



Winter 2018 - Volume 8, Issue 2

News and Information from Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin  
for employees of the Tustin Unified School District

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Beckman High School Music Director Jim Kollias organized and conducted a concert in memory of Pioneer Middle School music teacher Doug Fischer. The concert featured many former Pioneer students. The impact Fischer had on music education for Tustin Unified students is immeasurable.

### Superintendent's Message: A Teacher's Contribution

A memorial concert was held on October 27 to honor Pioneer Middle School instrumental music teacher Doug Fisher, who passed away in June. The event was a beautiful celebration of Mr. Fisher's contributions to Tustin Unified music students, his colleagues, the schools he served, and his community. Mr. Fisher was remembered through music, words, and pictures. In 2017, Tustin High School teacher Mr. Ian Williamson was remembered for similar contributions in his field of science, technology, and engineering.

Both celebrations of life highlighted the contributions these two fine teachers made to their students and their colleagues. While they were both passionate about their subjects (music and STEM), they were most passionate about their students' development, understanding, well-being, and success. I believe this is true of all great teachers and the reason why students fondly remember those teachers who had the greatest impact on them. In the words of Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will always remember how you made them feel."

We can all learn from the examples left by Mr. Fischer and Mr. Williamson. Celebrated teachers demonstrate passion, caring, and concern in their interactions with students and colleagues. It is one of the great honors of our profession that we have the opportunity to make a positive and lasting impact on our youth. I am honored we get to do this work together.

Go TUSD!

Gregory A. Franklin, Ed.D.



**TUSD Board Members, from left, James Laird, Jonathan Abelow, Lynn Davis, Tammie Bullard, and Francine Scinto, and Superintendent Dr. Gregory Franklin stand next to the dedication plaque with Gerry's wife, Diane Aust, who is seated.**  
*Photo courtesy of John Garrett*

## **TUSD Dedicates Gerry Aust Activity Center at Hewes School**

The Tustin Unified School District dedicated the Gerry Aust Activity Center at Hewes Middle School on October 2. The building was named in honor and celebration of Aust's long-lasting contributions to the Tustin Unified community.

Aust, who passed away last year, worked in public education for 39 years – 37 of those in the Tustin school district. He served as a teacher, activities director, assistant principal, and principal in Tustin Unified. He retired in 2000, but never really stopped working. Aust served as an interim principal or assistant principal at almost every school in the District.

Among his many community service activities, Aust served on the Tustin Public Schools Foundation (TPSF) Board of Directors for 17 years. Aust and his wife, Diane, were involved in the Dinosaur Dash since it began 28 years ago and served as co-chairs of the annual event for two years. Aust also served as master of ceremonies for the annual TPSF Teacher of the Year Dinner for 16 years and was honorary superintendent of the Foundation's Summer Academy program for elementary and middle school students.

For 22 years, the Austs voluntarily led Tustin middle school students to Washington, D.C., shepherding over 2,500 students and making history and democracy come alive for them. Aust's passion for his country is well-known; he was known as "Mr. Red, White and Blue." Many of the nearly 250 attendees wore red, white, and blue.

Aust was a longtime member of the Tustin-Santa Ana Rotary Club serving twice as its president and coordinating the club's high school scholarships program for many years. He served on the Tustin Area Council for Fine Arts' Encore Group supporting the arts in the community, was a board member for the Assessment and Treatment Services Center, served on the Tustin Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors, and was involved in the Tustin Chili Cook-Off and Tustin Tiller Days.

"Gerry always focused on the students and what better way to pay tribute and honor this TUSD icon," School Board President Tammie Bullard said. "His memory will live on for decades to come for the students, staff, parents and the community."



## **TUSD Administrators of the Year Honorees Announced**

The Tustin School Management Association has announced its 2019 Administrators of the Year Honorees. They will represent the Tustin Unified School District in the 2019 Orange County Administrators of the Year Awards Program, sponsored by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), Region 17:

- ▶ Elementary Principal of the Year – Stephanie Yang, Principal, Benjamin Beswick Elementary School
- ▶ Middle Grades Principal of the Year – Cindy Agopian, Principal, Orchard Hills School
- ▶ Secondary Co-Administrator of the Year – Mike Velez, Assistant Principal, A.G. Currie Middle School
- ▶ Career Technical Education Administrator of the Year – Dr. Grant Litfin, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services
- ▶ Special Education Administrator of the Year – Gloria Olamendi, Director, Special Education
- ▶ Valuing Diversity Award – Rafael Plascencia, Principal, Marjorie Veeh Elementary School

ACSA annually recognizes outstanding administrators for their leadership skills, professionalism, creativity, innovation, and commitment to a quality education. Orange County Administrators of the Year will be announced in the spring. The 46<sup>th</sup> annual ACSA "Administrators of the Year and Friends of Education Awards" Dinner will be held on May 13, 2019, at the Irvine Marriott. Region 17 represents 28 school districts in Orange County.

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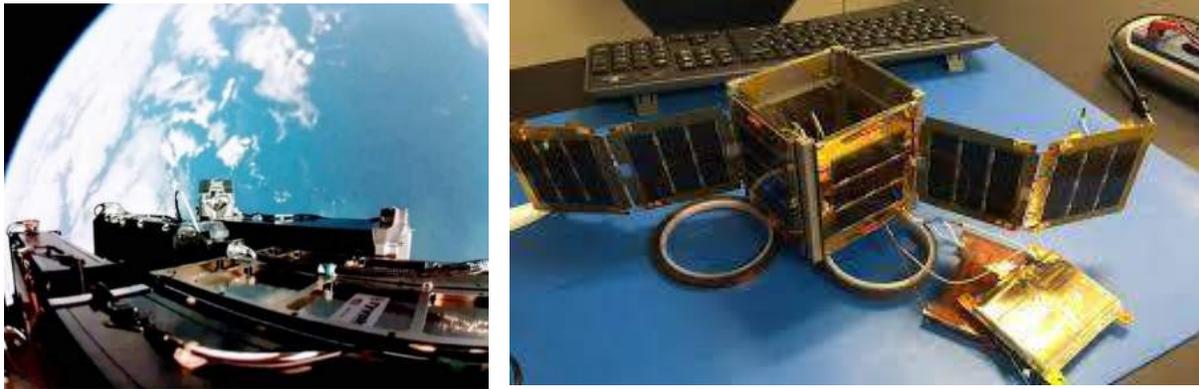
**Tustin Unified School District 2018 Teachers of the Year Carrie Murillo and Joanna Vandal were recognized at the annual Orange County Teachers of the Year Dinner.**  
*Photo courtesy of Paul Gibson at OCDE*

## **TUSD Teachers of the Year Honored by OCDE**

The Tustin Unified School District's 2018 Teachers of the Year – Carrie Murillo, fourth-grade teacher at W.R. Nelson Elementary School, and Joanna Vandal, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) teacher at Tustin High School – were honored by the Orange County Department of Education at its annual Orange County Teachers of the Year Dinner on November 2 at the Disneyland Hotel. Both teachers represented the District in the 2018-19 Orange County Teachers of the Year program. They were also selected as two of 15 semifinalists in the program.

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**Photos: Rocket blasts off with the CubeSAT onboard; CubeSAT's-eye-view from outer space.**

## **Beckman Students Have a Blast with CubeSAT Project**

Students from Beckman High School in TUSD and other high schools in Irvine have worked to successfully launch two satellites into space as part of the Irvine CubeSAT STEM Program.

On November 10, IRVINE01 was launched from New Zealand aboard an Electron Rocket and the satellite communicated with Earth several times – making it one of the first High School CubeSATs to reach orbit (100 miles above Earth) and now the first to fully function in space. The cube satellite (CubeSAT) is 2.3 pounds and solar powered.

On December 3, IRVINE02 was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 Rocket from Vandenberg Air Force Base and was part of a mission that accomplished a lot of “firsts” in the aerospace industry:

- First time SpaceX used the same rocket booster to go to space three times.
- First time a high school has ever launched two satellites in the same month.
- Approximately 34 companies representing 17 different countries are on board the rocket on the most crowded ridesharing mission ever launched.

For both the CubeSAT IRVINE01 and IRVINE02 projects, Beckman served as the “Avionics” Team and was in charge of the “brain” of the satellites. The Beckman students coded the satellite and insured the different components worked together as planned.

Both IRVINE01 and IRVINE02 have a main payload that includes a digital camera that can send pictures of planets and the moon back to Earth. IRVINE02 is a more complicated version of IRVINE01 and includes electric thrusters for propulsion and deployable solar arrays.

Beckman students are currently coding and helping to construct IRVINE03 – and plans are well underway for IRVINE04, 05, 06, and 07. Beckman science teachers Siu Kong Sit and Siu Ling Sit are leading the charge. Retired science teacher Dr. Paul Lewanski helped lead the construction of the first CubeSAT, IRVINE01.

The Irvine CubeSAT Program provides a hands-on STEM experience to foster interest in advanced technologies and meet the rising demand for a highly qualified workforce in growing STEM-related industries. The program is a joint educational endeavor to teach, train, and inspire the next generation of STEM professionals. It is comprised of over 150 high students from six different high schools in the city of Irvine whose main objective is to assemble, test, and launch nano-satellites into low Earth orbit.

Individuals can follow the program's progress at [www.irvinecubesat.org](http://www.irvinecubesat.org) or on Twitter: [@irvinecubesat](https://twitter.com/irvinecubesat).

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**Tustin High School students Mark Gleeson, Angelica Pelcastre, and Chloe Carraway, and engineering teacher and T-Tech Academy Director Ed Hernandez participated at the OC Pathways Showcase.**  
*Photo courtesy of Paul Gibson at OCDE*

## Tustin High T-Tech Academy Participates at OC Pathways Showcase

Tustin High School's T-Tech Academy, led by engineering teacher/director Ed Hernandez, represented the engineering pathway for TUSD at the Orange County Department of Education's fourth annual OC Pathways Showcase held on November 27 at Edwards Lifesciences in Irvine.

Tustin High T-Tech seniors Mark Gleeson, Angelica Pelcastre, and Chloe Carraway brought to the showcase their EVZ, an ultra-lightweight electric vehicle built by students to compete in the smallest vehicle class at the UC Irvine Energy Invitational. T-Tech Academy students learn skills in engineering, computer science, and product design.

"Each of the past three years, T-Tech Academy has been invited to represent the best of pre-engineering education Orange County has to offer," Hernandez said. "Among their projects, my students are learning how to create vehicles that are more energy efficient while helping them prepare for jobs in the future."

Based on the theme, "Our Humanity, Our Technology, Our Future," the OC Pathways Showcase featured student-led projects and exhibits, and celebrated the collaborative efforts of schools, colleges, and businesses to forge 21<sup>st</sup> century career pathways and work-based learning opportunities for students in 15 industry sectors. The pathways include agriculture; arts, media, and entertainment; building and construction; business and finance; education and child development; energy and the environment; engineering and architecture; fashion and interior design; health science and medical technology; hospitality and tourism; information and communication technologies; manufacturing; marketing and sales; public services; and transportation.

According to OCDE, OC Pathways was created in 2014 through a grant from the California Department of Education with a mission to connect educators and industry leaders to create navigable career paths and work-based learning opportunities for students.



**Hicks Canyon Elementary School students in teacher Elizabeth Crenshaw's first-grade class use their new iPads to code their way through a math maze. Hicks Canyon is a leader in showing even the youngest students how coding, logic, and problem solving can be applied to every subject across the curriculum.**

## Technology: Reading, Writing, Arithmetic...Coding

Tustin Unified students are celebrating Code Week, December 3-9, by participating in computer-science-related activities across the grade levels and curriculum. This effort, often referred to as the "Hour of Code," involves over 180 countries and nearly 100 million students. TUSD has participated in the program for the last five years, and it has become increasingly popular among students and teachers. In fact, TUSD students generated over 70,000 hits on the District's coding websites, [Hourofcode.com](http://Hourofcode.com) and [code.org](http://code.org), in just one week last year. As the year progressed, students and parents returned to the sites thousands more times to practice their coding and learn this new skill together.



The Hour of Code/Code Week is part of an ongoing effort to expose students to one of the world's most in-demand industries and a discipline that many are calling an essential element of 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy. Events like Hour of Code have proven to be extremely successful in opening the door to coding for students that are typically underrepresented in the computer science, information technology, robotics, and software engineering fields.

During Code Week, students have opportunities to do everything from drag and drop "Blockly" and coding to moving through "Swift" Playgrounds and designing their own applications using "Python." Even if students decide not to pursue a career related to coding, perhaps this type of experience will lead them to join a college and career pathway program that uses coding, take AP computer science, compete on one of TUSD's world-class robotics or Cyber-Patriot teams, or maybe they will help write the code for a future CubeSat satellite.

The future is bright for Tustin Unified students. With skills like they are able to gain through a combination of Measure S technology, great teaching, and engaging activities like the Hour of Code, TUSD may have a the next great tech innovator in one of its classrooms.

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**Connect Coach Denise Granger, far right, leads her team of teachers, from left, Jenna Flores, Pamela Stiefel, Cindy Sakurai, and Wendy McCracken, in digital storytelling learning.**

## **Educational Services: TUSD Coaches – Collaborating and Connecting in Classrooms**

Teacher Connect Coaches in the Tustin Unified School District continue to take the lead in building innovative instruction and engaging practices for all students. As leaders of change, Connect Coaches serve as co-teachers, staff developers, and motivators who seeks to coach, mentor, and inspire their colleagues to continue to transform teaching and learning in their classrooms. Additionally, Connect Coaches aspire to provide all TUSD teachers with ongoing support, encouragement, and expertise so they continue to learn and grow in their work as educators.



This year at the elementary level, Connect Coaches are continuing to support teachers in their work by helping them implement the workshop model, supporting cognitively guided instruction, strengthening EL learner instruction, inspiring digital storytelling lessons, integrating technology tools, and facilitating professional learning community work. This year they have created a Lab Day option for schools that entails a team of four to six coaches working with various grade levels throughout the day to allow teachers to observe a modeled lesson or strategy, try it out in their classroom, and then seek feedback. This approach enables grade levels to learn a new teaching strategy or approach they are interested in while learning together and working cohesively alongside coaches.

**Photo above: Secondary Connect Coaches are engaged in a collaborative structures training activity. They include, from left, Joanna Lane, Roland Jones, Gretchen Fleming, Michelle Ciecok (teacher on special assignment) and Melanie Formanek.**

Connect Coaches are also working together to build a collection of online courses that will soon be available to teachers so they can have access to a personalized learning platform whenever it is convenient for them.

This year, nine high school Connect Coaches are supporting Tustin Unified high schools through lesson study cycles and instructional rounds. Their work aligns with District goals, site goals, and WASC goals simultaneously. Coaches work with teachers to decide upon a specific strategy to embed into their current lessons to uplevel the student experience in their classroom. Then, the coach and the teacher co-plan a

lesson, practice using the strategy with students, reflect, and refine. Sites have targets of 75 teachers projected to participate in lesson study cycles this year. The lesson study cycle will culminate in instructional rounds. A triad of teachers focusing on the same language domain will be released for a full day to participate in the following: a morning pre-brief around the strategy and the feedback focus for the classroom visit, a series of classroom visits where each teacher will teach the strategy with their own students while the coach and teacher cohort gather feedback data, and a debrief in the afternoon to reflect and determine next steps. To inform teachers of their work this year, the coaches created a digital story with the purpose and structure of the lesson study cycles. TUSD looks forward to seeing the impact its high school coaches have on student learning during the school year.

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**TUSD employees enjoy the annual Health Fair in the courtyard at the District Office.**

## **Personnel Services: TUSD Holds Eighth Annual Employee Health Fair**

Several hundred staff members attended the Tustin Unified School District's eighth annual Employee Health Fair held on October 24 in the courtyard at the District Office. The health fair, organized by TUSD Personnel Services and sponsored by Burnham Benefits, included flu shots, interactive and informational booths, biometric screenings, and a healthy lunch served by TUSD Nutrition Services.

TUSD employees were able to talk to over 30 vendors, such as health experts and representatives from local fitness centers, physical therapy centers, vision and health insurance companies, SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union, and others. Additionally, many employees won raffle prizes – gift cards, donations from vendors, and bicycles. The event was well-received by District employees.

**Right photo: Nutrition Services Manager Jim Kamuran and Pioneer Middle School Cafeteria cook Alice Sanchez prepare healthy lunches.**





Facilities Master Plan Committee members work on a school improvement project at a recent meeting.

## Maintenance, Operations, and Facilities: Projects Update and Master Plan Committee

Following an exorbitant pace for completing summer projects, the Facilities team has shifted its gears toward two primary areas – maintenance work orders and planning. Over 1,800 maintenance work orders were submitted during the first two months of the school year and 80 percent have been complete to date. The referenced work ranges from tasks such as plumbing, air conditioning, electrical, and irrigation repairs to requests for new planting, fencing, and painting.

Planning and design work is currently underway on the following projects slated for completion in 2019: Long-range facilities master plan, solar carports/shade structures at various sites, and C.E. Utt Middle School science lab modernization. Last, but not least, State Architect approval was recently secured for a series of projects that will bid and commence shortly: classroom additions at Tustin Connect, Red Hill Elementary School, and Hewes Middle School; and Red Hill shade structure.

The Facilities Master Plan Committee was established to help develop a Long-Range Facilities Master Plan for the District. Membership on the committee represents school and District staff, students, parents, and community members. Committee members may also participate in school or community meetings over the next year or so to gather additional input regarding facility needs.



## The Buddy System

Jeane Thorman Elementary School recently unveiled its new Buddy Bench. The Buddy Bench is a simple idea to eliminate loneliness and foster empathy and friendship on the playground.

If a student is in need of someone to play with, they simply have a seat on the Buddy Bench. Students know to keep an eye on the bench and if they see someone who needs a friend, they go say hi and include the student in their activity. It's a win-win for everybuddy!

Thorman Elementary students, from left, Magaly Solano, Samantha Garcia, Chris Fernandez and Diego Bermudes strike up a friendship at the bench.



Runners are having the time of their lives at the Tustin Public Schools Foundation's 28<sup>th</sup> annual Dinosaur Dash held on November 4 at the Tustin Market Place. This year, the event featured a half-marathon run.  
*Photos courtesy of John Garrett*

## Tustin Public Schools Foundation: TUSD Community Has Fun and Raises Funds at Dinosaur Dash

The 28<sup>th</sup> annual Dinosaur Dash, presented by Balfour Beatty, was held on November 4 at the Market Place in Tustin. The community run, walk, and bike event benefited the Tustin Public Schools Foundation and featured an all-new half-marathon run in addition to its traditional Smart & Final 2K, Tustin Auto Center 5K, 10K and Seven Gables Real Estate Bike Tours.

Half-marathon finishers received a commemorative medal billed as "Southern California's largest" in celebration of the inaugural Half for the Dash. The medal, six inches in diameter, weighed 13.1 oz. – a nod to the 13.1-mile half-marathon distance.

More than 10,000 attended the Dinosaur Dash, which included a free family expo that offered activities, school fundraising booths, exhibitors, and a food court featuring local restaurants.

This year's event, with the theme, "#DashGoBig," was led by co-chairs Troy Fresch, assistant principal at Pioneer Middle School, and Kristin Simpkins, a school parent. Both serve on the Board of Directors of the Tustin Public Schools Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to raising funds for Tustin Unified schools. The event raised more than \$200,000.

Further community involvement is evident in the event logo and event trophies that are awarded for the top finisher in each race, in each age division. Trophies are ceramic dinosaurs crafted by students in the ceramics classes at Foothill and Tustin high schools.

The logo for this year's event was designed by Foothill High School student Kat Garzon. To learn more about TPSF's events and programs, visit [www.tpsf.net](http://www.tpsf.net).



## Grant Applications Open

The Tustin Public Schools Foundation offers funding to TUSD educators through two avenues: Innovative Grant Program and Classroom and Schoolwide Grant Program. The application period for both is now open at [www.tpsf.net/grants](http://www.tpsf.net/grants). The deadline to apply is Monday, December 31.

**Columbus Tustin Middle School students show the water bottle refilling station the school purchased with help from a grant from TPSF.**

*Photo courtesy of John Garrett*

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## Follow Superintendent Franklin and TUSD on Twitter!

During the year, get the latest news and information! You can always follow Superintendent Gregory Franklin and the Tustin Unified School District on Twitter: @SuptFranklin and @TUSDschools. "Like" us on Facebook: TUSDschools. Stay in touch with us!



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For questions, comments or information, contact:  
Mark Eliot, Director of Communications and Public Information  
(714) 730-7339 or [meliot@tustin.k12.ca.us](mailto:meliot@tustin.k12.ca.us)

