MAKE THE GRADE 2019
YOUR LOCAL GUIDE FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR

- NEW TEACHER profiles
- CURRICULUM updates
- BUILDING additions
Children Nutrition Services 2019-2020

Our online application is available to apply for free or reduced priced breakfast and lunch for your students through the internet. We ask that every Sierra Sands family complete this application whether or not you participate in the breakfast or lunch program. Please complete only one application per family no matter how many children and different school sites they attend. Computers are available at the school sites for those families that would like to use a computer at school; however anyone who has access to the internet can apply right from your home. A paper application is also available at your school site but the preferred method is the online application. Parents may complete the online application for 2019-20 school year as early as July 1, 2019. Simply visit: family.titank12.com to begin the application process.

While at family.titank12.com, create an account to manage your students account throughout the year. Click on “sign up today!” to begin the process. The web site is user friendly and has a high level of security so your information is safe. Applications submitted with an email address will receive benefit information within 10 days.

New this year is your interactive menu. Go to ssusdcafe.com to see the menu with the nutritional values. Visit the play store to download the mobile App at web menus for school nutrition.

If you have any questions, or need assistance with your application, please contact the Child Nutrition Services office at 760-499-1880 x2, Sue LeBlanc or your school site.
Sierra Sands School District 2019-2020 Bus Route Schedule

Attention All Parents of Students Riding the Bus for the 2019-20 School Year

1. The attached posted times are the estimated pick up and drop times. Adjustment to route times may be made as needed and drivers will notify students of impending changes. Inactive bus stops may be reinstated as needed. Please feel free to call the Transportation Office at 760-499-1874 if you have any questions.

2. If we experience delays, we will be using ParentSquare to notify you. Please make sure the school site has your correct phone/cell phone/email address for proper notification. This means your student must ride the designated route in order for you to receive notification.

3. LATE START WEDNESDAYS: All route times listed will be delayed by thirty (30) minutes on late start Wednesdays. For example: If your normal pick up time is 6:30 AM, your late start Wednesday pick up time will be 7:00 AM. All routes will be delayed by 30 minutes.

4. All students must have their bus pass and be ready to show it to the bus driver by September 10, 2019. Passes will be needed for AM and PM pick up.

5. Every Wednesday is late start, morning buses will arrive 30 minutes later than the stop please contact the Transportation Department at 760-499-1874.

View or download the PDF of the bus route schedules on our district website www.ssusd.org or our Facebook page.

If you do not see a stop near you, please contact the Transportation Office at 760-499-1874.

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Every Wednesday is late start, morning buses will arrive 30 minutes later than the scheduled time. Except: November 20 and December 18, 2019.
March 11 and April 24, 2020 no late start Wednesdays in May.
Help kids create good study habits

BY MELISSA ERICKSON
More Content Now

Encouraging good study skills when children are young is an effective way for parents to help support their kids’ future academic success.

It’s crucial for parents to help students move beyond simply memorizing facts from their homework to really engaging with the material, said Dr. David Timony, an educational psychologist and chair of Delaware Valley University’s Department of Education.

“Children naturally practice, rehearse and study to develop their skills and interests. They understand that improvement requires work and it’s important that we recognize that and tap into that focus and motivation,” he said.

Young children may not be developmentally ready to see these relationships, but parents can help them connect the dots.

“Look for improvement, point it out and celebrate growth,” Timony said.

Have a conversation

Part of the conversation needs to be to frame take-home work and study skills in a positive light rather than suggesting that homework is a hassle.

“Just like their parents, children always have something they would rather be doing, and interrupting them to do something else may be met with resistance. Helping parents and children to see the functional value in homework is an important factor in motivation,” Timony said.

Model the behavior

“Homework is simply one type of practice that we engage in as students,” he said. “If you think about it, we do all sorts of activities that require practice to improve our skills. Connecting our practice in life to the practice of improving our academic skills is one that kids will understand if it is explained through patience and demonstration rather than through telling, rule-making and punishments or threats.”

Offer support

A parent has many ways to be supportive to the process of completing homework.

“For younger children, it may be something simple like proximity — sitting down together while the child works,” Timony said. “They can pause every so often for a quick chat, encouragement or snack. It’s not necessarily one-on-one time, but that shared parallel experience may serve to support the activity.”

Don’t be dismissive

While parents should obviously not do their child’s homework, there are other things to avoid.

“Don’t allow homework to be the wedge in your lives and your relationships,” Timony said. “Parents should avoid getting in between the teacher and the student. You don’t want to be dismissive about the assignments or the teachers or show your frustration. This doesn’t advance the conversation and creates conflict that kids are not prepared to mediate.”

Be organized but flexible

Structure and organization can be helpful as long as it’s flexible. Be sure to include the child in developing a plan of action.

“One often, parents impose a structure that does not work for the child. For example, a parent may demand the child sit at the kitchen table to do their studying but the child may prefer to sit on a comfy chair or even lay on the floor to do their studying,’’ Timony said. “Giving children choices increases their engagement and improves outcomes. That’s not to say that they will always have the best ideas, but our kids deserve a conversation rather than an edict. Let’s explore together what works best.”

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Tips to be your student’s advocate

BY MELISSA ERICKSON
More Content Now

Engaged in education research and program evaluations for 35 years, Nancy Brigham knows that not all children are treated equally in the public education system.

“Poor, minority, students with disabilities and non-English-speaking students are shortchanged by schools. These students don’t have the same experiences as more affluent kids do,” said Brigham, author of “A Fragile Enterprise,” which addresses pitfalls she’s seen in the U.S. educational system and highlights devoted people who are making a difference in students’ lives.

Educators and administrators have knowledge and experience, but parents may feel like beginners when it comes to understanding what a child’s rights are, Brigham said.

“It’s easy for parents to feel intimidated. Schools are a bureaucracy,” she said.

Some tips to help parents advocate for their children:

Save all paperwork

Children with special needs will usually have an individualized education program, or IEP, which is a strategy for how the school will serve and meet a child’s unique needs, Brigham said. IEP meetings can be overwhelming, but being organized can help lessen anxiety and increase a parent’s role as an advocate.

“Save all your paperwork. Take notes. Build a file,” she said. During IEP meetings someone on the school staff should be taking notes; request those notes, Brigham said. Be sure to keep everything that is pertinent to the education and well-being of your child.

“Paper is out. Instead, urge the school to deliver paperwork digitally,” she said.

Find a partner

Families who seek help often feel like there is a divide with parents on one side and the school on the other, Brigham said. Try to close the gap by finding a partner.

“Families have to build a relationship with the school. More than that they have to find a partner within the school who they can talk to and trust,” Brigham said. That person could be a teacher or administrator; someone whom you feel comfortable talking with and emailing directly.

Ask questions

During meetings with teachers or other staff make sure your voice is heard.

“You should feel comfortable asking questions. At the end ask what the next step will be,” Brigham said.

Be sure to get direct email addresses for the people you want to contact.

“General school (inboxes) may get 500 emails a day. If you send an email there, forget it. You may never get a response,” Brigham said.

Meet with teachers

Parents need to be open-minded and understand that schools are strained financially and that teachers are often dealing with many children who need special help. Make appointments with individual teachers to discuss your child’s IEP, their strengths and weaknesses.
Does your child need a little extra time and attention? Do you want to enhance their artistic nature?

PUBLIC EDUCATION / PARENT DRIVEN

NOW ENROLLING

GRADES: TK-6
Sierra Sands faces changes and challenges

BY JACK BARNWELL
Community Editor
jbarnwell@ridgecrestca.com

Sierra Sands Unified School District will start its school year off with a lot of new changes — a new superintendent and assistant superintendent of human resources, new leadership at Burroughs High School, Murray Middle School and James Monroe Middle School, and a host of challenges.

It will also face changes the district continues its recovery effort from the July 4 and July 5 Searles Valley earthquakes that rattled the area and caused significant damage to dozens of structures in Ridgecrest, Trona and aboard China Lake.

Richmond Elementary aboard the naval base has been closed and its operations transferred to Vieweg School on Rowe Street, while the Adult School and night school options at that site will be relocated to Mesquite High School.

The curriculum office will be relocated to the Sierra Vista Shopping Center, which the district owns and already has its copy center located there.

Murray Middle School will absorb additional students from Ridgecrest Charter School, which has closed and re-opened as Ridgecrest Elementary

Students who last year who previously would have come through the entrance to Richmond Elementary School will now see this sight each morning, as earthquake damage prompted Richmond’s closure with that school’s operations moved to the Vieweg Elementary School campus. Vieweg was closed in 1999, and in recent years had held adult education classes and night school.
Academy of Language, Music and Science, which covers kindergarten through sixth grade.

But Dave Ostash, the new superintendent, said the district has already overcome the first hurdles post-earthquake and will rise to the occasion of meeting future challenges as it continues to serve its roughly 5,000 students.

“The modernization efforts at Burroughs High School and the new Murray Middle School fared extremely well during the earthquakes,” Ostash said. “Murray was an almost non-impact, and with Burroughs there were some more isolated concerns. We are looking closely at the Performing Arts Center to make sure our repair efforts are complete there.”

Other school sites sustained varying degrees of damage. With Richmond, which is already at the end of its service life, the damage reached a level that the school site was closed down even as the district starts the first stage of finding a new campus site.

Gateway Elementary School also sustained water damage after its multipurpose room fire suppression system was set off in the magnitude 7.1 earthquake on July 5, damaging instructional materials stored there.

“All of our efforts right now are being channeled into making sure our schools are ready and safe to be all systems ready,” Ostash said. “It’s a whole new reality. It means that there will be some things put on hold, but not pushed aside. We are growth-minded district, and we want to make sure that our schools and offices are made better as we go.”

Various shade structures at the other elementary schools will also have to be repaired or removed.

“Our recovery efforts at other sites aren’t really difficult,” Ostash said. “It’s just the Richmond situation is the most difficult.”

Ostash said that the district will repair and keep its garage, transportation department and central warehouse on base.

The district’s buildings aren’t the only thing to be shaken up over the summer. Some personnel will take on new roles this school year.

“Three of our secondary schools have new leadership, but they are all experienced leaders, and it’s good that we have the in-house talent to promote from,” Ostash said.

Chiefly, Murray Middle School will receive Cody Pearce as its new principal after moving on from BHS as an assistant principal. Carrie Cope assumes the mantle of principal at Burroughs, a step up from co-assistant principal, taking over from Bryan Auld, who was appointed as the new assistant superintendent of human resources.

John Cosner takes over James Monroe Middle School from Bev Ewbank. Cosner served a year as principal at Pierce Elementary; before that he was assistant principal at Murray Middle School under the now-retired Kirsti Smith.

Ostash replaces Ernie Bell, who retired at the end of June following a 35-year career as teacher, principal and superintendent at Sierra Sands.

Growth

Overall, the district has grown over the past two years, reaching a student enrollment of just over 5,000 students districtwide. At the same time, Rand Elementary in Johannesburg was closed down following the 2017-2018 school year-end because enrollment had decreased to a projected three students.

Students and the school’s only teacher were re-located to other sites in the district.

The district is also evaluating a new location for Richmond Elementary, which qualified for grant funding under the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment and will be evaluating three sites.

According to Ostash, the grant will eventually cover 80 percent of construction costs, with the rest coming from a local match. The eventual campus will relocate the last school site within the China Lake fence line to outside the boundaries.

As the school year approaches, Ostash said that the district will be deepening the curriculum it has in place and providing its teachers and educators with professional development.

“We are heavily involved in a program/partnership with the UCLA Curtis Center to bolster mathematics,” Ostash said.

Mathematics has in the past been seen as an area of concern for Sierra Sands students. According to past board of education agenda staff reports, in 2018 students in grades 3-8 and 11 were on average 45.8 points below meeting the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress English standards. CAASP is the state’s current standard of testing.

The Curtis center partnership helps Sierra Sands address mathematics readiness and achievement for its students.

“There is also a premier education company we partnered with to provide professional development to teachers,” Ostash said.

In addition to that, the district is also providing an in-house credential cohort in partnership with Braymond University.

“Some of the coursework will be taught in district facilities and some of it is online,” Ostash said. “It provides convenience so people who don’t travel.”

The cohort program allows for Ridgecrest residents wanting to pursue a teaching career to earn their teaching credentials.

“There are so many requirements to get a teaching credential, that if they don’t have everything in place to get it yet, they have that option here locally,” Ostash said. “That is a huge relief both on the time and financial burden of having to travel hundreds of miles.”

He said several SSUSD and community members benefited from a similar cohort for administration three years ago through Cal Lutheran University.
He said among those who graduated from the administrative are Miriam Hogg, the new chief executive officer of REALMS, the successor to Ridgecrest Charter School, as well as Kevin Wythe, the district’s new student services coordinator, Chris Ostermann at Burroughs High School.

“Any time you can partner with an accredited school that provides the program you need here on site, it provides a tremendous benefit to growing and maintaining your own teachers and administrators from within,” Ostash said.

He noted it can be difficult recruiting new teachers, specialists and staff in rural school districts such as Sierra Sands.

“Often the way we hire new staff is that the base is a much larger employer and so people may have a significant other who has a teacher’s credential or interest in completing one,” Ostash said.

Specialists such as school psychologists and speech therapists/pathologists can be even harder to recruit, given the level of demand and supply.

He noted those positions require advanced education and specialized credentialing from California’s Department of Education.

“Keep in mind that if you have a Ph.D. in psychology, that does not qualify you to be a school psychologist,” Ostash said. “You have to have a proper school credential.”

He noted that California’s public school system is regulated in such a way that each level, from teacher to administration, have unique requirements.

Public education a great equalizer

Ostash maintains his belief the public schools are a great equalizer in the U.S., and California in particular.

“When one can get an education, then it provides some of those societal tools that get you access to opportunities that many people might not otherwise have: various careers and professions, various ways of contributing to society,” he said. “To me, it’s not about how much money you make or how much prestige any one job has. What is important to me is how every individual in our country gains the freedom and opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to society.”

He added that “anyone who is not already in the middle class can get into the middle class through education.”

He added California education also has what he considers an amazing three-tiered system.

“Not only does it have a funded transitional kindergarten through 12th grade free education, but it also has a community college system, the University of California and California State University systems,” he said. “Anyone can find their fit. I, for example, am a product of California public education: I went to a public school district in Glendale, then a local community college and then to UCLA.”

Ostash said he knew he wanted to attend UCLA from an early age, but its cost and the competition to get in as a freshmen were barriers. His solution: attend Glendale Community College and then transfer to upper-division courses at UCLA.

“I don’t think every state offers that opportunity,” he said.

Ostash also noted that Burroughs High School stands out among high schools in the state in the enrichment programs it offers students above and beyond the traditional state-mandated curriculum.

“We have an auto shop, criminal justice, restaurant careers, a metal, and a woodshop,” Ostash said. “We recently surveyed parents and it was overwhelmingly stronger for maintenance or growth and improvement of career technical education than academic. Obviously, everyone values academic programs, but the parental survey data indicates if the district could do more, it would be more in career technical education.”

He noted Sierra Sands’ goal is to serve the community to the best of its ability program wise.

“To make our community more sustainable, the more people who come up through a system and then become professionals or base workers or in our local establishments, the better,” he said. “We are also competing with other communities and entities and we want to make sure our students can compete nationally so they can get into the university or job or preferred field they want to.”

He noted the partnership with the base, including Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, has proven an advantage. NAWCWD has in the past hosted two science conferences for middle schools each year at McLean Laboratory, or host career days at Burroughs High School.

“We have our engineering building at Burroughs that has a tremendous quality of the equipment that has been purchased locally, regionally or at a state level but with significant federal grants or donations from the base,” he said. “We have students who go do work-study programs throughout the summer; some students leave Burroughs or Mesquite to get academic or technical training and end up coming back to work at China Lake.”

He noted the partnership with Cerro Coso College also provides opportunities for students. The college has hosted career and college exploration programs for middle school students and invited BHS and Mesquite students to its career exploration day.

Cerro Coso also has a dual enrollment partnership with Sierra Sands, allowing students to take college courses toward a college degree while still in high school.

“Cerro Coso College is a tremendous resource for us because not every community has a college,” he said. “There are several communities that have students who need to travel through several towns to get to their regional community college.”

CHRISTOPHER LIVINGSTON/DAILY INDEPENDENT FILE PHOTO

Burroughs High School, in conjunction with a team from Leadership Ridgecrest, held a College and Career Exploration Day on Wednesday, March 6, 2018, which aimed to teach the students different paths they can take after high school. Programs and partnerships like College and Career Exploration Day have offered several options for its high school students.

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10 / MAKE THE GRADE 2019

Daily Independent
New school year, new REALMS of educational choices

BY JACK BARNWELL
Community Editor
jbarnwell@ridgecrestca.com

As the 2019-2020 school year starts for students in the Indian Wells Valley, one school is starting fresh as it opens up its doors on the site of its predecessor.

The Ridgecrest Elementary Academy for Language, Music and Science starts its school year on Aug. 12, in line with most of the other schools in the valley.

Under the support of the Kern County Office of Superintendent of Schools, the charter school replaces Ridgecrest Charter School, months after its renewal petition was recommended by a state panel to be denied by the California Board of Education.

“We are excited to impact change and remain an option for the community,” said REALMS Chief Executive Officer Miriam Hogg. “There are some educational institutions that just do not work for everyone. That’s why charters exist.”

Under REALMS, the focus will be on language, music, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). The school will serve transitional kindergarten through sixth grade in a traditional elementary school site.

As part of that experience, science and music will be a huge emphasis on the K-5 grades. Sixth grade...
past, but she said REALMS will place a Lake financial analyst.

rector is Jacklyn Davis, a retired China

Jennifer Zanke, and its new finance di-

of the Kernville Union School District.

was as well, whether it's speech or reading.

grams.

w

it to something else as they decide

kids are doing STEM, they can connect

sustainability decreases.”

don't complete high school, your life

there is a likely chance of not complet-

learned how to read by the third grade,

important for all students.

Hogg. “Our goal is to make sure all of

Christian School or Saint Ann School.

or to private options such as Immanuel

hoped for one

sure, the middle school students will

prepare students for middle school,

resources that better fit our students’

primary goal.

REALMS, that

score to determine proficiency.”

valid measurements; but now we’re

scores and we need to look at other

world as a whole.

been a topic of debate in the education

community feels that heightened sense

now,” Hogg said. “The charter school

enough to keep the option of choices open here in Ridge-

crest.”

Hogg noted that like other charter schools

in California, there will be some level of

scrutiny from the state. Re-

cently, other charter schools have faced clo-

sure for one reason or an-

other.

“There is a lot of pressure for all charter schools to per-

formed right

now,” Hogg said. “The charter school

community feels that heightened sense of threat to their existence.”

She added test scores have always

been a topic of debate in the education world as a whole.

“In education, there is a lot of back

and forth about test scores and should

they be the deciding factor on how students are performing,” Hogg said. “At

one turn, we say it’s not about the test

scores and we need to look at other

valid measurements; but now we're

right back to point of using the test

score to determine proficiency.”

One of the concerns Sierra Sands

Unified School District board of educa-

tion members had when RCS’ petition

came up for renewal in 2018 was aca-

demic success rates. SSUSD has tradi-

tionally denied the RCS renewal peti-

tion every time it comes up as its right

of first refusal. After that, it was nor-

mally sponsored directly by the Cali-

fornia Department of Education.

While RCS has had an anomalous

year, its board president Eric Bruen

told the Daily Independent in May, the

school as a whole achieved much since

it opened in 2001.

But Bruen noted that things will be

different at REALMS.

“REALMS is not RCS and it will not

be RCS,” he said, adding the new

school begins with a clean slate. “It will

be a different type of campus with a
different type of curriculum and differ-

ent expectations strategically and

budgetary.”

Like Hogg, he noted REALMS’ cur-

riculum won’t develop immediately.

“It’s going to take some years to

build,” Bruen said. “When you talk

about change, you have to look at strat-

ey and things aren’t going to change

overnight.”

Bruen also added in the May inter-

view that without REALMS as an

option for the fall, RCS parents who have

children just entering sixth grade

wouldn’t have an option other than

middle school. He said those students

might not be prepared for a middle

school environment.

“REALMS ensures that parents have

that option if they want to continue

their children in a K-6 environment,”

Bruen said. “I think there is a huge

amount of maturity and growth that

occurs between that fifth and sixth

grade and sixth- and seventh-grade

transition. We see that as an oppor-

tunity in making a truly unique differ-

cence in what our charter program is.”

Some projects that were on the

books at RCS, however, will have to be

put on hold, since all assets were trans-

ferred and REALMS is a new entity.

Those projects included the con-

struction of a new gym/multi-purpose

room.

“It is on REALMS’ wish list but

when we had to close out RCS as we

know it, access to bonds immediately

wasn’t available to us,” Hogg said. “Fi-

nancial institutions would want you to

ensure your stability before they go

forward.”

Ultimately, Hogg said, she is excited

for the new school year and REALMS

future.
Immanuel Christian School will be starting its new school year with a lot of new things: a new principal, new goals and a partnership with Cerro Coso College for concurrent enrollment. Juli Maikai, ICS’s new principal, started in June and replaces Lisa Waddill, who retired at the end of the previous school year.

“I taught here for eight years and am coming back in essence,” Maikai said. “I’m very excited to return for the new school year. We have a wonderful program.

“I have 25 years in education and taught school for 10 years in elementary, junior high and high school,” Maikai said. “I worked for a number of years at Cerro Coso Community College and I have a very long history in education. I’m very passionate about reaching all students on the level they are at.”

Maikai added she has an extensive background in special education and strives to make sure students have all they need to succeed.

Maikai said that as a small school, ICS offers a lot of opportunities to its students, from kindergarten to 12th grade.

“We offer a Christian education from a Biblical world view and use a Christian curriculum,” Maikai said. “Literature, for example, we might have a different perspective on it. Reading and book selection is tailored to ICS’ needs and curriculum.”

All subjects are taught, providing students a comprehensive education, she said.

“Everything we do, whether it’s grammar, or science or history, is all from a Biblical perspective,” Maikai said. “For example, we teach about evolution so students are aware of it, but we also teach the Christian belief that God created the world in six days. They are getting a thorough and comprehensive education.”

ICS is Western Association of Schools and Colleges accredited, so students who come here will have their courses and transcripts transferred to any college of their choice.

ICS also offers several curricular or extracurricular activities, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) at all grade levels and a robotics team.

“We have a strong robotics club and students can take it as extra credit or as a class,” Maikai said. “We have a number of awards and they have gone to the state level.”

ICS has maintained a strong college prep program, and Maikai said that will be expanded in the spring.

“We are going to be offering in Spring 2020 concurrent enrollment with Cerro Coso College,” she said. “High school students will be able to take classes at the college and have them applied here. It helps us expand our offerings because we are a small school, we can partner more classes for our students.”

She added the benefit of the partnership with Cerro Coso could entice graduates to pursue a higher degree and eventually return to a career and life in Ridgecrest while giving back to the community.

“What I am most looking forward to this year is moving ICS forward,” she said. “They’ve already got a strong start with the STEM and robotics. One of the ways is partnering with Cerro Coso and finding creative ways to increase our offerings so we have a very diverse program for our students.”

Like other schools in Ridgecrest, Maikai said ICS maintains an educational partnership with the Navy at China Lake.

“It’s beneficial because we can show our students what is available in our community and maybe start through STEM and robotics program encourage them to pursue a career in the future,” she said.

She said all those components come together under ICS’ expected student achievement outcome: Academic Achievement, Biblical world view, and citizenship.

“We are educating them for academic advancement, and that’s where the college comes in. Biblical world view comes in through our curriculum and our chapel once a week,” Maikai said. “The citizenship component is training to be respectful to others while being of value to our community. If we provide a good education and Biblical world view and show students how great it is to be part of the community, they will want to come back and contribute in the future.”

As a private school, ICS does charge tuition, but Maikai said prices are determined based on meetings with parents.

“We talk with them to determine what their vision is for their child and then I talk with them about how we can meet it,” she said. “It depends on if their child is elementary, junior high or high school-aged. Everything is done in an educational success consultation.”

She said that consultation allows both her and the parents to discuss everything at once and lay out all the information.

One of the biggest advantages of being a small school is the smaller class sizes and increased participatory opportunities for students.

“You get very personalized attention from the instructors and you’re not competing for attention with other students,” Maikai said. “It’s also easier to participate in activities. With larger schools, if you want to play in a sport, for example, there are multiple levels of teams and tryouts. Because we’re small, you have a greater opportunity to participate in any of the sports we have.”

She added student camaraderie is also strong.

“Another benefit of a smaller school size is that it fosters a family atmosphere,” she said. “A lot of these students spend most of their school career and are like siblings. They can rely on one another and form strong, close-knit relationships.”

ICS maintains an athletics program that varies depending on the interest level. At the moment, the school has boys and girls basketball, baseball and softball, and volleyball.

Activities also include a praise and worship team, Interact Club, sponsored by Rotary Club to help establish civic relationships with the community.

“We are looking at starting up a club for students interested in computers and technology apart from robotics,” she said. “We participate in science fairs, speech meets, spelling bees, math competitions.”

ICS also offers a full-day kindergarten program.

“Our kindergarten is a full-day program with enrichment programs in the afternoon,” Maikai said. “The advantage is it better prepares students for first grade; our curriculum tends to be very strong and so they are more prepared for what they see in first grade.”

Maikai said ICS also includes a comprehensive look into its anti-bullying program every year.

“We incorporate it into the beginning of the year and the chapel, and throughout the year reinforcing our policy,” Maikai said. “We have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, and so right out the gate, the first thing students get is our anti-bullying curriculum.”

Maikai noted that the end of the day, faith helps ICS stand out as a great place to attend and work.

“I love teaching at ICS because we are free to be who we are as Christians in the sense that we can pray when there are earthquakes and students are afraid,” she said. “My very first year here was the year 9/11 happened, so we were able to take the students together, comfort them and remind them that God is looking over them. It’s a freeing experience — people might see it as restrictive but I see it otherwise.”

ICS starts its academic year on Aug. 12.
Saint Ann School Principal Tracy Sherrick is looking to continue the work initiated over the past few years as she settles into her new role.

Sherrick takes over from Alicia Conliffe, who left the area with her family following her husband Cmdr. Matt Conliffe's retirement as executive officer of NAWS China Lake.

“I was born and raised here in Ridgecrest, at the old dispensary at China Lake, I attended Saint Ann as a child and my two children came through Saint Ann, and I’ve taught here for 15 years,” Sherrick said.

Sherrick served as the vice-principal and the fifth-grade teacher last year and said she thoroughly enjoyed working under Conliffe.

“I hope to continue with the things that Alicia did to help grow the school last year,” Sherrick said. “With her at the helm, our enrollment increased and we adopted a new science curriculum. With the help of the staff and the diocese, I will continue that.”

Saint Ann currently has around 130 students, but Sherrick expects that enrollment to grow.

As a small Catholic school, Saint Ann School offers K-8 education to Ridgecrest students. The school, along with Saint Ann Catholic Church, is part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fresno.

She noted that religion plays a strong part in language arts, including novels that shine a light on racism or ill-treatment, the significance of numbers in mathematics and the connection between science and Catholic tradition.

“Last year, we moved our Christmas music program...
from the parish hall to the church chapel and combined it with our Rosetta stone teaching," Sherrick said. “We sang Christmas carols in different languages and instruments.”

Saint Ann also hosts a fine arts program during the spring, which showcases music and artistic skills of students.

“Our instructors are very involved and always looking to stimulate the students’ creative side,” Sherrick said.

Part of the continued curriculum will be foreign language offerings initiated last year under Conliffe’s tenure.

Utilizing the Rosetta Stone software, Saint Ann School provides four languages: German, Spanish, French and Mandarin Chinese.

“It is going well,” Sherrick said. “Last year was a trial year to work out some bugs. Some of the schools in the diocese offered one or two language choices, but I believe we are one of the only schools to offer four.”

Sherrick said integrating languages into Saint Ann School curriculum offers a variety of benefits, including cultural understanding.

“A couple of times last year we would gather as language groups,” Sherrick said. “We eventually divided our Spanish group since it is our largest group between K-3 and 4-8. We would have native language speakers come in to practice on words, conversing and talking about the culture.”

She added the benefit of real-world exposure gives additional layers, as opposed to working on an iPad or computer.

As a Catholic school, faith is woven into every element of the school’s curriculum and subject areas.

“We are trying to promote ourselves and grow ourselves,” she said. “We are involved in service projects both locally and around the country. We are looking at a program that will be sending our fifth-graders to Edwards Air Force Base for a STEM program.”

As part of its broadening educational opportunities, Saint Ann School started a student garden project this past year.

“Each grade has its particular plot that is assigned to them,” Sherrick said. “Some are growing tomatoes while others are growing flowers. The idea is that we could have a greenhouse here.”

Sherrick said she is looking to increase the level of participation with Cerro Coso College and with engineers aboard China Lake, which has a solid educational outreach component.

Sherrick said that, as with many other small schools, parent involvement is crucial, both in support of tuition and volunteering.

“They work with different fundraisers and things that we need help with,” Sherrick said. “We could not exist without them.”

One example is the Star Review, a family-friendly version of the Chamber of Commerce’s annual Community Follies.

A second one is planned for October.

Sherrick said small class sizes are also an advantage for Saint Ann School.

“We typically would like to see classroom sizes at between 20 and 25 students, and as we did when I was in school, we would probably place a cap with a waiting list,” Sherrick said. “If you go above 25 students, we definitely lose the benefit of small class sizes.”

Saint Ann School’s athletics programs do include middle school girls volleyball and boys and girls basketball teams, as well as fourth/fifth-grade basketball and Junior Olympics.

She added that as a small school, students and teachers know each other better.

“It’s easier to build relationships,” Sherrick said. “It’s more like a family here, which can have its disadvantages of being like brothers and sisters who fight, but there is a closeness.”

She added both of Saint Ann Church’s pastors, Rev. Father Rayanna Pudota and Rev. Father Jim Doud, who presides over Catholic services at All Faith Chapel aboard China Lake, have been instrumental in support.

“Their support and their working with the kids is also an important part of the school and we are indebted to them," Sherrick said.

Saint Ann School starts its school year on Aug. 12.
Cerro Coso welcomes students back to campus

**BY NATALIE DORRELL**
Cerro Coso Community College

It’s that time of year again! The fall semester is about to begin, and Cerro Coso campuses are buzzing with the excited anticipation that a new academic year brings.

“This is my favorite season, as the campus comes to life with the rhythm of faculty, staff, and students beginning a new academic year. They are full of promise for the future,” said Cerro Coso President Jill Board. “This year is no exception. I hope our faculty and students enjoyed a restful and refreshing summer, because the fall semester is already shaping up to be a busy and productive one.”

The college held a grand re-opening of the Main Building in May following a three-year construction project that completely renovated and modernized the original 47,000-square-foot building constructed in 1973.

“It’s great to be in one central location again,” said Board.

The facility, which serves as the hub of the East side of the campus, opened last September, only to suffer significant cosmetic damage during the recent 6.4 and 7.1 earthquakes that hit Searles Valley.

“This challenge has once again revealed the extraordinary resilience and strength of our college,” said Board. “It has presented challenges, but we will recover.”

For first-time college students, returning students, transfer students, or students about to graduate, Cerro Coso has implemented a number of strategies they can take to set themselves up for one of the best semesters ever.

The semester will officially kick off with Cerro Coso Rocks Your Orientation, a welcome back event slated for Thursday, Aug. 22, from 3 to 7 p.m. in the courtyard between the Main Building and West Wing. It’s open to the public, and activities will include: tacos for schedules, counseling assistance, student IDs, games, photo booth, DJ; popcorn, ice cream social with the president, tours, information, workshops, orientation, and will provide an excellent opportunity to meet new faculty and staff and to catch up with those who have been away during the summer. Barnes and Noble will be open for books and supplies and everyone is encouraged to come dressed in their finest rock star outfit. Ridgecrest Transit will be providing free rides from 3 to 7 p.m. For pickup times, call 760-499-5040.

The summer is almost over, but the fun isn’t ending. To welcome students back and get them into the swing of things, the college is hosting this fun friendly free event thanks to the support of Barnes and Noble, Ridgecrest Transit, Oasis Mexican Restaurant, and the Cerro Coso Community College Foundation. Parking fees will not be enforced during public events.

Students are encouraged to download the new Navigate Student App. Cerro Coso launched the app last year to make college less complicated. Navigate is software designed specifically for Cerro Coso students to help them get ready for college, access campus resources quickly and easily, and build an academic plan that best fits their schedule. Students can also form study groups and schedule an appointment with their counselor through the app. Navigate helps students stay updated on important deadlines, events, and activities; and allows them to explore majors and careers; and schedule classes around the rest of their lives, based on preferences. The app can be downloaded from the Google Play or Apple App Store, off the Cerro Coso website at cerrocoso.edu/navigate, or from InsideCC-Tools-Navigate Student.

“Ours faculty and staff are the heart of all that we do, and I am excited to welcome several new faculty to the campus community this fall,” said Board. “We will welcome Gaysha Smith, Art Instructor (East Kern); Tanner McGuire, Art Instructor (IWV); Vonetta Mixson, Business (East Kern); and Tyrone Ledford, Child Development Instructor (IWV).”

The Cerro Coso Community College Foundation is the focus of community support for Cerro Coso’s students and faculty. Over the years, thousands of caring citizens, organizations, and industry have given time and money to the Foundation, thus ensuring that quality education is available for everyone in the college’s service area. Last year, the Foundation launched the Cerro Coso Promise scholarship to ensure that students can reduce the time and cost it requires to complete a degree while guaranteeing they will be fully prepared for their next step upon graduation. The Cerro Coso Promise scholarship represents the heart of what Cerro Coso Community College is all about and creates a strong organization, more educated community, and better-prepared workforce.

“I am proud to report the CCCC Foundation awarded $75,000 in Promise Scholarships to CC students last year,” said Board.

On-campus classes for the Fall 2019 semester at Cerro Coso will begin Monday, Aug. 26. Online students may begin logging into classes as early as Saturday, Aug. 24th.

“I want to thank every member of the Cerro Coso community for continuing to distinguish this college as a place where individual passions fuel a collective purpose,” Board said. “Because of their commitment to collaboration, creativity, and innovation, the 2018/2019 academic year was filled with noteworthy achievements. I know 2019/2020 will continue this trend.”

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How long have you been an educator? How long have you been with Sierra Sands Unified?
I started my career in education in 1994 as a teacher intern in San Diego. Then in 1995, I accepted a position at Burroughs High School as a science teacher, where I have been ever since. I was a teacher from 1995 until 2014. In 2014 I became an administrator.

Why did you pursue a career in education?
I pursued a career in education because I like working with children. I taught swim lessons and gymnastics when I was a teenager and throughout my college years. I enjoyed working with youth and helping them grow and learn new skills.

What do you enjoy most about your career in Ridgecrest?
It’s very rewarding watching students develop into young adults and hoping you made a difference in their lives.

What are you looking forward to in your role as principal for the new school year?
As the principal I am looking forward to working with our staff, students, and parents in a different capacity. I plan to work on building relationships with the Burroughs community and serving them to the best of my ability.

What are some memorable moments from your previous position?
Some of my most memorable moments as an assistant principal are based on performing during the sports rallies. As a teacher and administrator, I also enjoy listening to former students share their memories of Burroughs. It’s always great to hear the success stories of students.

Homecoming activities, such as painting B-Mountain, powderpuff, float building, the Amazing Race, coronation, and the football game, are always very memorable activities. Homecoming is an exciting time where the entire community comes together and supports Burroughs and our staff and students.

What are your goals going forward as principal?
Recently there have been a lot of changes in education. I want to make sure Burroughs is continuing to stay ahead of the changes and move forward to enhance students’ education. Supporting the staff by providing them with the tools and skills they need to continue preparing our students for their future, whether the students go directly into the workforce, go into the military, go to trade school, or go to college, is vital to my role as principal. It is essential that I continue to keep the four core values — tradition, pride, excellence, and integrity — in the forefront of any decisions that are made. Finally, I want Burroughs to be a school where students learn, grow, and develop into contributing members of our society.

The Daily Independent wishes all our local students good luck in the new school year.

Wishing the students of the Indian Wells Valley a successful year.

Carrie Cope, Burroughs High School

How long have you been an educator? How long have you been with Sierra Sands Unified?
I have been an educator for the last 8 years and all of those have been with Burroughs High School in the Sierra Sands Unified School District. I taught PE and coached sports for 5 years and have been an Assistant Principal for the last 3 years.

Why did you pursue a career in education?
Besides my family, educators had the biggest influence on my life and they still do. I got into education because I wanted to be able to have a similar effect on children.

What do you enjoy most about your career in Ridgecrest?
I love the community in Ridgecrest. From the day I moved here, it has felt like home. The town is so welcoming and supportive.

What are you looking forward to in your role as principal for the new school year?
I am looking forward to serving the staff and students at Murray Middle School. Murray is a wonderful school and I am excited to be a part of the Mustang family and continue to transform the education of our youth.

What are some memorable moments from your previous position?
All of my memorable moments are the relationships built at Burroughs High School. This is both the staff and the students. It is hard to pick out one or two because there were so many.

What are your goals going forward as principal?
My goals moving forward are to serve our staff and students to continue improving the education that our students receive.

Cody Pearce, Monroe Middle School

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Get to know our new school principals

John Cosner, Monroe Middle School

How long have you been an educator? How long have you been with Sierra Sands Unified?
I have been blessed to have all of my time in education serving my home community through Sierra Sands Unified school district for more than 12 years.

Why did you pursue a career in education?
I fell in love with teaching while actually pursuing the medical profession. I was home applying to medical and graduate programs, when my former principal, Ernie Bell, asked me to both substitute and help in the math department. It was nice work, but when I really found my calling is when I took over a class as a long-term substitute. I was talking with a group of 11th-grade students about our history in context to what was happening in the world today, and the moment just struck me with how much I loved serving our community’s children in this way.

What do you enjoy most about your career in Ridgecrest?
I love that I get to serve a population I care for deeply helping our community’s most needy to help all have equal opportunity. The relationship building for our city’s mission serving our nation in a huge capacity has been such a balm to my soul.

What are you looking forward to in your role as principal for the new school year?
I feel a sense of exhilaration just thinking about the caliber of individuals we are pulling together this next year. The staff has already met on their own time to help prepare for the year to come with great ideas and positive energy. The excitement has just been palpable among the staff with the positive changes at not only our site but throughout the district. We are getting an extra math teacher, art, Spanish, and a new special position to help support students with emotional and behavioral challenges.

What are some memorable moments from your previous position?
While I could not be happier to come into this role at James Monroe Middle School, I know that I will miss many moments from being principal at Pierce Elementary. A particular favorite of mine is each time I stepped into the Kindergarten classes I felt like a bit of a rockstar. The children would run to throw their arms around me, and I got to shower them with praise on their hard work and effort in being so great for their teachers. I hope to bring this energy, though perhaps without the kindergarten gusto, to my new work.

What are your goals going forward as principal?
While there are many great traditions I hope to carry forward through sports, activities, and cultural events, I hope to bring systems in place to help make teacher’s lives easier and students experience better. I know my predecessors have put their blood, sweat and tears to help bring great experiences to students, and I want to infuse these noble goals with technical ingenuity and a positive experience to breathe new life into a long-term dream.
Get to know our new school principals

Shyanne Ledford, Pierce Elementary School

How long have you been an educator? How long have you been with Sierra Sands Unified?
I began my career in education in 2002 teaching 5th grade in Delano, CA. I began my career in educational admin in 2010 in a Federal Correctional Facility, and later became the founding principal of a California charter school. This is my first year with SSUSD.

Why did you pursue a career in education?
Prior to becoming a teacher, I was a social worker in Tulare County. I loved my job, but I longed for a career that was more proactive in the lives of children rather than reactive. I became a teacher so I could have positive interactions with children over many days across an entire school year. My goal then and now was to be an appropriate model of triumph and lifelong learning while developing within them grit and skills that would transcend their current status in life.

What do you enjoy most about your career in Ridgecrest?
I have lived in Ridgecrest since July 14th of this year, so I must admit I do not know much about the city or the community just yet. Previously I lived in Oklahoma, but I am from Bakersfield. When I decided to return to California, I began looking for cities near enough to Bakersfield but more communal and less frenetic, and I found Ridgecrest. I found the city before I found the job. So far, I appreciate the kindness of people, the closeness of the community, and of course, the scenery.

What are you looking forward to in your role as principal for the new school year?
In my role as principal this year I am most excited to build relationships with all members of the Pierce Pride, from the kids to their families to the community at large. The Pierce Panthers are a family, and we will roar together! I look forward to growing with the school.

What are some memorable moments from your previous position?
I’ve worked with children more than fifteen years in some capacity or another, so picking memorable moments is nearly impossible. But I can say that the most magical experiences I’ve had as an educator are when children come to love learning and intrinsically desire achievement. There is nothing more rewarding as an educator than when a child is driven by their own desire to succeed, especially if that child had previously lacked motivation or interest in their own development.

What are your goals going forward as principal?
Building unity throughout the Pierce family, improving student outcomes, and enhancing the learning experience for all learners are goals for me this year.

Remember to get a good night’s sleep before school!
Get to know our new school principals

Sarah Tate, Las Flores Elementary School

How long have you been an educator? How long have you been with Sierra Sands Unified?
I have been an educator for 16 years. This will be my 6th year with Sierra Sands.

Why did you pursue a career in education?
I have wanted to be an educator my whole life. I come from a family of educators. Both my parents were teachers and administrators, my grandmother was a Kindergarten teacher, I have cousins who are teachers, my step daughter is a teacher. I spent my childhood following my dad around during lunch duty, high school sporting events and school dances. This is all I have ever wanted.

What do you enjoy most about your career in Ridgecrest?
I love the sense of family you feel here in Ridgecrest. Las Flores was very welcoming to me 5 years ago, and when I was named principal I have never felt more supported.

What are you looking forward to in your role as principal for the new school year?
I look forward to leading the staff in a positive direction and getting to know all the students and parents here at Las Flores.

What are some memorable moments from your previous position?
As the Title 1 projects teacher, I was able to have many small groups of students in my class every day. I loved the opportunity to teach and get to know so many of the Las Flores students. I also had the opportunity to work collaboratively with the teachers.

What are your goals going forward as principal?
It is my goal to provide a safe and positive learning environment for students and staff and to make parents and community members feel welcome at Las Flores.

Freshmen: Remember that bad grades now can come back to haunt you at college application time.

Chris Ostermann, BHS assistant principal

How long have you been an educator? How long have you been with Sierra Sands Unified?
In 1984 I accepted a teaching position with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. in Koror, Belau, an archipelago found within the Federated States of Micronesia. I continued my teaching career as a science teacher at Murray Middle School from 1987 until 1995. In 1995 I took a position as a science teacher at Burroughs High School. Since 2016 I have continued to serve Burroughs High School and SSUSD as a TOSA within the Curriculum Office.

Why did you pursue a career in education?
I had not considered education as a possibility while attending college; however, I was offered a job teaching in Micronesia and early in my career I found the work to be very enjoyable and rewarding. My mother and grandmother also pursued careers in education, so it was probably in my genes.

What do you enjoy most about your career in Ridgecrest?
My role as a TOSA for the Curriculum Office has provided me the opportunity to travel to other schools and work with educators throughout Kern County and the State of California. Yet, working with Ridgecrest students, families, and educators has always been rewarding on account of the strong sense of community and pride which is not always present in other settings.

What are you looking forward to in your role as principal for the new school year?
In my new capacity as an assistant principal I am looking forward to expanding my support to a larger number of students, parents and staff members.

What are some memorable moments from your previous position?
Beyond the classroom, I have been very fortunate to work with students in nonacademic settings as a club adviser and a track & field coach. My most recent role as a TOSA has allowed me to work with many outstanding fellow educators. However, I have many wonderful memories from working with students in a laboratory setting as a science teacher.

What are your goals going forward as principal?
As an assistant principal, I hope to provide support for students, parents and staff members as we face the challenges of an evolving culture. At the same time I hope to help our leadership team facilitate growth within staff and students as they prepare to find ways meet the needs of our contemporary society.
Get to know our new school principals
Sandra Castro, BHS assistant principal

How long have you been an educator? How long have you been with Sierra Sands Unified?
I began my career at Westchester High School in 2008 as a student teacher. Upon completing my teaching credential in the summer of 2008, I was accepted into the Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education Program (PLACE Corps) through Loyola Marymount University. PLACE Corps gave me the opportunity to teach in East Los Angeles while working on my Master’s Degree. Following the conclusion of the program in 2010, I secured a job at Environmental Charter High School in Lawndale. During this time, my fiancé moved to Ridgecrest for a new job. In the summer of 2011, we married and I moved to Ridgecrest. I was hired on as a District Translator and part-time Spanish teacher at Murray Middle School. I moved to Burroughs High School (BHS) in 2013 as a full time Spanish teacher and have been at BHS since. I completed a second master’s degree and finished the coursework for administration in 2013. This is my first year as an administrator.

Why did you pursue a career in education?
I was that little girl that knew what she wanted to do with her life at the age of four. I was fortunate to have many influential educators in my life that helped me get to where I am now. Educators allowed me to overcome my challenges. I didn’t know English when I started school, I grew up in a poor neighborhood, and I had no idea how to get to college. Fortunately, I worked hard, went to college and I was able to pursue my career in education.

What do you enjoy most about your career in Ridgecrest?
I enjoy the community. I have been fortunate to have met students and families through my years as a translator as well as many community organizations. I really like seeing the students grow, learn and mature throughout the years.

What are you looking forward to in your role as principal for the new school year?
I’m looking forward to seeing our teachers in action in the classroom. We have a lot of great teaching.

What are some memorable moments from your previous position?
I have so many! I will never forget when a student told me I reminded them of Ms. Frizzle from the Magic School Bus.

What are your goals going forward as principal?
My goal is to work alongside teachers and students to help them become better versions of themselves.

Your guide to elementary school success
BY MELISSA ERICKSON

As a child’s first teachers, parents play a key part in continuing to shape their overall learning after they enter school.
“Your child will grow and change tremendously through the elementary school years. Modeling a positive attitude towards school and learning and developing the same in your children will help carry them through these years, and far into the future,” said Sascha Mowrey, assistant professor of early childhood education at Missouri State University. “No two children travel at the same pace through childhood, so be flexible and communicate regularly with your child and with school personnel.”

Being involved can help young children do well academically.
“Parents can have conversations with children about what they are learning at school, ask questions to encourage students to share their thinking and help make connections between school lessons and daily life,” Mowrey said.

Continue the conversation with teachers and the school.
“This is especially important if there are concerns. The teacher will reach out to the family, but effective communication goes both directions,” Mowrey said.

Finally, parents can and should advocate for their own children as well as for other students at the school and in the
One of the best ways to send children to school ready to learn is to make sure that their basic needs are met.

"Make sure each child is well-rested and has a routine to start the day that ensures they feel safe, loved and energized for the school day," Mowrey said.

Avoid activities like television and games in the morning as children often do not want to leave these activities to go to school, Mowrey said.

"Talk about the day to help the children know what to expect," especially if there is a special class like physical education, an event or a change to transportation or after-school plans, Mowrey said.

"Try establishing a routine to make sure that lunches/lunch money, glasses and other school needs are in a single location and do not get left behind," she said.

For elementary school children a considerable portion of organization is being prepared.

"For young students that means thinking about what you will need ahead of time and making sure that you can find it. As students get older, that also includes taking care of items (calendars, papers, etc.) and keeping them accessible and clean," Mowrey said.

Establishing a simple and consistent routine and central location for school items will help with this.

"Parents can model gathering up all the items the child needs, if they are very young, or talk the child through gathering their items and placing them in a school bag. At the end of the school day, parents and children can discuss any items coming home from school, and plan how to take care of any action items such as permission slips and gym shoes before the next school day," Mowrey said.

Younger students are not ready for formal tests and will likely take very few.

"The teachers will be assessing them using observation, note-taking, listening to student thinking as well as studying the work that they create for class assignments," Mowrey said. "If your child has knowledge tests, encourage them to practice in a way that is fun for them, rather than high pressure. Focus on tricky, confusing items and how the student can use strategies for remembering patterns and details. Use hands-on materials to engage them." ❖

## Immunizations and school

Recent outbreaks of measles, mumps and whooping cough have ignited controversy about childhood vaccines, but infectious disease specialists and public health doctors urge children to get vaccinated to ensure their long-term health.

"Back-to-school is a great time to think about vaccinations because it’s one point when your child’s pediatrician is checking to see if they’re up to date," said Dr. Zachary Klase, assistant professor of biological sciences at University of the Sciences in Philadelphia. Vaccines are more than just a government regulation or requirement: They are an extremely effective public health tool that protects the spread of disease, Klase said.

The common preventable illnesses protected by childhood vaccinations include tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B and meningitis.

"Parents are faced with a complicated set of vaccinations that children are asked to get and that makes some parents concerned, but it is much better to get the vaccine than to get the disease," said Dr. Paul Offit, director of the Vaccine Education Center and professor of pediatrics in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

### Recommended schedule

Throughout childhood there are three main stages when a child is recommended to receive vaccinations: from birth to age 2, from 4 to 6 and from 11 to 13, Offit said. At 16, young people should receive booster doses of meningitis vaccine, he said.

"Every child over the age of 6 months should get a flu shot each year," Klase said. "Parents can model gathering up all the items the child needs, if they are very young, or talk the child through gathering their items and placing them in a school bag. At the end of the school day, parents and children can discuss any items coming home from school, and plan how to take care of any action items such as permission slips and gym shoes before the next school day," Mowrey said.

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As a person ages a Td booster is recommended every 10 years to protect against tetanus and diphtheria, Klase said.

Check cdc.gov/vaccines/growing/immunization-schedule.html to see an easy-to-read schedule.

No matter if a child is taught healthy habits or if a school is clean and well-maintained, children get sick. Schools are a great environment for spreading bacteria and viruses because students are in crowded classrooms, sharing things and in close proximity to one another, Klase said.

### Check state requirements

While the federal government recommends the immunization schedule, it varies somewhat from state to state, which can cause some confusion especially when a family moves, Klase said. All 50 states require children attending public schools to be vaccinated (unless they have an exemption) for DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis), polio, MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) and chickenpox, Klase said. Some states require others, such as hepatitis B and meningitis vaccines, Klase said.

Thanks to modern science many people don’t understand the severity of childhood illnesses that vaccines protect against, Klase said. For example, in 2017 a 6-year-old Oregon boy who was not vaccinated contracted tetanus after cutting his forehead. He spent nearly two months in the hospital, a majority in intensive care, and the family racked up a medical bill of over $800,000, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While measles was practically eradicated in the United States, it is now back, and whooping cough is also on the upswing, Klase said.

"Why take a chance of getting a serious illness? You can almost die — or die — from something that is vaccine-preventable. If you have questions, talk to your doctor. Talk to a couple of doctors. Don’t just go on the internet and do your own research," Klase said. ❖

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**It’s time for back-to-school PHYSICALS**

It’s already time to start thinking about back-to-school physicals! The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a yearly physical for all school-aged children.

Many summer camps, sports and schools also require physicals.

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**To make an appointment, please call 760-499-3846**
“The leaders of tomorrow are in the classrooms today, so we are fortunate that Kern County is home to some of the brightest minds in the state. Wishing everyone a great start to the school year!”

Kevin McCarthy

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