

# STATE OF THE SCHOOLS REPORT 2022-2023



# 2022-2023 NEVADA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

## A Message From the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools Scott W. Lay



Welcome to the State of the Schools report for 2023. I'm happy to be able to offer to the community a glimpse into our schools and a description of what the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools office provides to our youth and community. Inside you will also find assessment data for our students, an explanation of the Local Control Accountability Plan for schools, and the state accountability system.

Nevada County is home to over 10,000 students (excluding the Truckee area). This includes eight elementary school districts, one comprehensive high school district, and seven independent charter schools. We also oversee two statewide charter schools that serve 18+ year old students striving to secure their high school diploma. All of our schools pride themselves in working collaboratively to maximize tax payer dollars, while delivering a quality educational

experience for the students. We pride ourselves in serving our schools and students.

As we work through a post pandemic educational landscape, two of our schools' goals are targeting learning loss mitigation and mental health support for our students. You will find multiple strategies implemented across the county's schools that meet the specific needs of their students.

I encourage you to arrange visits to any of our county's schools and see firsthand the teaching and learning going on inside the classrooms. I think you will be impressed.

Sincerely,

Scott W. Lay  
Superintendent

## Our Mission and Vision

Through exemplary countywide leadership, facilitation and support, the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools (NCSoS) programs and staff will create, sustain, and encourage high-quality educational programs for all students. High academic standards, safe and engaging learning environments and the development of community partnerships will help in our mission to prepare students for the future.

Preparing students for the future will be accomplished through fiscal and curricular accountability, support to school districts, and developing partnerships with stakeholders including parents, students, business community, and agencies.

## Our Nevada County Board of Education

The Nevada County Board of Education (County Board) is comprised of five members who are elected by the voters of the county and serve a four-year term. The County Board supports and guides the NCSoS office in providing leadership and services to school districts. Each of the nine school districts in Nevada County operates under the governance of their own local board. The roles of the County Board of Education differ in that its primary responsibilities include:

- Adopt rules and regulations for the board's own governance and keep a recording of their proceedings,
- Adopt the annual budget of the county superintendent before its submission to the county board of supervisors,
- Approve the salary of the county superintendent,
- Establish and oversee the NCSoS authorized charter schools,
- Review interim financial reports and the annual audit report of the county superintendent,
- Hold public hearing and adopt the Local Control Accountability Plan for the county-run program,
- Serve as an appellate body for student expulsions and inter-district transfers, and
- Acquire, lease, lease-purchase, hold and convey real property.

## Leadership through Service

Across California, there are 58 county offices of education that provide important support and resources to their respective school districts. The County Superintendent of Schools is elected by the voters in Nevada County and serves a four-year term. The primary statutory responsibility of the superintendent is the oversight of district finances. The state mandated requirements include review and approval of district Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs), providing differentiated technical assistance to districts, audit district budgets, certification of school attendance records, and monitoring of teacher credentials. The superintendent administers the county office. Under this leadership, the NCSoS office is proud to serve local districts through a variety of programs and supports to benefit the students of Nevada County.

Five departments within the NCSoS office promote and provide high-quality education services for schools and districts in Nevada County and throughout the region. Our team of experts design, develop and deliver tailored services based on individual district needs to support business, technology, human resources, special education and educational services.

The business services department staff works to improve the quality, efficiency and cost-effective-

ness of all school business operations serving nine school districts and seven charter schools by providing services such as accounts payable and payroll processing, auditing, fiscal oversight, guidance, and support. This department also provides internal accounting support for the many programs operated by NCSoS.

The human resources department staff serves as a strategic partner supporting NCSoS as an employer of choice by attracting, retaining, and inspiring passionate educators to support the successful development of our youth. We are a professional resource for the organization and local districts regarding all employment matters, including recruitment, interview and selection, employee orientation, professional development and retention, teacher credentialing, countywide teacher substitute consortium, employee and labor relations, leaves, health and welfare benefits, worker's compensation, and pre-retirement counseling. Specialized services including executive recruitment searches are available upon request.

The Information Technology department is responsible for the management of the technology infrastructure for NCSoS and its remote sites, including cybersecurity, phone services, user support, network services and all related equipment. This team offers services and support for a mix of technologies which support educational technology and administrative services for our school districts to enhance learning and growth.

The Special Education department provides regional programs designed for students who need highly specialized intensive services. The services are delivered through regional programs located throughout the county in 10 classrooms across three school districts. Infants with special low incidence needs are served in our Early Start Program through classroom and in-home based services. Our dedicated team of educators and support staff have the professional training and expertise to deliver high quality instruction for each child in our care. In addition, our specialists provide speech, visual impairment and deaf and hard of hearing services to students who require these supports.

The Educational Services department provides a wide array of supports for countywide schools including: professional development offerings in curriculum and instruction across all content areas, state and federal accountability programming support (e.g., Local Control Accountability Plans, Williams School monitoring, and technical assistance for student and school improvement), safety and school climate resources and training, foster youth services, Indian Education programs for Native students, health education support, homeless and student attendance support, alternative education opportunities, and early childhood education programs.

Nevada County is an amazing place to live and raise a family in. Our amazing setting and geography are second to none. But what makes this place feel like home, what makes it feel like a community, are the people that you engage with every day and week. At Nevada County Superintendent of Schools, you will find that all of us strive to bring that community focus into our service, and we work to communicate that belief to our students, the educational team members, and the families we support at every opportunity we get.

### Nevada County Superintendent of Schools

380 Crown Point Circle  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.478.6400  
[www.nevco.org](http://www.nevco.org)

**Total Student Enrollment (2021-22)**  
10,921

**Scott W. Lay**  
Superintendent

**Teena Corker**  
Associate Superintendent  
Educational Services

**Eli Gallup**  
Associate Superintendent  
Special Education/SELPA Director

**Darlene Waddle**  
Chief Business Official

**Rick Jex**  
Director, Information Technology

**Regina Reno**  
Executive Director, Human Resources

**Eric Nielsen**  
Maintenance Supervisor

**Nevada County Board of Education Trustees**  
Heino L. Nicolai, President  
Susan Clarabut  
Louise Bennicoff Johnson  
Timothy May  
Julie Baker

**Teena Corker**  
Associate Superintendent  
Educational Services

**Andrea Marks**  
Director,  
Curriculum, Instruction &  
Accountability

### NCSoS Offers a System of Support

Nevada County Superintendent of Schools is part of a comprehensive, statewide, system of support that provides resources and services to school districts and charter schools, also known as Local Education Agencies (LEAs). The success of students lies at the heart of this system. Currently in California there are 1,037 Local Education Agencies; 58 County Offices of Education; and 7 Geographic Lead agencies.

The System of Support is an effort to reduce redundancy across state and federal programs and advance efforts to improve student achievement across the state. There are three levels of support. Level 1 provides Support for All. For example, this would include the delivery of professional development, resources, and information to districts for the purpose of supporting teachers with their instruction and ultimately improving student achievement. Currently, one way that NCSoS is providing Level 1 support to districts is by providing educators with professional learning opportunities, materials, and resources as they implement Social Emotional Learning practices and the Universal Design for Learning framework through well-developed Communities of Practice. In addition, Instructional Coaches work with school sites to improve instructional practices in all content areas including areas of Mathematics, Science, ELA and the Arts.

Level 2 provides support in the form of Differentiated Assistance (DA). DA is a process that involves the use of Improvement Science methodology and protocols to

conduct a complete analysis of a school district’s system. The process involves a data dive followed by a root cause analysis that leads to a research-based practice or initiative that the team would like to conduct short action research cycles on all to improve student achievement. Districts are identified for DA through results posted on the California Dashboard. They may be identified to receive Level 2 support through any of the following priority areas: English Language Arts and Mathematics Academic indicator, English Learning Progress, Chronic Absenteeism, Suspension, College and Career Readiness, and Graduation Rate. Currently, in Nevada County there are five districts receiving DA.

Level 3 provides more Intensive Intervention. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction may require more intensive interventions for LEAs with persistent performance issues and a lack of improvement over a four-year period. There are currently no LEAs in Nevada County needing Level 3 support.

For more information visit: [cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/t1/csss.asp](http://cde.ca.gov/sp/sw/t1/csss.asp).

### Restarting the California School Dashboard

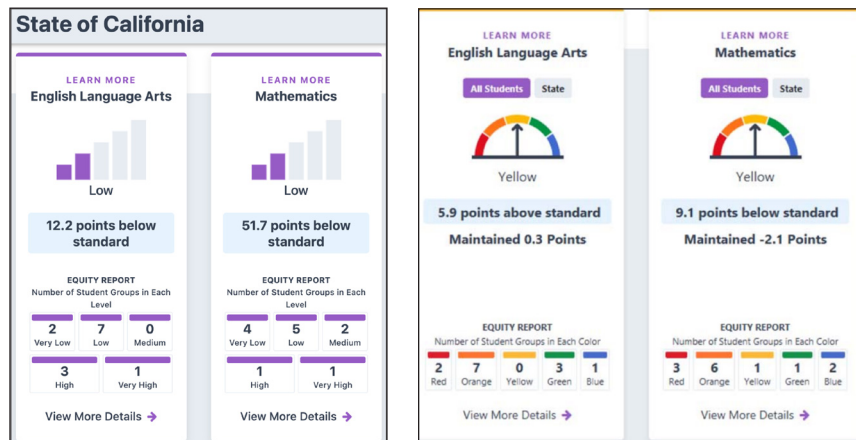
In the Spring of 2017, the California School Dashboard was launched. The CA Dashboard operated through 2019 using multiple measures for schools to consider student performance and plan for continuous improvement. With the onset of COVID 19, all high stakes testing was halted. The CA Dashboard was “frozen” and data was not collected for the 2020 school year. In 2021, districts had the option to use standards-aligned local assessment tools or administer the CAASPP in a modified form. Many Nevada County schools opted to administer the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) to their students. However, there were many questions about equity and validity when it came to analyzing the data.

The California School Dashboard officially restarted in December 2022. Pre-COVID, schools were identified on a scale from low performing to high performing and assigned a color with blue and green

indicating high performance and red and orange being the lowest performance. A formula including status and change was used to place schools and student groups on this scale.

Formerly, data was used to determine current year performance (Status), and prior year data was used to determine a change in performance. For the restart of the CA School Dashboard in 2022, only status and the color purple are used to identify levels of performance. Change will be added in 2023 and the CA Dashboard will be able to serve as a fully operational accountability system once again providing on-going data measuring not only academic indicators but also, chronic absenteeism, English Language progress, Suspension Rate, Graduation Rate, College and Career Readiness as well as local indicators.

Find the California School Dashboard here: [caschooldashboard.org](http://caschooldashboard.org).



### 2022 Statewide & County Academic Indicator Results Comparison CA Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)

% of students meeting or exceeding CA State Standards		
	CA - ALL STUDENT GROUPS	Nevada County - ALL STUDENT GROUPS
English Language Arts	47.06%	47.76% Above State Average
Mathematics	33.38%	35.14% Above State Average
Science	29.45%	35.63% Above State Average

### 2022 and the CA Dashboard

#### Annual Summary of Dashboard Indicators

Indicator	2017	2018	2019	202	2021	2022
English Language Arts/Mathematics	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	Status Only
Chronic Absenteeism	n/a	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	Status Only
English Language Progress	✓	n/a	Status Only	n/a	n/a	Status Only
Suspension Rate	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	Status Only
Graduation	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	Status Only
College/Career	n/a	Status Only	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local Indicators	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	Status Only

#### Assembly Bill 130

- Suspended reporting of state indicators on the 2021 Dashboard
- Requires the use of current year performance data (i.e., 2021–22)

**Teena Corker**  
Associate Superintendent  
Educational Services

**Andrea Marks**  
Director,  
Curriculum, Instruction &  
Accountability

**COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE LEADS**  
**Carrie Ferrero**  
Continuous Improvement Specialist  
Science & Math

**Nancy Jackson**  
Continuous Specialist English  
Language Arts & Arts Education

**Meghan Salter**  
Social Emotional Learning  
Instructional Coach  
Teacher On Special Assignment

**Melissa Parrett**  
Child Welfare & Attendance

## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

### The Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)

As part of the state accountability system, every district and charter school must develop an LCAP. It is a three-year plan and developed in three stages: identify district goals with the input of parents, the public, teachers, and students; develop action plans to meet district goals and state priorities; and review by the county office of education. LCAPs must outline their public engagement processes, identify goals and performance indicators, and lay out action and budget plans. This plan is the district's opportunity to tell their story of how, what, and why programs and services are selected to meet their local needs. While this is a three-year plan, it is reviewed annually where data from local and state indicators are analyzed. Based on the yearly review of state and local data, the plan is revised to adjust actions toward improved student performance.

NCSoS plays multiple roles in supporting the LCAP process for districts and charters. We provide guidance and technical assistance in the development of the plans, spending significant time and resources helping districts and charters understand the compliance with LCAP requirements. We provide trainings sessions, small group support and individual district and charter school guidance and act as conduits of information from the state to districts and charters. Districts and charters confirm that county office assistance is useful.

District LCAPs are adopted by their local board of trustees and then the county office of education reviews and approves them for adherence to state requirements to make sure the plans follow state laws. The county office does not approve charter school LCAPs, that approval remains with their chartering councils, however, all local charter schools participate in the training, workshops, and reviews of their LCAPs with the county office for consistency in the process.

To read a district or charter LCAP, go to their website and to learn more about the LCAP, click on this link: [cde.ca.gov/re/lc/](https://cde.ca.gov/re/lc/).



Nicole Tucker Smith of LessonCast provides expertise on the Universal Design for Learning framework

### Professional Learning Through Communities of Practice

Traditionally, professional development has consisted of a set of tools, resources, and training sessions for educators to improve their instruction. Usually, an expert delivers this information in a lecture style setting. Although the content and delivery may be engaging and informative, many educators have difficulty knowing whether newly learned concepts are being implemented effectively.

In the last few years, there has been a shift from the traditional professional development delivery model to learning through Communities of Practice. Educators have a focus or common problem that they are seeking to address through research-based practices. They meet regularly to learn and plan implementation of new ideas and concepts. Protocols for non-evaluative observations, data collection and debriefing are often utilized to guide the process of learning.

The Nevada County Network Improvement Community project: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is one example of a Community of Practice taking place in Nevada County. In its fifth year, it has grown to include 65 K-12 teachers. These 65 educators form nine smaller cohorts and are led by Instructional Coaches and Teacher Leaders. They each focus on utilizing the UDL framework to remove student barriers to learning and content in the areas of ELA, Mathematics, Social Emotional Learning, and Science. Teachers learn about UDL from experts in the field and then plan lessons together to immediately implement UDL strategies. One teacher invites the others to observe the lesson and take anecdotal notes on what the students are doing and saying during the lesson. Afterward, the group debriefs and identifies areas of strength and areas for improvement in their lesson. Together they write the next lesson with improvements and plan for the next observation.

Communities of practice provide ongoing learning opportunities and collegial support as educators can interact regularly about their area of focus and the application of new ideas to support continuous improvement. Additional communities of practice at the

county office include science and math, social emotional learning, arts education and attendance.

You can read more about the UDL project at: [ilcblog.stanford.edu/2021/01/12/nevada-county](https://ilcblog.stanford.edu/2021/01/12/nevada-county).



Instructional Coach, Chris Thibodeau, works with teachers to develop a lesson plan using UDL strategies.

## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

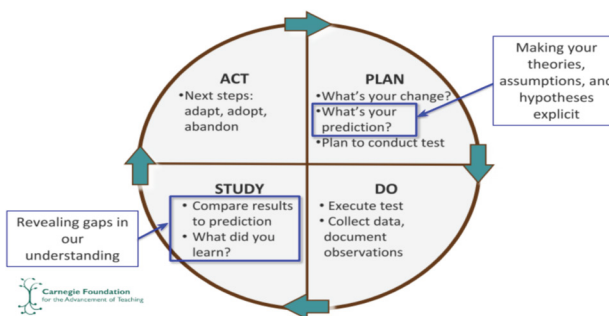
### Nevada County Instructional Coaches Well-Versed in Improvement Science Practices

The Nevada County Instructional Coaching Team continues to provide professional development, personalized coaching, information and resources on research based best practices in education to districts and schools through a process called Improvement Science. However, there has been a significant shift in the team's own professional learning and coaching practice that has resulted in an even deeper level of commitment to improving instructional practices through Improvement Science.

Each Instructional Coach has been trained in Improvement Science through the Carnegie Foundation. Improvement Science, based on six core principles for system improvement, is the application of small, measurable, and individualized changes to address specific issues in an educational setting and help uncover the root cause of problems. Follow this link for more information: [EdD. Research Guide: Improvement Science](#)

These principles support the idea that professional development is most effective when content is immediately applied through goal setting and planning, followed by implementation, data collections and new action planning based on that information. This inquiry-based cyclical process can be observed as the Instructional Coaches lead Communities of Practice and is also utilized within the System of Support.

### The PDSA Cycle



**Andrea Marks**  
Director,  
Curriculum, Instruction &  
Accountability

**Instructional Coaches Team**  
Carrie Ferrero  
Steve Hansen  
Nancy Jackson  
Meghan Salter  
Chris Thibodeau

**Nancy Jackson**  
Continuous Improvement Specialist  
English Language Arts &  
Arts Education



The NCSoS Instructional Coaching Team from left to right: Steve Hansen, Chris Thibodeau, Meghan Salter, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability, Andrea Marks, Nancy Jackson and Carrie Ferrero.

### State of the Arts in Nevada County

Part of the mission of Nevada County Superintendent of Schools (NCSoS) is to “create, sustain and encourage high quality educational programs for all students.” More than ever, the past couple of years has shown that providing safe and engaging learning environments not only prepares our students for the future but also helps them thrive in unimaginable ways. NCSoS recognizes that a robust arts education enhances learning outcomes across content areas and develops positive social emotional well-being.

To fulfill this mission for the arts, NCSoS spearheaded the writing of a Strategic Arts Plan. The impetus for the plan was the newly adopted Arts Standards and Frameworks and 2019 data (collected by the Nevada County Arts Council) on student access to arts education, which showed inconsistency of access to arts education in the county. NCSoS invited stakeholders from across the county to the table to tackle a plan. Districts, schools and community members (including students) worked to produce the Strategic Arts Plan for 2020-2025 (found on the NCSoS Arts website).

To enact this vision, NCSoS hired an Instructional Specialist for the Arts to promote and coordinate county-wide arts programs, as well as to provide professional learning opportunities to build the capacity of teachers with arts implementation and integration.

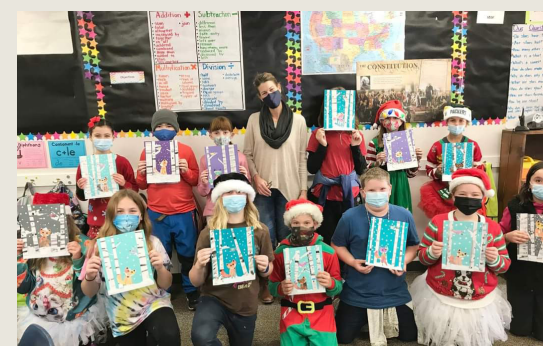
These programs include, but are not limited to, the Art Docent Program (parent volunteers in TK-6 classrooms who teach art history and art lessons monthly) and Nevada County Reads (an annual community read with associated events, including a Meet the Author). On a county-wide basis, many entities collaborate with the NCSoS office to actively provide arts education. These entities include Music in the Mountains (a variety of music education programs), InConcert Sierra (county-wide 3rd grade concert), Center for the Arts (hosting a TK-8th grade student matinee program), Nevada County libraries, and the Nevada County Arts Council.

The fruits of the Strategic Arts Plan have been the development of an Arts Leads Group representing their school districts/sites and other professional development opportunities. The Arts Leads Group operates as a community of practice to support their growth as Arts educators as well as developing resources and professional learning for classroom teachers on the integration of the arts into their core curriculum. A 2021 survey of almost 100 teachers in the county indicated the need for such professional development. Additionally, the plan calls for a Summer Arts Institute slated for June 2023 for teachers to build their capacity for arts integration.

Another worthwhile art endeavor Nevada County

embraces is STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math). The arts support the inquiry & critical thinking of the other disciplines, as well as cultivating a sought-after quality employers value in hiring. For more information on this visit: [otis.edu/student-work](https://otis.edu/student-work). As the Arts Standards were updated to include digital media as an arts discipline, Nevada County's 2023 STEAM EXPO now offers a Digital Media category in the Arts Showcase & Competition.

As one of 14 State-designated Cultural Districts, which spotlights the cultural diversity and unique artistic identities found in a region, the Nevada City/Grass Valley area is a beacon of rich arts offerings. The arts are thriving in Nevada County, and NCSoS is committed to supporting the growth of robust arts programs in schools across the county.



**Carrie Ferrero**  
STEAM Expo Coordinator

**Nancy Jackson**  
STEAM Arts Chair

**Dave Lawell**  
STEAM On-The-Spot Challenge  
Chair

**Dave Pistone**  
STEAM Tech Test Jr. Chair

**Maryanne Connelley**  
STEAM Economic Resource Council  
Chair

**Olivia Carson**  
STEAM Exhibits and Sponsors  
Tournaments

**Rick Jex**  
**Vivian McKnight**  
Technology Support

## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

### Next Generation Science Standards and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics – More than just a Science Fair!

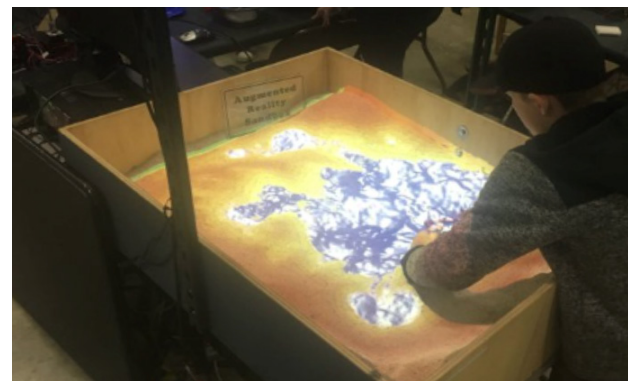
The Nevada County STEAM Expo is an innovative alternative to the typical science fair — striving to give students a place to exhibit their work alongside entertainment and learning opportunities for the whole family — engaging with interactive exhibits from local schools, scientists, organizations, and companies.

Exploring subjects involving science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics can lead to careers that have a promising future. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2020 STEM occupations paid more than double that of non-STEM occupations, on average, and those jobs are expected to grow rapidly through 2030. We are excited to highlight local community partners as the Expo who can provide opportunities for employment right in Nevada County.

To learn more about the STEAM Expo visit [www.nevcoexpo.org](http://www.nevcoexpo.org).

The 9th annual Nevada County STEAM Expo continues to serve as a qualifying event for the California Science and Engineering Fair, a statewide competition that celebrates student learning in science and engineering education. The California Science & Engineering Fair is the final science fair of the academic year for students throughout the State of California in grades 6-12, **servicing California's future scientists and engineers since 1952**. The fair is hosted by the **California Science Center**.

New this year is the inclusion of the Digital Media Arts Category. Winners of the digital media showcase competition category will be nominated to compete as student representatives from Nevada



Students explore hands-on, interactive displays hosted by our community sponsors at the Nevada County STEAM Expo.

County in the California Student Media Festival which seeks to transform K-12 student learning by recognizing creativity and student agency through the cultivation and celebration of original work. We see our students publishing their ideas in new ways and we are here to celebrate their learning and showcase the impact of technology in this process.

The Nevada County STEAM Expo continues to serve as one of six county expos that contribute representatives to this statewide science showcase. We encourage all students to think outside the box and explore the amazing opportunities available. From better ways to access clean drinking water, to arts submissions depicting the effects of pollution, robotics coding that build teamwork skills, and connecting with community partners through project mentorship, the Nevada County STEAM Expo continues to build momentum and engage our students in a future of possibilities.



### Students Shine in Academic Tournaments

In support from many generous community sponsors and participating schools, the NCSoS office is proud to host several county-wide academic tournaments for the students in Western Nevada County. Tournament preparation begins in classrooms at school sites, culminating in top competitors being selected to represent their school at the county-wide level.

The Geography Tournament, held in October provides 7th grade teams from each school the opportunity to show their geographical prowess in both team and individual competitions. The winners receive trophies and various other geography-related prizes from sponsors.

The Spelling Tournament takes place on two days in November, one day for grades 5 and 6, and the second day for grades 7 and 8. The tournament begins with a written team competition where the top scorer from each team advances to the individual oral competition. The overall winner in each grade level earns a trophy and a spot at the State Spelling Bee.

The Writing Tournament, held in January for grades 7 and 8, is comprised of three writing assignments: informative/explanatory, creative writing from a prompt, and argument in a letter format. The student in each grade



Speech Tournament 1st place Winners 2023

level with the highest cumulative score earns a trophy.

The Speech Tournament takes place in March and is comprised of two levels of competition; a semifinal competition and a final competition for grades 4 through 8. The finals competition is held at an evening event at the Nevada Theater and includes three semi-finalists from each grade. The winners receive trophies.

The Tech-Test Junior Math Tournament is held in March for students in grades 5 through 8 and takes place at local engineering and technology corporations in the county. The engineering corporations host the competition and provide a lunch and tour of the building to



Spelling Tournament 2022

students. Top winners in each grade level earn prizes and ribbons that are presented at the STEAM Expo in March.

We are fortunate across the years to partner with sponsors in the community who generously donate prizes for the winners of the tournaments. Such sponsors have included Nevada County Media, AJA Video, Telestream, Tri Counties Bank of Grass Valley, KNN Wealth Management Group, The Book Seller, The Rotary Club of Grass Valley, Nevada Theatre, Miners Foundry, and Williams Stationary.

## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

### Nevada County's Social and Emotional Learning Community of Practice: "It IS the Plate"

Navigating the impact of the pandemic highlighted the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) in supporting the mental health and well-being of students. The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as "the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions." The CASEL 5 core competencies — self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making - impact everyday life.

Since 2019, NCSoS has led the initiative on the importance of addressing SEL within the schools. Our continuous improvement specialist leads a CoP where members believe that SEL isn't one more thing on the plate; it IS the plate. This collaboration works to build core competencies among students and staff as well as integrate SEL across the curriculum. The Center for Disease Control identified trauma as "possibly the largest public health issue facing our children today," and experts believe events of the past two years have increased the number of children experiencing trauma.

NCSoS has brought experts from the behavioral and mental

health fields to lead sessions focused on trauma-informed practices that create and maintain positive relationships to counter the negative impacts of trauma and introduced staff to best-practices to use within their schools. We joined the CA SEL CoP under the CalHOPE Student Support Program, which started as a statewide response to COVID-19. Experts across local school districts and our continuous improvement specialist presented six modules developed by the Greater Good Science Center based at UC Berkeley to the CoP collaborative on topics ranging from creating a culture of belonging to developing emotional resilience.

For the 2022-23 school year, learning and implementation around SEL continues to grow and deepen with two different areas of focus. First, 8 districts and 5 charters formed teams to attend the yearlong "Designing for Equity and Inclusion" series. This series looks at how educators can create inclusive environments for every learner. Between Zoom sessions, teams apply research and evidence-based practices at their own sites, bringing change to schools.

In addition to the equity series, five sites are "focal schools" as part of the CalHOPE grant. Teams from Arete Charter Academy, Lyman Gilmore Middle School, Magnolia Intermediate School, Silver Springs High School, and Union Hill Middle School drafted plans targeting SEL focal areas at their sites. Throughout the year, teams will "plan, do, study, and act," using a continuous improvement cycle to intentionally implement changes, collect data, reflect, and respond based on learnings.

#### Meghan Salter

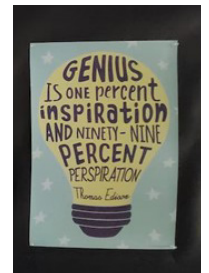
Social Emotional Learning  
Instructional Coach  
Teacher on Special Assignment

#### Chris Espedal

Safety Director



Earle Jamieson's team worked to cultivate the environment. One hallway became a "Transition Time Zone" with inspirational quotes and posters. At the beginning of the day, students select one inspirational quote that relates to them and focus on this for the rest of the day.



### School Safety

Despite the challenges of the past two years, the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools Office has remained vigilant about school safety. The collaborative efforts between school site administrators, charter school directors, local law enforcement and fire services keeps school safety at the forefront of planning, training, and drills. Most recently these efforts were evident at the School Safety Summit held at the Bear River High School Theater and the Nevada Union John Baggett Theater in September, 2022. High ranking representatives from law enforcement, California Highway Patrol, fire services, and the Nevada County Office of Emergency Services presented a united front in working together for students and staff in Nevada County. A link to this event may be found on the Nevada Union High School website: School Safety in Nevada County — Nevada Union Meeting — [vimeo.com/749679195](https://vimeo.com/749679195).

It is a requirement of the California Department of Education that Comprehensive School Safety plans be updated annually by March of each school year. The NCSoS Director of School Safety serves as a resource to Nevada County schools for completion, updating, and recommendations for state and federal best practices. School site walk-throughs are conducted, as requested by site administrators, to help school sites improve school safety. Collaboration with law enforcement and fire services is a part of this process to ensure cohesiveness, cooperation, and consistency.

Safety trainings for both staff and students, as appropriate, are offered by the NCSoS Director of School Safety throughout the school year to increase preparedness and response in the event of an incident. From active shooter response to fire safety, staff and students participate in drills to keep skills sharp and awareness high. Tabletop exercises, with incident specific scenarios facilitated by the Director of School Safety, help school staff consider the



"what ifs" for safety. Representatives from fire services and law enforcement are invited to attend drills to offer their support and oversight.

The NCSoS Director of School Safety meets quarterly with the newly formed California Department of Education Emergency Services Team. This group continually seeks ways to improve emergency management in TK-12 schools in the state of California and supports schools before, during and after incidents. As well, a monthly meeting, Community Agencies United for Safe Schools and Safe Streets (CAUSSSS) is facilitated by the NCSoS Safety Director. School Administrators gather with representatives from local law enforcement, fire services, Nevada County Public Health, Behavioral Health, Child Welfare Services, Office of Emergency Services, and Probation to collaborate and discuss what is happening in our schools and on our streets.

A close working relationship with Nevada County Office of Emergency Services (OES) keeps local schools up to date with wildfire preparedness and other safety issues that schools may face. Ready, Set, Go handbooks were distributed to school sites and students were encouraged to make safety plans with their families at home. In the event of a fire affecting Nevada County, NCSoS stands ready to assist Nevada County OES by opening schools to use as evacuation centers.

The past two years have provided an opportunity for a partnership with NCSoS and the Nevada County Department of Public Health. With the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, NCSoS worked

collaboratively with both the state and local Public Health Departments to provide current information, protocol, personal protective equipment, and COVID-19 testing for students, staff and families. NCSoS serves as the hub for distribution of At-Home Antigen Tests for school sites. A Health Data Analyst was added to the staff of NCSoS to help support school sites with COVID-19 testing and reporting.

### School Climate

PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) uses evidence and data-based programs, practices and strategies to frame behavioral improvement in terms of student growth in academic performance, safety, behavior, and establishing and maintaining positive school culture. PBIS addresses the needs of at-risk students as well as the multi-leveled needs of all students in regard to behavior, which creates an environment for both teaching and learning to occur in schools. NCSoS offers, at-no-charge, training in PBIS to all Nevada County schools.

Nevada County Handle with Care is a program for schools to support students experiencing trauma. Handle with Care supports children exposed to violence and trauma, through improved communication and collaboration between law enforcement, schools, and community resources. This collaborative effort between first responders, Connecting Point and NCSoS help children succeed to the best of their ability, regardless of the environment in which they live or trauma they have experienced.

NCSoS is represented on the Nevada County Suicide Task Force. Local opportunities for training on suicide awareness are shared with students, staff and the community at large. Suicide prevention month is promoted each year in September with Know the Signs training, panel discussions, and open conversations with students to support their needs.

**Melissa Parrett**  
Child Welfare and Attendance  
Coordinator

**Charlotte Peterson**  
Homeless Education Program  
Specialist

**Katie Dyer**  
Homeless Education Case Manager



## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

### Supporting Children, Youth and Families that are homeless or experiencing housing transition

Schools are often the first place that homelessness within families/students is identified. Early intervention and connection to services via schools ultimately helps to reduce chronic homelessness.

Within the education system, “homeless” is defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, adequate, night-time residence (per the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act). A unique aspect of this definition is that it also includes families doubled-up due to economic hardship, those displaced due to natural disasters, refugees and unaccompanied minors living with someone other than a parent or legal guardian.

During the 2021-22 academic year, 265 children (ages 0-18) within Nevada County were identified as homeless, 82% qualified because they were doubled-up due to economic hardship, 8% were unsheltered, 6% were in a hotel/motel, and 4% were in a temporary shelter/transitional housing.

The NCSoS Homeless Education (HE) Team coordinates with school personnel and community agencies to ensure that basic

needs are met and to remove any barriers to equal access to education for this population. Once families have been identified, the HE Team is able to assist with access to resource connections, provide advocacy, and comprehensive support. Examples of supports to designated students and families may include provision of school and weather appropriate clothing and shoes, backpacks, school supplies, personal hygiene items, water bottles, transportation assistance to school, assistance with housing and social service applications, and assistance accessing community resources (food pantries, Booth Family Center, Hospitality House, AMI Housing, Regional Housing Authority, Behavioral Health, Victor Community Services, etc.).

Districts and school sites have designated homeless liaisons that receive technical assistance, professional development, and up-to-date information from the county HE Team.

Through partnerships with early childhood educators throughout the county, the HE Team trains providers on identification practices and provides linkages to services for children ages 0-5 who qualify for McKinney-Vento Homeless Education support. This dedicated, compassionate team continues to strive toward best meeting the needs of Nevada County’s homeless children, youth and families.

### Court related collaborations/programming

#### JUVENILE JUSTICE UNIT

Nevada County 8th grade students spend a portion of their academic year learning about, and ultimately being tested on, the Constitution of the United States. NCSoS coordinates a week-long unit about the judicial branch, constitutional amendments and juvenile related crises and interventions with a Nevada County Judge, a Deputy Sheriff and/or Police Officer, a District Attorney and Public Defender and a Juvenile Probation officer. Additionally, NCSoS partners with the district attorney’s office to provide a 10-week law-related education program aimed at 5th grade students designed to encourage students to stay in school and out of trouble called, “Project Lead”.

#### LAW DAY

Local 5th grade students experience and learn about the legal system and law enforcement efforts with a tour of the courthouse building while observing informative presentations by judges, attorneys, bailiffs, and representatives of law enforcement. Partnering agency visits include the California Highway Patrol horses and Air Operations officers, K-9 units, Search & Rescue, and robotic animal decoys.



Law Day

#### CONNECTING FAMILIES IN CRISIS TO SUPPORT

If a student or family needs resources above and beyond what the school can offer, the school site may submit a referral to NCSoS for a Special Multi-Agency Resource Team (SMART) meeting to be held. The team focus is: “Keeping our kids safe, healthy, at home, in school, and out of trouble.” Participating agencies: Child Protective Services, Public Health, Juvenile Probation, Behavioral Health, Victor Community Support Services, Sierra Forever Families, and Nevada County schools. Families are given direction on how to engage with needed services.

### Addressing Absenteeism

School attendance is a critical component of a child’s learning experience and overall success in academics. NCSoS recognizes that increased attendance is directly linked to positive school climate, established relationships and basic needs being met within the home and on campus. In fact, research demonstrates that children are more likely to attend school and parents are more likely to engage when school is a welcoming, caring environment. While there are times in which absenteeism may be necessary, such as with illness, schools work diligently to help students to be present and arrive on time. NCSoS provides a variety of technical assistance, training opportunities and interventions to support districts and schools with their attendance efforts.

#### COE ATTENDANCE COLLABORATIVE

NCSoS is one of nine County Offices of Education (COE) selected for a new COE collaborative focused on best practices for attendance. Each month, the COE Attendance Collaborative offers a free “Lunch & Learn” virtual event to school personnel and service practitioners statewide, featuring a school district, or school site that has outstanding attendance practices. Attendees are encouraged to actively engage with presenters and various resources are shared among participants. In addition, NCSoS holds a seat appointed by CA State Superintendent of Public Instruction on the CA State School Attendance Review Board (SARB) and is a long-time member of the CA Association of Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance (CASCWA), an organization comprised of school and community professionals who are dedicated to improving school climate, safety, and increasing school attendance.

#### ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH (SEPTEMBER)

Since 2013, NCSoS has participated in a nationwide effort to celebrate Attendance Awareness during the month of September. The goal of this effort is to raise awareness about the value of regular school attendance and to focus on reducing chronic absenteeism each new school year. Attendance Works, a national non-profit, assists NCSoS and local schools with provision resources to raise public awareness related to the importance of attendance and negative impacts of chronic absenteeism. Schools are also encouraged to dig deeper into their attendance data during this month for early identification of students who may already be struggling with attendance enabling them to get needed resources in place for families.

#### NEVADA COUNTY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REVIEW BOARD (SARB)

When all efforts at remedying attendance problems have been thoroughly exhausted by schools and interventions have failed to produce needed changes in a student’s attendance or behavior problem, a referral to the SARB may be made. The overall goal of the SARB is to examine poor attendance situations and develop an individual plan with the student and the family to end absences and/or tardies. This plan is in the form of a legally binding SARB contract. Agencies represented on the SARB in addition to NCSoS include Child Welfare, Social Services, Behavioral Health, the District Attorney’s office, the Public Defender’s office, and Public Health. SARB occurs monthly and convenes at the Nevada County Courthouse.

#### TRUANCY COURT

In extreme situations, when the SARB process is not effective and the contract is violated, a truancy case may be referred to the District Attorney’s office for legal intervention. The goal is that the Truancy Court will provide judicial oversight/supervision for families who have not been successful at remedying attendance issues despite numerous supports offered/provided and various interventions such as SARB (e.g., families may have been cited for contract violation on several occasions and/or been through the SARB process more than once).

## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

### Serving our Foster Youth and Native American students with a Cultural and Trauma Informed Lens.

Youth who experience an out of home placement through foster care face many challenges. In addition to the social, emotional, and physical consequences of being removed from their families, youth in care are placed at a disadvantage educationally due to having multiple placements and educational disruptions. To mitigate these inequities, Nevada County Superintendent of Schools (NCSoS) hosts an array of trauma informed programs that support the unique educational needs of youth in foster care and out of home placements. The Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP), Independent Living Program (ILP), Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP+), and Foster Kinship Care Education Program (FKCE) support PreK-12 students and transition age youth. These award-winning programs are coordinated and supported by a staff of educational specialists, case managers, and education liaisons who support education, employment, housing, and wellness using a trauma-informed approach. Through engagement, support, and extracurricular opportunities, youth are empowered and challenged to achieve their full potential. FYSCP coordinates services between community partners and school districts ensuring that youth have an advocate well versed in the educational rights of the roughly 150-250 foster youth served annually in Nevada County. Our team of experts works with schools to support youth, supply technical instruction to district liaisons. The FYSCP programs Educational Liaison supports academic and case management support to foster youth.

As foster youth make the transition to adult living, ILP is available to support this transition and provide services for youth to reach their independent living goals. Every year anywhere between 120-180 current and former foster youth are served through ILP. Staff provide services like financial aid, job searches, referrals to community resources, housing support, bi-weekly life skills classes, and aid with college enrollment. Youth that take part in ILP also have access to a food pantry, college field trips, recreational activities, and leadership opportunities.

The THP+ Program continues to build upon the services provided through ILP. The THP+ Case Manager, provides intensive case management, housing support, and financial reimbursement services to transitional aged youth while they work and/or attend post-secondary education. Currently, THP+ has 6 annual spots that receive full services, including rent reimbursement, with an ongoing waitlist. There have been 15 youth and their family members housed in 2022 to date. THP+ is working with multiple agencies that focus on housing engagement at the county and statewide levels including county and federal funding that focuses on youth housing services. THP+ fosters the mentor/ambassador program at FYSCP as well as hosts the podcast “Shelter Dogs; Foster Youth Advocates”.

Additionally, the coordinator for the counties Indian Education Program supplies culturally competent educational services to families and youth of Native American decent. Currently, the program provides services to about 230 youth and families such as tutoring, Family Nights, and leadership opportunities in the Parent Council. The Education Liaison for the program, supports Native American students by supplying more academic support, brief intervention, and case management.

**Melissa Balderston**  
Foster & Native American Youth  
Coordinator

**Helena Heinzelman**  
Foster Youth Specialist

**Morgan Welty-Geisick**  
ILP/THP Case Manager

**Jamie Sneed**  
Indian Education Liaison

**Stephen Thompson**  
Foster Youth Liaison



Indian Ed Harvest Feast



Indian Ed Harvest Feast



FYSCP Staff and Youth Mentor delivering Christmas gifts to transition age foster youth

**Melody Easton**  
**Morgan Best**  
Interim Family Resource  
Coordinators

**Akim Aginsky**  
Career Technology Educator



The Health Department's Health Education Specialist provided new tips to children and parents at the Penn Valley FRC. She encouraged them to brush the hard-to-reach areas and provided puppets so they could practice.



This mom of twins often leads the Penn Valley FRC Playgroup during Circle Time. Her sweet expressive voice engages the toddlers as well as the parents as they pretend to be bunnies, toast, or teapots.

## Family Resource Centers help families thrive in Nevada County

The PARTNERS Family Resource Centers (FRCs) is a network of three FRCs in Western Nevada County. Located in Penn Valley, on the San Juan Ridge, and in Grass Valley. The FRCs are funded by Nevada County Superintendent of Schools, First 5 Nevada County, and the Nevada County Behavioral Health Department. Each FRC provides the same core services including parenting support, weekly toddler playgroups, The Diaper Project, clothes closets, lending libraries, wellness services, technology access (computers, internet access, printers, fax, & support to utilize them), children & youth activities, referrals to help families gain access to basic needs and any other resource connections that a family or community member may need. They are a place where Nevada County families and community members gather for support, information, resources, and fun!

The FRCs have a Latino Outreach Coordinator that helps Latino families connect to community resources by offering interpretation and translation services along with promoting physical, social, and mental health. The FRCs Parenting Specialist provides parents and caregivers with Nurturing Parenting classes, coaching and support to bring physical, emotional, and mental health to Nevada County families. Nurturing Parenting classes are offered throughout the school year and in various locations across western Nevada County.

Additionally, as each FRC is in a different location, they tailor other programs to address the specific needs in their area.

Unique to the San Juan Ridge FRC located on the Oak Tree campus is their food pantry, seasonal firewood program, summer camps for all ages.

The Penn Valley FRC located on the Ready Springs campus partners with the on-site afterschool program to provide enrichment classes.

Grass Valley FRC, located next to Grass Valley Charter School provides tutoring for students, and an English Language Learning class.

The FRCs thrive due to amazing community members and partnering agencies. Data from 2021/2022 shows the FRCs

- Provided 1098 families with concrete supports (food pantry, The Diaper Project, clothes closet, etc.)
- Facilitated 169 toddler playgroups
- Made 235 referrals to community agencies

Everyone in Nevada County should know about Family Resource Centers! Knowledge is power and knowing what resources are available in this county and how to access them for yourself, your family, and friends can really make a difference. Stop by one of the three child friendly resource centers and see what we are all about! [www.partnersfamilyresourcecenters.org](http://www.partnersfamilyresourcecenters.org)



Cooperative play at the Grass Valley FRC: social emotional development, language development, problem solving skills.



Young athletes enjoy a game of soccer at San Juan Ridge FRC's 2022 Junior Sports Camp.

**CAREER  
PATHWAY  
PARTNERS**  
Nevada County  
Superintendent of Schools

## Career and Technical Education in Charter Schools

For the first time in Nevada County, in person Career and Technical Education is being offered to Charter High School students. This new Business and Entrepreneurship Class is possible from a unique collaboration between the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools, Forest and Bitney Prep Charter Schools, Sierra College and matching funds from the Community College Chancellor's Office Strong Workforce Grant.

The classes are focused on providing students with the skills and understanding of how to develop a business plan, evaluate the viability of a business idea and a basic comprehension of what's required to open and operate a small business. With dual enrollment, students are simultaneously enrolled in Sierra College and from the comfort of their high school classroom, earning college credits for participation in the class. Students have the option to take two semesters of this course and earn a total of six Sierra College credits.

## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

### Education Begins Early

The Early Childhood Education programs under Nevada County Superintendent of Schools are thriving and growing! Beginning in 2010 NCSoS began a partnership with Sierra College to operate the Child Development Center at the Nevada County Campus. At that time there were 24 students between 3 and 5 years being served in the State Preschool/Head Start classroom. During this transition, NCSoS applied for grants through Early Head Start and the California State Infant/Toddler program to begin a Toddler program serving students 18 months through 3-years-old. This allowed the county to serve 16 toddler students. In 2015, NCSoS opened two full inclusion classrooms for preschool students at the Terrence K. McAteer Family Resource Center in Nevada City. These classrooms serve typically developing preschoolers as well as those with moderate to severe disabilities. In 2016, NCSoS was awarded an additional grant through the California State Preschool Program to serve an additional 27 students in an inclusive classroom setting. In 2022 NCSoS was awarded a third grant to serve an additional 45 students in the California State Preschool Program. As of this writing, NCSoS serves 70 students between 18 months and entry into kindergarten. The program has almost tripled in size in the last 10 years! With the additional grant funding we are looking for ways to partner with local school districts to support their Transitional Kindergarten programs in offering a full 9 hours of care as well as vacation care.

The focus of our Early Head Start program is to support families in securing and continuing employment or education. Families must meet income eligibility requirements as well as demonstrate a need for care to be part of the program. Once enrolled, children are offered 7 hours of care each day, year-round. The families are supported by a Family Advocate, who ensures that families have a medical home (Primary Care Physician), are

up to date on immunizations and well care, and are progressing toward their family's goals. The Family Advocate can also support parents in accessing community support such as enrolling in WIC, enrolling in Medi-Cal or finding permanent housing.

The focus of our Head Start/State Preschool programs is to support students in school readiness. Families still must meet income eligibility guidelines, but there is no "need for care" requirement. Each year staff comes up with School Readiness Goals that are used by teachers when planning curriculum and activities for the students. The focus of our Full Inclusion Preschool Program is to support children with exceptional needs in developing the skills they need to enter kindergarten as independently as possible. The other focus we have is to support typically developing students develop the empathy and understanding that everyone has their own unique learning style.

As with any school, the teachers are at the heart of our program. We strive to ensure they feel supported and fully trained to do all that their job encompasses. Through the Quality Counts California funding, teachers are offered a wide range of professional development opportunities. One of the most popular options is Onsite Coaching. This includes at least 4 observation visits from a highly experienced coach, who is then able to support the teacher in improving and honing their classroom skills. Some of the areas that coaches offer support include developing a high-quality classroom environment using environmental rating scales, embedding the social emotional curriculum into daily routines in order to support all learners (the curriculum is called CSEFEL which stands for Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Learning), and analyzing teacher-child interactions using a tool called CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System). Our Early Education team at NCSoS feels honored to support the children and families in our community!

**Morgan Best**  
Early Childhood Education Director

**Melody Easton**  
First 5 Executive Director

**Rossina Dort**  
Local Planning Council Director



### First 5 Nevada County

First 5 Nevada County promotes the importance of early childhood through investing in complex systems of care, empowering families, and strengthening the community. First 5 Nevada County provides funding to valuable community resources such as the PARTNERS FRCs, community collaboratives, early learning programs in Truckee, home visiting, and others. Additionally, First 5 Nevada County provides education and outreach for parents and caregivers of children ages 0-5, car seat safety education and inspection, and hosts the popular Kids Corner at the Fair — where families can cool off, gather resources, take home a book, and do a craft.

Fall 2022, First 5 Nevada County conducted a Parent Input process to gather feedback directly from caregivers of young children. That information will help shape the Strategic Plan and future funding decisions. First 5 Nevada County gathered feedback via online surveys and a series of listening sessions, where more than 50 parents sat down with staff to share their favorite thing about parenting in Nevada County, their worries, and what makes them feel empowered as a parent. Survey results showed us that parents are regularly reading and singing to their children multiple times per week. And 74% of caregivers reported having someone they can share their most private worries with and know where to seek advice when needed. 30% of parents surveyed shared that there are times when they don't know what to do as a parent. Over 70% of parents agreed that they feel confident in building relationships and communicating with other parents. While 44% of parents reported difficulty meeting their family's

basic needs. This, and other statistics gathered through this process, will help service providers tailor their programming to best meet the needs of the families in the County. Overwhelmingly, parents reported feeling empowered and supported within the community. Access to nature, an abundance of family-oriented services and programs, and the small-town culture were all listed as positive reasons to raise children in the County. The full report can be found on the First 5 Nevada County website — [first5nevco.com](https://www.first5nevco.com).

#### THE LOCAL PLANNING COUNCIL EXPANDS ACCESS TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

The Local Planning Council for Child Care Development ("LPC") is a state mandated advisory board designed to: (1) plan, coordinate and support early care and education services in Nevada County; and (2) expand access to high-quality, early learning and care programs for children under 12.

Services include:

- Providing a forum for the public and members appointed by the County Board of Supervisors and the County Superintendent of Schools to ensure young children have access to quality child care that educates and enriches their lives.
- Conducting community assessments to identify areas with the greatest need for childcare services.
- Identifying local priorities to mobilize public and private resources and inform where state and federal childcare contracts should be prioritized.
- Administering professional development grants/stipends to advance early care educator credentials and support workforce

retention.

- Providing grants to early care and education settings to increase the supply and access to safe and engaging early care settings.
- Supporting PRE-K/TK/K educators with aligned learning goals for successful kindergarten transitions.
- Partnering and convening stakeholders to support the implementation of a Universal Preschool Mixed Delivery System that meets the early education needs of 3 and 4-year old children and respond to the needs of our community members.

The LPC effectively supports early care educators with professional development. For the past 5 years, the LPC distributed at least \$120,000 annually to support over 98 early care educators in advancing their credentials, professional qualifications and/or upgrading their Child Development Permits.

The LPC awarded over 54 private and state subsidized early care and education programs participating in CA's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) with grants of up to \$9000 per site based upon verified eligibility criteria, to improve site quality and to strengthen early care educators to set and practice standards of excellence in their care for children.

The LPC also increased educator engagement in quality improvement activities by providing free resources, online/onsite evidence-based trainings, on-site/on-line coaching, and peer mentoring. These efforts made a quantifiable difference in increasing program quality and the skills and competencies of staff that run them.

**Marlene Mahurin**  
Intervention Services Coordinator

**Amy Taylor**  
Intervention Services Program  
Specialist

**CATCH**<sup>®</sup>  
MY BREATH



Nevada Union High School TUPE during Club Rush

## 2022-2023 NCSOs PROGRAMS

### Tobacco use prevention and youth advocacy offered throughout the county

Nevada County middle and high school students participate in the Tobacco Use Prevention Education (TUPE) Program. Funded by a grant through the California Department of Education, TUPE aims to reduce youth tobacco and cannabis use by helping students make healthy decisions through evidence-based curriculum and activities that build knowledge as well as social skills and youth development assets.

6th, 7th and 9th graders receive TUPE curriculum that includes the health risks of tobacco, nicotine and cannabis use. (photo 1)

Students also have the opportunity to educate their peers through TUPE Peer Educator groups on their campuses. TUPE Peer Educators organize school wide events throughout the year; such as Red Ribbon Week in October and Take Down Tobacco Day in March. They also educate their peers and younger students through classroom presentations. Middle school peer educators spend a day training at Camp Del Oro each fall, learning effective ways to support their peers through education and advocacy work.

In partnership with Nevada County Public Health, Nevada Union High School TUPE Peer Educators created a “Take Back Our Bathrooms” campaign in an attempt to reduce vaping in the bathrooms. The campaign was so popular that many other sites implemented the campaign on their campuses. (Photo 5)

TUPE also provides schools with trainings in Brief Intervention, a short-term counseling intervention aimed at adolescents who use alcohol and/or other drugs and cessation support through the YVAPE and Quit the Hit programs.

TUPE also produced a video for parents: Tobacco, Vaping and Marijuana: A Parent’s Guide to a New Epidemic to educate them on the health risks of youth vaping and how to support their students. Parents can view the video on the TUPE website: [nevco.org/tupe/parents](http://nevco.org/tupe/parents).

Families can sign-up for our FREE monthly newsletter for article like this as well as TUPE classes and programs.

**Follow us on Facebook:** Nevada County TUPE

### Youth-led alternative to suspension program growing strong in local schools

In the fall of 2021, the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools office, in collaboration with the Nevada Joint Union High School District, piloted RAYS (Restorative Accountable Youth Solutions) at Silver Springs High School. Funded by a Prop 64 grant and based in restorative practices, this youth-led alternative to suspension program provides a new option for students facing traditional discipline. In order to go through RAYS, students must take accountability for their actions and be open to repairing any harm caused by their choice. Primarily supporting students with substance-use infractions, students choosing to go through RAYS sit in a circle with a trained RAYS student team, who comes up with a restorative plan for the student. Using a carefully designed script, the RAYS team asks a series of questions designed to really get to know the offending student and find ways to best support them in an effort to reduce the likelihood of them reoffending. All plans include 4 components:

1. Future Circles: Each student going through RAYS returns to sit on the circle of another student going through RAYS, but this time as a supporter. This gives them the opportunity to give back to other students who may be struggling with similar issues and communicates that they are not alone.
2. Harm Reparation: Questions are designed to determine who was impacted by the student’s poor choice and how harm can be repaired. Typically, this happens through an in-person structured apology, using a series of questions based in restorative practices.
3. Community Engagement: All students going through RAYS complete a community engagement project that gives back to the school. The student team asks questions to determine what the student is interested in and then designs a project that will be meaningful for the student. Some past examples include building a bench for the baseball field, working in the school garden, creating educational posters on the health risks of substance use, a photography display and painting a mural. The goal is for the student to give back to their school community but without it feeling punitive.
4. Support Services: During the circle, the team asks questions about the student’s home life, mental well-being, substance use, academic successes and challenges and add necessary supports for the student. This may include sessions with our RAYS counselor, participating in a substance-use harm reduction class, tutoring or academic support and referrals to outside agencies.

Once the student team creates a plan for the offending student, they have 30 days to complete it. They receive support throughout the process from both a designated staff and student supporter. Students are surveyed both before and after the program and all



RAYS student training at Nevada Union



Silver Springs RAYS Team presenting about RAYS at Sierra College



Bear River and Silver Springs RAYS Team sharing with students at Nevada Union High School

the data is recorded in a database so the program can be evaluated by a team of researchers at UC, San Diego. The goal of the program is to reduce youth substance use, suspension and recidivism rates. One unexpected result we have seen is the number of students going through RAYS who want to join the RAYS student team upon completing their plan. They feel so supported by their peers that they want to become involved with the program.

RAYS has now expanded to three additional schools: Lyman Gilmore Middle School, Bear River and Nevada Union High Schools, where student teams are running weekly circles.

We are currently filming a documentary on RAYS to showcase the benefits of a youth-led alternative to suspension program and the successes and challenges of running this type of program. Filming will be completed by the end of the school year and the film will be released in the fall of 2023.

If you are interested in learning more about RAYS, you can view our promotional video at: [youtu.be/isSYmkWwzNg](https://youtu.be/isSYmkWwzNg)

For more information please contact: Marlene Mahurin, RAYS Project Director at [mmahurin@nevco.org](mailto:mmahurin@nevco.org)

## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

### Health and the Schools

The County Health Coordinator works closely with our districts supporting services, policies and programs with credentialed school nurses and the Nevada County Public Health Department. The county provides a leadership role in providing support, professional development in health education, healthy environments, health counseling, parent/community involvement and facilitates a county health advisory council.

NCSoS offers CPR, AED & First Aid Training. Nevada County schools have over 90% of our districts' certified in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation/First Aid and the use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) for adult/child/infant. Yearly we train over 500 staff from our schools and community. Classes are held frequently, and registration can be accessed online through our website: [nevco.org/cpr-aed-training/](http://nevco.org/cpr-aed-training/).

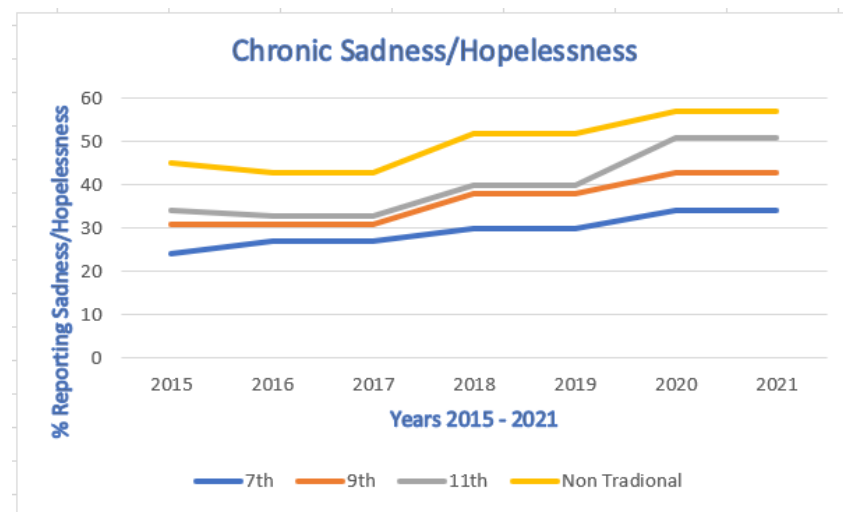
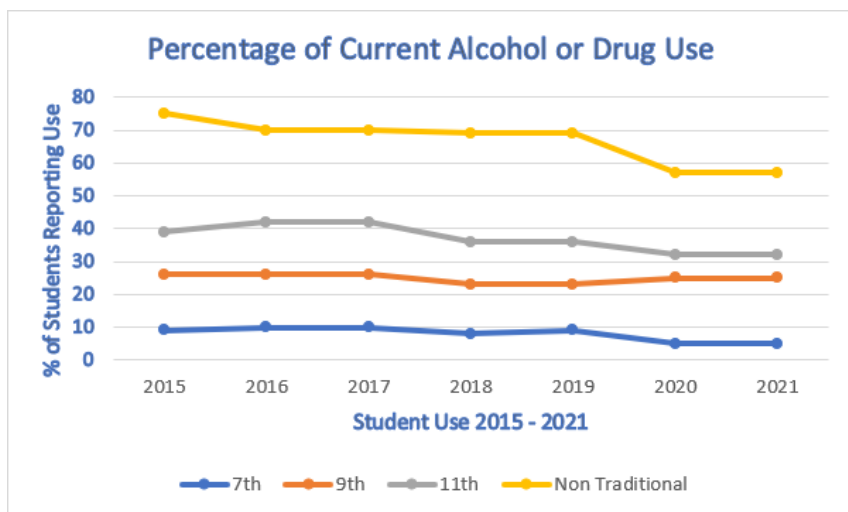
The California Health Kids Survey (CHKS), is a comprehensive student data collection system that addresses school climate, health risks and behaviors, and youth resiliency. CHKS is administered at our schools to parents, school staff and students in grades five, seven, nine and eleven. The CHKS survey, a voluntary, confidential and anonymous survey has been administered annually since 2005. Schools collect and analyze this data regarding youth health risks and behaviors, school connectedness, school climate, protective factors, and school violence. Survey results are used to inform schools in decision-making and in the development of their Local Control Accountability Reports toward improving school climate and student learning environments. Our schools and community depend on this survey to identify barriers and help us meet the needs of not only students, but the overall health of our community. Reports from these surveys are available to the public at [calschls.org/reports-data](http://calschls.org/reports-data).

Results from the Nevada County CHKS Dashboard reveal feelings of chronic hopelessness and sadness have steadily increased over the past four years. Children in 7th grade experienced their lowest point in 2015, with 24% of students reporting feelings of sadness/hopelessness. This number increased to 34% of students in 2021, following the first year of COVID. All other grades reported their lowest levels in 2017, with 9th grade, 11th grade, and non-traditional schools (Charter schools, private schools, online schools) coming in at 31%, 33% and 43% respectively. These numbers increased to 43%, 51%, and 57% reporting sadness/hopelessness in 2021; again post-COVID. Statewide trends are also show increasing numbers of students reporting sadness/hopelessness.

Some good news from the Nevada County CHKS data is that students reporting use of Alcohol or Drugs (AOD) in the prior 30 days has been decreasing steadily. In 2016, 7th, 9th, and 11th grades had the highest reported incidences of AOD at 10%, 26%, and 42% respectively. In 2021, AOD use was down to 5%, 25%, and 32% respectively. Non-traditional students had the most significant drop in use, from a high of 75% in 2015 to a low of 57% in 2021. Statewide trends in AOD have also been decreasing, with current reporting only up to 2019.

**Teena Corker**  
County Health Services,  
Interim Coordinator  
Associate Superintendent of  
Educational Services

**Sarah Svendsen**  
Data Technician



**Alternative Education Services**  
Earle Jamieson Educational Options  
112 Nevada City Hwy  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.272.5464

**Amy Brooks**  
Alternative Education Principal

**Special Education Services**  
Terence K. McAteer  
Family Resource Center  
400 Hoover Lane  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.265.0611

**Eli Gallup**  
Associate Superintendent  
Special Education  
SELPA Director

**Mary Schug**  
Interim Special Education Principal

## 2022-2023 NCSoS PROGRAMS

### Students Find Success at Earle Jamieson Educational Options

The Nevada County Superintendent of Schools provides a mandated alternative education community school for specified students. Earle Jamieson Educational Options (EJ) is a restorative learning community committed to academic, personal, social, emotional and career development to foster the overall success of every student. EJ is a county community school for sixth through 12th grade students, serving approximately 20 to 40 students per year. Located at 112 Nevada City Highway in Nevada City, EJ accepts students solely through referrals meeting the following criteria: a) expelled from a local school district, b) placed by the probation department, or c) placed because of habitual truancy by the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). Students typically enroll at EJ for one to two semesters.

EJ is a restrictive setting that provides full-time staff supervision of students. All staff are trained to support students academically and emotionally so that students may find success and return to a

less restrictive school setting. Through ongoing staff development in positive behavioral interventions (PBIS), and attending social emotional community of practice trainings, staff have opportunities to become more trauma informed. The fundamental rules which guide the school are: Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Responsible, and Be Ready to Learn. All students have individualized learning plans and attend classes that are mixed grade levels. Students are given direct instruction and apply independent learning to excel and achieve, where they often have not previously found success in an educational setting.

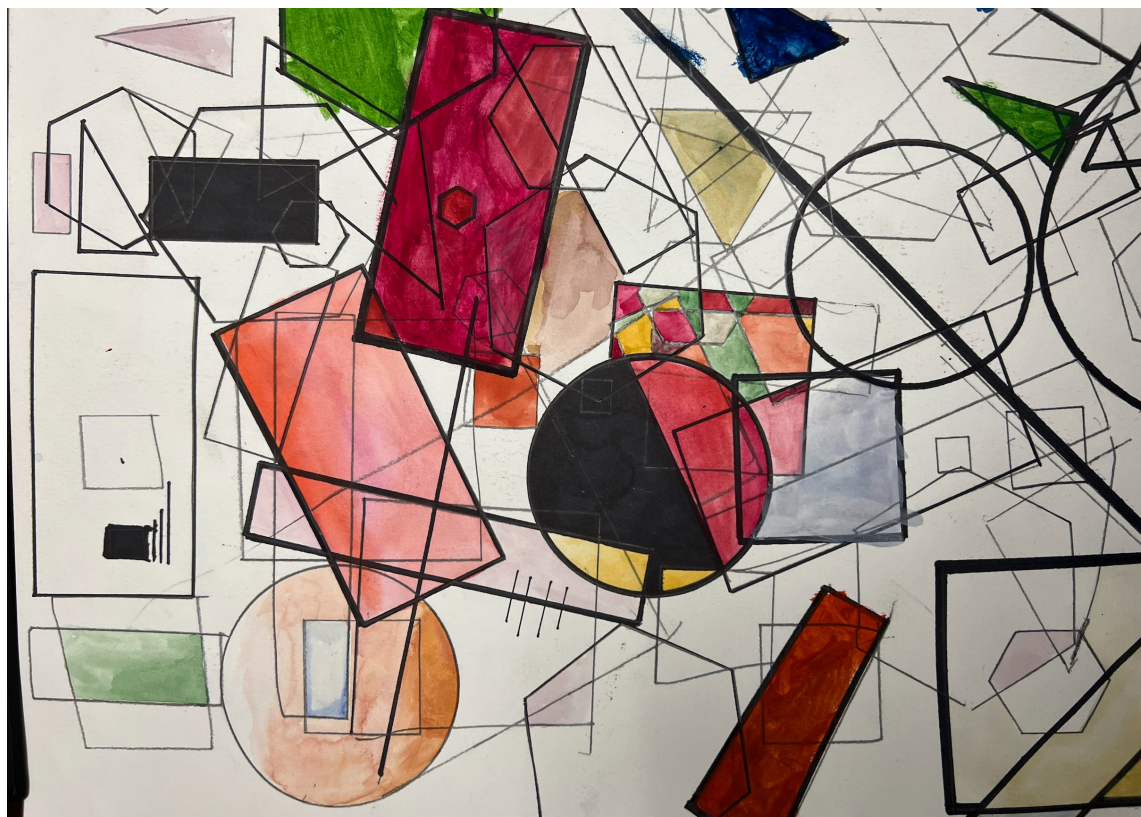
Students participate in a social emotional learning program called, "Why-Try" and in a drama therapy class provided by the Nevada County Arts Council called, "Acting Up". Further supports are offered through regular visits from outside county agencies that include Victor Community Services and the Nevada County Probation Department. Together as staff, we work to provide a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for the students to thrive.

### Nevada County Superintendent of Schools supports students with disabilities.

The Special Education Service Department of Nevada County provides high quality, effective interventions, and support to students with disabilities throughout Western Nevada County. Our mission is to ensure that all students have access to specialized services to support their education. In Nevada County we have an amazing gift of educational choice, from traditional schools to public charter schools, along with many private schools, all within our area. When a student requires more intensive educational services and support, almost all these schools will partner with the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools to receive expert support.

Nevada County Superintendent of Schools provides support to schools and parents of students with disabilities in several meaningful ways. The Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) division is within the Superintendent of Schools office. SELPA is dedicated to the belief that all students can learn and that students with disabilities must be guaranteed equal opportunity to become contributing members of society. SELPAs facilitate high quality educational programs and services for students and training for parents and educators. SELPA collaborates with county agencies and school districts to develop and maintain healthy and enriching environments in which students with disabilities, and their families, can thrive and succeed.

Nevada County Superintendent of Schools also supports families and students in more direct ways. Young families who are raising a child with a disability can also find help within the Infant Program. This program has several experts in early childhood disabilities, and a speech and language pathologist, to help our youngest community members find their voice. These services can be delivered within the home setting, as well as out in the



Kandinsky Inspired Watercolor and Pen by EJ Student, Kylor Eaton, 10th Grade. His artwork was used by NCSoS for the 2022 holiday card.

community.

The Nevada County Superintendent of Schools Special Education Division provides regional programs designed for students who need highly specialized and intensive services. The services are delivered through programs located throughout the county, in ten classrooms, across three school districts, with grades ranging from Preschool through Eighth grade.

Some of our services and support are available to any-

one attending a school; they are not required to be in one of our regional classrooms. Our expertise does not stop with curriculum, we have expertise in visual impairment, deaf and hard of hearing, orientation and mobility, orthopedic Impairment, occupational therapy, adapted physical education, mental health/behavior, and speech/language. These services can be delivered within their own school, with our commitment to serve a student in their best educational setting.

## CHICAGO PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT



### Chicago Park Takes Pride In Gem of a School

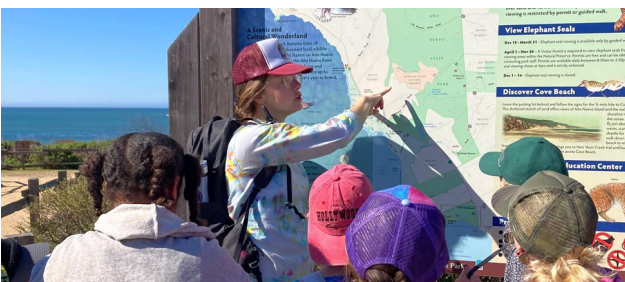
#### OUR GEM

The Chicago Park School District is hidden amongst apple orchards and grazing farm animals just off Highway 174 between Grass Valley and Colfax. The District boasts two schools, Chicago Park Elementary and Chicago Park Community Charter School, which are co-mingled to provide stellar academic and enrichment programs for the community. Though a rural school, it features a full-size gymnasium, state-of-the-art makerspace, and an outstanding garden program.

Small class sizes, hands-on learning, a strong character development program, middle school electives, and before and after school opportunities are a few of the features that define our school community. Our ultimate goal is to prepare students to be successful both academically and socially as they enter high school.

#### ACADEMICS

We take pride in offering a rigorous, engaging academic program at Chicago Park that meets the needs of all students. We work diligently to support our struggling learners and give them the confidence necessary to close learning gaps. We also challenge our advanced learners to excel in their studies and develop to their full academic potential. Once a student reaches our Academy (6th – 8th grade program) they receive instruction by in block format (Humanities – English/History, STEAM – Science/Math/Art) by specialized teachers. Elongated periods allow teachers the time necessary to provide quality lessons through experiential learning including science labs and real-life math projects.



#### CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

We believe that our job is to prepare students for life after elementary school, and a critical part of that is having the ability to make good choices for the right reasons. To help develop these skills, we conduct what we call a flag ceremony first thing each Friday we are in session. The entire community is encouraged to attend. After we recognize community members and students for their positive contributions to society, we then pass on a message that challenges students (and adults) to practice developing positive character traits. Each school year our ceremonies touch on a different theme such as: Let's Knock it out of the Park, Heroes in our Community, and Reach for the Stars, to name a few.



#### ENRICHMENT

Chicago Park offers a variety of enrichment opportunities to stimulate learning interests in many areas. Examples of some programs include, before/after school Extended Learning Opportunities Program, Kuk Sool Won, and a full array of after school sports including basketball, volleyball, mountain biking, cross-country, and track. Multiple field trips take place at all grade levels throughout the year. In addition, grades 5-8 participate in Career Technical Education and grades TK-8th participate in agriculture education once a week by a Sierra Harvest garden teacher.

#### TECHNOLOGY

We may be a small rural school, but we do not lack in the area of providing meaningful technology for both teachers and students. TK-1st grade are equipped with iPads for students to use and starting in 2nd grade, every child is issued a Chromebook, giving them the ability to type essays and do on-line research for projects. Each classroom is equipped with projectors with Apple TVs and a few of our classrooms are set up with 75" TVs. The school is also equipped with a Makerspace with 7 3-D printers, a maker cart, robots, and much more.

#### LIBRARY

Reading for pleasure and learning to navigate a library and do off-line research is a priority at Chicago Park School District. We boast a large, fully stocked library of ever-expanding fiction and nonfiction for our students to enjoy. Built into student's schedules, all classes visit the library once a week and each student may check out up to two books at a time.

#### VISUAL AND FINE ARTS

Chicago Park participates in the Art Decent program where students get exposed to a new genre each month. Students also perform at our annual winter program, in classroom plays, and at our Friday flag ceremonies. Each year the school brings entertaining assemblies to campus that also teach valuable lessons.

#### Chicago Park School District

15725 Mt. Olive Road  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.346.2153  
[www.chicagoparkschool.org](http://www.chicagoparkschool.org)

#### Katie Kohler

Superintendent/ Principal

#### Current Enrollment

165

#### Chicago Park Elementary School (TK-8)

15725 Mt. Olive Road  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.346.2153

#### Chicago Park Community Charter School (TK-8)

15725 Mt. Olive Road  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.346.2153

#### Board of Trustees

Dustin Mooers  
Joyce Czuprynski  
Michael Dunham  
Cynthia McCoy  
Jeffrey Pare

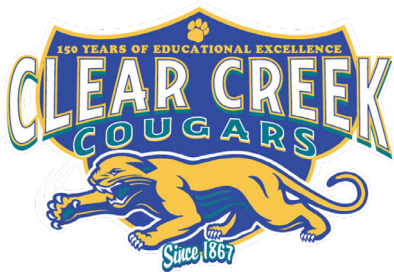


**Clear Creek Elementary School District (TK-8)**  
17700 McCourtney Rd  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530-273-3664  
[www.clearcreekschool.com](http://www.clearcreekschool.com)

**Carolyn Cramer**  
Superintendent/Principal

**Current Enrollment**  
156

**School Board Members**  
Karen Wallace  
Patsy Hannebrink  
Bart Riebe  
Jerily McCormick  
Nancy Messier



Camp Cougar Before and After Care Program



PTC Sponsored Fall Festival Fun

## CLEAR CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Clear Creek Elementary School District Celebrates 155 Years Of Excellence!

Clear Creek Elementary School District is located in rural ranch land in southwest Nevada County. The District consists of one TK-8 grade school that is recognized for its academic achievement in a safe, nurturing, and family friendly learning environment. Small class sizes and exemplary teachers are two important factors that contribute to Clear Creek School consistently demonstrating some of the highest state test scores in the county.

#### THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

- School begins at 8:30 AM and ends at 1:00 PM for our youngest students (TK and K) and at 2:45 for the 1st–8th grade students except on Fridays when dismissal for grades 1st–8th is at 1:30 to allow for teacher collaboration time. We align with the high school calendar for major breaks in fall, winter, and spring.
- Our school is supported by a wonderful, caring community of parents. Our Parent Teacher Club meets monthly to brainstorm fundraising activities that benefit our entire school community. PTC also helps to coordinate quality community events at our school all year long including Cougar Coffee (every Friday morning), a Fall Festival, Halloween Parade and Trick or Treating for all students, Prize shopping for AR, a Holiday Program, a Walk-a-thon and Cougarpawlooza, an end of the year celebration.
- Extra-curricular programs are a priority at Clear Creek! Currently, we host a before school Kuk Sool Won class for 1st-8th grade students, after school Homework Club, and each year our 6th graders enjoy a five-day learning adventure at science camp. Field trips are an important part of the educational experience. Annual visits to Bierwagon's Farm, Empire Mine, Bridgeport, Coloma, a Salmon Expedition, Music in the Mountains performances, and a variety of other trips supplement our students' academic growth.
- Camp Cougar, an on-site before and after school program provides a place for students to mingle, play, and get their home work done while they wait in a safe, warm environment for parents. Camp Cougar is a valuable resource to parents who need to get to work in the morning or just need an hour or two more after dismissal. Camp Cougar is available Monday – Friday from 7:00-8:30 AM before school and from 1:00–4:00 PM after school.



Wake with Kuk Sool Won Enrichment Class



3rd Grade Garden Project

- We implement programs such as Accelerated Reader and Espark, and use STAR 360 assessments each trimester to assure we are meeting student reading and math needs. At the conclusion of each trimester, students are acknowledged publicly for the achievements at an Awards Assembly as well as students who attain their AR reading goal. These programs are in addition to our state adopted language arts curriculum which includes various opportunities to practice and improve reading comprehension, writing, and grammar skills.
- Our math curriculum offers both hands on manipulatives and online math games that allow students to incorporate skills and concepts learned in class in a colorful and engaging game style format. These supplemental materials are available in addition to daily in class whole group and small group lessons.
- We also have a rigorous intervention program implemented by a full time certificated teacher. We are able to provide both small group and individual pull out and push in support to students across all grade levels.
- We may be a small rural school, but we do not lack in the area of providing meaningful technology for both teachers and students. The implementation of technology is an integral part of a child's education at Clear Creek. Each class has its own set of student tablets or Chromebooks and a charging station. Access to computers is integrated appropriately throughout the curriculum based on developmental needs. Students can practice their keyboarding skills, learn how to create documents and slide show presentations, as well as improve digital literacy. Teachers have access teaching tools such as document cameras, projectors, and the ability to stream educational videos to enhance the learning experience.
- Visual and performing arts are not overlooked at Clear Creek School. The excellent teaching staff provide art and music opportunities across all grade levels throughout the year. Students also have the opportunity to perform at our annual Holiday program produced by one of our retired teachers, participate in classroom plays and musicals, and attend local community performances.
- Clear Creek School and our PTC work together to provide assemblies to students that enables them to engage in topics such as anti-bullying, personal safety, water conservation, fire awareness, and boating safety.

## GRASS VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Bell Hill Academy

Bell Hill Academy (BHA) is a TK-4 school that offers two unique learning opportunities for our students and families. BHA operates a Global Studies program which includes international cultural studies and it offers a Dual Immersion (DI) program where students learn core content and curriculum along with learning Spanish and English. Our DI program includes instruction that is delivered primarily in Spanish with more time spent on English as students move up through the grades. Both programs are innovative, and they foster the development of a global perspective and respect within our students. Bell Hill Academy has a strong connection with families and the community, and we encourage regular participation in school events and activities. We also offer extension activities and support through district partnership, before and after care, and tutoring.

### LYMAN GILMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Lyman Gilmore Middle School is a fantastic school site that supports our district's 5th-8th grade students. We value the whole child and along with strong core content instruction honors courses are provided as well. Elective offerings rotate to include content such as animation, dance, band, art, musical theater, culinary arts, computer programming, coding, robotics, STEAM, and more. Academic options include high school level math (Algebra and



Lyman Gilmore students and teacher Dave Lawell refurbished the sign at the front of the school, one of many active STEAM projects improving the campus for all to enjoy.



Grass Valley Charter School students on a field trip.

Geometry equivalent) available in 8th grade and a learning center with additional support and resources. Lyman Gilmore Middle School also offers the Dual Immersion (DI) Program as students matriculate from elementary. We live up to our mission statement, which reads, "Lyman Gilmore Middle School is a safe, nurturing, stimulating, and adventurous learning community dedicated to ensuring that all learners are respected, encouraged, and supported in their academic, social, and personal growth."

### MARGARET G. SCOTTEN

Serving students TK-4th grade, Margaret G. Scotten strives to unlock the love of learning in all children. We value parent support and encourage families to get actively involved through a variety of engagement opportunities such as our school wide Scotten Sing, school plays and productions. We also support additional learning through a partnership with the Nevada County Artists in Schools Program. Our team is dedicated to continuous improvement, and we work hard to help each individual student reach their greatest potential. At Margaret G. Scotten we offer high levels of support including before and after school extension activities and tutoring.

### GRASS VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOL

Grass Valley Charter (GVCS) offers a preschool program along with TK-8th grade school-aged services. GVCS is nationally recognized as an Expeditionary Learning (EL) Education Mentor School, and we believe that success is a combination of strong character and academics. We build a school culture where everyone can become effective learners and contribute to a better world. Common Core standards are taught through meaningful learning expeditions where students participate in fieldwork. Guest experts, hands-on projects, and authentic final products also contribute to building student achievement. In bringing our character traits to life, students go snowshoeing, spelunking, rafting down the Yuba, and they build snow caves, kayak, backpack, and climb on GVCS's very own rock-climbing structure. We welcome parents and community members as part of the learning.



The Scotten team has taken a lead with our district work in early learning and intervention. They have worked closely with our entire district as well as learning organizations throughout the state to ensure we are offering our students the best program and support. This work aligns well with our preschool services to support student literacy success.

### Grass Valley School District

10840 Gilmore Way  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.4483

[www.gvdsd.us](http://www.gvdsd.us)

### Andrew Withers

Superintendent

### Brian Martinez

Assistant Superintendent / Chief  
Business Officer

### Current Enrollment

1600

### Bell Hill Academy (TK-4)

342 S. School St.  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.2281

### Gabriela Prado

Principal

### Grass Valley Charter School (TK-8)

225 S. Auburn St.  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.8723

### Luke Duchene

Principal

### Lyman Gilmore Middle School (5-8)

10837 Rough and Ready Hwy.  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.8479

### Lisa Lawell

Principal

### Margaret G. Scotten (TK-4)

10821 Squirrel Creek Rd.  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.6472

### Susie Patterson

Principal

### Board of Trustees

Thomas Pettit, Board President

Lisa Jarvis, Board Clerk

Debbie Lindh, Trustee

Scott Costa, Trustee

Mark Hermes, Trustee



This Bell Hill Academy student is enjoying the annual Dia de los Muertos celebration. Throughout this event our students learn the importance of celebrating their loved ones and honoring their lives.

## Nevada City School District

800 Hoover Lane  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.265.1820  
[www.ncsd.k12.ca.us](http://www.ncsd.k12.ca.us)

**John Baggett**  
Superintendent

**Current Enrollment**  
690

### Deer Creek School (TK-3)

805 Lindley Ave  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.265.1870

**Robin Black**  
Principal

### Seven Hills School (4-8)

700 Hoover Lane  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.265.1840

**Sam Schug**  
Principal

### Board of Trustees

Jennifer Singer, President  
Sandra Barrington, Clerk  
Seth Leishman, Trustee  
Ty Conway, Trustee  
Joshua Pack, Trustee

## NEVADA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Nevada City School District

The Nevada City School District is nestled in beautiful Nevada City and is home to students in transitional kindergarten through eighth grade. Nevada City School District is committed to providing an environment in which all students learn and achieve to the best of their abilities and talents; become life-long, enthusiastic learners; and develop a positive self-concept and sense of responsibility. Nevada City School District is a Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) District and received

the 2019 Innovation Award for the Foothills Fresh Program with Sierra Harvest.

Deer Creek Elementary School and Seven Hills Middle School are both California Distinguished Schools. Deer Creek School houses transitional kindergarten to third grade and Seven Hills School is home to grades fourth-eighth. Both schools have a strong academic reputation as well as an exciting enrichment program that supports students' academic and personal interests.

### Deer Creek: Be Fawntastic!

Deer Creek Elementary School provides an exceptional education in a traditional public-school setting. Students engage in enriching programs beyond a typical elementary school experience.

Deer Creek prepares students for the future by offering STEAM-based education in a designated STEAM classroom and Lego room. Students program robots, construct articulated "fingers," and create marble mazes, to name a few projects. This program bridges science, math, and art through experiments and exploration.

Healthy Kids is a school-wide nutrition and fitness program offered at Deer Creek. Fun, interactive lessons about well-being, food choices, and exercise encourage student well-being. In partnership with Sierra Harvest, students enjoy Harvest of the Month, wherein children sample locally grown fruits and vegetables. In addition, the campus is proud to provide students access to its garden and orchard, including its many heritage fruit trees.

Deer Creek establishes a strong sense of positive school culture by providing clear expectations, teaching social-emotional tools campus-wide, and celebrating students for being "Fawn-tastic." Third-grade students can participate in student council, where they brainstorm ways to model leadership, promote school spirit, and give back to the community.

The active PTC and Nevada City Schools Foundation provide additional opportunities for Deer Creek students that support its robust offerings. The PTC funds ceramics lessons that allow students to create beautiful clay projects. The Nevada City Schools Foundation most recently helped fund the update of the school's audio-visual system in the gym, modernizing Deer Creek's common gathering space.

These varied and exceptional experiences foster a genuine love of learning. Deer Creek Elementary is proud of all it offers children in a public-school setting.



Mountain Bike Team

### It's a great day to be a Raider at Seven Hills Middle School

At the end of every announcement the familiar voice of principal Sam Schug declares "It's a great day to be a Raider". At Seven Hills Middle School, there is pride in being a Raider as it reflects a part of who the staff and students are and what they represent. Raiders represent being respectful, responsible, and ready to learn.

Seven Hills offers a wide variety of academic, STEAM, and performing arts related opportunities. A STEAM class is offered where students work on trebuchets, programming robots, and coding. A bike shop elective is offered where students learn how to completely rebuild bikes. These bikes are then donated throughout our community. From Spanish and Drama to Art and Band, our students are offered a wide variety of experiences.

Some other highlights are the academic and athletic teams at Seven Hills including the Spelling and Geography tournaments and many types of athletics. From Cross Country and Track to Basketball and the Mountain Bike Team, Seven Hills hopes to help students discover their passions and strengths as well as prepare students for future education. It truly is a great day to be a Raider!



Cross Country Team



Woodshop

## NEVADA JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

### NJUHSD — Preparing all students for success in college, career, and life

NJUHSD has a vision to be California's district of choice, preparing all students for success in college, career, and life. It has long been the mission of the district to provide educational options for students that prepare them for life after high school and to support students in their pursuit of realizing their full potential. District schools seek to meet students where they are, and to accommodate their unique passions and needs.

**North Point Academy** is the Independent Study program for NJUHSD. Students attend NPA for various reasons -- opportunities to work during the day, participation in competitive activities such as dance, rodeo, adventure sports, etc., or to accommodate health needs, to name a few. NPA students are on individualized learning plans which vary a great deal from student to student and they typically meet for one hour each week with their teacher. NPA offers multiple options for students who are either aspiring to meet A-G requirements and transition directly to CSU/UC schools, students seeking to complete their general graduation track, or prep for high school equivalency exams. NPA can also accommodate students who are on a fast track and looking to graduate early!

**Ghidotti Early College High School** helps kids earn up to two years' worth of transferable college credit while completing their high school diploma! Located on the Nevada County Campus of Sierra Community College, Ghidotti was initially supported by a start-up grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Ghidotti is one of 41 early college high school programs in California and serves students grades 9-12. Many students earn both a high school and college degree upon graduation. In the past five years, over 90% of Ghidotti students have continued with their college studies at Sierra College or matriculated to four-year universities. By bridging the divide between high school and college, Ghidotti helps students overcome barriers to attending a four-year university. Ghidotti is open to all students, and historically serves disadvantaged students, low-income students, first-generation college students, English language learners, and other students for whom a smooth transition into post-secondary education can be a challenge.



Nevada Union Comedy Sports Club



Bear River Girls Basketball Section Title

**Silver Springs High School** is a continuation school serving 10-12th grade students looking for, or in need of, an alternative school environment. The variable credit system at the school provides students the opportunity to catch up on coursework to get back on track for graduation, or in some cases, to graduate ahead of schedule! The smaller school setting is reported by students and staff as feeling like a Family. The staff are seasoned professionals who are well trained at supporting social-emotional learning, making academic content accessible, and most importantly, making genuine connections with students that make them feel valued and important. Principal Marty Mathiesen leans on his many connections to provide students with access to field trips throughout the year to Giants/A's games, Kings games, ski and snowboard at Palisades at Tahoe, to name a few.

**Bear River High School** is a campus with a heart of gold. The school boasts the academic and extracurricular offerings of a large high school, while maintaining its quaint stature (525 students). The school offers a wide variety of academic, CTE, and athletic programs, along with a staff dedicated to embodying the belief that all students belong, can learn, and have a place at Bear River High School. There are 17 advanced placement and honors courses. State test scores remain above state averages with an average SAT score of 1170. The school maintains a 99% graduation rate and more than half of the students are A-G eligible.

Bear River offers seven emerging pathways for career technical education with a wide variety of career interests, from agriculture to publications, dance, music, drama, and more. The school also boasts a full athletic program that competes, and wins, at a high level.

**Nevada Union** is the largest school in the district and offers a myriad of opportunities to students in our community. With roughly 1,500 students, there are opportunities to offer a large number of comprehensive programs. With a passionate, dedicated, and specialized staff to drive these programs, students come to Nevada Union to thrive! NU has a storied history and is a deep source of pride in the community. On a hill 'neath waving pine trees.... If there is a passion or interest that a student possesses, Nevada Union most certainly has an opportunity for them to fulfill it!

### Nevada Joint Union High School District

11645 Ridge Rd.  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.3351  
**Dan Frisella**  
Superintendent

**Current Enrollment**  
2,500

#### Bear River High School (9-12)

11130 Magnolia Road,  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
530.268.3700  
**Chris Roberts**  
Principal

#### Ghidotti Early College High School (9-12)

250 Sierra College Drive  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.274.5270  
**Stacy Clement**  
Principal

#### Nevada Union High School (9-12)

11761 Ridge Rd.  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.4431  
**Kelly Rhoden**  
Principal

#### North Point Academy (9-12)

11761 Ridge Road  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.477.1225  
Vacant, Principal

#### Silver Springs High School (9-12)

140 Park Ave.  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
530.272.2635  
**Marty Mathiesen**  
Principal

#### Board of Trustees

Olivia Pritchett  
Wendy Willoughby  
DuWaine Ganskie  
Ken Johnson



Silver Springs Students go Snowboarding!

**Penn Valley Union Elementary School District**

14806 Pleasant Valley Rd.  
Penn Valley, CA 95946  
530.432.7311

[www.pvuesd.org](http://www.pvuesd.org)

**Melissa Conley**  
Superintendent

**Current Enrollment**  
593

**Ready Springs School (TK-8)**

10862 Spenceville Rd.  
Penn Valley, CA 95946  
530.432.1118

**Chrissy McKeown**  
Principal

**Vantage Point Charter School (TK-12)**

10862 Spenceville Rd.  
Penn Valley, CA 95946  
530.432.5312

**Melissa Conley**  
Principal

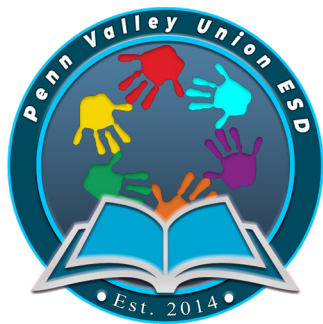
**Williams Ranch School (TK - 5)**

14804 Pleasant Valley Rd.  
Penn Valley, CA 95946  
530.432.7300

**Jennifer Eubanks**  
Principal

**Board of Trustees**

Robert Moen, President  
Linda Collins, Clerk  
Sharon Louck  
Amanda Connell  
Lance Eck



Kinder and 1st Grade Painting

**PENN VALLEY UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Schools thriving in Penn Valley**

Penn Valley Union Elementary School District (PVUESD) is a quaint school district consisting of two campuses. Williams Ranch school has TK-5th grade and Ready Springs school has TK-8th grade. Students participate in a traditional junior high schedule, rotating classrooms throughout the day. They have opportunities to participate in clubs, electives, drama, skateboarding, yoga, STEM, sports and more! Students in 4th through 8th grade participate in cross country and track & field. Students in 6th through 8th grade can participate in boys and girls volleyball, basketball, cross country, and mountain biking.

PVUESD also sponsors the Vantage Point Charter School. Vantage Point is a TK- 12th grade independent study program located on the Ready Springs School campus. Students have one-to-one instruction from a certificated teacher, have access to math tutoring, various electives, science labs, work experience, and more. The program is WASC accredited which allows for students to enroll at a junior college, enlist in the military, or join the workforce with a traditional high school diploma. Vantage Point staff participate in training and other programs offered to all staff throughout the district.

Through collaboration the district continues to focus on significant gains in Language Arts and Math achievement. Staff continue to participate in ongoing collaboration days, professional development and outside trainings in order to continue to learn and grow. Registered Behavior Technicians are located at each campus and Restorative Justice is fully implemented as a response to behavior needs. The district has provided Chromebooks for all students for individual daily use. PVUESD also utilizes authentic outdoor education opportunities to learn about their environment, sustainability measures, and their role as environmental ambassadors through Our Forest Programs and Sierra Harvest Garden Education.



Helicopter Visit

The district continues to build upon programs already in place, that directly support students and staff in creating and maintaining structures that support a positive and safe school environment, as well as academic achievement. Staff have been trained in using Zones of Regulation in all grades. This program is designed to help students learn to use core breathing to self-regulate and teaches students to use applied mindfulness in their daily lives. They learn to identify feelings and manage their attention to engage and be ready to learn. Through this program staff have seen a positive change in student behavior and have noticed benefits for themselves as they model and teach the various aspects of the program that transfer to all areas of life, regardless of age.

In addition to the positive school climate, the district has continued to expand visual and performing arts throughout each school. Students have the opportunity to work with professional teaching artists weekly through the Nevada County Arts Council. Lessons have been created based on grade level State Standards to connect academic learning to the arts, engaging all learners. Junior High students can participate in art through the elective options.

Overall, PVUESD is thriving! Staff continue to work collaboratively to help students gain the knowledge needed to find success in their learning on all levels. They strive to build programs that engage and support the whole child. Behavioral health and social-emotional learning are priorities for the district as they go into the new year. Families have appreciated the ongoing support and education as it lends to greater success and opportunity for their child. It truly does take a village and PVUESD staff does a remarkable job caring for the well-being of each and every child they educate. In addition to mindful practices, the district is excited to move forward in advancing our instructional practices to meet the needs of *all* students.



Skateboard Elective

## PLEASANT RIDGE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Pleasant Ridge Elementary School (PRUSD) is in the beautiful Sierra Foothills, serving the communities of Auburn, Lake of the Pines, Alta Sierra and Grass Valley. In 1959 PRUSD was formed by consolidating three original schools; Wolf School, Forest Springs School, and Lime Kiln School; and in 1980 the Pleasant Ridge Union School District was formed. As years passed the school continued to meet the needs of the growing county, culminating with opening three new schools: Alta Sierra, Cottage Hill, and Magnolia Intermediate. In 2010 the Trustees voted to close Pleasant Ridge School due to declining enrollment. With increasing inquiry of independent study requests, PRUSD opened Arete Charter Academy as a non-traditional school in the fall of 2017.

As a TK-8 school district we provide an outstanding educational experience for our students. We strive to provide a safe and engaging environment where students develop academic, social, and life skills to become productive citizens in a constantly changing global society. Our relentless focus is to encourage, engage and educate students daily. We are very proud of our students, faculty, and programs, which have been recognized throughout the state, nationally and internationally. All three schools have been recognized as California Distinguished Schools and each of the two elementary schools have been named National Blue-Ribbon Schools. The latest award the district was awarded was the 2022 California Pivotal Practice Award. This award recognizes schools and districts that implemented an innovative practice during the 2020-21 school year, when California required schools to offer distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pleasant Ridge Union School District was 1 of 121 school districts in the entire state.

The District is also known for its educational leadership, innovative instructional practices, and student success in academic and extra-curricular competitions. The district's use of technology in instruction is a model that other school districts have recognized and adopted. The district is committed to the highest quality instruction, reinforced with ongoing professional development, character education, robust elective programs and use of best educational practices. The staff is progressive in seeking ways to improve on teaching/learning, for the success of each student. The PRUSD teachers have embarked on tackling four ongoing robust professional development opportunities annually that focus on Universal Design for Learning, Mathematical Mindset, 95% Phonics Group, and Social Emotional Learning. These four initiatives have improved student learning and re-engaged students back into a traditional school setting since the pandemic.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the district has introduced the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program. This program seeks to provide students unique and diverse learning opportunities after school, during the summer, and on a variety of weekends throughout the school year. Our students have been introduced to cooking classes, amazing science labs, foreign languages, as well as adventures outside of the school that has seen them fish, farm, hike the Palisades, ice skate, rock climb, and zipline. Additionally, students have seen Broadway plays, ice skating performances, animatronic dinosaurs, and planetariums...with more amazing things on the horizon. Our goal is to open new worlds to the students and spark a burning desire to learn and achieve.



**Pleasant Ridge Union School District**  
22580 Kingston Lane  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
530.268.2800  
[www.prsd.us](http://www.prsd.us)  
**Rusty Clark**  
Superintendent

**Enrollment**  
1,395

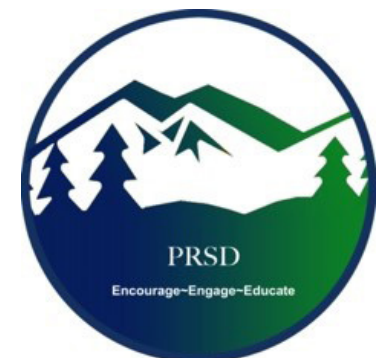
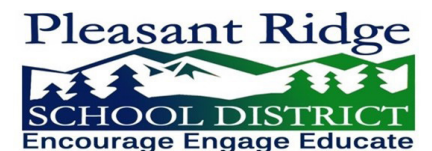
**Alta Sierra Elementary School (TK-5)**  
16607 Annie Drive  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
530.272.2319  
**Thomas Bivens**  
Principal

**Arete Charter Academy (TK-8)**  
16229 Duggans Rd  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
530.268.2805  
**Sarah Schwartz**  
Principal

**Cottage Hill Elementary School (TK-5)**  
22600 Kingston Lane  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
530.268.2808  
**Olivia Conn**  
Principal

**Magnolia Intermediate School (6-8)**  
22431 Kingston Lane  
Grass Valley, CA 95949  
530.268.2815  
**Randy Holcomb**  
Principal

**Board of Trustees**  
Chris Mertens  
Deane Opdahl  
Katrina Paz  
Kelly McKinley  
Peggy Fava



**Twin Ridges Elementary School District**

16661 Old Mill Road  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.265.9052

[www.twinridgeselementary.com](http://www.twinridgeselementary.com)

**Scott Mikal-Heine**

Superintendent/Principal

**Current Enrollment**

127

**Grizzly Hill School (TK-8)**

16661 Old Mill Road  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.265.9052

**Little Acorns Preschool**

18847 Oak Tree Road  
Nevada City, CA 95986  
530.292.3140

**Board of Trustees**

Malik Goodman  
Aubrey Puetz  
Mindi Morton  
Lorien Whitestone  
Jonathan Ferrall



Grizzly Hill

**TWIN RIDGES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Twin Ridges Elementary:  
A School District with a Story**

By geographic area, the Twin Ridges Elementary School District is the largest elementary school district in Nevada County. It is also the most rural, bordering neighboring counties of Yuba and Sierra, and by that virtue, has one of the smallest student populations. Two of Nevada County's three CA state parks make up our collective backyard. A good view of the district, which is in between the South and Middle Forks of the Yuba River, can be had at the Washington vista overlook on Hwy 20. The district has proud historical roots that emerge from the back-to-the-land homesteading of the 1960s and 1970s and further back to the one-room pioneer schoolhouses of the California gold rush era.

The district, serving TK-8, has three sites and currently operates one primary school; Grizzly Hill School on the San Juan Ridge. After many years of a steady but locally aging population, Grizzly Hill is seeing real enrollment growth with 108 current students, and new families moving to our community every week! The Twin Ridges Elementary district office is on the Grizzly Hill school site and administration is led by a team of superintendent/principal, student services coordinator, and chief business official. Grizzly Hill is a bucolic little mountain community school, with nine classrooms, art and music electives, physical education, and a free daily afterschool program. Our small scale allows us to have some of the best student to teacher ratios to be found anywhere in the county. The school itself is also notably green, with water-capture landscape and rain gardens throughout campus and local California Solar Electric-constructed solar arrays on every school building. Grizzly Hill also has a tradition of providing some of the finest school meals in Nevada County. We make every effort to

use organic food that is purchased from local farms and scratch-cooked breakfast and lunch are served free to every student daily.

The historic Oak Tree School was hand built by neighbors and community members in the 1970s. This fascinating account, which captures the unique spirit and story of the San Juan Ridge, is featured in an excellent essay that can be found on the North Columbia Schoolhouse Cultural Center website. Not many schools in California have a lodge, a log cabin, or a bus barn. Oak Tree, just outside of the town of North San Juan, hosts two programs. Little Acorns Preschool, with 19 little ones enrolled, is a two-class, half-day program, with M-W-F and T-Th cohorts depending on student age. At Oak Tree School you can also find the NCSOS San Juan Ridge Family Resource Center. Oak Tree is also partnered on the school site with San Juan Ridge Community Library and the Oak Tree Parks and Recreation District – come and check out this essential community hub!

Washington School is a “one room” schoolhouse in the center of the historic river town of Washington, known lovingly as “Little Town” to many residents of Nevada County. Washington School is in a year of transition. After operating nearly continuously for over 100 years, Washington residents and students can now access Nevada City School District or any local charter school. Washington residents and students can now access Nevada City School District or any local charter school. Twin Ridges Elementary is working diligently to ensure the future of the schoolhouse is aimed at serving and supporting the community, students and residents of Washington. More to come with this beautiful and historic site!

The Twin Ridges Elementary School district is proud to be woven into the fabric of one of Nevada County's most historic and unique communities. The story continues with yet a new chapter.



Construction of Oak Tree School

## UNION HILL SCHOOL DISTRICT



### Union Hill School District: Focused on students' individual needs with 21st century Teaching and Learning

The Mission of our school is to provide a safe and enriching learning environment where the whole student is nurtured and developed. Our teachers, staff and administrators pledge to support the academic and emotional wellbeing of each and every student. Students will leave our school prepared with skills and knowledge that will give them advantages throughout their future educational and life experiences. Our rigorous standards challenge all students to rise to their full potential and become the best global citizens they can be.

You only need to walk on to the Union Hill campus to feel the unique energy of this historic school. Established in 1868, Union Hill School District serves over 700 students by integrating our rich history and contemporary learning.

Union Hill School District (UHSD) is home to our Bearcat students beginning at 3 years old going through 8th grade. Preschoolers begin their school career at the Bearcat Discovery Center and advance onto Union Hill Charter School (TK-6th), completing their elementary education at Union Hill Middle School in grades seven and eight. The three schools are all located together on a beautiful property set in the tall pines and majestic oaks across from Empire Mine State Historic Park.

UHSD has a dedicated, professional staff that utilize an exciting, rigorous curriculum to support individual needs. Teachers provide all of this in an inspiring, safe and nurturing environment. This approach has fostered 150 years of educational excellence. The extraordinary parent and alumni participation has led to multiple generations attending the school and returning to give back what they so positively experienced as a student. Alumni recognize the gift and value of the education they received at Union Hill and want that sustained for future generations.

The K-6 Charter and middle school provide an array of enrichment opportunities connecting students with real-life experiences that focus on critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, and connection. The schools' classrooms and playgrounds aren't constrained to the edge of the property; they extend into the local community, Nevada County, California and the world being supported by our unique educational and private partnerships. Each year students look forward to the Highway 49 Trip, Science Camp, Pumpkin Patch Festival, Kindergarten Circus, athletic competitions, and a host of extracurricular and co-curricular activities. Principal Solley states that "the focus of Union Hill is to work collaboratively as a team to support growth of the entire child, which includes their academic, social, and academic progress."



Bearcat Pride!

Utilizing technology and research-proven strategies UHSD students are provided a rigorous academic program aligned to California state standards and they are constantly renewing and growing the school's physical, financial, and human resources to achieve student potential, even in students as young as three years old. The Bearcat Discovery Center serves children in their earliest years with a positive atmosphere that fosters social and academic growth. Union Hill's character education philosophy has been customized to meet the needs of their specific school culture. All three Union Hill schools strive to develop students who make good choices and support their classmates in making good choices by emphasizing character traits through a program called "Bearcats of Character". These traits are:

- Wisdom and good judgment to make thoughtful decisions
- Sense of justice that is informed by fairness, honesty, and civility
- Respect for self, respect for others, and respect for property
- Tolerance and understanding of others
- Compassion for others through empathy, kindness, and service
- Discipline and responsibility by exhibiting self-control and the willingness to admit mistakes and correct them
- Positive attitude that reflects hope, enthusiasm, flexibility, and appreciation
- Pride in oneself and others by doing the best for self, family, school, and community and by respecting the achievement of others
- Personal and academic integrity through honesty, expressing beliefs in appropriate ways, and working to one's full potential

For 150 years Union Hill has been a cornerstone embedded in the rich history of Nevada County. While maintaining valuable traditions, Union Hill schools adapt quickly to the progressing learning needs of our students.

Dr. Andy Parsons, Superintendent, summarized saying "The academic and social opportunities that are available to all students, the dedication and commitment of our staff, our parent and community partnerships and the seamless transitions from preschool through eighth grade creates an effective and memorable educational journey for each and every student."

**Union Hill School District**  
10879 Bartlett Drive  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.0647  
[www.unionhillschooldistrict.org](http://www.unionhillschooldistrict.org)  
**Dr. Andy Parsons**  
Superintendent

**Current Enrollment**  
690

**Union Hill Elementary Charter School (TK-6)**  
**Union Hill Middle School (7-8)**  
11638 Colfax Highway  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.8456  
**Daniela Solley**  
Principal

**Bearcat Discovery Center (Pre-8)**  
10879 Bartlett Drive  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.273.6831  
**Mary Kragel**  
Director

**Board of Trustees**  
Tami Stedman, President  
Leslie Lattyak, Vice President  
Naomi Schmitt, Clerk  
Mike Blake, Member  
John Schies, Member



Commonly traveled walkways emphasize Union Hill character traits

### Bitney Preparatory High School (9-12)

135 Joerschke Drive  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.477.1235

[www.bitneyprep.net](http://www.bitneyprep.net)

**Jonathan Molnar**  
Director

**Current Enrollment**  
95

#### Charter Council

Eric Robins, Chair (Student alum)  
Bruce Herring, Vice Chair (Former Principal)  
Leslie Woodman, Secretary (Parent)  
Celine Negrete (Parent alum)  
Amber Stoer (Parent)  
Jonathan Molnar, Director (non-voting)  
Angelina Young, CBO (non-voting)

#### Forest Charter School (K-12)

470 Searls Ave.  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.265.4823

[www.forestcharter.com](http://www.forestcharter.com)

**Peter Sagebiel**  
Director

**Current Enrollment**  
782

#### Board Members

Dan Thiem  
Cheryl Knight  
Amees Medeiros  
Dylan Hendricks  
Geoff Thornton

## CHARTER SCHOOLS — BITNEY PREP CHARTER AND FOREST CHARTER

### Bitney Prep High School – A Big Picture Learning School

Nearly everything one needs to know about Bitney is expressed in our school motto:

**“Bitney is a place where students are known, respected, and educated.”**

For twenty four years, Bitney Prep High School has offered a rich and dynamic program to meet the needs of its diverse student body. During these years our program has evolved to become more inclusive and safe for all students. We place all students at the center of their education and help them develop their goals and plans for after graduation.

There is no such thing as a “typical” Bitney student. Bitney students are diverse, self-directed individuals who are inclusive of their peers and community minded. Students are proud to belong to the Bitney community, and they recognize the value of our program and our approach to student-focused learning.

In 2016, we realized that instead of going straight to university, many students were opting to go to Sierra College first, or entering straight into the workforce after graduation. In order to offer a more equitable program, Bitney Prep joined Big Picture Learning, a national network of innovative schools dedicated to helping students identify their passions and align them with their learning. Bitney is WASC-accredited and offers a challenging college preparatory curriculum aligned with the University of California A-G entry requirements. We also offer our students a comprehensive Advisory program and an innovative Internship program. Weekly internships provide students a valuable opportunity to explore job and career interests with a mentor at a local business one day per week. Bitney Prep partners with Sierra College to provide students with early college experiences through both dual-enrollment and academic enrichment courses. This year we launched a

new Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway in Entrepreneurship.

At Bitney Prep our staff utilizes a “One Student At A Time” approach to build and to maintain a close-knit school community. We prioritize getting to know our students, building mutual respect, and educating them in a way that best supports their success in school and in life. As a community, we strive to teach our students to be aware of themselves and the world around them, to be skilled in the latest communication tools, and to possess an understanding of the environmental, historical, and cultural issues that shape society. Together with a strong base in science, mathematics, and literature, they possess an appreciation for the arts and celebrate their own creative talents. Our emphasis on real world learning opportunities and critical-thinking skills helps students to become competent, lifelong learners who are better prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of life.



Bitney Prep



Hands on Learning Opportunities

### Forest Charter School: Celebrating Twenty Years of Personalized Learning Options for Students

Since 2002, Forest Charter School has been a pioneer of Personalized Learning opportunities for students in grades TK-12 with learning centers in Nevada City, Truckee, Foresthill, and Auburn. At the heart of the Forest Charter School program rests the principle that all children hold the capacity for significant educational success, but that this success must be nurtured through specific, student-centered approaches. Employing a non-traditional approach, Forest Charter School develops a personalized program for each student utilizing multiple curriculum and program options within its structure. Parents, supervising teachers, administration, support staff and, most importantly, the student, work as a dynamic and collaborative team to inspire a lifelong love of learning.

Forest Charter School provides this unique approach to education through its variety of programmatic options. With input from Forest’s knowledgeable staff, each family can choose from an educational menu rich in both academics, the arts, and electives that they feel will best serve their individual student. Options include traditional home-schooling, on-site classes, site-specific cooperatives, online

classes, community college courses and more. Personalized Learning theory thrives on the idea that each student has distinctive educational needs and goals; thus, Forest Charter School provides a fully credentialed supervising teacher to guide a family in exploring and growing their learning needs while upholding the California State Standards.

Forest Charter School is known for its flexibility and progressive educational vision; however, it is most proud of the culture it has fostered. Forest Charter School believes that students learn best when they feel safe and supported physically, intellectually and emotionally in their educational environment; therefore, Forest Charter School emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence throughout its programs, making community and relationships priorities alongside of the academic content available to students. In fact, Forest Charter School believes students can only reach their full capacity when all of these needs are met. Even as Forest Charter School continues to evolve its program, and to explore new and innovative approaches to education, the focus will always be on building and growing personalized relationships with students and their families to deliberately and purposefully guide each student toward their best path for learning.

## CHARTER SCHOOLS — NEVADA CITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND SAEL

### Nevada City School of the Arts Provides a Fusion of Art and Academics

Nevada City School of the Arts (NCSA) is a Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade charter school established in 1994, currently serving over 430 students. Founded by parents and teachers to provide an integrated academic and arts education, NCSA remains committed to that vision and is notable for giving students individualized attention, providing an extensive fusion of arts and academics, offering significant cultural and ecological field studies, its commitment to equity and anti-bias education, and for its caring and supportive community of faculty, staff and parents.

#### CURRICULUM

In addition to common core based academic curriculum, art and music are key components to the NCSA pedagogy. Main Lesson Art supports, enhances, and brings greater depth to the students' studies through tactile hands-on experiences and in-depth analysis of art as it relates to the lesson. Art criticism, history and aesthetics all combine to inform academics in each grade. Foundation Art is the arts curriculum taught as a core subject in a sequential introduction to art concepts and techniques. Dance and music round out the curriculum in each grade.

#### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL LEARNING

We adhere to two social emotional learning (SEL) curricula that emphasize open and clear communication and conflict resolution methods. The SEL curriculum is based on the books Positive Discipline and the 5 Dimensions of Engaged Teaching program, also known as Passageworks. Teachers are trained to help students with an emotional vocabulary, conflict resolution, understanding consequences, and the developmental challenges of growing up. NCSA is also using Restorative Circles as an alternative to suspension.

#### ORGANIZATION

NCSA is a 501c3 non-profit organization. It is sponsored by Nevada County Superintendent of Schools and is governed by the Charter Governance Council, a board of administration, parents and community members. The governing model is "Policy Governance®", designed to empower boards of directors to fulfill their obligation of accountability for the organizations they govern with a set of Ends Policies — NCSA exists so that students, families, staff and the greater community have:

- an arts-based choice for elementary education.
- an educational institution that facilitates academic, artistic, and social-emotional achievement.
- a collaborator and contributor to the greater community.
- safe, respectful, and equitable conditions for learning and working.



Music, Theater & Dance at NCSA

**Nevada City School of the Arts**  
13032 Bitney Springs Rd, Bldg. 8  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.273.7736  
[www.ncsota.org](http://www.ncsota.org)  
**Holly Pettitt**  
Director

**Current Enrollment**  
433

**Charter Governance Council**  
LeeAnne Haglund, Board President  
Lauren Hesterman, Vice President  
Meshawn Simmons, Treasurer  
Meghan Archer, Secretary  
Trisha Zakon  
Laura LeBleu  
Qayyuma Didomenico  
Andrew Todd  
Abby Oas

**Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning**  
505 Main Street  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.268.2200  
[www.sierraacademy.net](http://www.sierraacademy.net)  
**Richard Young**  
Executive Director

**Current Enrollment**  
175

**Board of Directors**  
Joel Swift  
Geoffrey Nelson  
Rachel Pena  
Andres Amador  
Marie Hipsley

### SAEL Continues To Thrive

Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning (SAEL) is partnered with a nationally-recognized school transformation non-profit organization that shapes our innovative approach to teaching and learning. EL Education works with 175 schools nationwide as a whole school approach to teaching and learning. The mission of EL Education is "to create classrooms where teachers can fulfill their highest aspirations, and students achieve more than they think possible, becoming active contributors to building a better world." EL Education provides the framework and vision for SAEL as well as the necessary tools and training to support the implementation of deeper learning and college and career readiness for students. In 2022 SAEL was recognized by EL Education with a full credential for its exemplary implementation of the EL model.

As an independent public charter high school, SAEL has an enrollment of 170 students. Using interdisciplinary, project-based learning, students go into the field, engage with experts, and produce high quality work that has a real world impact. Students are not only pushed to think critically, discuss passionately, and learn deeply, but they are also asked to do this while examining world issues from multiple perspectives and with open minds. This service learning is a means of discovering the world and helping to preserve, protect, and support it while also offering an authentic audience for student work.

Incorporating hands-on college preparatory academics with service and offsite fieldwork, teachers create semester-long interdisciplinary units of study called Learning Expeditions. Mastery based grading is a foundation of the program, allowing students to work toward mastery of learning targets based on state standards. There is a growth

mindset approach to grading, teaching, and learning at SAEL with a separation of character and academic grades to give clearer feedback to students about where they need to improve.

Beyond the traditional classroom, a sampling of offsite fieldwork include, camping, rafting local rivers, backpacking the South Yuba Trail, rock climbing at the Emeralds, urban experiences and college visit and much, much more. Students work closely with service based local non-profits including SYRCL, Sierra Streams Institute and the Bear Yuba Land Trust. Experts from local colleges, the Native Plant Society, The Union Newspaper, Edward Jones Investments, and the Forest and Fire Services work with SAEL students.

There is a goal of 100% college acceptance at all EL schools throughout the country. All graduating classes at SAEL have worked hard and met this challenge. SAEL is small but mighty, where each student gets the support they need to have all post-high school options available. Thus far, SAEL students have been accepted at colleges including Lewis and Clark, Cal Poly, Warren Wilson, UC Berkeley and Davis, CSU Chico, and Sacramento, UNR, Colorado State, Sierra College, and Evergreen State.



Graduation Day at SAEL

### **Twin Ridges Home Study Charter School (K-8)**

111 New Mohawk Road  
Nevada City, CA 95959  
530.478.1815

[www.twinridgeshomestudy.org](http://www.twinridgeshomestudy.org)

**Jennifer Dearduff**  
Director

**Current Enrollment**  
212

#### **Board Members**

Marieke Furnee, Board President  
"Xylem" Larla Maloney  
Jalana Smith  
Brenda Royer  
Rachel Wegman

### **Yuba River Charter School (TK-8)**

10085 Adam Avenue  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.272.6060

[www.yubariverschool.org](http://www.yubariverschool.org)

**Denis Hill**  
School Director

**Current Enrollment**  
320

#### **Board of Directors**

Ben Geare  
Kate Haight  
Kerri Kuepler  
Laura Hazelton  
Lisa Wilkinson  
Megan Lingo  
Robert Pegg  
Torrie Lauer

## **CHARTER SCHOOLS — TWIN RIDGES HOME STUDY CHARTER & YUBA RIVER CHARTER**

### **Twin Ridges Home Study Charter School: Supporting your home study philosophy since 1978**

Twin Ridges Home Study Charter School (TRHS) learning centers are located in Nevada City, Truckee, and Wheatland, where students in Nevada, Placer, Sierra and Yuba Counties are provided with a public education alternative. TRHS has been a leader of the personalized, home study learning movement for over forty years. With that kind of enduring track record, we are proud of what conspires in the TRHS community. As one of California's first K-8 Independent Study Charter Schools, TRHS has continued to provide students' supports with an innovative approach to meeting academic core standards while encouraging a global perspective in education, to broaden the boundaries of their learning experience. TRHS now serves TK-8 grade students at all three sites. Administrators, staff, teachers, and families work collaboratively to create an environment where every child's unique skill set can be accessed, developed and refined.

Each site facilitates parent-teacher meetings, access to extensive resource collections, and a wide variety of enrichment



Lego fun at Twin Ridges Home Study.

programs. Students are provided 1-on-1 time with credentialed teachers and an individualized educational budget. Frequent field trips, exciting social and cultural events, and a resourceful staff provide TRHS students and families with superior opportunities. TRHS is competitive in the educational arena, actively participating in local academic competitions.

#### **FINANCIAL STIPEND**

Families receive an education budget per student each semester. These dollars allow for tutoring, lessons with community specialists, sports, field trips, and participation in enrichment programs.

#### **FIELD TRIPS**

Ideas can be submitted by anyone for consideration. Common field trips are visiting local farms, museums, nature hikes, ice skating, and other activities and experiences that assist in developing students' physical, social, academic and emotional skills. Additional field trips have also included the Van Gogh Experience as well as releasing salmon at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery

#### **ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**

Optional lessons/workshops include music, computer skills, art, hands-on science, mindfulness, reading and math targeted instruction, and 3D printing opportunities taught by teachers, field experts, community artisans, and visiting lecturers and performers.

Based on the TRHS home study format, parents and students have endless options on how to design their program. Upon graduation, students are poised to achieve success in their next educational foray, from conservatories, professional athletics, performance, and agricultural institutes, to vocational guilds, as well as traditional high schools and colleges. For more information call 530.478.1815 or visit our website at [twinridgeshomestudy.org](http://twinridgeshomestudy.org)



## **Whole Child-Centered Education at Yuba River Charter School**

Yuba River Charter School (YRCS) provides TK-8 public education that is guided by the core principles of Public Waldorf Education and emphasizes the teaching of the whole child — head, hands, and heart. YRCS offers a developmentally appropriate curriculum that nurtures the physical, emotional, and intellectual capacities of the child. Our rigorous curriculum meets the California state standards, integrates the arts into everyday life, and develops capacities within each student, inspiring lifelong learners to become self-reliant individuals capable of recognizing their highest potential. YRCS is the only Waldorf methods charter school in western Nevada County.

The focus of YRCS is to bring to the Nevada County community and surrounding areas an instructional method and educational philosophy committed to educating the whole child. This approach creates in each child an ability to respond to curricular material with empathy and a will to persevere as they complete challenging academic tasks through a multicultural integrated curriculum, active learning, and the arts. We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and support the full development of each child's potential. Instruction in foreign languages fosters familiarity with and appreciation of cultural differences. Students participate in a variety of hands-on, experiential learning activities, including gardening, cooking, handwork, practical arts, and music. The curriculum also includes traditional subjects such as math, science, language arts, and social studies. These subjects are taught in a way that encourages creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Many hands-on activities and tasks strengthen motor skills and the sense of a capable self.



Artistic activity, music, and the teaching of communication and interpersonal skills nurture healthy emotional growth. The children participate in conscious, daily group-building activities and tasks that strengthen their motor skills, bolster their self-esteem, and encourage empathy toward others, in order to develop a compassionate perspective toward all members of their class and their greater community.

After 10 years of planning and building, YRCS opened the 2018 school year at their permanent, final home on Adam Avenue in Grass Valley. Now in its 29th year as a public charter school, YRCS has realized the dream of land ownership while creating an educational space for children to create, learn and play on our beautiful 16-acre school site. YRCS plans to have a farm with animals, an outdoor amphitheater, gardens, play fields, outdoor classrooms, and space for a full practical arts program while upholding sustainable land stewardship. YRCS is committed to offering a unique, whole child-centered education.

## CHARTER SCHOOLS — EPIC CHARTER AND JOHN MUIR CHARTER SCHOOLS

### Empowering the Underserved to be Self-Sufficient

EPIC is the charter high school program of the non-profit organization Farmworker Institute for Education and Leadership Development. FIELD's mission is to foster economic & social prosperity through a continuum of educational and workforce development programs. Adult students are taught in a traditional school setting with instructors who understand their cultural background and academic struggles. Curriculum delivery is intensive, aligned with California State Standards, and assessed with the use of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) standardized tests for adult learners.

The school's mission is focused on remediation, basic skill development, and credit recovery leading to a high school diploma for students over the age of 18. In addition, Work Experience and Career Technical Education career pathways courses with industry recognized certificates that are integrated with community college courses are available. For students interested in a university pathway, EPIC also offers college preparatory classes.

EPIC has graduated more than 1,000 students in the past five years. Flexibility in bell schedules and class scheduling is the key to keeping EPIC students engaged. Our students are adults with jobs and families. By providing both AM and PM class meeting times, distance education options, school credit for Vocational Education programs, and a variety of Career Technical Education classes, students are able to customize their schedules. Our EPIC programs provide both a high school diploma and a certificate of completion in the career track of one's choice.

EPIC de Cesar Chavez High School enrolls all students into either 10th or 12th grade. Most of the students are adult immigrant students with limited English language abilities who need a high school diploma, or high school dropouts who attended school in the United States, but never completed a high school diploma program. The majority of the students also live in the rural and/or agricultural areas in which EPIC learning centers have been established. EPIC maintains a classroom site in Grass Valley. Enrollment is open and students are welcome at any time in the school year.

### John Muir Charter Schools

Chartered under the Nevada County Superintendent of Schools in 1998 to provide high school education programs for the California Conservation Corps, John Muir Charter Schools (JMCS) provides high school diploma programs to the California Conservation Corps, California Local Conservation Corps certified by the California Conservation Corps, federally affiliated YouthBuild programs, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs. Currently operating at 36 school sites, John Muir Charter Schools is a WASC accredited, classroom-based charter school.

John Muir Charter Schools is a comprehensive 9-12 high school; the mission of John Muir Charter School is to meet the unique educational, social, and emotional needs of our diverse student population in safe and nurturing environments that foster personal, professional, and academic growth. The vision of John Muir Charter School is for students to gain the skills to achieve lifelong, sustainable employment and become proactive members of their communities through collaboration with our partner agencies and relevant, rigorous instruction toward a high school diploma, and college and career readiness. As an institution JMCS staff and our educational partners emphasize the values of Empathy, Equity, Integrity, Empowerment, Innovation, Respect, Partnership, and Scholarship. All JMCS programs, operations, and materials are designed and implemented with these values, mission, and vision as our guiding principles.

In our academic programs, the JMCS instructional model uses a combination of instructional practices including whole class direct instruction, small group instruction, and individualized instruction. To adequately provide relevant, rigorous instruction toward a high school diploma, and college and career readiness to students at multiple skills levels with and various credit totals, our staff set feasible graduation plans for each student and address remediation needs and credit recovery in addition to large class instructional models.



John Muir Charter Schools is a nationally recognized educational organization and has been recognized and honored with the 2007 Conservation Corps Northbay Special Recognition Award, 2012 Operation New Hope Youth Community Service Award, 2014 Los Angeles Regional YouthBuild Collaborative Outstanding Leadership Award, 2014 Farmworkers Institute for Education and Leadership Development (FIELD) Si Se Puede Award; 2014, 2015, 2016 Habitat for Humanity Donor of Recognition Award, 2015 California Charter Schools Association Hart, Vision Charter School of the Year, 2015 Community Action Project Santa Rosa Partnership Recognition Award, 2016 California Conservation Corps 40th Anniversary Legacy Award, 2019 California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Medal of Honor, and the 2019 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) Director's Award.

**Epic de Cesar Chavez Charter High School**  
[www.farmworkerinstitute.org/epic](http://www.farmworkerinstitute.org/epic)  
**Raquel C. Villarino**  
Assistant Director

**Current Enrollment**  
470

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#### John Muir Charter Schools (Ages 16-25)

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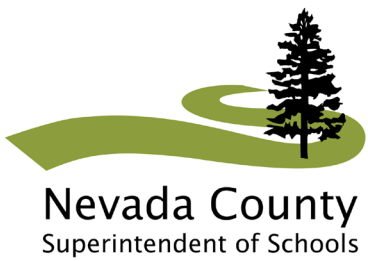
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