

RISE & shine



2019-2020 Annual Report to the Community

LAGUNA BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

cabinet



**JASON
VILORIA, ED.D.**

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



**LEISA
WINSTON, ED.D.**

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT,
Human Resources & Instructional Services



**JEFF
DIXON**

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT,
Business Services

partnerships



ALLISON MOTHERWAY

President, SchoolPower

STEVE SAMUELIAN

President, SchoolPower Endowment

Laguna Beach Council



everychild.one voice.[®]

KELLY OSBORNE

President, Laguna Beach Council of PTAs

the sun always rises

■ JASON VILORIA, ED.D.,
Superintendent of Schools

When we look back on our lives, we often don't see the whole film but rather a burst of moments that have shaped our present. Undoubtedly, those memories are a potpourri of both good times and times that have tried our spirit because, in the end, those are the moments that shape us. It is undeniable that the 2019-2020 school year will join the ranks of the memories that we will deposit into the bank of our lives, including the challenges and opportunities to rise to the occasion that came with it.

For years, a guiding tenet of our work in Laguna Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) has been continuous improvement, along

el sol siempre sale

■ JASON VILORIA, ED.D.,
Superintendente de Escuelas

Cuando recordamos nuestras vidas, a menudo no vemos toda la película, sino más bien una explosión de momentos que han dado forma a nuestro presente. Sin duda, esos recuerdos son un popurrí de buenos tiempos y tiempos que han probado nuestro espíritu porque, al final, esos son los momentos que nos moldean. Es innegable que el año escolar 2019-2020 se unirá a las filas de recuerdos que depositaremos en el banco de nuestras vidas, incluidos los retos difíciles y las oportunidades de crecimiento que nos dio.

Durante años, un principio rector de nuestro trabajo en el Distrito Escolar Unificado de Laguna Beach (LBUSD) ha sido

with a focus on every student, every day, while leading through the lens of relationships. This school year tested that commitment. We were confronted with circumstances that were foreign and unknown to us, but we persevered together.

The Chilean author Isabel Allende wrote, "We all have an unsuspected reserve of strength inside that emerges when life puts us to the test." I was a witness to the emergence of this strength in our community, and I am immensely proud of what we accomplished collectively for the betterment of the children that are shaping our future.

In the fall, as we prepared for the opening of schools, I challenged our LBUSD family of teachers and staff to invest time in building relationships

el mejoramiento continuo, junto con un enfoque en cada estudiante, cada día, mientras nutrimos las relaciones interpersonales. Este año escolar probó ese compromiso. Nos enfrentamos a circunstancias ajenas y desconocidas para nosotros, pero perseveramos juntos.

La autora chilena Isabel Allende escribió: "Todos tenemos una reserva insospechada de fuerza en el interior que surge cuando la vida nos pone a prueba." Fui testigo del surgimiento de esta fortaleza en nuestra comunidad, y estoy inmensamente orgulloso de lo que hemos logrado colectivamente para mejorar a los niños que darán forma a nuestro futuro.

En el otoño, mientras nos preparábamos para la apertura de las escuelas, rete a nuestra familia de maestros y personal de LBUSD a invertir tiempo en establecer

with each other and the students we serve; relationships with personal connections that matter when all is said and done. In the spring, as we transitioned to distance learning, I saw the fruits of that labor. Those relationships were at the epicenter of our response to the complex challenges presented by COVID-19. It was those interpersonal connections that sustained our students and families as we navigated uncharted waters.

There are more unknowns than certainties for the future, and that can be daunting, but there is one thing I know for sure, the sun rises every morning, and as long as the sun rises, there is hope.

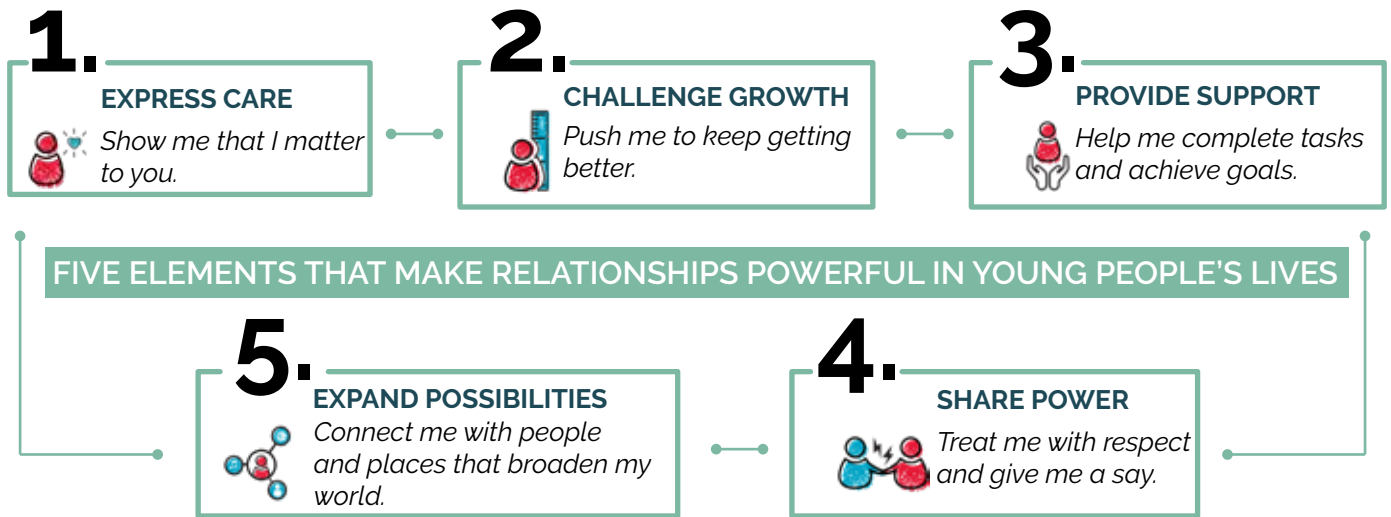


relaciones entre ellos y con los estudiantes a los que servimos; relaciones con conexiones personales que importan cuando todo está dicho y hecho. En la primavera, mientras hacíamos la transición al aprendizaje a distancia, vi los frutos de ese labor. Esas relaciones estaban en el epicentro de nuestra respuesta a los complejos desafíos presentados por COVID-19. Fueron esas conexiones interpersonales las que sostuvieron a nuestros estudiantes y familias mientras navegábamos por aguas desconocidas.

Hay más incógnitas que certezas para el futuro, y eso puede ser desalentador, pero hay una cosa que sé con certeza: el sol sale todas las mañanas, y mientras el sol salga, hay esperanza.

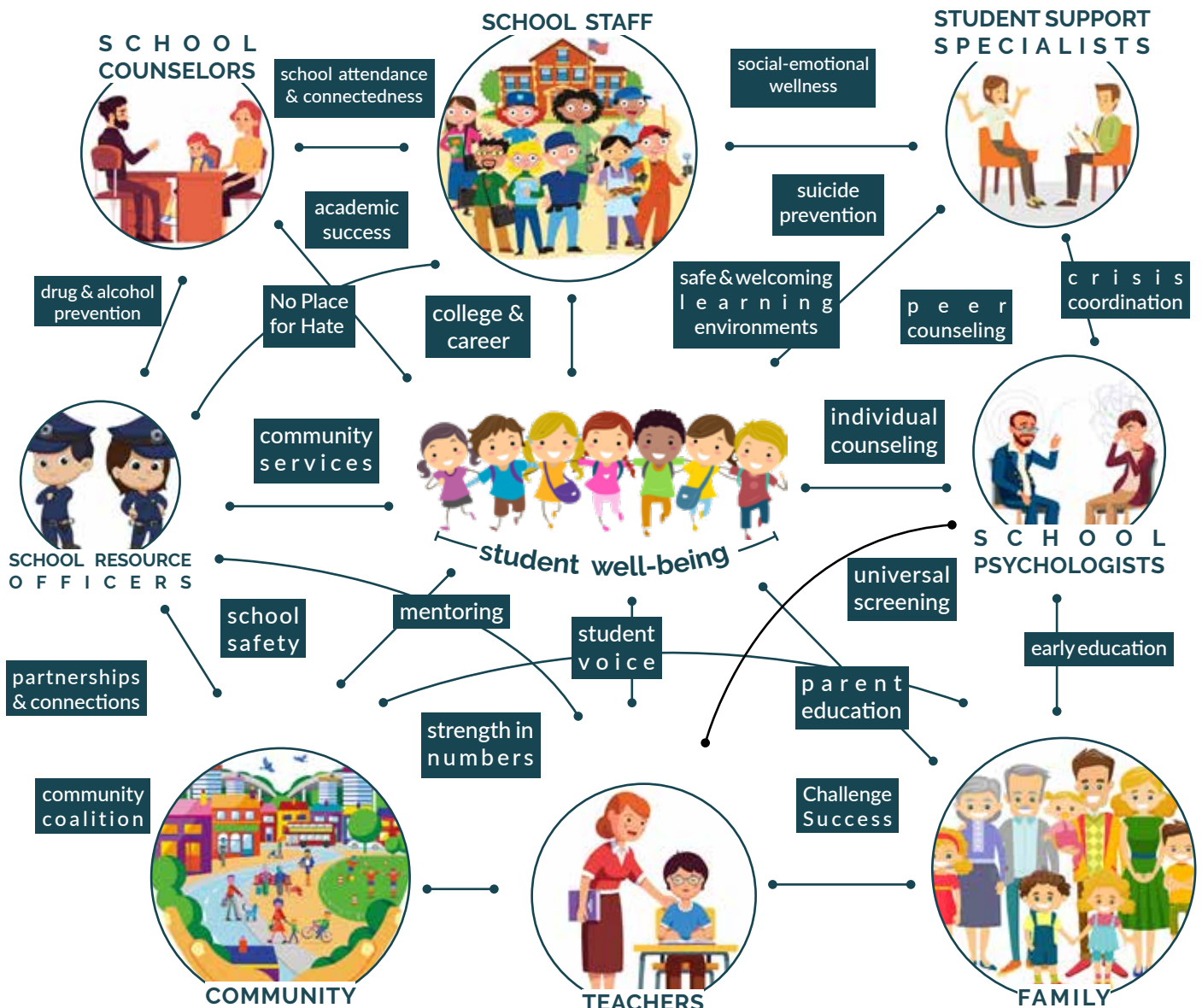
relationships matter

Putting adult-student relationships at the center of student well-being



FIVE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE RELATIONSHIPS POWERFUL IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

Social-emotional wellness is an essential condition for learning. For students to thrive in school and in life, all stakeholders work collaboratively to increase student social-emotional wellness and decrease distress.



separate but together

LBUSD's transition to distance learning in spring 2020

ZOOM ZOOM ZOOM



6,279

M E E T I N G S



122,116

M E E T I N G
P A R T I C I P A N T S



2.6M

M E E T I N G
M I N U T E S

GOOGLE



31,442

M E E T I N G S

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND COVID-19

In LBUSD, school psychologists, school counselors, and student support specialists collaborated with the department of special education to ensure vertical alignment in support services for students under the conditions of distance learning. Innovative technologies helped deliver the following services to support the social-emotional and academic wellness of students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic:

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT



1,012

H E L P T I C K E T S R E S O L V E D

- Specialized Academic Instruction
- Speech & Language Services
- Occupational Therapy (OT) Services
- Adapted Physical Education (APE) Services
- Physical Therapy Services
- Psychological Services, including Individual Counseling and Supervision Services
- Intensive Individual Instruction

1 : 1

D I S T R I C T

One-to-one refers to one device for every student.



CURBSIDE MEAL DISTRIBUTION



3,600+

M E A L S
S E R V E D

During distance learning, curbside meal distribution, which included breakfast and lunch, was offered to families Monday through Friday.

the other side of fear

■ ANGELA HARRIS, parent with students in the district

My name is Angela Harris, and we have three children in the school district, one daughter with autism at Thurston in the special education program and two younger children at El Morro. Our family moved to Laguna Beach in the summer of 2016 from the San Francisco bay area. It felt very scary to make such a big move, but the reoccurring theme then, and now, is choosing courage in the face of the unknown.



My husband and I were used to frequently moving because of our careers, but the one place we knew we'd establish roots was in Laguna Beach. I've never experienced such a smooth transition into a new town, let alone a new school for my children. Laguna seemed to shine a little brighter than other places, and it seemed like the people reflected the weather. I felt a culture of kindness, openness, and a general feeling of shared gratitude to live in this little slice of paradise.

The one thing that stood out to me the most about all of our teachers at El Morro was how present they were with my children. They genuinely love what they do, and as a parent, I couldn't feel more grateful to have my children at a place of learning where their teacher's passion exudes in their work. I remember stepping into a comfortable setting where new families could join the administration for coffee. It was so impressive to me that not only did the superintendent want to meet new families, but so did every principal from all the schools. There was an immediate sense that I was now apart of an approachable community that valued its relationships.

Since we've begun social distancing, we've all had to pivot from what our old norms were. I wish I could say the transition was easy for us as a family, but it was rocky. In our home, we try to have a balance of technology, and the new distance learning model required my children to be on devices for several hours a day. I saw my son's second-grade teacher jump onto a Zoom call with the class before they even had a curriculum in place, to connect with them, and read a book that belonged to her child. Eventually, we all got into the groove, and it became a smoother process. I have a whole new appreciation for our teachers, who have planned an engaging experience for the students during such an unprecedented time.

We've had days that went great, and others where the technical difficulties hindered the Zoom meetings. We've had a show and tell with a therapy bunny and a teacher that had to jump off calls because her child needed her. We've seen real-life through this process on both ends of the lens; hopefully, all allowing the grace and space to function within it.

I don't have all the answers for my children as we face this uncertain time, but what I do know is that I will forever cherish this special season that forced us all to slow down. Time is fleeting, and even though the history books may show the turmoil of 2020, I will remember it as a time that made our family tighter and stronger. My children all miss school more than they thought they would. When they do get to see their teachers and hug their friends, they will have a whole new appreciation for their school experiences.

Walking through the other side of fear is something we as a family do to get through things that seem difficult. We don't know what the other side of this experience will look like in the fall, but I hope with the support of our community and the LBUSD family, we can all choose courage and face it together.

al otro lado del miedo

■ ANGELA HARRIS, padre de familia con estudiantes en el distrito

Mi nombre es Angela Harris, y junto con mi esposo, tengo tres hijos en el distrito escolar. Una hija con autismo en Thurston en el programa de educación especial y dos niños más pequeños en El Morro. Nuestra familia se mudó a Laguna Beach en el verano de 2016 desde el área de la bahía de San Francisco. Sentí mucho miedo hacer un movimiento tan grande, pero el tema recurrente en ese momento y ahora, es elegir la valentía frente a lo desconocido.



Mi esposo y yo estábamos acostumbrados a mudarnos con frecuencia debido a nuestras carreras, pero el único lugar donde sabíamos que estableceríamos raíces era Laguna Beach. Nunca he experimentado una transición tan suave hacia una nueva ciudad, y mucho menos a una nueva escuela para mis hijos. Laguna parecía brillar un poco más que otros lugares, y parecía que la gente reflejaba el clima. Sentí una cultura de amabilidad, apertura y un sentimiento general de agradecimiento compartido por vivir en este pequeño pedazo de paraíso.

Lo que más me llamó la atención de todos nuestros maestros en

El Morro fue cuán presentes estaban con mis hijos. Realmente aman lo que hacen, y como madre, no podría sentirme más agradecida de tener a mis hijos en un lugar de aprendizaje donde la pasión de su maestra exuda en su trabajo. Recuerdo haber entrado en un entorno cómodo donde las nuevas familias podrían unirse a la administración para tomar un café. Fue tan impresionante para mí que el superintendente no solo quería conocer nuevas familias, sino también todos los directores de todas las escuelas. Hubo una sensación inmediata de que ahora era parte de una comunidad accesible que valoraba sus relaciones.

Desde que comenzamos el distanciamiento social, todos hemos tenido que basarnos en lo que eran nuestras viejas normas. Ojalá pudiera decir que la transición fue fácil para nosotros como familia, pero fue difícil. En nuestro hogar, tratamos de tener un equilibrio de tecnología, y el nuevo modelo de aprendizaje a distancia requería que mis hijos estuvieran en dispositivos durante varias horas al día. Vi a la maestra de segundo grado de mi hijo saltar a una llamada de Zoom con la clase antes de que tuvieran un plan de estudios, para conectarse con ellos y leer un libro que pertenecía a su hijo. Finalmente, todos entramos en una rutina, y se convirtió en un proceso más fluido. Tengo un aprecio completamente nuevo por nuestros maestros, quienes han planeado una experiencia atractiva para los estudiantes durante un tiempo tan sin precedentes. Hemos tenido días que fueron geniales y otros en los que las dificultades técnicas dificultaron



las reuniones de Zoom. Tuvimos un espectáculo con un conejito de terapia y una maestra que tuvo que saltar las llamadas porque su hijo la necesitaba. Hemos visto la vida real a través de este proceso en ambos extremos de la lente; con suerte, todo permitiendo que la gracia y el espacio funcionen dentro de él.

No tengo todas las respuestas para mis hijos al enfrentarnos a este momento incierto, pero lo que sí sé es que siempre apreciaré esta temporada especial que nos obligó a todos a reducir la velocidad. El tiempo es fugaz, y aunque los libros de historia pueden mostrar la agitación de 2020, lo recordaré como un momento que hizo a nuestra familia más fuerte y unida. Todos mis hijos extrañan la escuela más de lo que pensaban. Cuando puedan ver a sus maestros y abrazar a sus amigos, tendrán una nueva apreciación por sus experiencias escolares.

Atravesando el miedo es algo que nosotros como familia hacemos para superar las cosas que parecen difíciles. No sabemos cómo será el otro lado de esta experiencia en el otoño, pero espero que con el apoyo de nuestra comunidad y la familia LBUSD, todos podamos elegir ser valientes y enfrentarlo juntos.

be well, LBUSD

Employee wellness and professional development



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

To support the social-emotional well-being and health of LBUSD teachers and staff, the District provides access to short-term, professional counseling and referral services to help employees with personal and family issues and work/life balance.

Key services include:

- support and counseling
- legal services
- financial services
- child care referrals
- elder care referrals
- online resources



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

All LBUSD employees are eligible to participate in the Laguna Beach Unified School District Wellness Program, provided in partnership with Health Advocate. The program is designed to help employees take charge of their health and improve their well-being, while earning rewards by participating in healthy activities and district-wide challenges.

MINDFULLY NAVIGATING COVID-19

What is Mindfulness?

"Mindfulness is noticing your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations in the present moment without judgement in as many moments in your life as possible."

- Gina Biegel, MA, LMFT



During the period of distance learning, LBUSD offered bi-weekly professional development opportunities for all staff focused on mindfulness, managing stress, practicing peace during difficult times, cultivating gratitude and joy, and self-compassion. The sessions shared simple and effective mindfulness strategies to help staff create a mindful path towards self-care.



WELCOME BACK BREAKFAST

For more than 20 years, LBUSD has welcomed back teachers and staff with the annual Welcome Back Breakfast. The event gives teachers and staff an opportunity to focus on interpersonal relationships with colleagues before students return for the school year. "I think we can all agree that our work is not easy and it will never be easy but there's a reason we all keep coming back," said Dr. Vloria. "We come back because we know the

feeling of making a difference in the lives of our students. We discover their needs and support them so that they can excel, we challenge them and help them reach their potential. I know we will have a great year and I thank you in advance for your hard work and dedication to our students," he concluded. The breakfast also includes the introduction of new staff members, recognition of years of service, special recognition of employees of the year, and the presentation of the Spirit of LBUSD Award.

HOLIDAY HELLO



An annual tradition, the Holiday Open House brings together all LBUSD staff to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season and to announce the Classified Employees and Teacher of the Year.

silver lining

■ DAWN HUNNICUTT, LBHS English teacher

Although I am outgoing and wear my heart on my sleeve, I am fiercely protective of my family, and I guard their lives with my own; however, if I am to ask my students to be vulnerable in their writing, to shed fear and share their stories, I must be able to share my own.



My oldest child was a phenom at everything he attempted. A quick learner in all things--learning to ride a bike at three years old, reading at an 8th-grade level in first grade, making best friends with everyone in minutes--life could not come at him quickly enough. He soaked all of it in, and his every breath was one of exuberance. Taking that energy into school and athletics, his boundless enthusiasm, coupled with ability and intellect, catapulted him to all-star teams, spelling bees, trophies upon trophies, excessive friendships with every new "team," and days filled with too few hours to fit in all of his life. I knew, as a mother, that important lessons were not being learned: patience, resilience in the face of adversity, empathy, and try as we could as parents, it is difficult to impose hardship when it doesn't naturally occur. #hindsight.

When he went to college, when he

decided not to play sports, when social aspects didn't work out the way he'd planned, the world came crashing down. How do you make friends when you've never had to expend any effort before? How do you acquire "study skills" when you've always been able to "wing it" and ace the tests? How do you find happiness when it usually comes at you in full force? As parents 1,000 miles away, how do you help your child build those skills necessary to face adversity? Seemingly a silly problem considering what many of my students have experienced, the pain was real.

I was teaching at LBHS at this time, and as his peers were celebrating their college graduations, he was not. As his peers were moving onto the next phase, he was struggling mightily, and as a successful teacher, why had I apparently failed as a parent? Driving by his old baseball fields proved painful, and I would take another route. Passing by the old elementary school only made me despondent. There was a deep sense of sadness that the "plan" we had for our child was not the route he was taking. I realized we were on a different journey, and we had to mourn the loss of our dream, which was not the dream he was to eventually fulfill.

With love and patience, with surrender and hope, our son found his way. He graduated from Boise State in his own time, went onto Officer Candidate School for the Marines and graduated, moved onto The Basic School and

finished in a stellar manner, and is now a Field Artillery Officer for the USMC: 2nd Lieutenant. He is getting married in September to the love of his life, and they just bought their first home. He is happy, above all, and he chose the path right for him and eventually found his way. He learned everything we couldn't give him through the United States Marine Corps, and as parents, we are eternally grateful for that branch of service; he has finally found the meaning he was looking for in his life. He said to me once when he was eight: "I want to go through something hard!" Oh my goodness, OCS is not for the faint of heart.

The bright side of all of this is that moving through this difficult time has given me a greater empathy for my students because of my own experience. I am equally as devastated in a parent conference when I see a similar struggle, and I grieve with those parents who struggle to find hope and are looking for answers. And I come to that phone call, conference table, or zoom session with an empathy and understanding I couldn't have gained without years of grief and heartache...

...and I think I am a better teacher for it. Let's hope.



Escanee el código QR con la cámara de su teléfono inteligente para obtener el artículo en español.

an abundance of seeds

■ ANTHONY RAMIREZ, LBHS class of 2020

Growth is a result of an endless abundance of seeds—planted one-by-one. It is the fluorescence of fresh beginnings, shaped by the tumultuous storms that help feed it.

In August 2018, I thought I had outgrown my shell. I was ready to start my junior year fresh under a new sun. Little did I know, the weevils and thrips of cancer had colonized in my lungs. My hopes and aspirations were a pile of fertile soil, and on the day I got diagnosed with cancer, I received my first seed. When and where I decided to plant that seed was dependent on me. It was a war that I had to fight alone; ultimately, my mindset, my battle. And boy, did I fight.

In a world where you only get one shot at life, I took my opportunity and applied to my dream school, the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM). I was determined to achieve every goal on my list. When there wasn't a path fit for me to walk, I made my own. Recognition and awards began to blur as goals and dreams-come-true lit up each corner of my life. On the day I beat cancer, I blossomed into the person I am today. But to say my fight was over is wrong.

There was much more I still had to prove to myself, but most importantly, changing the narrative that cancer set forth for me. Not

only was I accepted to my dream school, but I also became the first person in my family ever to attend a private university. I made my dream a reality with the help of the College and Career Center in Laguna Beach High School. They helped me every step of the way and made sure I had all the right resources for a smooth transition into college. My senior year became filled with classes focused around art and fashion, reflecting the career I have chosen to study.



Coming from a family with economic disadvantages, the College and Career Center not only helped me with scholarships but also answered any questions I had when it came to Federal Financial Aid. As a wise man once said, “hard work pays off.” And indeed it has. My first year at FIDM will be completely free, and I am incredibly grateful to LBHS for supporting my hard work along the way. However, as I previously

mentioned, to say my fight is over is wrong.

Upon entering FIDM, I will major in fashion design for four years to obtain a bachelor's degree and, most importantly, a spot in the fashion industry. Fashion design is all about making others feel confident again. I want to transform the people that wear my designs into moving works of art-- a Van Gogh in a black-and-white world. I want to be innovative but, most importantly, changing the perspective on how we define beauty and art. To shine a light that the imperfect are perfect. Making a damaged society bloom into a community, pieced together by the hems and fabrics on the outfits, is something I would like to create.



Escanee el código QR con la cámara de su teléfono inteligente para obtener el artículo en español.

k- 12 college & career readiness

Preparing students in K-12 for all postsecondary options, without a preset trajectory



The pathway that a student chooses their senior year in high school

shouldn't be binding for the rest of their lives. Current data shows that, on average, people change career fields between five and ten times within their lifetime. That number has increased with every generation, and the time between changes is getting shorter and shorter.

In 2019-2020, LBUSD began the work of expanding college and career readiness beyond the last four years of public education and began strengthening the K-12 continuum focused on vertical collaboration between elementary, middle, and high school to increase student's exposure to career fields at a much younger age.

Young children are sponges that absorb everything they see and hear. When they are exposed to career fields at a younger age the field of view of what their future

might look like expands. It can become a spark that motivates them academically and a driving force that ignites a curiosity for learning. Research shows a strong correlation between social skills and behaviors and postsecondary success. LBUSD uses a whole-child approach to measure not only student achievement on standardized exams, but also student engagement, social behavior, and academic behaviors to provide comprehensive college and career readiness to all students in the Laguna Beach Unified School District. Successful programming takes a coordinated, community-wide approach that integrates families, local organizations, and employers in student development initiatives. In fall 2020, LBUSD hosted the first district-wide K-12 career fair, inviting all students and families to explore different career opportunities presented by college programs and industry experts.



For high school students that have not had that career exposure, Career Technical Education (CTE) becomes a critical opportunity to explore options. Today, CTE classes are a blend of academics and work-based learning experiences. Of the courses offered at LBHS, about 95 percent are A-G approved. This is critical because it means that a student now doesn't have to decide between career exploration and unit completion. For example, they can choose to take a course in graphic design and simultaneously fulfill their "F" requirement (one year of visual and performing arts). In the last ten years, CTE has transformed into a program that incorporates industry and curriculum standards with work-based learning (internships, job shadowing, industry certifications, etc.). CTE courses, along with Advanced Placement courses and electives, provide students with both breadth and depth in an academically enriching and challenging manner. In the process, they can identify strengths and rule potential careers out to ultimately set off on the trajectory that best fits their interests.

AUTHENTIC EXPLORATORY RESEARCH (AER)

Scan the QR code using your smartphone camera to learn more about AER at LBHS.



Understanding the significance of a driving force like curiosity, LBHS introduced Authentic Exploratory Research (AER) in September 2019. AER is a student self-directed project-based learning program that pairs interested high schoolers with experienced mentors in various fields of study to offer students real-world research experience. The role of the mentor is to provide students with professional expertise and guidance as they work through one of three study plans: a business challenge that results in the resolution of a real-world business issue, an action-based project that solves a real-world problem, or academic research that concludes with an oral defense.



continuous improvement

District Achievement Data



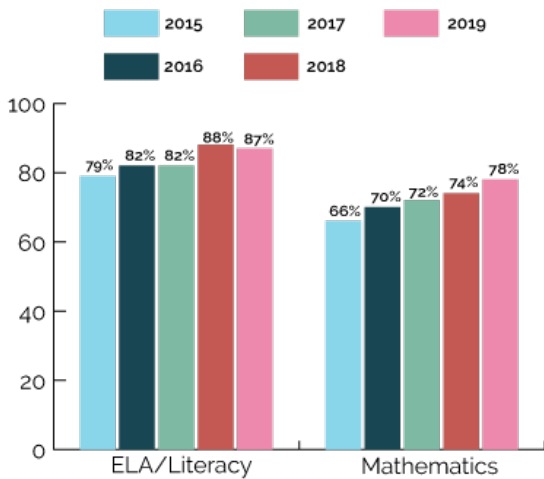
The **California School Dashboard** is an online tool that shows parents and communities how well schools and districts are meeting the needs of all students. It reports performance on both state and local measures that reflect

California's accountability system, which is based on the 8 priority areas of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). According to the Dashboard, in the Laguna Beach Unified School District:

- **73.5 percent of graduates were designated as prepared for college or a career** based on the state's College/Career Readiness Indicator. College or career readiness means completing rigorous coursework, passing challenging exams, or receiving a state seal. As LBUSD expands college and career readiness, the District has seen a shift in the data, including a 3.1 percent increase in readiness last year.

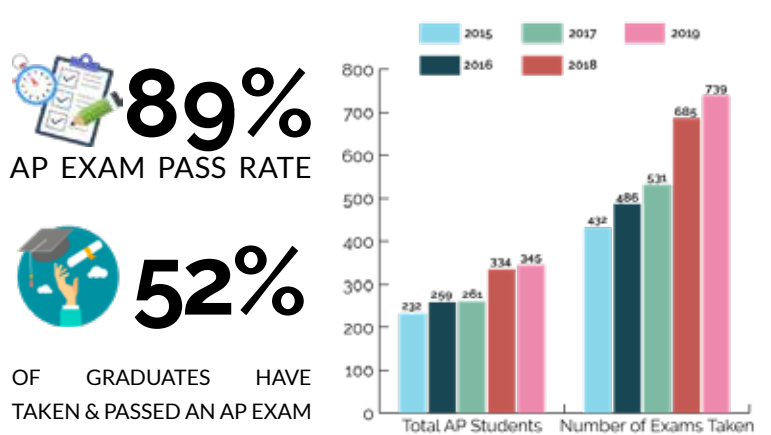
CAASPP SCORES

Overall proficiency (2015-2019)



ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

Number of students taking AP exams, 5-year growth (2015-2019)



99.7%
GRADUATION RATE

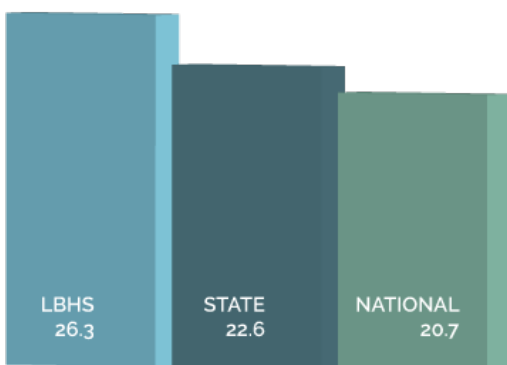
36%
OF GRADUATES RECEIVE A SEAL OF BILITERACY*
*Orange County (22%), CA (12%)

77.5%
OF GRADUATES MEET THE UC/CSUA-GREQUIREMENTS

96%
DAILY ATTENDANCE RATE

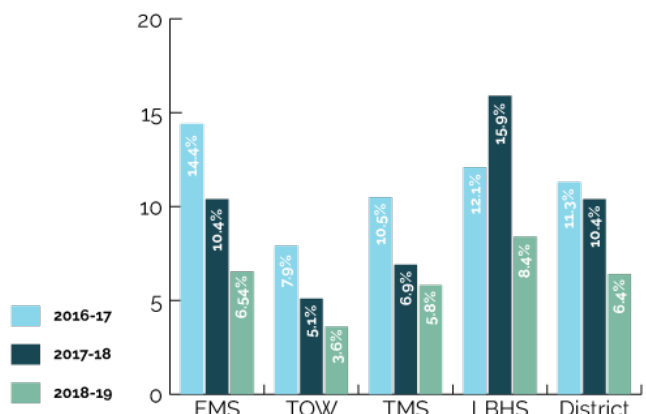
ACT

Composite Scores (2019)




CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Chronic absenteeism is described as missing 10 percent of the school year -- or about 18 days -- for any reason, excused or unexcused. Research indicates that this is the point at which absenteeism begins to affect student performance.



district finances

4 SCHOOLS   **2,788** STUDENTS ENROLLED

 **371** 173 CLASSIFIED
198 CERTIFICATED
E M P L O Y E E S

EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL

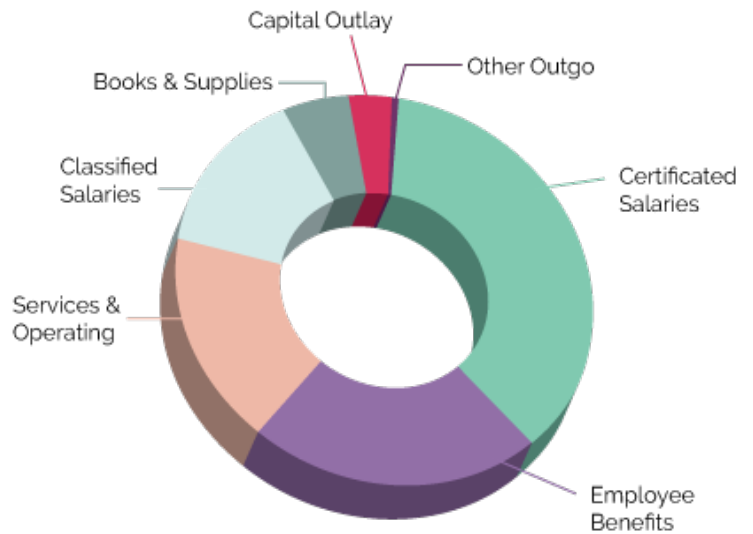
Per Second Interim Report (3/11/2020)

Instruction Related	\$15,497
Student Support Services	\$ 3,141
Administration	\$ 1,961
Facilities & Operations	\$ 2,283
Other	\$ 110

EXPENDITURES

Per Second Interim Report (3/11/20)

Certificated Salaries	\$23,463,699
Classified Salaries	\$ 9,318,456
Employee Benefits	\$14,515,429
Books & Supplies	\$ 3,388,877
Services & Operating	\$11,045,320
Capital Outlay	\$ 2,062,089
Other Outgo	\$ 308,050



2020 GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS

In May 2020, the board reviewed and adopted *Resolution 20-05: A Resolution of The Board of Education of The Laguna Beach Unified School District Authorizing The Issuance Of Laguna Beach Unified School District (Orange County, California) 2020 General Obligation Refunding Bonds*. The resolution authorized the issuance of general obligation (G.O.) refunding bonds to refinance existing G.O. bonds which were issued in 2010. The 2010 G.O. Bonds refinanced the then-outstanding G.O. bonds

authorized by voters in 2001. District staff will continue to work with the municipal advising team to potentially refinance existing 2010 G.O. Bonds. **The refinancing is intended to lower debt service payments which in turn lower property taxes that are collected annually by the County Treasurer-Tax Collector to pay for the G.O. bonds.** The term of the bonds will not be extended with the refinancing. Staff expects to sell the G.O. bonds through a competitive bidding process, however, the

resolution also authorized the sale through a negotiated process to an underwriter if determined to be more beneficial to lower the tax payments associated with the existing G.O. bond payments.

BOND CREDIT RATINGS

In investment, the bond credit rating represents the credit worthiness of corporate or government bonds. The AAA rating indicates that an obligor has **EXTREMELY STRONG** capacity to meet its financial commitments.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

The rigor of a government's financial management practices is an important factor in Standard & Poor's (S&P) Ratings Services analysis of that government's creditworthiness. Managerial decisions, policies, and practices apply directly to the government's financial position and operations, debt burden, and other key credit factors. In 2020, S&P revised its opinion of the district's financial management practices to strong from good under its Financial Management Assessment (FMA) methodology.



• S&P Global
• Moody's

taking chances

■ AMANDA VANDER VEEN, TMS school counselor

Ever since I was young, I knew I was going to be a teacher. It was these great mentors in my life growing up that always believed in me, encouraged me, and challenged me. They sparked a desire to want to make others around me know and feel their worth. I flew through middle school, high school, and college with my eye on the prize of one day having a classroom of my own with young minds and hearts to nourish and encourage. Never, at the time, did I imagine I would one day be working with middle school students. They were too scary and intimidating, too cool with big attitudes. I didn't feel old or wise enough to be able to guide them.

I was fresh out of my credential program when they finally called with my first offer for a substitute teaching experience. There was only one small problem; it was to cover an 8th-grade science class. Instant panic set in. "No way! I told them only elementary," I thought to myself. I was terrified but desperate to get some substituting experience finally. I accepted the job begrudgingly, not knowing it would be one of the best decisions I would ever make..... 8th-graders were AWESOME!! They understood my humor, were fun to talk and debate with and yet still silly and goofy enough to be themselves. I had found my calling. No wonder I never seemed to fit in with the elementary staff during student teaching, I was cut from a different cloth. It takes special people to be able to work with, and truly "get" middle school kids!

Not too much later, I started my dream job (or so I thought) as a middle school science teacher. It was a blast. The days were filled with experiments, labs, goofy dances, and songs to remember science facts, but as the years went by, there was just one thing

that kept getting to me. Some of my students needed more; science and my class weren't enough, no matter how fun I made it. I started becoming acutely aware of the many barriers my students faced as they transitioned from elementary to middle to high school. These barriers came in different forms and sizes from losing the motivation they once had, struggling with understanding who they were, and how they compared with peers, to no longer feeling important and like their life would never amount to anything.

I found myself struggling with how to help these students. I spent countless hours and tried numerous approaches each year to help students through these tough thoughts and experiences. After many trips to our middle school counselor's office and many attempts by him and others to steer me to the wonderful world of school counseling, I finally decided to attempt my Pupil Personnel Credential.

"Was I crazy? Why would I throw myself back into the college world again while juggling an overly full-time job (teachers, we all know how hard you work!)? What if I couldn't handle it? How would I possibly have the time and stamina to manage both? What if I failed?" There was no other way around it, I needed to provide more for my students, and my heart wouldn't let me settle for less or look the other way any longer.

As soon as I started my classes, I knew this was my arena. I couldn't learn enough about the mind and the techniques and skills that encourage and empower strengths and change. It transformed the way I taught in my classroom. It shaped the way that I saw my students, my colleagues, and

myself. It made my heart feel full, and like I was finally using my strengths in a way that allowed me to reach my full potential.

And now, here I am at Thurston Middle School as a school counselor, using every minute I can of my school days to let students know how amazing they are in their own and perfect way. Helping them find, focus on, and use their one-of-a-kind strengths to find success in any area of their life—finally, my true dream job.

I think back sometimes of the decisions that brought me here. Imagine if I had let the fear and barriers win, imagine if I didn't listen to all the voices that believed in me to help me believe in myself. It was not easy, and it was not always fun, but it was



worth it. So my message to you is not a new or profound truth, but rather a reminder that "fear, he is a liar," don't let fear stop you from believing in yourself. Listen to your heart and the words of the people who know you and "see" you, and you can accomplish more than you ever dreamed.

tomando la oportunidad

■ AMANDA VANDER VEEN,
consejera escolar, escuela
secundaria de Thurston

Desde que era joven, sabía que iba a ser maestra. Fueron estos grandes mentores de mi vida los que siempre creyeron en mí, me alentaron y me desafiaron. Desencadenaron el deseo de querer que otros a mi alrededor sepan y sientan su valor. Recorri la escuela secundaria, la preparatoria y la universidad con el ojo puesto en el premio de un día tener un sala de clase propia con mentes y corazones jóvenes para alimentar y alentar. Nunca, en ese momento, imaginé que algún día estaría trabajando con estudiantes de secundaria. Eran demasiado atemorizantes e intimidantes, demasiado geniales con grandes actitudes. No me sentía lo suficientemente madura o sabia para poder guiarlos.

Recién salí de mi programa de credenciales cuando finalmente me llamaron con mi primera oferta para una experiencia de enseñanza sustituta. Solo había un pequeño problema; era para cubrir una clase de ciencias de octavo grado. Pánico instantáneo. “¡De ninguna manera! Les dije solo elemental,” pensé para mí misma. Estaba aterrorizada pero desesperada por obtener una experiencia de sustitución finalmente. Acepté el trabajo a regañadientes, sin saber que sería una de las mejores decisiones que tomaría ... ¡Los alumnos de 8° grado fueron INCREÍBLES! Entendieron mi humor, fueron divertidos para hablar y debatir y, sin embargo, todavía eran lo suficientemente inocentes como para ser ellos mismos. Había encontrado mi vocación. No es de extrañar que nunca pareciera encajar con el personal de primaria durante mis estudios, me cortaron de una tela diferente. ¡Se necesita gente especial para poder trabajar y verdaderamente “consejar” a los niños de la escuela secundaria! No mucho después, comencé el trabajo de mis sueños (o eso pensaba) como maestra de ciencias de secundaria.

Era una maravilla. Los días estuvieron llenos de experimentos, laboratorios, bailes tontos y canciones para recordar hechos científicos, pero a medida que pasaban los años, solo había una cosa que me afectaba. Algunos de mis alumnos necesitaban más; la ciencia y mi clase no eran suficientes, no importaba cuán divertido lo hacía. Comencé a darme cuenta de las muchas barreras que enfrentaban mis alumnos al pasar de la escuela primaria a la secundaria. Estas barreras se presentaron en diferentes formas y tamaños, desde perder la motivación que alguna vez tuvieron, luchando por comprender quiénes eran y cómo se comparaban con sus compañeros, hasta dejar de sentirse importantes y que su vida nunca sería nada.

Me encontré luchando sobre cómo ayudar a estos estudiantes. Pasé innumerables horas y probé numerosos enfoques cada año para ayudar a los estudiantes a superar estos pensamientos y experiencias difíciles. Después de muchos viajes a la oficina del consejero de nuestra escuela secundaria y muchos intentos de él y de otros para guiarme al maravilloso mundo de la orientación escolar, finalmente decidí intentar mi Credencial de Personal de Alumno.

“¿Estaba loca? ¿Por qué volvería a lanzarme al mundo universitario mientras hago malabarismos con un trabajo a tiempo completo (profesores, todos sabemos lo duro que trabajas)? ¿Y si no pudiera manejarlo? ¿Cómo podría tener el tiempo y la resistencia para manejar ambos? ¿Y si fallara? No había otra forma de evitarlo, necesitaba proporcionar más para mis alumnos, y mi corazón no me dejaba conformarme con menos o mirar hacia otro lado por más tiempo.

Tan pronto como comencé mis clases, supe que esta era mi arena. No se saciaba mi deseo de aprender sobre



la mente y las técnicas y habilidades que fomentan y fortalecen las fortalezas y el cambio. Transformó la forma en que enseñaba en mi clase. Dio forma a la forma en que me veía a mis alumnos, mis colegas y a mí misma. Me hizo sentir el corazón lleno, y como si finalmente estuviera usando mis fortalezas de una manera que me permitiera alcanzar mi máximo potencial.

Y ahora, aquí estoy en Thurston Middle School como consejera escolar, usando cada minuto que puedo de mis días escolares para que los estudiantes sepan lo increíbles que son a su manera y de manera perfecta. Ayudándolos a encontrar, concentrarse y usar sus fortalezas únicas para encontrar el éxito en cualquier área de su vida, finalmente, el trabajo de mis sueños.

A veces pienso en las decisiones que me trajeron aquí. Imagínese si hubiera dejado ganar el miedo y las barreras, imagine si no hubiera escuchado todas las voces que creían en mí para ayudarme a creer en mí mismo. No fue fácil y no siempre fue divertido, pero valió la pena. Entonces, mi mensaje para usted no es una verdad nueva o profunda, sino más bien un recordatorio de que “el miedo es un mentiroso”, no permita que el miedo le impida creer en usted mismo. Escuche a su corazón y las palabras de las personas que lo conocen y lo “ven”, y puede lograr más de lo que jamás haya soñado.

VISION

WE TAKE OWNERSHIP OF EACH CHILD'S LEARNING IN OUR SCHOOLS, ACCEPTING NO LIMITS ON POTENTIAL.

MISSION

EACH STUDENT GAINS THE KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE, WORLD PERSPECTIVES, AND SKILLS NEEDED TO BECOME A LIFELONG LEARNER AND PRODUCER IN A COMPETITIVE AND INTERCONNECTED WORLD.

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS



Chris Duddy
El Morro Elementary



Julie Hatchel, Ed.D.
Top of the World Elementary



Jenny Salberg
Thurston Middle School



Jason Allemann, Ed.D.
Laguna Beach High School



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