



RIVERSIDE COUNTY  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
KENNETH M. YOUNG  
Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

# Models of **Academic Excellence** and **Innovation**



| 2016 MODELS

Models of Academic Excellence and Innovation  
summaries and workshop materials  
available online at:

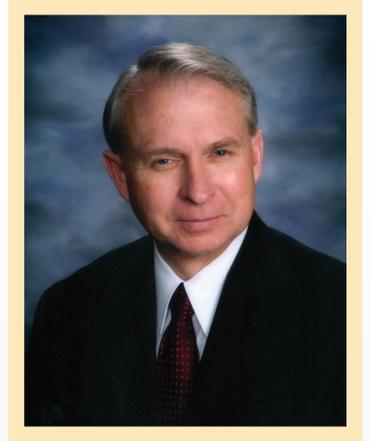


[www.rcoe.us/ed-summit](http://www.rcoe.us/ed-summit)

# Message from the County Superintendent

Throughout Riverside County, our schools and districts have exemplary programs and practices that impact our students each and every day. Educators from inside and outside of the county continually want to know where they can find programs that are having a positive impact on students at all levels.

The Models of Academic Excellence highlighted in this guide feature outstanding practices that address instructional strategies, student engagement, school culture, and many other factors that research has shown contribute to student success.



I hope you enjoy learning more about the work being done in our schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth M. Young". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Kenneth M. Young  
Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

*All students in Riverside County will graduate from high school well prepared for college and the workforce.*

# Abbreviations

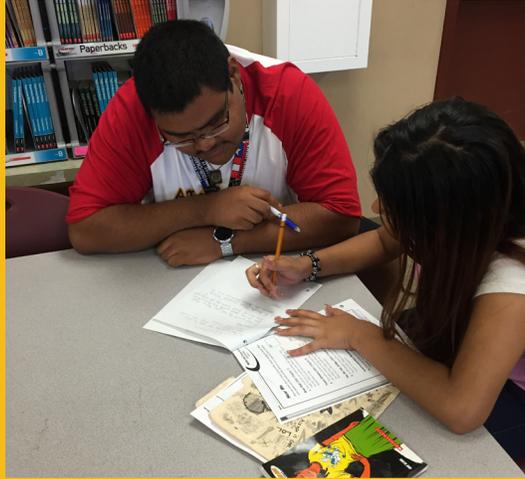
AP	Advanced Placement
ASES	After School Education and Safety
AVID	Advancement Via Individualized Determination
CELDT	California English Language Development Test
CST	California Standardized Test
CVC	Cielo Vista Charter
CVUSD	Coachella Valley Unified School District
DSUSD	Desert Sands Unified School District
ELA	English Language Arts
ELs	English Learners
ELD	English Language Development
GI	Gastrointestinal
GPA	Grade Point Average
LCAP	Local Control Accountability Plan
LEUSD	Lake Elsinore Unified School District
MVUSD	Moreno Valley Unified School District
NGSS	Next Generation Science Standards
PE	Physical Education
PLCs	Professional Learning Communities
PSAT	Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test
RCOE	Riverside County Office of Education
SBAC	Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium
SET	Screen Evaluate Treatment
SMART	Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent
SNAP	Screen Now and Prevent
STEM	Science Technology Engineering Mathematics
U.S.	United States

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# AmeriCorps Lectura Program



Coachella Valley  
Unified School District

Dr. Darryl Adams  
District Superintendent

Coachella Valley USD (CVUSD) serves one of the nation's most impoverished rural areas. Poverty, geographic isolation, language barriers, and a lack of services contribute to the numerous barriers encountered daily by CVUSD students and their families.

The *AmeriCorps Lectura Program* is comprised of 52 volunteer members who provide 1:1 or small group tutoring in literacy to CVUSD students grades K-8, who are not reading at grade level. In grades 3-8, members are placed in Read 180 intervention classrooms. Members in K-6 sites work in classrooms with the highest numbers of English Learners and lowest decoding, phonological awareness, and reading comprehension abilities. In middle school, students in Read 180 are typically Long Term English Learners who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for five or more continuous years and have not met reclassification requirements.

AmeriCorps volunteers' target growth per student is one grade level per year. The AmeriCorps Program outcomes indicators reflect targeted intervention yields positive student academic results.

During the 2014-2015 school year, nearly 92% of participating students moved up one grade level in reading. In 2013-2014, nearly 75% of students moved up one grade level in reading. The *AmeriCorps Lectura Program* focus centers on literacy improvement; the benefits of having a Lectura tutee by far surpass merely meeting academic goals. Tutors become mentors and provide tutees with irreplaceable relationships, personal growth, positive self-image, improved self-esteem, confidence, improved communication, and social skills.

For additional information, contact:  
Hidali Garcia, [hidali.garcia@cvusd.us](mailto:hidali.garcia@cvusd.us), (760) 848-1028

# Café Literario

Jurupa Unified  
School District

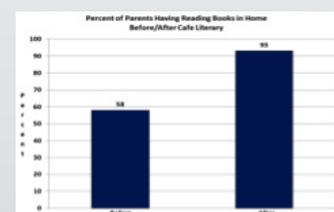
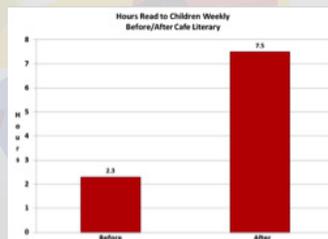
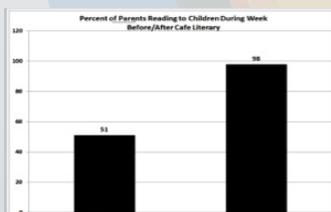
Mr. Elliott Duchon  
District Superintendent



*Café Literario* is designed to create reading role models in the homes of our students, as well as to fill in the research-documented lack of books in economically challenged homes. *Café Literario* (or Literary Café) is not a literacy class, even though it definitely includes literacy as part of the learning. *Café Literario* is at a much higher level of rigor than just learning how to read.

This program promotes a passion for reading, literature, and cultural awareness at an adult level of readability and interest. The program is not once or twice a year, instead it runs throughout the whole year; once a week, two hours a week and reading books are provided by the district. Books can be selected by the district, parents, or both. The district is also responsible for providing tools, resources, and access to those things that may benefit our parents and community. Examples of such resources are: access to a psychologist when dealing with the subject of sexual abuse (Khaled Hosseini's *Kite Runner*), Child Protective Services presentations on child safety and identifying and reporting child abuse (David Pelzer's trilogy, *A Child Called It*, *The Lost Boy*, and *A Man Named Dave*), etc.

As mentioned before, research has shown the value of parents reading with their children. As you can see in the charts below, the program has made a tremendous impact, not only has reading time increased but the number of books in the household has too.



For additional information, contact:  
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# Encore



## Beaumont Unified School District

Mountain View Middle School

Mr. Terrence Davis  
District Superintendent

*Encore*, named for its role in supporting the core instructional program, is an agile and responsive service delivery model designed to support the changing academic needs of all students. The program's responsiveness to student need comes from a school-wide restructuring every six weeks. Student data is analyzed to determine which students are in need of strategic-level support, and the specific skills in need of support. Extension/enrichment classes are provided for students who do not demonstrate a need for academic or behavioral intervention and are also redesigned every six weeks for increased variety.

*Encore* provides strategic interventions for students in academics and behavior during the school day without the need to change a student's class placement. Students looking for a greater challenge may request an honors project during the *Encore* period. Students whose need for intervention is at the intensive level continue their learning unimpeded in their intensive intervention class during the *Encore* period. Students being served in self-contained special education classes can be mainstreamed during the *Encore* period based on their individual level of readiness.

The array of opportunities for students at all levels based on their specific areas of need and interest create an environment of opportunity and support. Students are passing their classes at higher rates, and taking advantage of opportunities for academic honors. Students experiencing the behavior support groups in the *Encore* program have fewer suspensions. Struggling students improve, high-achieving students excel, and all students get a diversity of experiences beyond what traditional programs can deliver.

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# English Learner Families for College



Moreno Valley Unified  
School District

Dr. Judy White  
District Superintendent

*English Learner Families For College* is a model academic program addressing the LCAP priority area of student academic achievement and implemented on a pilot basis in all six middle schools and four high schools in MVUSD. The program was developed to address an urgent problem: long-term English learners were not reclassifying by the end of middle school, effectively blocking their access to high school college preparatory curriculum and limiting their future college and career prospects.

*Families for College* is a five-year program, supported by a U.S. Department of Education Investing In Innovation (i3) grant, that is following a cohort of long-term English learners from the fall of sixth grade to the fall of tenth grade. This program provides college-going culture supports and opportunities to improve school performance and college preparedness.

Aspects of the practice include: ongoing data collection and review; intensive middle-grades ELD preparation for high school access to A-G courses; educating and involving EL parents as partners and middle school site decision makers; and building students' 21st century skills via peer mentoring, annual academic plan completion, and student-led video conferences.

English 3D academic language training by Dr. Kate Kinsella and her associate Theresa Hancock has had a profound impact on CELDT reclassification. A baseline of 19% of cohort students reclassified in 2012-13, prior to entering the program. By 2015-16, 67% reclassified, this means the grant's five-year target has already been met. *Families for College* is a highly replicable, cost-effective program that other districts and schools can implement effectively.

For additional information, contact:  
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# Ensuring Equity and Success in Secondary Mathematics



**Desert Sands  
Unified School District**  
Dr. Gary Rutherford  
District Superintendent

In response to critical changes in mathematics education and the resulting demands on coursework, Desert Sands USD (DSUSD) redesigned its secondary mathematics program. After close examination, two major areas of concern emerged - inconsistent student placement and progression, and the ineffectiveness of math support for identified students. Contributing to the concern was the discovery that students were taking courses not at the sufficient level of rigor to prepare them for upper-level mathematics. To effectively support students in mastering mathematics skills and concepts, DSUSD recognized the need to develop a more responsive and prescriptive support system built on the premise that every high school student take standards aligned A-G courses during the school year.

The first step in the process for ensuring success in mathematics for all students began in 2015, when the district's Educational Services staff wrote and implemented two summer school courses, Introduction to *Math I* and *Calculus Prep*. While these courses were designed to prepare students for rigorous, upper-level mathematics coursework, they also served to increase student confidence. Data has proven that students who attended these courses were better prepared in math.

A second strategy was creating a Secondary Math Flowchart outlining how students' progress through mathematics. This template provides clarity for all stakeholders, including leadership, counselors, teachers, students and parents, and course progressions including remediation and acceleration opportunities. Through careful monitoring of performance data, DSUSD will refine its practices, as necessary, to ensure all students have access to high-quality mathematics instruction preparing them for college and career.

For additional information, contact:  
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# Expanded Learning Programs



**Desert Sands  
Unified School District**  
Dr. Gary Rutherford  
District Superintendent

Desert Sands USD (DSUSD) currently operates 16 expanded learning programs funded primarily by an After School Education and Safety (ASES) grant. The 13 elementary and 3 middle school programs are in the ninth year of operation and serve approximately 1,400 students daily. DSUSD embraces a collaborative process in the planning and implementation of all *expanded learning programs* that includes key stakeholders; principals, school staff, students, parents and community partners. This consistent articulation builds positive relationships, promotes excellence and assures alignment with the regular school day.

The district's Supplemental Services staff supports expanded learning by providing a menu of high interest, interactive programs and activities to ensure student participation, and increase 21st century learning. Principals collaborate with constituents from their site to decide which of these programs/activities will accommodate the specific needs and interests of all participants, and foster student-connectedness to their school. The district also supports this process by offering professional development that builds the expanded learning program staff's capacity to deliver effective academic and enrichment activities and ensures learning is active, meaningful, supports mastery, and expands the horizons of a diverse population of students.

The model of allowing principals to use a hybrid of district program goals/expectations and the flexibility to customize the *expanded learning program* for each school has proven to be extremely successful as evidenced by a high attendance rate and preparing a generation of students with the "4C's" for College and Career Readiness; Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Communication and Creativity.

For additional information, contact:  
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# Freshman Seminar



## Moreno Valley Unified School District

Canyon Springs High School

Dr. Judy White

District Superintendent

The transition to high school can be difficult for ninth graders, particularly those who were disengaged in middle school. In looking at GPA, behavior, and attendance data for ninth graders, many of those students who were not successful in middle school were even less successful in high school. The belief that intervention and support at the earliest opportunity will put a student on the right track led to the development of the program which focuses not only on academic progress but also the risk factors that result in student non-achievement.

The curriculum addresses the social and academic skills students need to be successful. Topics include making positive choices, building relationships, study skills, time management, and many more topics that teach personal responsibility and planning for the future. Students receive twice-weekly academic support during class by college-age tutors. Counselors and administrators give lessons on high school four-year planning, goal-setting, A-G requirements, and social skills. Teachers monitor academic progress in students' other classes and watch for behavior and attendance issues. They meet individually with students to review progress and set goals. Guest speakers and field trips round out the program, providing opportunities for growth beyond the classroom. At the end of the year students are connected to other academic programs on campus, such as AVID or an academy.

*Freshman Seminar* teachers note a significant improvement in students' attitudes toward school and a more positive outlook on their futures. The program has seen improvements of greater than 50% on grades, attendance and behavior when measuring the number of D/F grades, trancies, and discipline incidents.

For additional information, contact:  
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# Kickoff to College



Perris Union High  
School District

Mr. Grant Bennett  
District Superintendent

Bringing awareness to students about college and career readiness is the motivation for this district-wide event. It is imperative that all students have the knowledge and tools to navigate their way through the many career paths and college choices that are available to them as they transition into young adults. There is not one single path that suits every student.

The goal of this event is to ensure that every student has a plan for success upon completion of high school. This means the district will continually engage students in activities that expose them to the tools and resources available that support planning for their future.

The *Kickoff to College* engaged 9,609 students in activities that are preparing them for college and career access. The schools had 3,715 ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students take the PSAT and 1,512 twelfth grade students completed either a community college or four-year college application on this day.

#### *Kickoff to College* Objectives:

- Increase awareness about college and career readiness
- Expose students to college preparation assessments
- Use the PSAT to support and identify students for advanced and AP classes
- Provide opportunities for students to explore college and career options
- Provide support filling out college applications
- Identify funding resources to pay for college
- Educate students about tools and resources available to them
- Improve student planning and preparation for the future

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# Physical Education Leads the Way at Frank Augustus Miller Middle School



## Riverside Unified School District

Frank Augustus Miller Middle School

Dr. David Hansen  
District Superintendent

Frank Augustus Miller Middle School in Riverside USD offers excellence in academics and behavior due in large part to the Physical Education Department's programs. Students excel not only in physical fitness, but in meeting, exceeding, and maintaining a positive school culture focused on high student engagement and excellence in academics. For example, Miller's 1,060 students and staff recently set the square dancing world record.

Schoolwide rules, procedures, and activities are introduced, reinforced, and supported by the Physical Education department on the first days of school with assemblies. The PE teachers on our campus have the philosophy that all students, regardless of innate physical talent, should be given the knowledge and opportunity to gain value from a healthy, active lifestyle.

PE teaches non-traditional sports such as Pickleball and LaCrosse. A variety of teaching strategies using common core standards are utilized. The department created gym work-out videos featuring the PE teachers doing aerobic exercises. The department schedules guest speakers to motivate students. The PE department embraces technology and provides professional development for other teachers in the district.

By all measures, Miller Middle School excels. Miller has high fitness scores (70.6%). Academically, students are high achievers. In a recent Gallup Poll, Miller scored the highest in the district and significantly higher than the norm for staff and student engagement, (67% versus 31%). Students participate at a rate of 82.5% in one of Miller's 28 clubs.

For additional information, contact:

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# Professional Development



**Desert Sands  
Unified School District**  
Dr. Gary Rutherford  
District Superintendent

Desert Sands USD has a long-standing commitment to providing high-quality professional development for teachers and leaders. With implementation of new state standards, DSUSD embarked on a new level of professional learning inclusive of all stakeholders. The three signature characteristics that define the professional development process are: clarity of focus, depth of content, and a comprehensive and differentiated structure.

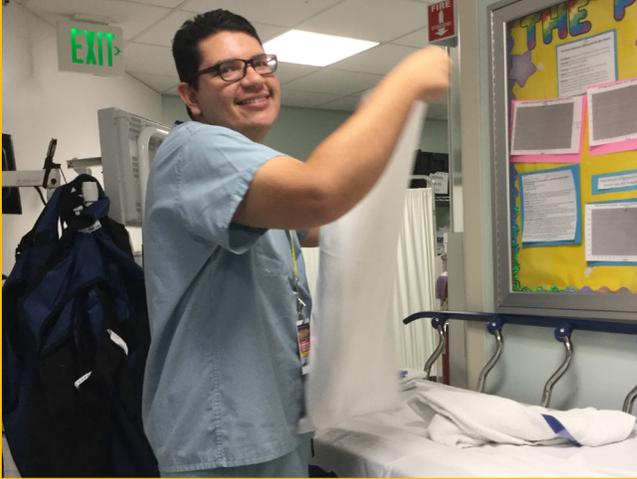
The DSUSD's focus provides clarity and cohesion for all district professional development. Educational Services created a "Literacy and Mathematics in the Classroom" tool, which further defines student learning outcomes, and directly supports the implementation of the district focus. To ensure optimal impact on student learning, the professional development structure strategically supports staff at every level, from classroom teachers and instructional coaches to principals and district leadership.

While maintaining a clear vision, Educational Services provides more than 100 professional development trainings per year for over 1,500 staff in grades K-12 on topics ranging from core content to instructional strategies. What makes DSUSD unique is not just the number of trainings, but the depth and breadth of the content delivered. Differentiated inservice opportunities include full-day grade-level/subject trainings, non-student professional development days, after-school academies, summer institutes, trainer of trainer models, site-based training, leadership cohorts, principal and instructional coach Professional Learning Communities, and online opportunities.

The success of the professional development program lies in the interconnectedness of three signature components: clarity of focus, depth of content, and a comprehensive, differentiated structure, all working together to support teaching and learning in Desert Sands.

For additional information, contact:  
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# Project Search



## Riverside County Office of Education

Dr. Diana Walsh-Reuss  
Associate Superintendent  
Division of Student Programs  
and Services

RCOE's *Project Search* is a work immersion program at Riverside Community Hospital for students with intellectual disabilities. Based on the national *Project Search* model, it is a partnership of the Riverside County Office of Education, Riverside Community Hospital, and the State Department of Rehabilitation.

Like other RCOE special education programs, *Project Search* emphasizes rigorous research-based instruction and data driven student feedback. Additionally, continual feedback and collaboration comes from the hospital staff in each department.

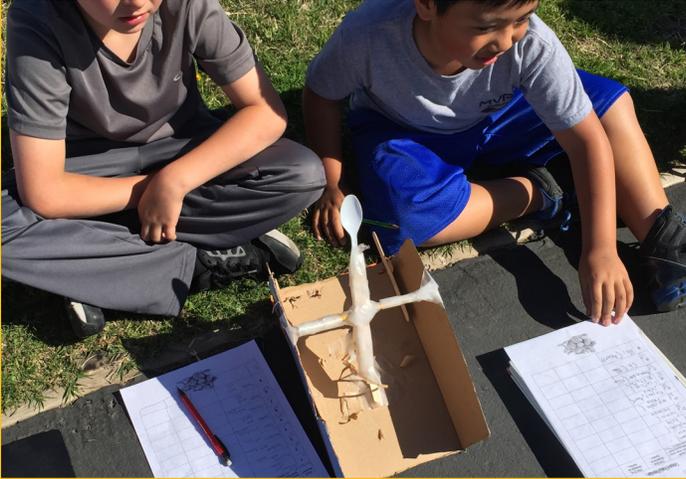
The school day begins and ends in the classroom at the hospital where lessons focus on independent living skills, employment skills, and self-advocacy skills. Nearly five hours per day is spent in an individual hospital internship. The following departments at Riverside Community Hospital have participated in *Project Search* internships: Imaging, Sterile Processing Department, Nutritional Services, Housekeeping, Admitting, Transplant, Mail Room, GI Lab, Outpatient Services, and Human Resources.

Individual success stories include Irena, hired by Riverside Community Hospital in 2011, who continues to work in the Nutritional Services Department as a Room Service Tray passer. She earns \$15.36 per hour and has received several employee awards. Forty-four interns have participated in RCOE's *Project Search* program since 2009. Of those, 59% are in paid supported employment positions and 16% are earning \$10 to \$15 per hour.

For additional information, contact:

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# Sci 5: Accelerating Literacy



## Val Verde Unified School District

Victoriano Elementary School

Mr. Michael McCormick  
District Superintendent

Advances in science and technology have changed the way we live, work, teach, and learn. The *Sci-5* model is a structured inquiry model that underpins rigorous, dynamic units of study centered on Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) disciplinary core ideas and associated literacy skills. Learning units are driven by essential questions that encourage students to develop critical thinking skills as they rationalize their thoughts and ideas. Students engage in in-depth inquiry using a variety of digital and analog references to build understanding of science and engineering concepts. Students participate in a range of experiments, collecting evidence in the form of narrative description, drawings and diagrams, photos, or videos. Finally, students create a summary of the process citing research sources they have referenced, and effectively communicate their ideas using various forms of media, technology and communication styles to a broad and authentic audience.

Since 2011, Victoriano has recorded among the highest science CST scores in Riverside County. In every year since 2011, more than 70% of Victoriano fifth graders have scored proficient or advanced on the California State Test (CST) for Science. In 2015, only 6% of students scored Far Below Basic, compared to an average of 17% across both the county and the state. Another indicator of the success can be found in the 2015 Speak Up Survey results; 63% of Victoriano students in grades 3-5 who responded to the survey indicated that they would like a job that incorporates STEM, compared to a national average of 45%.

For additional information, contact:  
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# SNAP (Screen Now and Prevent) / SET (Screen Evaluate Treatment) 4 School



Lake Elsinore Unified  
School District

Dr. Douglas Kimberly  
District Superintendent

The Lake Elsinore USD (LEUSD) houses the *SNAP/SET 4 School* county-wide program. The program fosters developmental and social competence by preventing, identifying, and treating communication disorders and disruptive behavior disorders, with simultaneous support to meet parenting needs. For the past ten years, the program has focused on supporting school readiness for young children while minimizing the stigma of mental health services. The program has provided early identification, intervention support, and case management to almost 6,000 young children age 0-5, through a multi-disciplinary Child Study Team approach in which children, parents, and teachers are linked to early interventions that support families and preschool teachers with specific strategies to address behavioral or developmental concerns. The outcomes of the practice focus on and reduce communication, developmental, conduct spectrum disorders, and the need for special education assessments.

The success of the program is evident through a data sample between July 2013 and January 2016. In LEUSD, 1,604 children 0-5 years old received social-emotional screenings; 1,405 children received developmental screenings. Each year, 600 cases were reviewed by the Child Study Team. Through identification, 40% of the children received early intervention services and 12% needed further assessment. Approximately 300 children and their parents participated in language support groups, 88% children improved their language skills. Each year, over 1,000 children participate in pro-social skills groups, 100 teachers and aides received classroom support, and over 200 parents received intense intervention to address behavioral concerns.

For additional information, contact:  
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# Universal Achievement Through Data-Driven Decision Making



## Palm Springs Unified School District

Cielo Vista Charter School

Mrs. Sandra Lyon  
District Superintendent

The culture of Cielo Vista Charter is based on the fundamental belief that all students are capable of high levels of achievement. All stakeholders have developed a strong buy-in to this fundamental principle that drives all decision making processes. The philosophy of universal achievement for all students drives the development of instruction based on this data analysis. Instruction integrates 21st century critical thinking and technology skills starting as early as kindergarten and continuing through eighth grade. Project-based learning is used as an essential element in allowing students to synthesize and apply their learning at high levels of real world application. Following this in depth data-analysis and collaborative discussion, collective inquiry is utilized to align these standards and skills to the curriculum resources and identify best instructional practices to meet all student needs.

The combination of data-driven decision making, collaborative instructional planning, and the implementation of state standards alignment through the monitoring of Essential Standards and the SMART goal process are essential to the CVC culture of universal achievement. Allowing students to not only perform exceptionally well on CST but the goal of having students prepared to tackle the rigorous testing on SBAC was met with great success. Students in grades 3-6 scored higher than the district and state averages on the SBAC with 59% of students meeting or exceeding standards in ELA and 52% in mathematics. The Cielo Vista community will continue to "soar to new heights" with future goals of never being satisfied until all students are reaching their highest potential.

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## Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

Kenneth M. Young

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