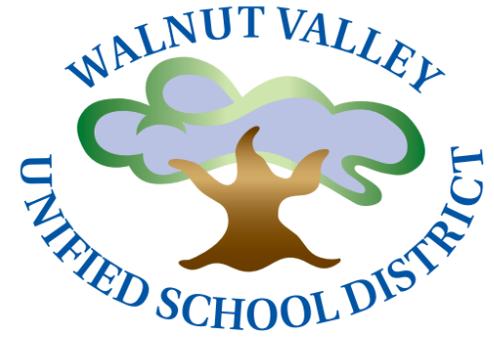


# Outlook



Issue 51 Spring 2022



## Steps To Success

### It's Time to Enroll for the 2022-2023 School Year!

Students explore, imagine, and discover unlimited possibilities for their future. Please share the following information with any families who have a child who is Preschool, Pre-K or Kindergarten age.

#### Walnut Valley USD early education programs:

**Preschool** (Children 2 and up)

[www.wvusd.org/Preschool/](http://www.wvusd.org/Preschool/)

**Transitional Kindergarten** (Children Age 4 on or before 2-28-22)

[www.wvusd.org/TK/](http://www.wvusd.org/TK/)

**Kindergarten** (Children Age 5 on or before 9-1-22)

[www.wvusd.org/Enroll/](http://www.wvusd.org/Enroll/)

#### Check out our TK, Kinder, and Preschool programs!

Scan the QR code or visit <https://youtu.be/LpFtXzL8mMw> to get a glimpse of our students in action!

*"Our TK program offers children the gift of time, learning at their own pace in a supportive and joyful learning environment," says Castle Rock Elementary TK teacher Christa Richard. "Teachers are dedicated to fostering the social, emotional and physical development of young children. We would love to welcome you to our amazing TK program!"*



## Message from the Superintendent



Dear Walnut Valley Educational Community,

One of our 5 Focus Areas continues to be "Leadership Development at All Levels of the Organization."

I recently had the opportunity to meet with an amazing group

of student leaders from across our District. These 25 students make up the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, and while we aspire to help them grow and develop as leaders, we, as adults, perhaps actually benefit more from learning the students' thoughts, perspectives, and ideas regarding our organization. This diverse group of 5th graders, 8th graders, and high school students meet with me monthly to represent our nearly 14,000 students Districtwide. This most recent meeting, coupled with my visiting various schools over the past few weeks, further solidified the fact that our kids, at all levels, have faced tremendous challenges and missed out on traditional opportunities over the past couple of years. They, however, have returned to school (in-person) with resilience, compassion, and empathy ... simply put, they are amazing!

As we enter spring and approach the end of the school year, I am extremely excited to celebrate our students in a variety of ways. Perhaps most notably, 5th grade students promoting to middle school, 8th grade students moving on to high school, and our high school seniors graduating on to their next chapter of life.

Finally, it certainly is a reflective time for me personally, as a parent, and professionally, as a Superintendent. Thanks to our parents for your continued support of our students and schools. Thanks to our community for all that you do to prioritize education throughout Walnut Valley (highlighted in this issue are the continued benefits of Measure WV). Thanks to our Board of Trustees for your continued leadership and dedication. And, as always, thanks to our employees who serve our kids each and every day.

I'll leave you with the final quote that a nationally-recognized educator shared with several members of our staff at a recent professional development session.

"Take care of yourself. Take care of each other. Take care of the organization."

Thank you for all you do!

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

## Three-Story Time Capsule Diamond Bar High School Instrumental Music Building Takes Shape

As construction progresses on Diamond Bar High's new instrumental music building, Music Director Steve Acciani is making sure to capture the spirit of the program for future generations. On February 7, music and color guard student leaders donned hard hats to create a time capsule in the three-story building by tucking a cache of memorabilia inside the walls. One-by-one the dozen teens attached photos of current students, alumni, autographed sheet music, and concert programs deemed meaningful to the history of the program.

"The idea actually came from one of our architects who suggested that the building be connected to not only current and incoming students, but to the students and history of the program as well," Acciani explained.

After digging through boxes of archives, Acciani found a treasure trove of band and orchestra pictures from the early 80's including "lots of pictures of former leaders who helped set the standard of performances and professionalism," he said.

Freshman bassoon player Natalie Wang was excited to help turn the new music building into a time capsule.

"I love the thought of being connected to all the great kids and performances that have happened before!" she said.

"The students we memorialized in the building had to work really hard to achieve great things and because of that we get to learn in this world-class building," added Joey Lin, a junior French horn player.

The longtime music educator says it's been "fantastic" being a part of the process and seeing the daily progress on the towering 15,700 square-foot building funded



by Bond Measure WV.

"Our students are developing a true appreciation for what has gone into providing them with such an amazing place to learn, perform, and be a part of something truly special," Acciani said.

The new "Music Box" will feature three strategically designed levels: with a 4,320 square-foot band room at the ground level; mid-level floor ensemble rooms, recording studio, library, and office space; and upper level 3,631 square-foot orchestra classroom with

adjacent rehearsal spaces for piano, harp, percussion, and individual practice. The construction project is slated for completion in Summer 2022.

Lin shared that he is most looking forward to utilizing the new recording technology when the instrumental music building opens next fall.

"Because of the way the building is designed, we will be able to more easily thrive as individuals as well as a group!"

## A Trio of Groundbreaking Ceremonies. . . details on page 3.



## Congratulations!

Aide Lori Perales

### Classified Employee of the Year

Walnut High School Instructional Aide Lori Perales was named the 2021 Classified Employee of the Year during a surprise announcement in front of students, faculty, administrators and family members.



"I am so thankful to be working in Walnut Valley USD and have loved each and every grade level to which I've been assigned," Lori shared.

"From being a one-on-one (aide) to my current assignment, it's been an awesome learning experience for me and hopefully for my students as well," she noted.

"Of course, my current assignment is my absolute favorite with all of my math classes!"

For the past 17 years, Lori has provided exceptional support to Walnut High students through her dedication to their academic success.

"Most importantly, Lori has a big heart and goes above and beyond for students," shared nominator Walnut High Instructional Dean Dr. Robin Perez.

"She's definitely an 'All In' employee!"



Watch awards at:  
<https://youtu.be/dhzHEliUMcM>

## A Class Act! 2021 Cornerstone Awards

Walnut Valley USD continued the tradition of honoring excellence during the annual "A Class Act" Cornerstone Awards. The ceremony celebrating a dozen outstanding classified employees premiered virtually due to the pandemic on February 16. The Personnel Commission's monthly Cornerstone Awards, established in 1999, recognize classified (non-teaching) staff members who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in providing outstanding service to the District and community.

### Congratulations to the following 2021 Cornerstone Award winners:

Gaby Manganiello, Office Assistant – Collegewood Elementary

Cheri Taing, Office Assistant – C.J. Morris Elementary

Efren Del Mundo, Custodian I – Evergreen Elementary

Su-San Lotz, Civic Center Supervisor – Maintenance, Operations, Transportation, and Facilities

Chris Koh, Support Specialist – Technology

Anna Amezcua, School Administrative Assistant – Quail Summit Elementary

Lucille Robles, Nutrition Services Worker I – Vejar Elementary

Jacob Walter, Instructional Aide III Special Education – Suzanne Middle School

Connie Han, Accounting Assistant II – Child Care

Gina Nemeth, Morning Aide – Castle Rock Elementary

Lori Perales, Instructional Aide II Special Education – Walnut High School

Michelle Bagwell, Health Clerk – South Pointe Middle School



The Project Leelyn Drone video may be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/4jhELIZL7LY>.

## Where Dreams Take Off! Diamond Bar High Students Prepare to Make History

Diamond Bar High students with lofty goals are planning to make history with the launch of a multirotor aircraft capable of lifting a human in the air.

"If everything goes as planned, we may be the first high school group ever to make a manned aircraft in California, maybe in the United States!" said senior Alan Zhang, president of the Dronescape Club.

The student-run non-profit organization is dedicated to bringing the newest aviation technology, related career options, and certifications to classrooms.

The club's newest project, the Leelyn Drone, will be 100% powered by electricity, capable of autopilot, and small enough to fit into a standard garage.

This year, members have been busy designing, fundraising, and building on the dream venture set to take off in June.

Zhang, age 18, said that although other high school groups have built fixed-wing planes that have received media attention, he deems the Leelyn Drone is "next level."

"While they're replicating technology from 100 years ago, we're pioneering into a new field that will be increasingly relevant in the future: personal aircrafts, electric vehicles, autopilot transportation, etc." he said.

Senior Hannah Zhou, the club's design director responsible for renderings of the supersized 12-foot drone, says it's gone from having four, to six, to eight propellers. The rotors create airflow and allow the aircraft to hover, ascend, or affect its yaw, pitch and roll. Zhou said the project is also providing an opportunity to diversify her skills beyond illustration into real-world applications.



"Seeing something I drew come to life is really fulfilling to me!"

Engineering director Eve Shi is transforming illustrations into prototypes using computer-aided design technology (CAD) and 3-D laser printers.

"I learned how to use the CAD programs in the PTLW Engineering class last year," said Shi, 17.

Senior Jolleen Mejia, 17, is acting

chief director who also serves on business and media teams that launched social media, vlog updates, and the pitch deck marketing campaign.

"We've been so busy, but the best part is being surrounded by some of the most ambitious people I know!"

The big question: who will be riding in the drone during the inaugural flight? With an abundance of caution, the first passenger will be a 150-pound "dummy" of the drone's namesake, club member Leelyn Shih. Although in the future, with additional funding and support from engineering professionals, Dronescape aims to launch the drone with a human.

"Somebody from our club will definitely be on that pioneering ride!" Zhang said.

Follow the team's progress on Instagram at @dronescapeclub.

## Teens give gift of time, music

### WHS Dreamcatchers Club creating powerful cross generational connections

About 30 Walnut High School students were elated to celebrate the season with local senior citizens.

"I felt extremely proud of the Dreamcatchers Club because it was our first event coming back from COVID," said Co-President Rachel Zeng.

The service club is dedicated to fulfilling the dreams of hospice patients, but due to the global health crisis all in-person activities had been canceled for nearly two years.

"The way we just continued and picked up right where we left off felt almost seamless!" the 17-year-old senior noted.

The giving teens arrived at the El Descanso Retirement Home in Covina with balloons, banners, and well-rehearsed program determined to brighten the Thanksgiving holiday. Members performed a dozen pop, classical, and instrumental numbers during the two-hour outdoor dinner party.

Sophomore Aya Angeles sang the classics "Fly Me To The Moon" and "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You", while Shani Su and Sasha Wong offered the inspirational "Hallelujah" with guitar accompaniment.

Between two sets of songs, students hosted games of Bingo and Taboo and visited with the seniors and their families during the evening meal.

"We were having so much fun we stayed and chatted with them after the event ended," shared Co-President senior Kayla Sham who emceed the event with Zeng.

The seniors were singing, clapping, and even swaying to the music.

"Most notably, there was this one senior citizen who came to the front to clap along, and she was so excited during all the performances," shared 17-year-old Sham who has been a service club member since her freshman year.

"It's really heartwarming because the seniors are all so willing to share stories of their lives with students and it's great talking to them," she added.

Sham said she joined Dreamcatchers because of its unique interactive purposes.

"We're able to make a difference in not only the hospice lives, but also with the families and staff around the patients."

She recalled one senior who talked about his travels during a Dreamcatchers party prior to the pandemic.

"He was just so glad we were there to keep him company!"

Zeng, who is also a four-year member, said she could tell from the response that the Dreamcatchers had met their objective for the latest event.

"At the end of the day, our goal is just to make the seniors' day happier and brighter by putting a smile on their faces in any way possible," Zeng shared.



# Construction Update

**Proud to be Community Supported!**



## A Trio of Construction Projects Funded by Measure WV Break Ground This Fall . . .

### South Pointe Middle School:

*Music All Around!*

Construction Begins on Performing Arts Building

Wearing blue hard hats, District leaders ceremoniously scooped golden shovels of earth at the official groundbreaking for South Pointe Middle School's new performing arts building on October 20.

The event marked construction onset of a 10,000 square-foot music center funded by community support of Measure WV.

"This is a celebration of what we can accomplish when we all come together with a strong vision," shared Principal Dr. Susan Arzola.

"It's a big day for all of us!"

The new building will feature expansive band and choir rooms with 24-foot-tall ceilings, ensemble rooms, instrument storage rooms, practice rooms, and music library room.

The South Pointe Choir opened the ceremony with the "National Anthem" performed by eighth grade member Ashley Shah and "We Can Dream" under the direction of Robin Wadsworth.



A percussion ensemble presented "On The Spectrum" led by band and instrumental music director Susan Willmering.

Parents in attendance were thrilled to see children perform for the first time together since pandemic swept through the nation.

"It's exciting to know that this state-of-the-art facility will impact generations of students," said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.



"Congratulations to the kids, you are the big winners today!"

Principal Arzola shared that the new construction project will have a "ripple effect" on campus.

With the expansion of band and choir programs, spin and dance classes will move into existing music rooms, the television studio will grow from a closet to a class, and a full classroom will now be dedicated to the robotics and STEAM program.

"Thanks to the Walnut Valley USD and our community, the sound of music will be louder and stronger here at South Pointe!"

The Board of Trustees awarded the contract to AWI Builders at the September 15, 2021 meeting with the winning bid of \$5,100,911.00.

The construction of the building designed by DC Architects began on October 17, 2021 with a duration of 426 days. Completion is slated for Winter 2022.

### Suzanne Middle School:

*Golden Shovel Day!*

Groundbreaking Commemorates Two Projects



Construction commenced this fall on a new two-story science and technology classroom building and gymnasium at Suzanne Middle School.

Walnut Valley USD celebrated the groundbreaking of the nearly \$5.2 million state-of-the-art facilities funded by Measure WV during a November 17 ceremony.

The 10,000 square-foot science building will feature ten STEAM-focused classrooms with collaboration work spaces.

The 12,000 square-foot gymnasium will include interior bleachers, full-size basketball court and two practice courts, volleyball court, wood gym floor, and attached Kinesiology workout room.

"The modern design will fully transform the look of our campus and we're excited to have that happen soon!" shared Principal Dr. Amy Smith.

The Board of Trustees awarded the contract for the two-story classroom building and gymnasium to R.C. Construction Services at the October 20 meeting.

The winning bid for the projects designed by DC Architects was \$5,100,911.00.

"I want to thank our community for making this possible!" said Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

"You can see the effects it's having throughout our entire district with modernization projects at all 15 schools."

Two student leaders shared their thoughts about the campus construction during the ceremony.

"This is a great thing for our school!" exclaimed ASB President 8th grader Maxwell Alfaro.

"And although I may not see the finished project, I'm happy knowing my little sisters will be able to enjoy these new buildings for me."

"I believe Suzanne students will be very excited because the new science building will be more modern and high-tech and the new gym will be useful in many ways," added seventh grade school treasurer Brandon Lee.

The Walnut campus built in 1962 has never had a gymnasium.

The 487-day construction began on November 29, 2021 with a projected completion in Spring 2023.



Walnut Elementary School

### Walnut Elementary School:

*Tax Dollars At Work*

Groundbreaking celebrates new multipurpose and classroom building

A staged row of glistening golden shovels signaled the construction ceremony at Walnut Elementary School on February 16.



Walnut Valley USD marked the groundbreaking for the new \$7.3 million multipurpose and classroom building funded by Measure WV.

"When I think about projects like this I get super excited about the impact it will have on kids for generations to come," shared Superintendent Dr. Robert Taylor.

"Thank you to our community for your ongoing support of our schools!"

The new 7,500 square-foot building will feature three 21st century learning classrooms and adjoining multipurpose room with open-concept ceilings, stage platform, storage and control rooms, LED lighting, and energy efficient HVAC systems. The multipurpose room (MPR) will replace the original structure built in 1976 that the school outgrew decades ago.

"This new state-of-the-art building will provide our campus with a larger space to accommodate student activities and events," shared Principal Robert Chang.

Fifth grader Riley de Jesus recalled that attending assemblies in the MPR had been "very crowded."

"Future students will be able to enjoy class plays, student performances, author visits, and many more wonderful things," she said.

Dual Language Immersion program fifth grader Sara Gidcumb believes the new building will bring joy and comfort, as well as good luck.

"Now, with a new MPR, we can fit more students into one assembly instead of doing multiple assemblies for each grade."

"We have outgrown our school's gathering place, but

fortunately, that's about to change!" said fifth-grade teacher and alumna Seema Bagai.

"In this new building, memories will be built for generations of Walnut Colts."

The Board of Trustees awarded the contract for the building to New Dynasty Construction at the November 17, 2021 meeting. The winning bid for the project designed by SGH Architects was \$7,297,000.

Construction began on December 20, 2021 and is slated for completion in Spring 2023.

# COVID-19 Testing, Vaccination Clinics

Walnut Valley USD continues to offer free, regular COVID-19 testing for all students and staff members.

In addition, COVID-19 vaccination clinics are available for students, staff, and community members. Testing and clinic schedules are available at [www.wvusd.org](http://www.wvusd.org). Walnut Valley USD has hosted ten vaccination clinics since September 2022, helping thousands of students, employees, and community members get their vaccine shots.



Watch video at: <https://youtu.be/hRRQqBJ3FO>.

## Wizards Only!



## C.J. Morris 5th Graders Conduct Harry Potter Lab Experiments

"I wanted to create an experience they wouldn't forget!" said C.J. Morris Elementary fifth-grade teacher Rachel Harrington who transformed her class for a Harry Potter-themed chemistry lesson on matter.

During the innovative Snape's Potion Lab, student investigators made observations and determined if a physical or chemical change occurred. Severus Snape is the name of the Hogwarts Potions professor in the Harry Potter series, explained Harrington, an admitted Potter-expert who even brought in a dry-ice cauldron for the activity.

Small groups rotated through stations containing simple ingredients the clever educator named Bouncing Spider Juice (vegetable oil), Moon Seeds (Alka Seltzer tablets), and Bat's Blood (water with red food coloring) to ramp up the excitement.

For the Elixir Euphoria Potion, the wizards-in-training placed three tablespoons of Unicorn Horn (baking powder) into a rubber glove and Kraken Venon (vinegar) into a plastic cup.

After securing the elements, student teams watched the exploding, bubbling reaction expand the glove – just like magic.

"Good thing we have a tray!" exclaimed Jacob Abdul Nour as the bright green mixture oozed out from the inflated glove onto the draped lab table.

"It created a gas!" he reported to his teacher who inquired about the reaction.

"It was a chemical change because the signs were bubbles and gas - and it smelled like vinegar chips!" shared Izlet Rodriguez.

The young scientists witnessed a physical change in the Polyjuice Potion Experiment after pouring milk and a drop of food coloring into a Petri dish.

"Then we took a swab and dipped it in the green liquid (dish soap) and it made this cool reaction!" gushed Kenzie Younes.

At the beginning of the year, students told their teacher they felt science was boring.

"Being that they were doing distance learning for so long, I could understand why they felt that way," Harrington said.

The dedicated teacher was determined to not let them leave her classroom feeling that way.

"We've performed so many experiments that I hope I've changed their minds!"

# Outlook

Issue 51 Spring 2022



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## 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

Spring Break April 11-18

Last Day of School May 26

Memorial Day May 30

2022-23 School Year Begins August 8!

**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).

## Program Spotlight

# Westhoff Pilots Units of Study for Reading

With fabric bookbags slung over shoulders, Westhoff Elementary first graders marched onto the kindergarten courtyard ready to offer up a cross-age reading lesson. For about 30 minutes, the six and seven-year-olds became teaching experts using facial expressions and hand gestures while delivering true-life tales about penguins and bugs and space.

This year, Westhoff has turned first-grade classrooms into reading workshops with implementation of the renowned Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP).

Reader's workshop students learn skills and strategies while reading books they have picked themselves with the goal of becoming life-long, confident readers and writers.

Elementary Learning Specialist Therapi Kaplan commented that students have literally been "gobbling up the reading. I've never seen kids' eyes light up with reading like this!"

The reading celebration marked the completion of a four-week unit of study on non-fiction works. The youngsters had been excited and a little nervous prior to the reading session where they would also be fielding questions from their kindergarten buddies. But, they had rehearsed and were prepared to do their very best.

Maya Jornacion, 6, skillfully read "Cats and Dogs" by Katy Pike and "Good Food" by Jean Elliot Junis to her kinder partner.

"I like that you can read books that you like," she said afterward. "And I can learn all about stuff!"

Her first-grade teacher Amy Leinen credits the pilot program for giving students the time to study and explore books independently as well as in their partnerships.

"I love how the children embrace everything that they learn during reader's workshop and use it to read to and teach the kindergarten buddies," she said.

All the research confirms the minutes spent on high success reading is the greatest indicator of a successful reader, reported Principal Dr. Sandra Lee.

"Reader's workshop allows students to fall in love with reading which will point them towards an upward

journey of wanting to do something they love to do," she said.

The school's Community Club backed the new program with shelves of high interest books.

Westhoff currently offers the TCRWP writer's workshop and has also launched the phonics units of study in all K-2 classes.

Principal Lee and Kaplan offer daily support in the new reading and phonics workshops. Kaplan refers to the units of study programs as the "secret sauce in teaching" with the precise teaching methods followed by direct application.

"Coming back from the year and a half, we've had students who were just hungry to learn and be with one another," she added.

"Our goal is to provide them with the best of what works in terms of getting kids to love and want more of reading."



Watch video at: <https://youtu.be/TYXTubXvM1k>.

## Special Delivery!

Vejar Elementary first grade "postal workers" recently delivered over 2,000 Valentine's Day cards to classmates.

Teachers Carolyn Campbell, Lisa Gomez, Kaylie Mitchell, and Brenda Moscoso created an innovative dramatic play opportunity as part of the social studies unit on American Symbols.

The children made stamps to be sold at the little Post Office located outside Room 13.

And for the first two weeks in February, classes took turns "working" to sort and date through stacks of pink, red, and white letters.

"They are learning through experience and having a blast!" shared Campbell who reported that students have even become inspired to write letters and keep their Post Office open.

Two classmates ran into an actual Walnut mail carrier while delivering a letter in the school office to Principal Dr. Whitney Prenger.

"It was perfect timing and a very memorable moment of a real-world connection for them!" Campbell added.



## Kind Coins Campaign

Educational Specialist Trisha Castaneda's HARTT Center class joined the Kind Coins for Peru campaign during the 2022 Great Kindness Challenge in February.

Students raised a total of \$355 in spare change to fund laptops for children of San Martin de Porres school in the village of El Guayabo - Pachacamac.

