA 90630 • 714/220-4201 • lexington.auhsd.us



Daniel Klatzker
Principal

Exciting Opportunities Ahead for Students!

As Lexington JH approaches second semester, exciting opportunities await our incoming 6th and outgoing 8th graders! To help ease the transition into new schools, Lexington offers a special preview days designed to inspire and inform students about the incredible programs available. All

of the 6th graders from the Cypress Elementary schools moving up to junior high, have a chance to be a part of Lexington JH 6th Grade Day exploring elective programs like band, choir, culinary arts, essentials of technology, speech and debate, and drama. Students will tour the campus, meet teachers, and get a taste of what makes junior high both fun and enriching. Meanwhile, 8th graders will have an opportunity to

visit their future Cypress High School to tour the campus and learn about programs and extracurriculars awaiting them. This sneak peek helps students make informed decisions during registration and builds excitement for the next chapter of their education. We are excited about strengthening ties across our schools, ensuring students feel confident and supported as they move forward in their academic journeys!



Loara High School

1765 W. Cerritos, Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/999-3677 • loara.uhisd.us



Gary Brown
Principal

Loara High School Dedicates Gym and Wrestling Room to Honor Legendary Leaders

On December 17, 2024, Loara High School dedicated its gymnasium in honor of the late Ed Prange, a beloved coach, educator, and mentor. Friends, family, students, and faculty gathered in the Ed Prange Gymnasium to celebrate his 33 years of unwavering service to students and athletes. Emotional tributes highlighted his profound impact on the Loara community.

Additionally, AUHSD approved naming Loara's wrestling room after Dr. John Dahlem, who served as a history teacher, wrestling coach, and principal. During



his 13 years as wrestling coach, Dr. Dahlem led the team to 233 victories, 10 league titles, and a CIF Championship. The Dr. John Dahlem Wrestling Room will be dedicated on January 27, 2025, honoring his transformative contributions to Loara's athletics and academics.

These newly named facilities celebrate two extraordinary leaders whose legacies of sportsmanship, leadership, and compassion will inspire future generations of Saxons.



Magnolia High School

2450 W. Ball Rd., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/220-4221 • magnolia.uhisd.us



Aaron Chau
Principal

Class Act

On December 9th, 2024, Magnolia High School was featured on KCAL Morning News as part of their "Class Act" segment, which was hosted by reporter Amanda Starrantino. Every week Class Act features a Southern California high school on the morning show.

Class Act highlighted so many of the awesome things that are happening at Magnolia High School. In the first segment, reporter Amanda Starrantino highlighted Magnolia's diverse student population by showing audience members its many multicultural clubs and organizations that will participate in this year's International Show,

including the Polynesian Club and Vietnamese Student Association. During the second segment, Starrantino highlighted the newly inaugurated Freight Farm at the MACC. Here, viewers got to see how hydroponics work as well as harvest efficiently-grown lettuce. In the third segment, Amanda highlighted the Jan and Ross Billing Innovation Center, with a special appearance from former Superintendent Dr. Jan Billings. In the last segment, Amanda highlighted Magnolia High School's Google Project Management certificate program and Adult Transition program.

Needless to say, Amanda and the CBS news team were blown away by what Magnolia High School has to offer to its student body. [Click here to watch the entire KCAL News: Class Act feature on Magnolia.](#)

Orangeview Junior High School

3715 W. Orange Ave., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/220-4205 • orangeview.uahsd.us



Bindi Crawford
Principal

Congratulations to Sean Fleshman, our Teacher of the Year!

Orangeview is excited to share great news about our move to the Western High School Campus for the 25-26 school year. Through careful planning with our parents, students, staff and community, we are excited to offer our students the opportunity to take advanced classes early, for parents to have a consistent drop off/pick up and school schedule for 6 years. 4 promising practices

will be implemented on the campus to enhance the student experience and make it different from any other comprehensive school experience in our area. Students will be with teaching teams (grouped for core classes) and students will get the opportunity to receive grade level appropriate advisory time where they will build soft skills and come together as a small group with their teacher. Teachers will spend time planning and ensuring real time intervention for students instead of waiting too long through KidTalk. Teacher and students will experience a block schedule which allows for additional instructional time and the ability for students at Western to take 4 more A-G classes, dual enrollment courses, and AIME

opportunities than other surrounding high school students. This will set them apart on college and job applications. We are so excited about positively evolving from the same traditional system that has existed for decades! See you next year!



Oxford Academy

5172 Orange Ave., Cypress, CA 90630 • 714/220-3055 • oxford.uahsd.us



Amber Houston
Principal

Oxford Students Making the News

We are proud to receive the AP Platinum Access Award for the second year in a row! Only 7% of schools in the United States and Canada qualify for this esteemed honor. This award honors our school that demonstrates a clear and effective commitment to equitable access to advanced coursework. We had 100% of our graduating cohort take at least 1 AP

exam during high school; with the majority taking up to 5 or more. In addition, we needed 25% or more of our graduating cohort to score a 3 or higher on at least one exam. I am proud to say we had an 87% average of a score of 3 or higher across all content areas. Something that makes our school unique as well is that we have 100% of our students complete at least one dual enrollment course and complete a career technical pathway in biotech, computer science, engineering or business entrepreneurship.



The Gamut Newspaper students posing with their award winning edition.

Savanna High School

301 N. Gilbert St., Anaheim, CA 9280 • 714/220-4262 • savanna.uhisd.us



Mike Pooley
Principal

Savanna's ILC= Student Success

School staff have been looking for a new approach to reach students who have not been successful in a traditional setting, came the idea of The Independent Learning Center (ILC., This is a brand-new campus initiative aimed at assisting students in getting back

on track for graduation. The ILC offers an adaptable Independent Study Program designed to satisfy every student's particular requirements.

The ILC's comprehensive support system is what makes it unique. Three teachers with amazing hearts and drive, a committed social worker and super dedicated counselor are available to the students, guaranteeing that they receive both academic and personal support. In order to promote development, resiliency, and success outside of the classroom, the program also provides workshops, field trips, and enrichment activities.

Students can rediscover their potential and work toward a better future at the ILC, which is more than just an academic program. Rebels are succeeding and becoming graduation ready!



South Junior High School

2320 E. South St., Anaheim, CA 9280 • 714/999-3667 • south.uhisd.us



Yolanda Mejia
Principal

South Junior High School Wins Sustainable Schools Award

South Junior High is proud to announce its recognition as part of the Sustainable Schools Award Program, highlighting its commitment to sustainability and environmental literacy. This prestigious program celebrates schools that integrate innovative environmental practices into their educational framework, demonstrating a strong dedication to sustainability and resource efficiency.

This year, South Junior High showcased a range of inspiring initiatives. From student-led projects in science classes to the integration of environmental principles across various disciplines, the school fosters critical thinking about sustainability. A standout moment was Vice President Kamala Harris responding to a student's inquiry, reflecting the impact of South's curriculum on global discussions.

The program has also inspired discussions about leveraging a \$15,000 grant for energy and water efficiency projects. Proposed ideas, such as hydroponic gardens



combined with robotics, embody the school's innovative approach to practical environmental education.

South Junior High's dedication to these efforts will be recognized at the Public Utilities Board meeting on January 22, 2025, a testament to the school's leadership in equipping students to address pressing global challenges.

Through initiatives like these, South Junior High is not only creating a greener campus but also empowering students to become thoughtful stewards of the planet. Together, the South community continues to pave the way for a sustainable future.

Sycamore Junior High School

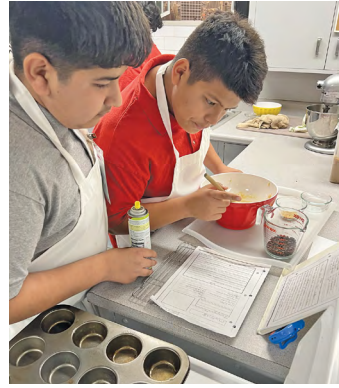
1801 E. Sycamore St., Anaheim, CA 92805 • 714/999-3616 • sycamore.auhsd.us



Nancy Cortez
Principal

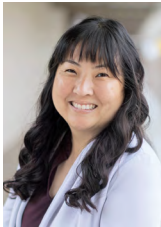
Preparing for the Future

The CTE department at Sycamore Junior High is an exciting, hands-on hub where students dive into cutting-edge skills that set them up for success! In Home Economics, students unleash their creativity, cooking delicious meals, managing finances, all while developing essential life skills. Our Digital Animation course lets students create stunning graphics and animations with the latest technology, bringing their imaginations to life! In Robotics, students roll up their sleeves to design, build, and program robots, discovering the thrill of engineering. Meanwhile, Biotechnology takes students on an exploration of the world of science, using hands-on experiments to unlock the secrets of biology. Our unique pathway course, Public Safety Academy, provides our students with the opportunity to experience careers in law enforcement or the fire department in collaboration with the city of Anaheim. With each course, students gain invaluable knowledge, ignite their passions, and develop skills that prepare them for the future.



Walker Junior High School

8132 Walker St., La Palma, CA 90623 • 714/220-4051 • walker.auhsd.us



Dr. Jennifer Sasai
Principal

Yes, We “Can”va!

Walker Junior High is setting a benchmark in digital creativity and innovation, leveraging Canva to empower students in meaningful and skill-based projects. From Civic Action Projects and PSAs to Shark Tank pitches and commercials, students are exploring diverse mediums to express ideas and solve real-world problems. Utilizing Canva’s cutting-edge AI features, they generate b-roll imagery and voiceovers to enhance their projects, creating professional-grade results.

In just the past five months, Walker students have designed an impressive 35,172 projects, with over 44% of the student body actively using Canva—the highest participation rate among junior high schools in Anaheim Union High School District.

Through these experiences, students are mastering essential technical and real-world skills, from design and video editing to storytelling and project management. Walker Junior High School’s commitment to integrating technology in education showcases the power of creative tools like Canva to prepare students for a dynamic future.



Western High School

501 S. Western Ave., Anaheim, CA 92804 • 714/220-4040 • western.auhsd.us



Lorena Moreno
Principal

Building a Unified Vision: Orangeview and Western Schools' Redesign

In fall 2025, Orangeview Junior High and Western High School will merge into a unified 7-12 school, marking a significant milestone in the Anaheim Union High School District's (AUHSD) innovative journey.

Over the past year, the Redesign Team—composed of teachers, administrators, and district leaders—has embraced research on

school redesign from the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) to guide our work.

This collaborative effort has laid the groundwork for a reimagined school structure, including a block schedule, teacher collaboration across disciplines, and a schoolwide advisory program. Focus areas such as Teaching Teams and Kid Talk will foster a culture of personalized support and academic excellence.



The partnership between Principals Moreno and Crawford, alongside teacher leaders, has evolved into a cohesive leadership model, propelling the redesign forward. With Planning and Implementation Teams (PITs) driving actionable plans, the new school is poised to serve as a model for innovation, equity, and student-centered learning.



Musical String Instruments Word Search Contest

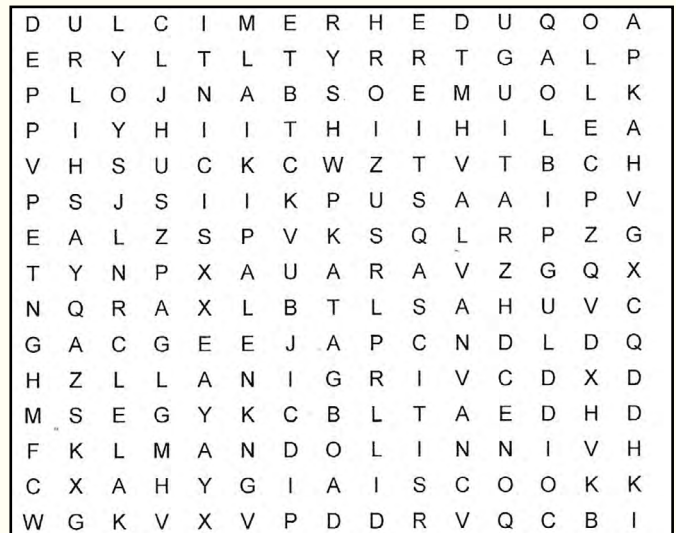
Rules! One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: SchoolNewsKay@gmail.com (Please put AUHSD in the subject line)

Entries must be received by **March 15, 2025**

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| BALALAIKA | LYRE |
| BANJO | MANDOLIN |
| BASS VIOL | ORGAN |
| CELLO | PIANO |
| CLAVICHORD | SITAR |
| CONTRABASS | UKULELE |
| DULCIMER | VIOLA |
| GUITAR | VIOLIN |
| HARPSICHORD | ZITHER |
| LUTE | |



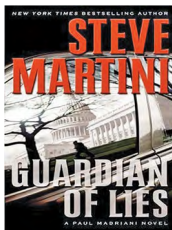
Sourish's Review



Sourish M.

The Web of Mysteries!!

A book by the New York Times Bestselling Author, Steve Martini, the *Guardian of Lies* offers a new perspective on an attorney/detective through his life,



attempting to solve a murder, with an action and suspense packed experience. The main character Paul Madriani explores the case of a murder and reveals secrets from the Cold War times, finding that an initial simple case turned out to be much more complicated. This book is a very riveting experience and further shows the complexities and difficulties of solving a case that was performed from the inside. This book has a central theme of the destructive power of deception and the struggle to uncover the truth, with many facing betrayal and forces of danger. While some parts of this book may be grim and bring fear, the overall plot and story of the book is very impactful and hooks the reader completely!

Sourish M. is a 9th grader who is passionate about learning and protecting nature. He is interested in Science and Engineering and pursues many hobbies such as playing Soccer and Guitar, while traveling with his friends and family.

History Depot



Learn about
World History • US History
Videos • Art • Music
Study Habits

History is about learning and understanding the past. The past does not change, but interpretations do. One cannot erase history and expect to remember the past.



HistoryDepot.com



Football Word Search Contest

Rules! One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: SchoolNewsKay@gmail.com (Please put AUHSD in the subject line)

Entries must be received by March 15, 2025

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Clipping | Kicker | Scrimmage |
| Coach | Linebacker | Special Teams |
| Conversion | Loss of Down | Super Bowl |
| Cornerback | Offsides | Tackle |
| Defense | Personal Foul | Tailback |
| Field Goal | Possession | Touchdown |
| Flanker | Quarterback | Yardage |
| Goal Post | Roughing | |
| Interference | Safety | |



Congratulations to Andrea Lopez & Yui Yang
Winners of the September Word Search Contests!

Orange County Department of Education

200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa CA 92628 • 714/966-4000 • www.ocde.us

5-3-1 Strategic Plan adds up to OCDE's path forward



Dr. Stefan Bean
Superintendent

The holiday season is a natural time for reflection. For organizations like ours, it's also a chance to assess progress, refine approaches and pursue new opportunities for innovation.

With 2024 coming to a close, and as I near the six-month mark as county superintendent, this feels like an opportune moment to share where the Orange County Department of Education is headed — and how we plan to get there.

Recently, we introduced a roadmap designed to guide our work, build on our strengths and set a unified vision for the future. Shaped through active collaboration with educational leaders and community partners, it's called the 5-3-1 Strategic Plan because it's built around five key initiatives, three objectives to support our districts, and one bold goal.

So, what exactly is in our 5-3-1 Strategic Plan? Let's take a look.

Five Key Initiatives

Five forward-thinking initiatives anchor this plan, targeting areas where innovation can have the most significant impact on students and schools. These include:

- Expanding career technical education. Along with broadening and enhancing CTE programs, we are looking to sharpen our focus on inclusivity, ensuring that these opportunities are accessible to all students.
- Fostering emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, or EQ, refers to the ability to understand and manage emotions effectively. These skills are essential for educators, administrators, support staff and students to build strong relationships and healthy learning environments.
- Integrating artificial intelligence. We are actively exploring and pursuing advanced AI technologies that will enhance learning experiences and streamline administrative processes.
- Ensuring school safety. Our commitment to creating secure educational environments will be stronger than ever, supported by comprehensive safety measures and processes.
- Providing innovative funding opportunities. We are looking to create new funding opportunities to back innovative educational projects that can transform learning environments — and ideally be replicated elsewhere.

Three Support Objectives

Next are three objectives that are specific to the support we provide for our 28 local school districts. These are:

- Legal, legislative and fiscal support. We will equip districts with the tools and training they need to manage complex educational policies and fiscal challenges.
- Academic focus. We remain committed to educational excellence through targeted instructional services and programs that support student success.
- Local superintendent needs. We're providing customized resources to address the unique challenges faced by Orange County's superintendents in service of their districts.

Finally, we come to the last part of our plan.

One Big Audacious Goal

Our big audacious goal refers to the work we are doing to improve outcomes and opportunities for all students enrolled in OCDE's Alternative Education program, known as ACCESS. This involves actively soliciting feedback from staff, local superintendents and other key partners to craft a comprehensive vision for ACCESS.

As part of this effort, we aim to improve mechanisms for measuring progress and ensuring continuous improvement across all student programs under the ACCESS umbrella. We are also moving forward with plans to develop an ethnic studies curriculum for ACCESS that uplifts our communities and enhances cultural awareness.

OCDE's 5-3-1 Strategic Plan reflects not only our collective aspirations but also our county's shared commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in support of students, families and schools. Think of it as a roadmap that draws on the strengths of our educators as well as the voices of our communities.

Six months into this role, I feel deeply honored to be on this journey with you. I am also confident that we have the people and resources to drive transformative, lasting change. Together, we can create a future where every student thrives, every school becomes a place of possibility, and every community benefits from a strong, cohesive educational system.

Thank you for your trust and partnership. Now let's make this vision a reality.