

# CJUSD *Newsletter*

## Welcome to the 2023-24 School Year!

Dear CJUSD Staff and Parents,

I am excited to extend a warm welcome to our dedicated staff and supportive parents as we launch a brand-new school year!

The start of a school year is a time of great anticipation and excitement for all of us. It marks the beginning of new friendships, challenges, and opportunities to learn and excel for our students. For our staff, it is a time to showcase our passion for education and make a lasting impact on the lives of our students. And for our parents, it is a time to continue our partnership in nurturing our children's intellectual, emotional, and social development.

At Corcoran Joint Unified School District, we relentlessly create a positive, safe, and stimulating environment for all to improve mind, character, and body. Our dedicated educators have been working diligently to prepare innovative lesson plans and dynamic classroom experiences that will inspire curiosity and foster a love of learning. Our schools are creating a safe and supportive learning environment that will allow our students to grow and flourish. This year, we will be focusing on providing good first instruction, implementing robust behavior support systems, and utilizing student data to respond to student needs in a timely manner. Together, we can create a supportive and responsive environment where each student's potential is recognized and nurtured.

Communication between home and school is essential for a successful educational journey. We encourage all parents to stay involved in their child's education by attending parent-teacher conferences, school events, and staying connected through our various communication channels, including ParentSquare and social media accounts. Additionally, we are actively seeking interested individuals for parents/guardians interested in becoming volunteers at the schools. We have begun the volunteer recruitment process at our recent Back to School Night events.

As we begin this new chapter together, I am grateful for your unwavering dedication to our students' growth and well-being. Your support, ongoing communication, and willing collaboration play a vital role in our shared mission of providing an exceptional education to all students.

Wishing you all a fantastic start to the school year!

Warm regards,  
Eduardo Ochoa  
Superintendent

### Upcoming events/ reminders

**NO SCHOOL**  
Monday, September 4, 2023  
Labor Day

Regular Board Meeting  
September 13, 2023

Regular Board Meeting  
September 27, 2023

## CJUSD Welcomes New Teachers



**Katherine Rios**

John Muir  
7th Grade ELA/SS, &  
Study Hall

I've been a teacher (full-time) for six years. I have four kids and two dogs. I've been with my husband for over 16 years. We just moved to Corcoran in July from Salinas, CA. I was a military brat, so I grew up in many places, but I spent most of my childhood in Georgia and all my teen and adult years in Monterey County, CA. Fun fact about me: I went to 7 elementary schools, one middle school, and three high schools! I have a Masters and Bachelors degree from Ashford University (now part of The University of Arizona Global Campus) and received my Teaching credential from Brandman University (now UMass Global). I also have an AA from Monterey Peninsula College. I have taught 7th grade English, 4th and 6th grades in a Charter school, and 7th and 8th grade Math. Before teaching full-time, I was a substitute teacher, and before that, I was a Paraprofessional with Mod-Severe students aged 18-22 years. I love to sing, workout, and watch crime drama shows. I look forward to building new connections with staff, students, and the community!

***- I believe that EVERYONE has the ability to learn. I also believe that learning is a participation sport!***



**Kasey Peevy**

Mark Twain  
5th Grade, Multiple  
Subject

This year will be my 5th year teaching. I was in special education for two years, and I was teaching 7th grade for two years. I have a son who is two years old and currently live in Porterville. I grew up in Tulare and went to CSU Bakersfield for my bachelor's degree and National University for my credential and master's degree. I enjoy going to the beach and Disneyland. My family are huge Disney people. I love spending time with family and doing fun things together. I am looking forward to working with my 5th-grade team! My last school was tiny, so I was the only teacher for my grade, so it would be great to work with more teachers in the same grade.

***- My teaching philosophy is treating students with respect to show them that you care.***



**Janna Spear**

Corcoran High School  
9-12 World History,  
US History, &  
Government

I am a mother of two and a huge animal lover. I have three dogs and two bunnies! In my free time, I love traveling and attending sporting events. I grew up in Sacramento, CA, and attended CSU Sacramento to obtain my Bachelor's Degree in Child Development. I also attended National University: Education Services Credential and Master in Special Education. I have taught for four years at the high school level. I love to cook, travel, spend time with my family, and watch sports. I look forward to new students, colleagues, and adventures.

***- You can teach a student a lesson for a day, but if you can teach them to learn by curiosity, they will continue the learning process as long as they live.***



**Amber  
Northcott**

Corcoran High School  
9th & 12 Math

I am married and have two dogs. I am a fan of Harry Potter (go Ravenclaw!), Star Wars, and Sailor Moon. I grew up in Porterville, CA, and received my Bachelor of Science in Math from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. I have a year of teaching experience (in my second year) and worked for a Boys & Girls Club from 2017 to 2022. I am a writer and have a book of poems on Amazon. I am currently working on some novels. I also play video games, especially Final Fantasy and Hogwarts Legacy. I look forward to new experiences, meeting new people, and making new friends here at CJUSD.

**- My teaching philosophy is to encourage students to believe in themselves and know that whatever they want to do in life, their dreams, they can and will do it.**



**Saul Magana**

Kings Lake Education  
Center  
11 & 12 Continuation

I come from a small community. I live on the outskirts of Woodlake. Although I was not born there, I have lived there for over 30 years. I attended Fresno Pacific for Multiple Subjects Teacher. Although this is my first year as a teacher, I have worked with students in several areas. From being a tutor to an aide to providing direct case management in the classroom through America's Job Center, I most recently taught high school students to prepare taxes through the IRS VITA program. One of my favorite hobbies is reading scholarly articles in my free time. I enjoy spending time with my family I am new to the district and excited to work with the Corcoran students and the community.

**- The choices we make today will bring us a better tomorrow. Life is all about choices.**



**Haley  
Bustamante**

John Muir School  
8th Math & Science

Hi there, my friends and husband would describe me as bubbly and a morning person - no coffee required! I am passionate about education and cannot wait to start this school year. I grew up in "Cow Town", Hanford, Ca. I graduated from Fresno State University with my BA in Liberal Studies. I have been long-term subbing since college and am SO ready to have a classroom of my own! I am an avid reader, and I read well over 15 books over the summer. I am really looking forward to helping the students reach their goals this year - LETS GO CLASS OF 2024!

**- Progress is still progress! Let's celebrate every step along the way!**



**Colleen Norris**

John Muir  
7th Math, Science, & Art

I was born and raised here in the Central Valley in a rural community. I have three children: two daughters and one son. I grew up in Lindsay, CA. I received my AA degree in University Studies in Elementary Teaching Preparation from the College of the Sequoias. I then attended Fresno Pacific University, earning my BA in Liberal Arts - Education with a Science concentration. I continued with Alder Graduate School of Education, earning my credential and Master of Arts in Education through a year-long residency program. Before entering my year-long residency program, I was a substitute for a couple of school districts in which I taught with a mentor for the entire school year. I was a parent volunteer in my children's school for many years and worked as an administrative assistant before returning to college to complete my education. I enjoy learning, reading, dogs, and game nights with family and friends. I look forward to working with my students and the incredible teachers and staff at John Muir Middle School, growing as an educator, building relationships, and making memories.

***- I am dedicated to the whole child model and student-centered education to prepare learners for their future. My role is to facilitate, advocate, and build relationships with all stakeholders to ensure the growth and success of each student.***



**Aurora  
Martinez**

Corcoran High School  
9 - 12 Agriculture

Hi there, my name is Aurora Martinez. I am a first-year teacher here at Corcoran High. I am a ball of energy with a passion for educating the future. I have lived in the Central Valley for seven years and have made it my home! I am a Halloween geek, and I love ALL animals... cats especially! If you ever see me, feel free to say hi! I love conversation and making new connections! I grew up in Escondido, CA, in San Diego County. I attended Reedley College, got my AA in Animal Science, and then transferred to Fresno State, where I received my Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education! I continued with Fresno State and went through their credential program as well. Before working in the classroom, I had the opportunity to be a Veterinarian Assistant in a small MA and PA veterinary clinic in Reedley. I learned pre- and post-operation skills, client communication, and hands-on vet medicine practice skills. My favorite part while working at the clinic was working alongside the Veterinarian during surgeries and creating a bond with the entire staff that felt like home. I enjoy spending my time outside. If I am not relaxing outside, I hang out with my two dogs and take them on trips. I look forward to getting to know the town, staff, and community at CJUSD!

***- A comfortable and safe working environment will help create stronger minds.***



**Elena Naranjo**

Bret Harte School  
Kindergarten

My name is Elena Naranjo, and I come from a big family. I have four brothers, two sisters, and many nieces and nephews. I live with my parents in Hanford and have been for many years. I have a strong work ethic, a quick learner, and always eager to learn new things. I have a love for and am passionate about working with children. My goal of becoming a teacher was inspired by the thought that every child deserves to pursue their dreams and goals, regardless of social or economic status. These are some of the things that make me who I am. I was born in Mexico and raised in California. I started my educational journey at COS, College of the Sequoias. I received my AA degree from there, and in 2021, I got my BA in Liberal Arts from Fresno Pacific University. I started as a medical records clerk and now have 29 years of experience in the medical field. First as a receptionist then finally, as a medical biller. Recently, I had one school year experience as a substitute teacher. I enjoy shopping when I am not at work because it relaxes me. I love spending time with my family and my four-legged babies, Nilo and Gigi. I look forward to building a close community/relationship with my students, their families, and the school district's community. Plus, join their mission "in creating a positive, safe, and stimulating environment for all to improve mind, character, and body."

**- My teaching philosophy is that all students should receive the same uplifting education regardless of socioeconomic background or ability because every child can learn and succeed.**



**Brenda Perez-Saldana**

Mark Twain School  
5th Grade, Multiple  
Subjects

I am a first-generation university graduate. I have an agricultural background, in which I was a migrant student. Growing up, I would help my parents work in the fields picking oranges, olives, grapes, and cherries. I am the fifth born out of six siblings. I am bilingual in Spanish and English. I grew up in a small town called Farmersville, CA. I attended College of the Sequoias from 2011-2014 and obtained my first degree as a Child development teacher. Then, I returned and got my Transfer Studies degree in Elementary Teacher Preparation in 2018. Lastly, I attended CSU Fresno, completing the first ITEP blended program and obtaining my multiple subject credentials and bachelor's degree in liberal studies in 2020. I have taught preschool in the past, been an after-school program leader, and subbed in elementary for the past two years. I enjoy taking walks and having "me" time, such as getting pedicures, buying a Dutch Bros drink, and shopping. I look forward to being a teacher for as long as I can here and helping make a difference in student's lives and the community.

**- My teaching philosophy is meeting students where they are academically and helping them make the best progress possible to help keep moving them forward and have success in life.**





**Gabrielle  
Sandoval**  
Mark Twain School  
4th Grade

I am teaching 4th Grade at Mark Twain Elementary. My name is Gabrielle Sandoval, and this is my first year teaching 4th Grade in Corcoran. I am currently attending Fresno Pacific University to receive my Preliminary Teaching Credential. I have been married to my amazing and supportive husband, Adrian, for eight years and have two children. Our son Erik is 13, and our daughter Danielle is 6. We live in Visalia but love visiting Carmel Beach with our family. I was born and raised in Visalia. I went to College of the Sequoias for my general education and Fresno Pacific University, where I earned my BA in Early Childhood Development. Before working at Corcoran, I was a long-term teacher for the past two years for the Visalia Unified School District. I worked in the music department teaching music to 4th through 6th grade students and then finished as an 8th-grade science teacher. I enjoy watching FRIENDS reruns on TV when I am not at work. I was always told Corcoran Unified is an amazing district to work for and attend because of the community's dedicated educators and hard-working families. I can't wait to learn as much as possible from my fellow teammates and give as much as possible to the community.

*CJUSD Retiree  
Congratulations on Your Retirement!*



*Lora Cartwright  
8/21/1995 - 8/25/2023*

# Bret Harte Elementary

## Highlights or celebrations:

We had an amazing first day of school at Bret Harte. Staff greeted families at our updated front entrance and were welcomed onto campus at 7:30 AM. We had photo opportunities available for our students, including a lovely balloon arch created by Janet Soto and a variety of fun frames to use as props.

## Important news or announcements for staff or parents:

Our Back to School night is August 22, from 5:00-6:00 PM. We are partnering with United Health Care this year, who will attend our evening family events to provide information about their services to our families.

## Upcoming Event for the next month:

Our first Title 1 meeting was held on August 22, 2023, followed by Back to School from 5:00-6:00 PM. Constitution Day will be celebrated on Friday, September 15.





## John C. Fremont Back School Night





# Mark Twain Elementary

## Highlights or celebrations:

Back to School Night had a great turnout. Mark Twain sold numerous school t-shirts so students could show off their school spirit. Students are getting accustomed to daily school and classroom routines and procedures.

## Important news or announcements for staff or parents:

Please remember to ensure that your child knows their bus route or which of the pick-up locations they will be met at.

## Upcoming Event for the next month:

Constitution Day is September 15, and PBIS Activities are coming up!





# John Muir Back School Night





# Corcoran High School

## **Highlights or celebrations:**

We are off to a really wonderful start. We are at 930 students. We have had great trainings to kick off the year, and the campus vibe is filled with strong, positive energy. We had a successful and well-attended Back to School last Wednesday.

## **Important news or announcements for staff or parents:**

The first SAT and Saturday School was held on August 26, 2023.

## **Upcoming Event for the next month:**

We will hold an Aeries Parent Workshop on September 28 from 5-6 PM in the TLC.





# Parent Engagement



CJUSD encourages parents to activate their ParentSquare account. Receive notifications regarding upcoming school and community events, meetings, holidays, and emergency alerts. Ensure your email is correct with your child's school.

## Download the ParentSquare App

ParentSquare makes it easy to register for ParentSquare from the app. Follow the steps below:

1. Open the ParentSquare App.
2. Enter your email or cell phone number.
3. Tap **Continue**.

*Note: If your email or phone number is not recognized by ParentSquare, you can "Request Access" or call your school office and ask them to update your contact information.*

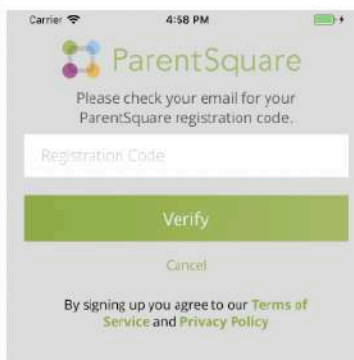


4. Create your password and confirm your password.

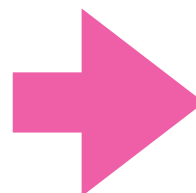


5. Enter your registration code sent by Email or Text and tap **Verify**.

*Note: If your registration link has expired, a new one will need to be sent to you. Please contact your school's admin and ask for a new link to be sent to you.*



Watch a video on how to get started!





## **CORCORAN JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT WELCOMES PARENTS TO VOLUNTEER**

### **COME JOIN US TO LEARN HOW TO BECOME A PARENT VOLUNTEER**

Parent volunteers play an important role in modern education. Not only are they great resources for teachers and a solid support for the school community, but parent volunteers also demonstrate to their children and others that school is important and worth the time and effort.



If we missed you  
at Back to School  
Night and are  
interested in  
becoming a Parent  
Volunteer, please  
stop by the  
District Office  
1520 Patterson Ave.  
or contact  
Rebecca Schreuder  
at (559) 992-8888  
ext. 1220 to

**-Learn the Process  
-Ask Questions  
-Fill Out Forms**

Forms can be returned to  
the District Office between  
8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Monday-Friday

