

NEWS UPDATE
September 9, 2019

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September CUCPTSA News Update

Celebrating Opening Day of School

Nearly 47,000 Capistrano Unified students were welcomed by teachers, staff, families, and community stakeholders as they returned to their classrooms on August 20 to begin the 2019-20 school year.

Capistrano Unified is once again, the top-achieving, large school district in California. This year, the district will continue to make investments in the academic, social, and emotional health of *all* students by launching Full Day Kindergarten, growing college and career pathways, and hosting a series of events to support parents on critical issues such as social media use, mental health, and suicide.

We are excited for the school year and are grateful for the opportunity to educate young people in our district.

Visit CUSDInsider.org to see all of the exciting activities that took place at schools across our District on opening day!

All Day Kindergarten Update

All Day Kindergarten opened without a hitch at every school site on August 20. This is a huge celebration for our District. Our enrollment numbers for kindergarten have increased Districtwide, which means our lower enrollment will be less than we thought.

CUSD Kicks Off New School Year by Welcoming Over 60 New Certificated Employees

Over 60 new certificated employees, including teachers, speech language pathologists, counselors, and nurses gathered at the District Office on August 14 for their annual orientation.

Superintendent Vital, Executive Cabinet members, Board of Trustees, district principals, and Capistrano Unified Education Association (CUEA) Executive Board greeted the new team members as they enjoyed breakfast provided by CUEA, followed by a variety of informative sessions to assist with beginning the school year.

Photos from the event are available on CUSDInsider.org.

Update on the Proposed Western and Southern SFID Facilities Needs

At the Board of Trustee meeting on July 27, 2019, the Board approved the adoption of a resolution declaring its intention to form a School Facilities Improvement District (SFID) in the southern region (San Clemente area, including Palisades Elementary School) and the western region (Dana Point, Laguna Niguel, and Aliso Viejo area). Visit our website [here](#) for additional information including fact sheets, FAQs and survey mailers that were sent to residents within each SFID boundary.

Board of Trustee Vacancy

Trustee Gary Pritchard resigned from the Board. At the August 14 special board meeting, the Board voted to make a provisional appointment to fill the Trustee vacancy in Trustee Area 5. Board members chose to make an appointment to save the District the estimated \$185,000 cost of a special election. Residents of Trustee Area 5 (which covers portions of Aliso Viejo and Laguna Niguel) who are registered to vote and have no disqualifying criminal record are eligible to apply. The application period closed on August 28. District staff will review the applications to make sure applicants meet the minimum legal qualifications. Board members will interview the applicants and may make a provisional appointment at the Special Board meeting scheduled for Monday, September 9, 2019. The agenda is available online [here](#). If the Board does not identify a suitable candidate, the Board may elect to order a special election to be held in March 2020. Whether appointed or elected, the individual will serve out the remainder of the term, which ends in November 2020.

Summer Construction Update

Maintenance & Operations and Facilities staff worked all summer on a modernization at Ambuehl Elementary School, new HVAC at Palisades Elementary School, Field replacement at Capistrano Valley High School, and a kitchen modernization at Dana Hills High School, and our continuing work on solar. Installation at all of our high schools will be complete soon, and construction began here at the District Office last week. Many of these projects are funded out of our deferred maintenance budget. The modernization at Ambuehl and the new HVAC at Palisades was funded through CFD dollars – from the communities of Whispering Hills and Pacifica San Juan. Solar is financed through federal renewable energy bonds – and the project could bring a savings of over \$57 million dollars over its 25-year lifespan. Our incredible high school students initiated this project with our board and staff and it will positively benefit our environment and our budget for years to come!

CUSD Insider Announcement

It's easy to see the outside of our school buildings...

Now, you can experience what's happening inside: www.cusdinsider.org

CUSD is pleased to announce [CUSD Insider](#). A new way to keep up with all the amazing things happening inside our classrooms. The online newspaper is designed to educate and inform the community, while highlighting accomplishments and successes of our students, teachers, and staff.

Webinars for Families

The District recently hosted two interactive webinars to get to know Capistrano Unified schools. Both webinar recordings are available on our website [here](#). Nearly 300 attendees RSVPd for each webinar. Input received from parents was positive, and we plan to host additional webinars in the future.

An elementary school webinar was held Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2019, featuring Dr. Susan Holliday, Associate Superintendent of Education Services; Dr. Greg Merwin, Associate Superintendent of Student Support Services; and Brad Shearer, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Preschool-Grade 5. The conversation included an overview of programs and improvements to elementary campuses; information about full-day kindergarten, STEAM/STEM programs, #CapoForward schools, innovation labs, Next Generation Science Standards, technology, and more.

The middle and high school webinar was held Friday, Aug. 9, 2019, and featured Dr. Holliday, Dr. Merwin, and Joshua Hill, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Grades 6-12, K-8, Alternative Education. The topics of discussion included an overview of programs and improvements to middle and high school campuses, health education, high school academies, and college and career advantage pathways; social-emotional, behavior, and academic support; a Hoag Hospital partnership supporting parents and students, how to navigate the college and career track, solar energy, and more.

CUSD Family Series

The District has partnered with Hoag to provide a speaker series that will support parents on critical issues such as social media use, mental health, and suicide. The first event is scheduled for September 11, 2019 and will include topics such as gaming, social media and mental wellness. Dr. Sina Safahieh, child adolescent psychiatrist will be the featured speaker for the evening. A panel of teen mental health experts from ASPIRE at Hoag will also be present to answer questions. Additional speaker series will be hosted on November 13, February 26, and April 22 of the 2019-20 school year from 6-8 p.m. A Save the Date was sent to families via SchoolMessenger and RSVPs are now full - [Join the wait list here](#).

CapoTalk Newsletter and Social Media

There are a number of ways to stay connected with CUSD through our monthly newsletter and social media to ensure you receive the latest news and important information. Sign up for the CapoTalk monthly newsletter here. Like CUSD on [Facebook](#). Follow CUSD on [Twitter](#). Follow CUSD on [Instagram](#).

Upcoming Events

- Special Board Meeting: September 9, 2019
- CUSD Family Series Event: September 11, 2019 at 6 p.m. at Capistrano Valley High School
- Regular Board Meeting: September 18, 2019
- CUSD College Fair: October 7, 2019 from 6-8:30 p.m. at Capistrano Valley High School

Upcoming Board Meetings

All Board meeting agendas [can be found here](#)

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