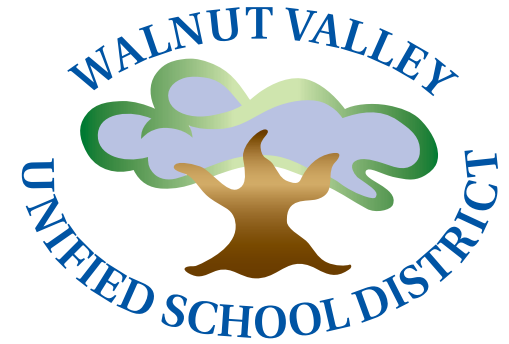


# Outlook



Issue 50 Fall 2021

## Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley Educational Community,

Happy Holidays! As the seasons begin to change, I'm reminded of what an incredible community we have in Walnut Valley. In the midst of perhaps the most challenging times in the history of our educational system (due to the impacts of the global pandemic), our school community has, as always, stepped up to ensure that our students continue to receive a premier education.

I'm thankful for our educators who have reinvented what teaching and learning looks like multiple times over in the past couple of years; I'm thankful for our employees who have assisted in keeping the operations of our organization running strong; I'm thankful to our parents and families for their relentless support; and, perhaps most notably, I'm appreciative of our students who have stayed resilient through it all. Our students are competing, performing, and participating at high levels in a plethora of sports, the Arts, and activities.

Our schools continue to shine! I am humbled and proud of recent publications that have, once again, ranked our schools and school district among the highest performing in the country. Our school facilities continue to be constructed and modernized, and we plan to hold ribbon-cutting ceremonies and ground-breaking events to celebrate the opening of state-of-the-art classrooms, multi-purpose spaces, world-class music buildings, and science and technology laboratories ... thanks to our community for its support of Measure WV!

I'm also thankful for the emphasis that our organization continues to place on the mental and emotional well-being of our students. On October 23, we were honored to have the world's leading author and researcher in the area of Emotional Intelligence, Dr. Marc Brackett from Yale University, speak at our Annual Parent Symposium. Dr. Brackett's book, *Permission to Feel*, along with the curriculum that he co-authored at Yale, serves as the foundation for our work in this area. Dr. Brackett encouraged all of us (who are parents) to serve as Emotional Scientists when working with our children, and thus work to better understand the "Why?" behind our kids' feelings, rather than serve as Emotional Judges. He provided tools and strategies to help us be both empathetic and curious, and he reminded us that we, too, need to be honest and vulnerable to help co-regulate emotions and feelings with our children. If interested, you can view Dr. Brackett's presentation on YouTube by searching, "WVUSD - Virtual Parent Symposium 10/23/21."

Thanks again for the ongoing support of our students. Enjoy the upcoming holiday season.

Sincerely,  
Robert P. Taylor, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

## Join the Walnut Valley Family!

Now accepting applications for Transitional Kindergarten through grade 12 students for the 2022-2023 school year!

Learn more about District of Choice (Applications accepted October 4 - December 31), Parent Employment (Allen Bill), Inter-District Transfer Permit, and Caregiver options during Enrollment Information Meetings.

November 16*	6:30 p.m.	Chaparral Middle School
December 9	6:30 p.m.	Webinar
January 13*	6:30 p.m.	Westhoff Elementary



Join Webinar at: <https://wvusd.zoom.us/j/86933481982>.

Can't attend a meeting? Applications are available at [www.wvusd.k12.ca.us/EnrollNow](http://www.wvusd.k12.ca.us/EnrollNow). For more information, call (909) 595-1261 ext. 31360 or email [enroll@wvusd.org](mailto:enroll@wvusd.org).

\*Translations services available at November 16 and January 13 meetings.



## Full Campuses, Full Hearts Students Return to Classes in Walnut Valley USD

After more than a year of pandemic shutdowns, over 13,400 Walnut Valley USD students bid farewell to virtual learning with the full-time return to classes on August 9.

"It's been 514 days since we've last been on campus," said Walnut High School senior ASB President Chloe Young, where teens were greeted with cheering staff, pep squads, and band performances.

"Since we don't know what tomorrow has in store for us, let's make every second count," she added.

At all 15 campuses, educators and students alike were eager to make friendly (masked) in-person connections.

"I've missed this and love having the kids back!" exclaimed transitional kindergarten teacher Christa Richard amid giggling and jumping youngsters playing parachute games at Castle Rock Elementary.

"It's only the first week and they are so excited to come to school every day!" she added.

Students have been poised for the long-awaited opportunity to reunite with schoolmates.

"Seeing my friends and talking to people has been the best!" said eighth grader Dylan Rosen, 13, from South Pointe Middle School.

"It's just great to be back!" said Diamond Bar High School math teacher Shari De Cambra who is grateful for face-to-face interactions and getting to know students on a more personal level.

"Today I saw football players wearing their jerseys, cheerleaders wearing uniforms, and the kids are just happy to see their friends and make new ones."

Collegewood Elementary teachers commemorated back-



to-school in a new two-story, 14-classroom building.

"Our students and staff are beyond excited to be back in person, and then to have this beautiful new building makes us so happy," said second grade teacher Diane Zell.

Zell's classroom encourages turning adversity into advantage with cheery "Making Lemonade Out of Lemons" themed decorations and artwork.

Catchy phrases like "Be Zesty" are displayed and a calming corner features a lemonade stand where kids can "Refresh."

"We had no choice but to make the best out of a difficult situation because all of our kids deserved that," the 38-year veteran Collegewood educator said.

"Having the kids back in the classroom had me misty eyed on Monday," reported orchestra teacher Taylor Barr from Chaparral Middle School.

"We have all been worried about what it will be like coming back, but so far the kids are more excited to be here than I think they have ever been... and so am I!"

"I love teaching in person!"

U.S. News & World Report

WVUSD Schools in Top 1%



All Walnut Valley USD elementary and middle schools are ranked in the top 1% in California by U.S. News & World Report

U.S. News analyzed data on 102,610 California schools for the inaugural listing of 2022 Best K-8 Schools. To determine rankings, U.S. News used math and reading proficiency data for each school collected from the U.S. Department of Education.

U.S. News published rankings on more than 80,000 public elementary and middle schools across the United States, with over 7,850 from the Golden State. View the full report released on October 12 at: <https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/elementary-schools/california>.

## Walnut High Earns Back-To-Back STEM Award



For the second consecutive year, Walnut High School has been lauded

with the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Distinguished School Award for empowering students with knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Walnut High is among only 155 schools in California to offer the rigorous International Baccalaureate Career-Related Programme/Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences Program. Students in the Human Body Systems course paired up to compare reaction times of voluntary and involuntary

activation of the quadriceps muscle (better known as the knee-jerk reflex) on October 13. With pant legs rolled up, the teens attached EKG sensors while using Accelerometers and Vernier Lab Quest minis to record measurements.

"A unique aspect of these PLTW courses is that students not only run labs using enzymes, DNA, microorganisms, etc., but also on themselves and each other," said teacher Chiara Morgan.

"These types of hands-on labs engage students in the learning objectives with the added bonus of getting to learn a little bit more about themselves in the process!"

Only 214 high schools across the country received the 2020-2021 recognition for increasing student access, engagement, and achievement.

## Sylvia Chen District Teacher of the Year



“Since we are going through a very unique time, I think it’s very important to document our experience!” shared Sylvia Chen, the 2021 District Teacher of the Year.

When in-person learning resumed, the fourth-grade Dual Language Immersion teacher at Walnut Elementary knew that she wanted to do something with face masks and was excited to come across a self-portrait activity.

“We are so much more than what is presented on the outside, so for this project I had students write down character traits that represent them on the inside. It will help us get to know each person behind the mask a little more!”

Chen’s focus is not only getting to know her students and their interests, but also establishing a positive classroom environment.

During a cell phone assignment, children provided basic information (age, family, favorite food, animal, color, subject, likes, and dislikes).

The personalized paper phones will now be displayed at the classroom entrance so that students can leave Post-It “messages” to encourage one another.

Chen faced the trials of being an English Learner for many years after moving to the United States from Taiwan during sixth grade.

This ignited her passion to support the dual language immersion students who face similar obstacles in speaking non-native language.

“It’s my mission to make sure each student feels seen and all curriculums are relevant to students’ personal lives to make learning meaningful.”

## Saluting! 2020-2021 Teachers of the Year

These wonderful educators have risen to the difficult challenges of this pandemic by bringing care, compassion, and ingenuity to the virtual classroom.

**Julie Urbaniec**, Castle Rock Elementary

**Angelica Infante**, Chaparral Middle School

**Stephanie Johnson**, Collegewood Elementary

**Rachel Harrington**, Cyrus J. Morris Elementary

**Barbara Vanderheyden**, Diamond Bar High

**Melody Fernandez**, Evergreen Elementary

**Samantha Trejo**, Maple Hill Elementary

**Geri Smith**, Quail Summit Elementary

**Marla Rickard**, Ron Hockwalt Academies

**Debra Brady**, South Pointe Middle School

**Kim Flick**, Suzanne Middle School

**Laura Saenz**, Vejar Elementary

**Sylvia Chen**, Walnut Elementary

**Kellee Lyons**, Walnut High

**Vicki Kim**, Westhoff Elementary

## Take a Bow! WVUSD Senior Scholars Named 2022 National Merit Semifinalists

Eighteen Walnut Valley USD seniors have been named semifinalists in the 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program. These high achieving students represent the top 1% in the country. Congratulations to the following students:



### Diamond Bar High School:

Emma Fu, Akash George, Brian Hsu, Irene Jin, Jaime Jin, Jason Kim, Han Lee, Nathan C. Lin, Ryan Lui, Erin Miyahara, Julienne Nguyen, Serena Shih, Steven Tjandra, Jaden Zhang, Eileen Zhu, and Nicholas Yu.



### Walnut High School:

Joshua Hsu and Joseph Shen.

The nationwide pool of approximately 16,000 semifinalists are the highest-scoring entrants in each state. Students entered the 67th annual National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the PSAT Test as juniors which served as the initial screen of program entrants. All semifinalists have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,500 National Merit Scholarship awards worth more than \$30 million to be awarded next spring.



When Diamond Bar High leadership students threw a National Beach Day party, it was truly a celebration of being back together.

“Our goal with activities this year is to raise school spirit like never before and make students feel welcome on campus,” offered United Student Body (USB) President senior Justin Tsai.

At noon, USB officers set up the shore-themed spirit event with free s’mores, popsicles, and a DIY craft and within minutes a sea of students flocked to the August 30 outdoor festivities.

Wearing tropical shirts and colorful Hawaiian leis, the USB team began serving up hundreds of frozen desserts with their friendly (masked) smiles.

“These activities, now more than ever, are important to our school culture because distance learning has taken a toll on many students, and we want all of them to be as excited as possible to be back to school,” 17-year-old Tsai added.

Across the corridor, teens gathered with friends to take photos at a beach-themed backdrop flanked with surfboards. Other students strung shell bracelets while taking a few precious moments to reconnect with friends.

“It’s great to see everyone back on campus having so much fun!” shared USB senior Haley Fetchik.

Throughout the pandemic, USB has worked diligently behind the scenes to positively impact students and boost morale.

“This year, we understand that it is even more important to provide fun and meaningful opportunities for our student body to reconnect,” commented Advisor Janna Van Horn.

USB events include the annual Rodeo Round-Up, Purple Friday spirit days, Renaissance give-a-ways to recognize students working toward academic goals, and more.

Tsai’s message to fellow classmates is to push through and persevere.

“I know times are tough right now especially due to the unpredictability of COVID-19, but let’s make the most out of what we are able to have and cherish these unforgettable memories.”

“Have fun, but make sure to stay safe!”



## National Honors!

This summer, Suzanne and Chaparral Middle

Schools received 2020-2021

National Schools to Watch re-designation awards during a long-awaited virtual ceremony co-hosted by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform and California League of Schools.

Twenty-nine California middle schools were recognized during in-person awards on March 6, 2020 - just one week before COVID-19 closures - but the national awards ceremony slated that summer in Washington, D.C. was cancelled.

The prestigious Schools to Watch award recognizes high performing schools and promotes replicable practices for middle schools across the country.

Suzanne and Chaparral previously earned the honor in 2017 and the designation can be earned every three years.

Walnut Valley USD is a proud National Schools to Watch District!

## Building Success

### Schools Earn State Recognition for Creating a Positive Learning Culture

Eight Walnut Valley USD elementary schools received 2021 California PBIS Coalition Awards for successfully implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Congratulations to Collegewood, Maple Hill, Westhoff – PLATINUM level; Vejar – SILVER level; and Castle Rock, Cyrus J. Morris, Evergreen, Quail Summit – BRONZE level.

PBIS is a proactive approach to establishing the behavioral supports and social culture needed for all students in a school to achieve social, emotional, and academic success.

Research shows that school climate strongly influences students’ motivation to learn and improve academic achievement.

“PBIS has allowed our students to thrive and S.H.I.N.E (show kindness, have heart, inspire others, never give up, encourage teamwork),” said Westhoff Elementary Principal Dr. Sandra Lee.

# Construction Update

## Thank You, Community! New Two-Story Classroom Building Complete at Collegewood Elementary



*Collegewood Elementary unveiled its new two-story classroom building during a ribbon-cutting ceremony held August 5.*

"It is my great honor to welcome all of you to this beautiful place where we get to make new memories and fill with a lot of hope, and laughter, and learning," shared a beaming Principal Dr. Mary Wendland.

The celebration marked the completion of the \$10-million transformational project on the 56-year-old campus funded by voter support of Bond Measure WV.

The towering 14-classroom educational complex officially opened its doors to students on the first day of school.

Campus upgrades also include a new landscaped plaza courtyard featuring a grass paw print of the Collegewood Cougar, a new playground, and exterior covered canopy. Fourteen outdated portable classrooms

were removed.

Construction began in November 2019.

"This wouldn't be possible without a community that's second to none in terms of supporting kids and education," said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

"We will see the impact of your support for generations to come!"

Teachers, staff, parents, community members, and officials attended the grand opening that culminated with self-guided tours.

"We are very excited to not only be back in person with our students, but to start the year in our incredible new building," commented fifth grade teacher Lori Huckler.

The new modern classes feature digital projection whiteboards and light fixtures that simulate blue sky sunlight for enhanced learning, creativity, and productivity.

"The high ceilings and bright lights provide an inviting space for students to engage in their learning," added fifth



grade colleague Florence Yu.

"My hope is that the simplicity and contemporary ambience of the new classroom will help the students and myself focus on what is essential to learning!"

Folding glass walls and skylights bring in natural daylight to support student performance, while outdoor classroom areas lend to project-based learning.

"We're pretty lucky here!" second-grade teacher Kelsie Boris shared while demonstrating how easily desks can be rolled outside to the adjacent learning space.

"I can't wait to plant some rosemary and lavender seeds in the garden!"

## Catching Good Thoughts



## Author's Message Prompts Lesson to Support Returning Students

As students return to in-person classes after more than a year of pandemic isolation, it's important that they feel safe and supported in school.

Quail Summit Elementary recently capped off a virtual assembly by "Catching Thoughts" author Bonnie Clark with a balloon art lesson to support children whenever they have unwanted feelings. Elementary Learning Specialist Leann Legind visited classes to expand on Clark's August 26 message of acknowledging or "catching" negative feelings and embracing colorful thoughts they can actively seek.

Third graders took out watercolors and brushes with the music from the Pixar movie "Up" playing during the social emotional learning (SEL) session. Legind directed students to write a word that brings a sense of happiness, joy, or calm inside their balloon drawing.

"My word is kindness," reported Wyatt Huey holding his blue balloon picture.

"I picked drawing - it makes me happy!" shared classmate Linda Li.

Other students selected hope, family, gardening, piano and more as their positive thoughts.

"What a gift that these beautiful children are learning skills to manage their emotions at an early age!" said teacher Criss Sykes.

Every student on campus will be painting a balloon with a positive word to be included in a schoolwide collaborative display.

"All of us, at one time or another, have negative thoughts that are hard to let go. Focusing on positive thoughts is a life skill that we all need to learn and practice," said Principal Frances Weissenberger.

"Seeing our students create balloons with happy thoughts warmed our hearts and spread joy across our campus!"

## South Pointe Sixth Graders Dig into a New Archaeology Experience

On a cloudy Monday afternoon, 70 South Pointe Middle School sixth-graders dug into an actual archaeology site on the Diamond Bar campus. Teams were tasked to create never-before-seen civilizations and select artifacts to be buried in an excavated plot behind classrooms. The new cross-curricular endeavor is completely hands-on, student led, and the passion project of social studies teacher Carley Waterbury.

"It's very close to my heart!" the first-year educator said of "The Dig" lesson she took part in as a middle schooler.

Waterbury's former teacher passed down all of the materials to benefit the next generation of learners.

"So, to be able to do this project with my students allowed for everything to come full circle!" Waterbury said.

Prior to the dig days, students learned about the field's tools and procedures, with firsthand accounts from a National Geographic guest speaker. The plot of land was excavated by the WVUSD Maintenance Division with supplies donated by Material Culture Consulting.

"The goal is teaching how ancient history comes to be known," Waterbury said of the archaeological process of recreating lives and cultures of civilizations.

The groups spent two days sifting up other team's treasures, uncovering the past, and interpreting the meaning behind each item.

"We found something that looks like a bone, maybe it's from a human sacrifice," pondered Kyle Fujihara.

"Ew, a worm!" screeched Esther Bejarno while gently scraping the sandy brown soil on September 27.



"It's just a worm, keep going," her teacher encouraged.

Students used math skills to plot artifacts on a graph so that teachers knew where to bury the items, Waterbury said of the project conducted with colleague Chris Turner-Gibbs.

"We made up a post-apocalyptic civilization," explained Parker Lai whose group chose 10 artifacts including face paint, water bottle, manga book, and bottle caps.

In Language Arts classes, students presented research projects and then checked with fellow classmates to see how close the findings were.

"By presenting their data they also learn how history and archaeology are subject to interpretation and sometimes people get it wrong!" Waterbury added.

After the dig session, groups gathered to examine findings before writing reflection assignments. One group located eight artifacts including a stone tablet with writing and a silver wing.

"We also found this squishy thing that looks like a marshmallow!" shared Kenneth Jin, 11.

"Today we found an arm drawing and a coin," reported Ashley Park, 11, of the revealed bounty.

"And now we make a hypothesis of what these things mean in that culture."

"It's so cool!"

# COVID-19 Testing, Vaccination Clinics

Walnut Valley USD offers FREE, regular COVID-19 testing for all students and staff members.

Testing programs help keep students in the classroom and allow them to take part in other activities they love. In addition, COVID-19 vaccination clinics are available for students, staff, and community members. The schedule is available online at: [www.wvusd.org](http://www.wvusd.org).

**Outlook** WALNUT VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Issue 50 Fall 2021

**Walnut Valley Unified School District**

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#### 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

Thanksgiving Break	November 22-26
Winter Break	December 17-January 3
Martin L. King Jr. Day	January 17
Presidents Day	February 21
Spring Break	April 11-18
Last Day of School	May 26
Memorial Day	May 30

**Let's Talk!** – We want to be responsive to your needs and invite you to send questions, comments, and suggestions to [www.wvusd.org](http://www.wvusd.org).

## Bullying Prevention Month. . .



### Castle Rock 5th Grader Promotes "Walk A Mile in Their Shoes"

At just 11-years-old, Ian Jones is determined to make a difference in the world. The Castle Rock Elementary fifth grader headed up an anti-bullying "Walk In Their Shoes" on October 8. The one-mile walk was held during lunchtime and open to all students.

"Not only is Ian a leader among his peers, he has more compassion and empathy than most students his age," shared teacher Lori Stokes.

"He is an amazing human!"

Last month, Ian said he felt sick to his stomach after learning about the TikTok challenges and increase in cyber bullying. He had already written an essay on the bullying topic this year and after talking to his teacher, she challenged him by asking, "What are you going to do about it?"

"I think I have my answer!" he replied.

At first, Ian decided to display anti-bullying posters around campus. It began with friends David List and Riley Neal, and soon nearly 20 schoolmates joined the poster-making project.

"But, these aren't going to be eye-catching enough, you need to do an event," commented fifth grade volunteer Austin Le.

Austin said that people wouldn't understand unless they "walked a mile in someone else's shoes," Ian recalled.

Ian took the idea and ran with it.

"And now, here I am trying to host an event to stop bullying in school!" he said.

A week earlier, Ian promoted the awareness activity while delivering morning announcements with the school's principal, Jason Eldridge.

"Ian is a kind-hearted leader on the Castle Rock campus," Eldridge said.

"He wrote an informative, funny script and made sure I rehearsed with him before we read it live!"

The event will also mark Ian's final day at Castle Rock because the family is moving out of state. The fifth grader is quick to point out that he's not looking to leave a mark on campus.

"My goal isn't to be remembered, it's to stop bullying."

Ian is definitely taking a step in the right direction.

October's National Bullying Prevention Month is a reminder that thousands of young people experience bullying at school, home, and through social media and texts. Resources can be found [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov).

## Helicopter Drop Challenge Chaparral students are engaged, connected, and thriving!

*It was a rare classroom sighting, to say the least...*

Thirty-five Chaparral Middle School students were directed to carefully stand on chairs, place one hand on hip for balance, with the other outstretched high holding a paper helicopter.

At the cue of teacher Mike Miller, the seventh-grade life science class released tiny spinners created from measured strips of notebook paper, and the reaction was immediate.

The young designers quickly exclaimed "Oh!" and "Ah!" while observing several seconds of clockwise twirls to the floor.

After documenting the results, students adjusted the blade angles and climbed back up on their perches for another test run.

During the helicopter drop experiment on September 10, students learned steps of the Scientific Method, made hypothesis statements, and tested their theories during several flights.

By manipulating the rudders that resembled bunny ears, students learned the helicopters spun in either a clockwise or counterclockwise motion.



In final step, students adjusted their flyer designs by adding pieces of foil, toothpicks, or tape to increase velocity.

"This lab really isn't really about the physics of flight, but more of a fun way to introduce students to the steps of scientific investigation," shared Miller, now in his 15th year as an educator.

"The kids love it because they get to challenge themselves to create a better design, use the stopwatch on their phones (a thrill during class), and stand on their chairs - which seems like a no-no!"

Miller's goal this year is to teach his students how to think and express themselves scientifically, critically, and logically.

"I'm hoping my students will learn that science is a balance of fun, discovery, and hard work!"



## Cracking the Code! Suzanne Middle School 8th grade detectives solve "The Tell-Tale Heart" escape room

Eighth-grade super sleuths at Suzanne Middle School decoded clues to solve the mysterious murder of the Old Man by his lodger in the "The Tell-Tale Heart" escape room.

Teacher Alexis Lujan tasked students to work in cooperative groups and use critical thinking skills as they made their way through the three-part digital activity. Since the ultimate goal was to keep the narrator of Edgar Allen Poe's classic short story locked in an insane asylum, students took on the role of detectives and collected evidence for their official reports, Lujan shared. Student groups used a cipher wheel and number codes to piece together the plot and find the Old Man's heart to avenge his killer. Teams were responsible for completing a patient analysis, providing the burden of proof, and finally submitting their summary of findings

in order to complete the challenge and break out of the escape room.

"In the last part we deciphered a code to find out what his last sentence was before he was locked away," explained Kaitlynn Tran after completing the Sept. 15 challenge.

"These escape rooms are fun – they bring out our competitive spirit!" added classmate Suki Hsu.

"And you learn how to cooperate with other people," said Tran.

Lujan rewarded the clever investigators with Lifesaver candies after they solved the puzzle.

"I've missed seeing kids work together and have fun with their peers, so this was an awesome activity to observe," she commented.

"And my classroom was finally noisy again!"