

CJUSD Newsletter

Upcoming events/ reminders

Regular Board Meeting
November 8, 2022
6 PM - Board Room

NO SCHOOL
November 11, 2022
Veterans Day

KEEPING SCHOOLS SAFE

Corcoran Joint Unified School District takes school safety very seriously. School safety is correlated to improved student outcomes. In particular, emotional and physical safety in school is related to academic performance. For students to learn, they need to feel safe. It is essential that all students be able to attend schools that provide a safe environment where they can thrive and fully engage in their studies without the distraction and worry about physical safety concerns. Students also need to feel safe emotionally. Being worried or afraid often makes it difficult to think about anything else. When you feel safe, you are able to think clearly and explore and try new things, which makes all learning possible.

The district is strongly committed to keeping students safe at school and also to and from school. In this issue of the District Newsletter are descriptions of the various layers of security and safety practices that help create a safe learning environment for all our students.

CJUSD has a strong relationship with the Corcoran Police Department. One of the ways we work together is by employing a School Resource Officer (SRO) who is a police officer who primarily focuses on the safety of the schools. Our SRO is Corporal Junior Aguirre who has over 20 years of experience and has considerable training on gangs. The District also has an excellent team of safety personnel including a Safety Security Coordinator, Ms. Laura Duran, and two Safety Supervisors, Mr. Alfonso Isiah and Mr. Daniel Ramirez. Ms. Duran is based at Kings Lake and is the handler for the district's canine, Jax. Jax is a highly trained canine who is able to detect drugs and firearms. The safety supervisors and safety security coordinator are tasked with supervision throughout the day on and around the campuses. The district is in the process of hiring two additional safety supervisors which would result in Corcoran High and John Muir each having two safety supervisors on site throughout the day.



CJUSD Safety Team

- *1 School Resource Officer*
- *1 Safety Security Coordinator (also a handler for the district canine)*
- *1 K-9 (able to detect drugs and firearms)*
- *2 Safety Supervisors (1 at CHS, 1 at John Muir)*
- *2 Additional Safety Supervisors (coming soon)*

Corporal Refugio Aguirre Jr., School Resource Officer

What is your work history, including your current position with CJUSD?

I began my career with the Kings County Sheriff's Department as a reserve Deputy Sheriff. I worked for the Sheriff's Department as a volunteer for approximately three years. I learned the functions of the Department by working in the jail as a Detentions Deputy, in the courts as a bailiff, River patrol/water rescue, and patrol. I realized I enjoyed the job and decided to attend the Police academy. Upon completing the Police academy, I tested with the Corcoran Police Department for a Police Officer Position and was selected. I have been employed with Corcoran Police Department since 2002. During my tenure with the Department, I have worked as a Patrol Officer, gang investigator, and expert in the field of gangs. I worked as an investigator with the Kings County Major Crimes unit for a short period of time and also worked as a Detective for two years as a Field Training Officer (FTO). My work experience includes seven years with the California Department of Corrections as a Correctional Officer.



What is most rewarding when working with students and/or in your position?

The most rewarding for me is providing a safe learning environment for our city schools and valuable resources to school staff members. Fostering positive relationships with youth, developing strategies to resolve youth problems, and protecting all students so they can reach their fullest potential. I am excited about my new Law Enforcement role as an SRO, informal counselor, and mentor.

What special safety project(s) are you working on with the students or staff in your position?

Currently, I am putting together a brief gang training for school administrators, teachers, and counselors, regarding current trends and tools they can use to identify students possibly involved in gang activity.

Who has been the biggest inspiration in your life?

I would have to say my father was the biggest inspiration in my life. My father devoted a lot of his time to me during my upbringing. My father was an outdoorsman who taught me how to fish, hunt, and swim. He taught me to appreciate nature and its beauty. He was very supportive and a great mentor. He brought me up to be a good man with a strong work ethic and instilled various traits that molded me into a good father and grandfather.

Corporal Refugio Garza Aguirre Jr. cont.

Tell us a little about yourself:

I have worked in law enforcement for approximately 23 years. I was born in Austin, TX, and later moved to California, where I was raised in the central valley. I have two sons, one daughter, and two beautiful granddaughters that I absolutely adore.

What is a good safety message you would like to give students, staff, and/or parents?

For the parents and staff, I would like to say that the best way to keep students safe is to be there for them. The more positive adults they have in life, the better their chance of making good choices. We all need to be positive adults and role models that children can count on. Make them a priority.

Laura Duran, Safety Security Coordinator



What is your work history, including your current position with CJUSD?

Medical assistant for Central Valley General Hospital clinic, Police officer/K9/Corporal with Corcoran Police Department, Armed Security with STC, Safety Security Coordinator with CJUSD

What is most rewarding when working with students and/or in your position?

Building positive relationships with staff, students and parents.

What special safety project(s) are you working on with the students or staff in your position?

We are training our staff and students on lockdown procedures. We work together to build muscle memory, confidence, and bravery. Most importantly we are all a team.

Who has been the biggest inspiration in your life?

My father. His famous quote was, "Always Believe in Yourself."

Tell us a little about yourself:

I am a person of integrity, hardworking and dedication. I am all about family. I'm proud of my spouse, daughters, son, and grandson because they are well educated, always going above and beyond, with hearts of gold. I am the president of Corcoran Kiwanis and have had the pleasure of organizing Corcoran's Trunk or Treat these past couple of years, along with other community events. I love fishing, playing softball, and camping.

What is a good safety message you would like to give students, staff, and/or parents?

Remember, we all can overcome anything we set our minds to. I believe in all of you. "Head on a swivel" -- watch your surroundings.

Jax, CJUSD K-9



Alfonso Isaiah, Safety Supervisor



What is your work history, including your current position with CJUSD?

I have worked in Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Detention Facilities, Juvenile Counseling, Adult Corrections, and as a Safety Supervisor at Corcoran High School.

What is most rewarding when working with students and/or in your position?

Be able to help guide the youth, keep them safe and help them through difficult situations.

What special safety project(s) are you working on with the students or staff in your position?

I have been talking to students and encouraging them to report any unsafe situations on campus.

Who has been the biggest inspiration in your life?

My mother. She was a single hard-working mother who taught me never to give up!

Tell us a little about yourself:

I like watching football. Go Bills! I'm married with four kids and a crazy Yorkie.

What is a good safety message you would like to give students, staff, and/or parents?

Pay attention to all your surroundings, and question things when you feel like it's not right. It takes everyone to make sure we have a safe campus. You see something, say something.

Daniel Ramirez, Safety Supervisor

What is your work history, including your current position with CJUSD?

I have been retired from the military for 22 years. My past positions included a firefighter for the State of California and a Police Officer in Coalinga.

What is most rewarding when working with students and/or in your position?

At the end of the day, when students go home safely is what is most rewarding to me. My philosophy in this position and my previous ones are to keep people safe.

Who has been the biggest inspiration in your life?

My son is the biggest inspiration in my life. Despite all the negativity in law enforcement, he is still determined to pursue his career as a police officer.

Tell us a little about yourself:

When I am not working, all my spare time is spent caring for my twin boys, but when I do get a free moment, I build military models. I have two dogs, an Alaskan Husky and a little Lhasa Apso mix, whom I have had for ten years. I'm not really into sports. I only watch one game a year which is the Annual Patriot Games. It is a football game between the Army and the Navy held in Westpoint, New York. One time, when I was overseas, I got up at two in the morning to watch it.

What is a good safety message you would like to give students, staff, and/or parents?

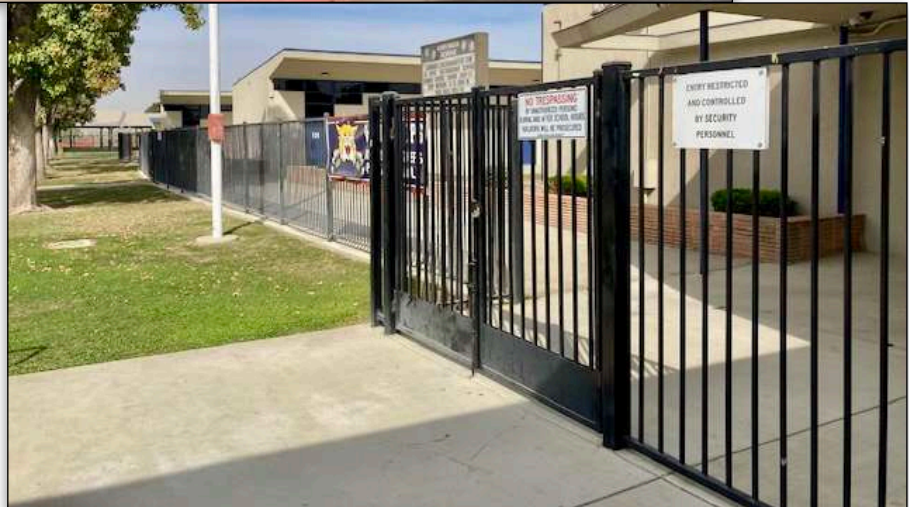
Live by the golden rule: treat others with respect and kindness, and you will get the same in return.



CJUSD Safety Equipment

Each school site has a secure perimeter fence in place that extends around the boundary of each campus. Everyone must use the gates identified to get on or off the campus. These entrances are supervised when students enter in the morning and exit campus in the afternoon. During the rest of the day, the gates are locked and secured, and students and visitors must check in through the school's main office. Each school site also has a system of security cameras that are used to monitor activity on campus throughout the day and night. The police department will also have access to the security feed to monitor and respond to activity on the school campuses. Throughout the day, the safety security coordinator and supervisors utilize clearly identifiable CJUSD security vehicles to patrol the campuses as well as the perimeter of the schools and will respond to any safety issues.

- Use of secure **perimeter fencing**



CJUSD Safety Equipment

- Use of locked and **secure gates**



- Use of a complete system of **security cameras** at each school site



CJUSD Safety Equipment

- Use of clearly identified **security vehicles**



CJUSD Safety Practices

In addition to the use of an excellent security team and the maintenance of secure facilities, CJUSD also has many practices in place employed by staff, students, and families to ensure the ongoing safety of our students. Regular and frequent emergency drills for fire, earthquake, and lockdown are practiced to make sure everyone knows what to do in case of a real emergency. The district canine, Jax, is used to increase the random checks for drugs and firearms at CHS, John Muir, and Kings Lake. The school resource officer and security personnel are easily identifiable with their uniforms and/or vests, as well as their vehicles. All staff also utilize easily identifiable ID badges on campus and wear colorful and identifiable reflective vests while supervising students outside. Students at the high school who are permitted to go off campus for lunch must present their school IDs to leave and return to campus—all visitors at every school must check in through the front office. CJUSD is in the process of implementing the use of the Raptor Visitor Management System to screen visitors. The safe district practices also extend to students going to/from school. The circle drives at the elementary schools and middle schools are now being utilized by families to safely drop students off in front of the schools. Additionally, CJUSD is in the process of implementing the use of Zonar, a system to track student bus riders and safeguard their arrival at their intended destination.

District Practices

- Use of canine (Jax) for increased **random checks** of drugs/firearms
- Clearly identified staff (**name badges, reflective vests**)



District Practices cont.

- Frequently planned **emergency drills** (fire, earthquake, lockdown)
- Frequent **perimeter patrols** of school sites by safety supervisors and coordinator
- CHS students **presenting IDs** to go on/off campus during lunch
- All school **visitors check-in** through the front office Raptor Visitor Management System to **screen visitors** (coming soon)



- Use of circle drives for **safe morning dropoff** of students
- Real-time **video surveillance monitoring** by Crime Guard
- Use of Zonar to **safeguard student bus riders** (coming soon)



CJUSD New Faculty

Genisi Murillo-Robles



What school, subject, and grade are you teaching? John Muir Middle School, SDC, ELA, Social Studies in Grades 6-8.

Tell us a little bit about yourself: After living in the Bay Area for a few years and being a para-educator, I decided to become a teacher. I am now in the GROW program through Kings County and look forward to working in this district.

Where did you grow up? Lemoore, CA

Where did you go to college? Majors/Degrees? Cal State East Bay - Recreation, Management Option

Do you have any prior teaching or other work experience? I am a first-year teacher, but I previously worked as a para-educator and had the opportunity to work under a short-term staff permit.

Do you have any hobbies? What do you enjoy doing away from work? I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. So during the weekends, you can find me with my friends shopping or trying out new restaurants or with my family having a barbecue.

Give us a short sentence or two on your teaching philosophy. I believe having high expectations for students can benefit their growth and encourage them to put in their best effort and strive for improvement.

What are you looking forward to at CJUSD? I look forward to working with everyone, and I am excited to be a part of a team that provides a supportive environment so that all students can be successful.

Ashley Navarro



What school, subject, and grade are you teaching? Mark Twain, 4th Grade

Tell us a little bit about yourself: I am a product of Corcoran Unified. I attended all the schools here. I have been working on becoming a teacher for over ten years! I feel so blessed and proud to be here finally.

Where did you grow up? Here! Corcoran, CA

Where did you go to college? Majors/Degrees? So far, I have earned an Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts from the College of the Sequoias and a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts from Brandman University. I am currently completing my Master of Arts in Teaching from UMass Global University (previously known as Brandman).

Do you have any prior teaching or other work experience? I taught preschool for about six years and was a substitute in the district last school year.

Do you have any hobbies? What do you enjoy doing away from work? I don't have much time for hobbies, but I do love shopping! When I am not working, I am probably at a practice of some sport for my son or chasing my toddler around.

Give us a short sentence or two on your teaching philosophy. A child can achieve so much more when they know someone believes in them. A teacher should always be one of those someones.

What are you looking forward to at CJUSD? Because I taught preschool for a while in Corcoran, I am getting the chance to see some of my former students at a higher grade level. I even have a few in my class! I love seeing the growth in them.

Elena Velasco



What school, subject, and grade are you teaching? Kindergarten at Bret Harte

Tell us a little bit about yourself: I am a first-year teacher and am so glad to have found a home here at Bret Harte. I am a mother of two little ones, Anthony, seven years old, and Amberlena, who is one year old. I have only been married for less than a year, so I'm still adjusting to my married name. But my husband and I have been together for about ten years now.

Where did you grow up? I grew up and still live in Tulare.

Where did you go to college? Majors/Degrees? After graduating from high school, I went to COS, where I got my associate's degree in elementary teaching. I then transferred to Fresno State, where I graduated with B.A. in liberal studies, a teaching credential, and bilingual authorization.

Do you have any prior teaching or other work experience? I completed my student teaching in a dual immersion school in Lindsay. I was substitute teaching for a year in Tulare and Lindsay while I finished my Bachelors's/credential program. Before that, I worked as a behavior technician practicing ABA therapy and as a Special education aide at a local high school.

Do you have any hobbies? What do you enjoy doing away from work? I love making custom gifts with my Cricut machine. There's something special about receiving something personal, like a cup or blanket with your name on it

Give us a short sentence or two on your teaching philosophy. As a teacher, I want to create an all-inclusive classroom where all my learners feel safe and welcome. By creating a safe, positive, and supportive learning environment, I can help children be great students and great people.

What are you looking forward to at CJUSD? I look forward to finishing this school year strong and helping all my little ones grow into amazing, independent, and kind kiddos.

Marc Ochoa



What school, subject, and grade are you teaching? Corcoran High School, U.S. History/Economics/Government, 11th and 12th grades.

Tell us a little bit about yourself: I am a person who likes to laugh and make people laugh. I definitely know how to turn a serious situation into a humorous one (even if it's by accident.) I enjoy cooking different cultural foods and traveling worldwide to experience other cultures, food, and languages. I enjoy spending time with the family and my cat Gucci Lyn Spears.

Where did you grow up? I am a Central Valley native! I grew up in Farmersville and Lindsay and graduated from Lindsay High School.

Where did you go to college? Majors/Degrees? Before working at Corcoran, I taught at Lindsay Unified as a World History teacher; before Lindsay, I worked at Fresno Unified as a certified substitute teacher. Outside of teaching, I worked various jobs while in college! At one point, I worked as an Ice Cream maker, and at another point, I worked the graveyard shift cleaning toilets at the university!

Do you have any prior teaching or other work experience? Before coming to CUSD, I was employed at Pioneer Union School District, where I worked for twelve years as the English Language Instructor for the District.

March Ochoa cont.

Do you have any hobbies? What do you enjoy doing away from work? Away from work, I enjoy spending time with my family and traveling. From day trips to the beach to 2-week vacations, I absolutely love getting away from the Valley HEAT. Along with travel comes fantastic food opportunities. I am a foody (clearly), and I love to sample different cuisines and learn about the history behind other foods/dishes. Besides eating and traveling, I am attempting to get into cardio because I need to run!

Give us a short sentence or two on your teaching philosophy. As a teacher, I believe that ALL kids can learn and will learn if given the proper tools. Sometimes the right tools are a daily fist-bump and a "happy you made it today." Sometimes the correct tools are to repeat the printed instructions a million times out loud and in differentiated ways - whatever means are necessary, all kids can learn if we give them the opportunity to.

What are you looking forward to at CJUSD? I look forward to getting to know my kids and the community that makes Corcoran a great place to be!

Marbeya Tapia



What school, subject, and grade are you teaching? I am a fourth-grade teacher at Mark Twain Elementary School.

Tell us a little bit about yourself: I was born in Hanford, CA, and raised in Corcoran, CA. I am a Corcoran High School graduate. I am the second of three children. I enjoy spending time with my family, reading books, and watching movies. I also enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking and swimming.

Where did you grow up? I grew up in Corcoran, CA.

Where did you go to college? Majors/Degrees? I graduated from the California State University of Fresno with a bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. I am currently pursuing a Masters degree in Reading/Language Arts.

Do you have any prior teaching or other work experience? Before working for CUSD, I worked as a California Migrant Tutor, where I offered my services to migrant students. I worked as a substitute teacher in K-12 classrooms and also worked for Bakersfield City School District as a second-grade teacher.

Do you have any hobbies? What do you enjoy doing away from work? I enjoy spending time with my family, shopping and going to the beach.

Give us a short sentence or two on your teaching philosophy.

My philosophy of education is that all children are unique and must have an encouraging classroom where they can grow physically, mentally, and emotionally. As a teacher, I desire to create a good learning environment for all my students. I will make a safe learning environment where students are invited to share their ideas and take risks.

What are you looking forward to at CJUSD? I am excited to be able to work with students from my community. I look forward to building relationships with students, families, and I look forward to growing as a teacher and as a person.

Cara Goldsworthy



What school, subject, and grade are you teaching? John C. Fremont Elementary, 3rd Grade

Tell us a little bit about yourself: This is my first year teaching. I love spending my free time with my kids and family! I have two children-- an eight-year-old daughter and a three-year-old son.

Where did you grow up? I grew up in the San Fernando Valley, specifically the Burbank area.

Where did you go to college? Majors/Degrees? I have a BA in Liberal Studies from UC Riverside.

Do you have any prior teaching or other work experience? I worked as a substitute teacher for two years at Visalia Unified.

Do you have any hobbies? What do you enjoy doing away from work? I'm doing stuff with my kids when I'm not at work! We love to visit the beach as much as possible, and I love swimming and crafting!

Give us a short sentence or two on your teaching philosophy. I believe every student can succeed given the proper environment and tools and it is my job as a teacher to provide that for all of my students.

What are you looking forward to at CJUSD? I look forward to learning from all of the fantastic teachers at CUSD!

Joshua Avila



What school, subject, and grade are you teaching? CHS Music 9-12

Where did you grow up? Tulare, Ca.

Where did you go to college? Majors/Degrees? Fresno State. A Bachelor's Degree in Musical Education with Instrumental Emphasis

Do you have any prior teaching or other work experience? Yes, this is my fourth year teaching.

Do you have any hobbies? What do you enjoy doing away from work? I enjoy playing soccer.

Give us a short sentence or two on your teaching philosophy.

My goal is to create a music program that instills a drive for excellence in musical expression and the students' futures in high school and beyond.

What are you looking forward to at CJUSD? I look forward to creating a quality music program that positively represents the school and the community.



- **Indoor speakers are installed in common areas at sites to provide coverage for emergency notifications.**
- **Making the Kindles available for purchase to those that have one checked out.**
- **November 6 - Remember to set your clocks back an hour!**

Mark Twain Elementary

Fall excitement is underway at Mark Twain. October has been full of many activities. Many of our students marched in the Cotton Parade, showing school and community spirit. Mark Twain's Annual Cardboard Challenge followed the parade. Students showed off their knowledge and creativity during this STEM activity, designing and building games for their peers to play. October will wrap up with Red Ribbon Week. This year's theme is "Celebrate Life, Live Drug-Free." The week will be filled with daily activities and dress-up days.



John Muir Middle School

October is Latin Heritage Month. Mrs. Ramirez has been leading fun and games to show appreciation for Latin culture.



Numerous clubs are beginning on campus. The Leadership class hosted fun activities during lunch, like musical chairs.



John Muir Middle School Band

JMMS Band performed in the Corcoran Cotton Parade. Here is a picture of the band setting up to march.



The Friends Club held its monthly activity during lunchtime. This month's activity was taking a pledge to stand up against bullying using posters to spread awareness and promote kindness. This club is open for anyone who wants to participate on the last Friday of the month during lunchtime.



Corcoran High School

Highlights or celebrations:

- The girls' tennis is undefeated league champs.
- We had a successful blood drive last Friday.

Important news or announcements for staff or parents:

Home football game this Friday vs. Strathmore

Upcoming Event for the next month:

Junior Ethics Day - Thursday, November 10, 2022



Facility Highlights

Construction on Bret Harte's TK classroom is set to begin next week!

The CHS Gym HVAC project is also almost complete.

