



# The Rincon Valley Chalkboard

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## Message from the Superintendent Tony Roehrick, Ed.D.

In this edition of the Chalkboard, I am providing background on the RVUSD proposed purchase of the 15-acre Oak Park property for use as a future school site. As you may know, in 2016 the RVUSD entered into a purchase agreement on the 15-acre site which was formerly the Oak Park Racquet and Swim Club. RVUSD's intention is to purchase the property and hold the land for 10 to 20 years until it is needed for a new school.

### Why is the District considering purchasing the 15-acre site at Oak Park?

The District has a fiduciary responsibility to plan the needs of the District in 10, 20, and 30 years from now. Building a new school requires significant land (10 – 15 acres), which is increasingly rare to find within the District boundaries. The Oak Park site is large enough to accommodate a new school. The District's intent from the start in 2016 was to purchase the land and hold the land for 10 – 20 years until it was needed for development.

Land costs in Sonoma County have skyrocketed over recent decades. Consider for example the 5 parcels that make up the Oak Park Property. These 5 parcels were purchased between 1973 and 1983 for a total cost of \$282,500. These same 15 acres were appraised in 2016 for \$3,180,000. This is an increase from \$18,808 to \$211,717 per acre. Waiting 10 – 20 years from now to try and find a 15-acre site when it is eminently needed could be impossible. Additionally, the cost increases from now to 10 – 20 years from now would put a huge financial burden on the District taxpayers.

It makes fiscal sense to buy the land now so the District can secure our future when there is land available and at today's price. Purchasing a 15-acre property for \$3 million today is a significant cost. However, the District has the one-time funding available to purchase the land which may not be the case 10 years from now.

District staff identified the site as land for a new school or a site to relocate a school if needed for growth, structural or other issues impacting students at other school sites. It is common practice for districts to purchase land and hold it for the future. For example, Santa Rosa City Schools purchased the Maria Carrillo High School site in 1965 and built the high school 30 years later in 1995.

### Will the population 10 to 20 years from now require RVUSD to build more schools?

We anticipate the population needs will require more schools for the District. RVUSD enrolls approximately 2% of Santa Rosa's population. The District's enrollment mirrors the annual population increases in the City of Santa Rosa. From 1960 to the present, the average increase in Santa Rosa for each decade has been approximately 3%. Using those figures demonstrates how the RVUSD School Board needs to prepare for anticipated population projections for 10 – 20 years from now.

### What is the process the District must complete to purchase the Oak Park property?

The process of purchasing a property for a school involves several steps of due diligence to identify any problems with the property or issues that might hinder development of the property as a school. Most Districts hire consultants to advise on the process of purchasing, evaluating property, conducting due diligence and environmental review for a property purchase.

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RVUSD hired consultants who are experts to conduct the environmental due diligence analysis and counsel the District on required actions needed to complete the purchase. The District is completing the due diligence on the property and anticipates receiving a full report from consultants outlining any issue the District needs to consider this summer. The District will hold several public meetings on the planned purchase before considering a vote to purchase the property.

**Is the District planning to replace or close Whited Elementary School?**

No. RVUSD’s intent for purchasing the Oak Park property was and is to hold the land for 10 – 20 years for future use. RVUSD has no plans to replace Whited Elementary School.

**If the District isn’t planning to relocate or close Whited Elementary School, then why was this discussed in the initial environmental documents performed on the proposed sale?**

The consultants the District hired in 2016 gave the District incorrect advice which led the District to begin environmental review on the property prior to the purchase. As part of the inaccurate advice given to the District, the consultants informed the District it must identify a “project” for the land to perform environmental review. Because the District had no immediate plans to build on the property, it identified relocating Whited Elementary School as the project to be studied for environmental review.

Last month, the District hired new counsel which clarified that the District did not have to perform environmental review prior to the purchase, but rather when the District develops the land 10 – 20 years from now as a school. The District will not be relocating or closing Whited Elementary School.

**What is next in the process to purchase the Oak Park property?**

The District will be holding two community workshop meetings on the proposed purchase. The School Board and staff want to hear from the community and listen to any concerns or issues related to the property purchase. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. The second meeting is still being scheduled. The location for the May 31<sup>st</sup> meeting is the RVUSD district office located at 1000 Yulupa Avenue.

The District is also launching a website page with all the project documents available for the public to view and download. The page will be live as of 5/16/17 and can be accessed by clicking on the “Oak Park Property Information” link on the RVUSD home page at [www.rvUSD.org](http://www.rvUSD.org).

**California has a new Accountability System!**

**Terry Metzger, Ed. D.**

In March 2017, the California Department of Education (CDE) unveiled a new state accountability system. The old system, commonly known as the Academic Performance Index (API), was a single number that primarily represented how well schools did on the state assessments each spring. In addition to an API score, a school received a ranking that compared their performance against all schools in the state and 100 similar schools.

The new system, called the *California School Dashboard*, uses several indicators that reflect how well schools are doing on the 8 state priority areas that are addressed in the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). Using a color-coding system, the public can very quickly see how well a school or district is doing in each area. Also included are charts that show “status” (Where are we now?) and “change” (Are we making growth?).

The Dashboard currently reflects five of the eight priority areas, with the remaining three being added in the fall.

Additional information will be shared in October 2017 when the Dashboard is updated. For now, visit the *California School Dashboard* at <https://www.caschooldashboard.org> Use the search tool to find a specific school or district.

**State Indicators**

- ✓ Chronic Absenteeism
- ✓ Suspension Rate
- ✓ English Learner Progress
- ✓ Graduation Rate
- ✓ Academic
  - English Language Arts
  - Mathematics

Highest

Lowest

- Performance category determined by the state, based on reference charts
- Use colored pies and reference charts to identify performance
- Include status and change rates
- Do not include data for groups of less than 29 students

# Two New Programs to Support Student Learning in Rincon Valley

Terry Metzger, Ed. D.



At the Rincon Valley School Board meeting in April, the governing board approved the adoption of *Benchmark Advance* as our new English Language Arts (ELA) and English Language Development (ELD) for grades K-6. Thirty-two teachers in our district piloted the program and strongly recommended the adoption.

Results from a pre and post test showed significant gains in reading for students who participated in the pilot when compared to students who did not. Teacher and administrator training for this program will begin this summer and continue throughout next school year. We are excited about the differentiated, small group foundation for this program. It helps us to meet our goal of providing the best education for each and all students in our district!

Rincon Valley Charter School English learners will begin using *English 3D* next year. *English 3D* is a powerful English language development program designed to accelerate English language proficiency and develop the academic language skills students need for success in college and career. The program, written by language development expert Dr. Kate Kinsella, builds students' competence and confidence through academic vocabulary, discussion, and writing.

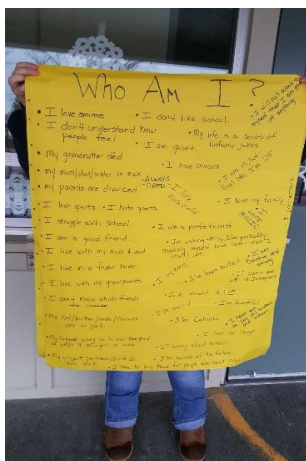


## Counseling in Rincon Valley and Parent University

Cathy Myhers, Director of Student Services

In the fall of 2015, the Rincon Valley Union School District added 5 school counselors to the student support team. An additional counselor was added in the fall of 2016. The counselors have been integral in the implementation of the district's social-emotional learning programs. If you have a kindergarten-aged student in the district, you have likely heard about Lovey Dovey and some of the other Kimochis characters. The Kimochis program is being taught in Kindergarten classrooms across the district. It is important for students to have the language around feelings and emotions. With this vocabulary, we are able to move towards teaching students the tools (Toolbox) to handle the different emotions or feelings that they have. Students in 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are taught how to use the Toolbox tools when needed, to work through feelings and emotions that may be negatively affecting their learning. Our 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have been instructed in Restorative Practices and participate in classroom circles on a regular basis. Kimochis are a big hit for all ages and have even been incorporated into Restorative Circles and classroom guidance lessons.

The counseling team provides support to school sites in many different ways. Here are a few examples:



The counselor at RVCS-Matanzas leads class discussions on empathy and students are encouraged to describe themselves in as many ways as possible. Students are able to get to this level of sharing after working on trust within the Restorative Practice Circles.

Students across the district celebrate Kindness Week with a wall dedicated to words of encouragement and kindness towards their fellow students.



### Our counselors are amazing!

Much of what the counselors do is behind the scenes. They lead parent workshops, support families who are struggling with barriers to good attendance, lead peer mediation groups, offer parents time to meet through a "second cup of coffee with the counselor", and run many student groups focused on supporting students through social and educational challenges.



Left to Right- Candace Corwonski (Binkley), Katie Prather (Whited and Austin Creek), Krista Boyd (Spring Creek and Matanzas), Leith Ulrich (Matanzas and RVCS-Matanzas), Caitlyn Jackson (Village and Madrone) and Tayler Hockett (Sequoia and RVCS-Sequoia)

# Save the date!

**September 23<sup>rd</sup> 9:00-1:00** is our first annual PARENT UNIVERSITY. This event will bring families together from across the district for a day of parent networking, workshops and access to community resources.

If you are interested in getting more information or if you would like to volunteer to help with the event, please contact Cathy Myhers at [cmyhers@rvusd.org](mailto:cmyhers@rvusd.org).

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

### **May:**

31 Oak Park Community Forum

### **June:**

13 District Board Meeting

### **August:**

8 District Board Meeting

14 First Day of School

### **September**

4 Labor Day – NO School

12 District Board Meeting

23 Parent University

For full District Calendar information and a printable 2017-18 calendar, visit the District website at [www.rvusd.org](http://www.rvusd.org).

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*The Chalkboard* is the quarterly newsletter of the Rincon Valley Union School District.

Yen Ngo, editor, [yngo@rvusd.org](mailto:yngo@rvusd.org).

**Address corrections should be given directly to the individual schools.**

*If you have any comments or questions regarding any of our eight elementary schools, the Rincon Valley Charter school, or any district programs, please let us know. If you wish to receive a personal response, please include your telephone number and/or address.*

RINCON VALLEY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

1000 Yulupa Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95405

**Dr. Tony Roehrick, Superintendent**

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