



Members of the Board

Beth Albiani
Nancy Chaires Espinoza
Carmine S. Forcina
Chet Madison, Sr.
Dr. Crystal Martinez-Alire
Anthony "Tony" Perez
Bobbie Singh-Allen

Christopher R. Hoffman
Superintendent

(916) 686-7700
FAX: (916) 686-7787
EMAIL: suptoffice@egusd.net

Robert L. Trigg Education Center
9510 Elk Grove-Florin Road, Elk Grove, CA 95624

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Dear Elk Grove Unified Parents and Families,

Welcome back to school! This new academic year promises great adventure and opportunity for our young explorers, avid readers, scholar-athletes, aspiring artists, critical thinkers and culturally and socially active students. Thanks to your dedication, care and attention to supporting your child's educational path, we know how much you value learning as a lifelong endeavor. Together, we can make Elk Grove Unified a model district and I look forward to doing just that by continuing our collaboration, communication and connection. At the risk of being lengthy, there are some important updates that I would like to share with you at the start of the year. I would like to provide you with a brief update on our facilities, staffing and capacity building, professional learning and school climate and culture.

On the facilities front, be sure to follow our [Measure M page](#) to see the progress we've made with several school maintenance and modernization projects. An exciting step forward we are taking toward the future of learning has to do with our District's educational specifications which are the basis of structural design and how our architects plan to strategically create transformative and successful educational environments for our students today and tomorrow. Plans include strategically looking at our educational environments to determine how we can better equip and design our schools and classrooms to support effective teaching and learning, provide safe real-world learning environments and inspire children to think critically, communicate and collaborate. I am also extremely excited to share that on Wednesday, August 8th, the Board of Education gave District leaders the "green light" for a multifaceted financing plan that will allow us to begin construction this coming spring at the new Franklin Elementary School site despite the absence of critical State funding. Thanks to our Board, we also hope to realize some of the new design ideas for this new facility.

In preparation for the new school year and to replenish our teaching and leadership ranks following a high number of retirements, our human resources team worked closely with our schools, transportation services and student support and health services to secure the best, brightest and diverse candidates for hard to fill positions. Despite many efforts to attract more bus drivers and school nurses, those positions remain hard to fill. Therefore, our transportation services department will continue to offer paid bus driver training, and for our school nurses, there is a newly agreed upon salary schedule posted that features more competitive pay for speech language pathologists and school nurses. Other programs designed to fill teacher shortages in specialty areas were recently featured in the news whereby, the District secured a grant to create a unique credentialing program for classified staff to become credentialed as classroom teachers. Similarly, District leaders, in support of the importance of foreign languages, secured funding for a separate cadre of bilingual teachers to participate in another unique District program to obtain a dual language teaching credential.

Without a doubt, our teachers and District staff remain motivated and ever interested in ongoing professional learning and development and they ascribe to one of my core educational beliefs that "the only way I know how to improve our students' performance is if we, the adults, get better at what we do." And we're doing just that. Furthermore, during July and starting this week, hundreds of elementary and secondary teachers and staff will have participated in hours of professional development and learning with a specific focus on improving the outcomes of our students by bettering teaching practices and by learning to put what I refer to as, "Mindset Before Process." In both cases, my expectations are clear that core to teaching and learning is an ability to see the humanity in every person and to be alive to the hopes, dreams and challenges of every individual.

In the area of school climate and culture, as educational leaders, we are responsible for creating welcoming, safe and healthy school climates and lasting culture. With an expectation of continuous improvement and putting mindset before process, our District can achieve our desired results for high academic performance, sustainable and thriving school climates and culture. We have also improved our organizational structure to better support our schools through dynamic leadership. This new structure will work across a spectrum of educational needs to realize our District's strategic goals and one of those needs has to do with establishing equitable disciplinary practices that are fair and consistent. In a continuing effort, District leaders have been focused on reviewing current disciplinary policies for the purposes of moving away from exclusionary practices and instead toward alternative measures, restorative justice and clearer lines of jurisdiction between school related matters and penal code violations. Instead of zero tolerance, we desire to teach acceptance, inclusion and tolerance and extend student learning during teachable moments toward character building and how to become a self-reliant, self-aware and self-disciplined young adult with integrity.

In closing, please know that we remain committed to providing you with safe and stimulating learning environments for your child and to preparing every child, in every classroom, in every subject, every day to be college, career and life ready upon graduation. Upcoming events to look forward to are the many college and career fairs as well as our annual Map Your Future event. You can find more information about these events by visiting the homepage of the District's website: www.egusd.net.

Lastly, please keep in mind and share with other new parents that regular school attendance is one of the top predictors of student success. When students are at school, our job is to keep them engaged, connected and learning. Let's work together to help get them there ready, willing and curious.

Thank you for choosing the Elk Grove Unified School District for your child's educational needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHR' followed by a stylized flourish.

Christopher R. Hoffman
Superintendent
Elk Grove Unified School District