



ISSUE NO.4

LAS LOMITAS ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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SUPERINTENDENT NEWSLETTER

A Spirit of Gratitude

November invites us to pause and reflect on what we're grateful for. I have much to appreciate. Thank you to our community and staff for your continued support and feedback. At the October Board meeting, I shared a summary of your summer feedback. I invite you to [review that presentation](#) to see how our recent work—from the Balanced Budget Initiative and Design Teams to programmatic adjustments—connects to what we heard.

I'm also grateful to lead such a talented team whose work earned LLESD a place on the 2025 California Honor Roll—one of only four districts in San Mateo County to receive this distinction.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to the Las Lomitas Education Foundation's Annual Campaign. Together, we've raised over \$50,000 for Apple For The Classroom! The Foundation has extended the deadline so the first \$200 of every donation continues to go directly back to your child's classroom. How wonderful would it be to reach \$100K for field trips and unique learning experiences?

As you gather this month, I hope near the top of your gratitude list is the privilege of being part of this extraordinary community of learners. I know it's near the top of mine. I'm grateful for you.

Warmly,
Erik Burmeister
Superintendent

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Message from the Board President



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Thank you for
your continued
support and
collaboration.

On behalf of the Board, I report on progress toward transparent governance and our district goals.

We reviewed last year's CAASPP results and local assessment data. We are encouraged by progress in some areas and identified areas requiring more attention. The Board initiated policy revisions starting with fiscal responsibility and taxpayer accountability. Next, we will address parental rights, wellness, technology use, and AI in relation to academic integrity.

We enthusiastically welcome our new Design Teams, committee work, and Balanced Budget Initiative. These provide innovative opportunities to strategically align resources with our priorities.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration. It is an honor to serve this community.

Sincerely,
Paige Winikoff
President, LLESD Board of Trustees
schoolboard@llesd.org

November: A Month of Gratitude

This month, we're celebrating:

- **1 of 4** districts in San Mateo County to earn CA Honor Roll recognition
- **\$50,000+** raised for Apple For The Classroom
- 550 students connecting at **LUDI Latin Convention**
- **6 Design Teams** collaborating to shape our district's future
- **New Math Bridge Program** supporting student pathways
- New technology supporting learning & **student safety**
- **Literacy programs** aligned with state standards
- Community gathering at the **Fun Run** (Nov 16!)



We're Honored! Las Lomas Stands Out Statewide

Las Lomas Elementary District has been recognized on the 2025 California Honor Roll by Educational Results Partnership (ERP), placing it among just four districts out of 24 in San Mateo County to receive this distinction.

The California Honor Roll identifies schools and districts demonstrating sustained academic growth across all student groups. This year, 1,834 schools and 158 districts statewide earned recognition based on three years of CAASPP results in English Language Arts and Math.

The methodology focuses on equitable outcomes—ensuring students of all backgrounds achieve at higher levels. Schools must demonstrate consistent progress across multiple years and student subgroups to qualify.

Both Las Lomas Elementary and La Entrada Middle School earned individual Honor Roll recognition, underscoring the district's commitment to rigorous learning from TK through 8th grade. The full list is available at HonorRollSchools.com.



Looking Ahead: A New Strategic Plan for LLESD

As the world emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, Las Lomas Elementary School District came together in 2022 to chart a course for recovery through its current Strategic Plan.

That plan—anchored in five key pillars: Inspirational Learning, Social-Emotional Learning & Wellness, Professional Development, Communication & Engagement, and Facilities & Infrastructure—has guided the district's work over the past three years and helped LLESD achieve many of its goals. (View the current Strategic Plan [here](#).)

Now, with a new Board of Trustees, Superintendent, and Leadership Team, and with fresh ideas and opportunities before us, we're excited to launch a community-wide process to design LLESD's next five-year Strategic Plan.

This is an important moment to imagine our district's future together—one that builds on our strengths, honors our history, and reflects the hopes of the students, staff, and families we serve. Stay tuned after the first of the year for opportunities to share your voice and help shape LLESD's next chapter.

Learning Community Updates

October 13 PD Day

On October 13, LLESD teachers came together for a districtwide Professional Development Day focused on Literacy for All, aligned with California's Golden State Literacy Plan.



Educators explored practical, evidence-based strategies in foundational literacy, vocabulary, and reading comprehension to help every student grow, from those still building skills to our highest achievers.

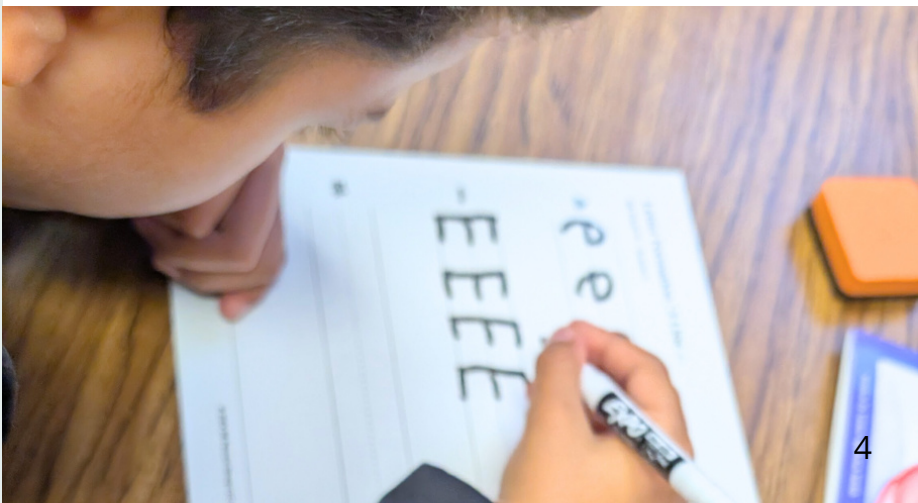
We are grateful to our families for supporting this day on a school day, which allows our teachers to strengthen the instruction your children experience every day in the classroom.



Literacy Design Team

The Literacy Design Team has developed a series of Challenge Briefs that define the context, problem, and opportunities connected to our literacy goals — including assessment, professional development, and collaboration/articulation. The team has also established a need-finding process that will take place between now and January 14, 2026.

Next steps include conducting focus groups and empathy interviews to gather insights from a range of perspectives across the district. The team will work with families to obtain student permissions and will engage students, staff, administrators, parents, and board members in these conversations to ensure a broad and inclusive understanding of literacy needs.



Las Lomitas Inclusion Initiative

Earlier this month, the Las Lomitas Inclusion Initiative (LLII) hosted its first Information Session, bringing together parents, caregivers, and educators committed to fostering inclusion and supporting students with learning differences.

The October 7 event was co-hosted by the LLII parent group and LLESD Student Services. Representatives shared insights about 504 plans, IEPs, and classroom supports, generating meaningful dialogue and strengthened partnerships across the district.



LLII is hosting a Coffee Event on Thursday, November 6, from 8:45–9:45 a.m. in the La Entrada MUR for parents and caregivers interested in exchanging ideas on supporting students with learning differences.

To learn more or join the network, visit laslomitasinclusion.com

Save the Date: Summer School

We're excited to share that LLESD plans to bring back summer programming June 22–July 17, after a year's hiatus due to budget constraints. Expected offerings include Extended School Year (ESY) for select students with IEPs and middle school math bridge courses for students interested in compacting or receiving additional support.

Mark your calendars and stay tuned!

Introducing the Math Bridge Program

We're excited to introduce the Math Bridge Program, designed to help students accelerate their math learning while building a strong foundation for success.

This winter/spring, LLESD will pilot two zero-period Math Bridge courses—one for current sixth-graders and one for seventh-graders—offered February 2 through April 30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings from 7:45 to 8:30 a.m.

These teacher-led sessions cover key content students would otherwise miss when transitioning to a compacted pathway. For 6th graders, the bridge provides prerequisite "7A" content for compacted 7th-grade math. For 7th graders, it covers Math 8 content for Algebra 1 readiness.

The district is also exploring summer and online bridge opportunities to expand access for all learners.

Look for communication from your child's teacher soon about participation options.

LLESD Hosts LUDI Latin Regional Convention



On October 18, 2025, LLESD proudly hosted the LUDI Latin Regional Convention, bringing together 550 students from 20 schools across Northern California for academic challenges, artistic performances, and spirited camaraderie.

Under the leadership of **Eleanor Stuart**, LLESD's Latin teacher and program advisor, the district coordinated activities including Certamen, Ludi games, Roman Speed Dating, Edible Mosaics, and Academic Testing. Students also attended "colloquia"—interactive workshops on topics such as "Ancient Greek for Neophytes."

Assistant Principal **Tish Whiteley** reflected, "The energy and sense of community were palpable." Eighth-graders **Avi B.** and **Chris H.**, both Northern California representatives on the California Junior Classical League Board, reflected on the experience. Avi shared, "It was a really great way to give back to CAJCL." Chris noted the event strengthened "the Latin community in Northern California."

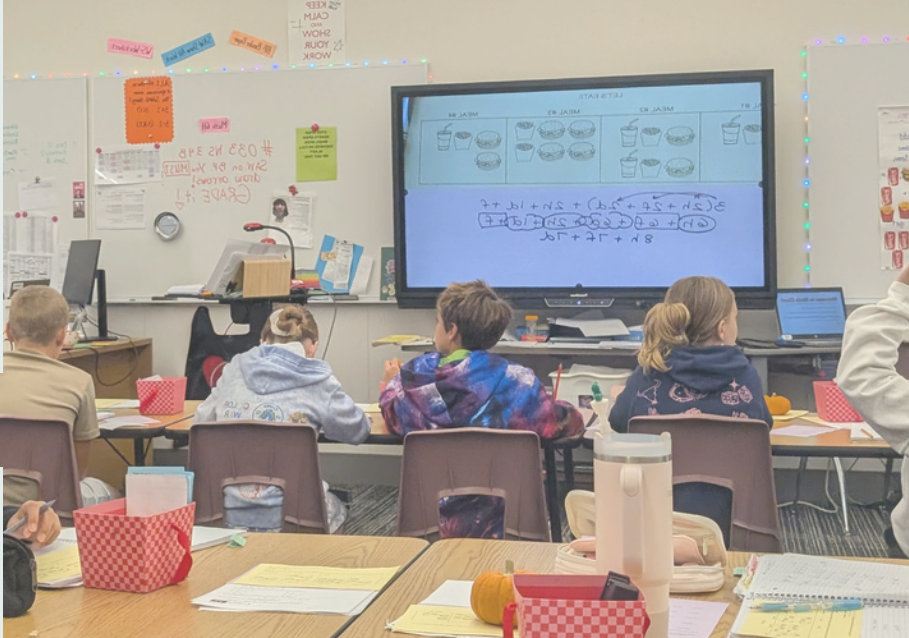
The event's success resulted from extraordinary teamwork. Special thanks to **Andrew Anagnostou, Leanne Cummins, Daniella Lefer, Jen Lutton, Roberto Melendez, Roberto Melendez Jr., Toni Papara, Karen Schutten, Kristine Tveten, Teagan Webster**, and dozens of parent and student volunteers.

Ms. Stuart's visionary leadership made it all possible. As she shared in [The Almanac's coverage](#), "The teaching of Latin and the Greek roots is backed up by many studies in being helpful for reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition—all of the things for wonderful brain development, not only for English-only speakers, but also English learners as well."

As one of the few public middle school Latin programs in the nation, LLESD continues its tradition of providing rich opportunities to explore the humanities.

Congratulations to all who participated—and gratias tibi to everyone who helped make this celebration a success!

Operations & Tech Updates



State Parks Pass for Fourth Graders

All fourth graders in California can now get a free California State Parks Adventure Pass that will give them the opportunity to explore 19 select state parks free for a year.

This Pass is valid for the one-year period during which the child is a 4th grader or 4th grade equivalent, until August 31, 2026. [Learn more.](#)



LLESD Rolls Out Threat and Bullying Prevention and Reporting Tool

Student safety is a top priority for Las Lomitas Elementary School District. La Entrada now offers grades 6-8 a tool called STOPit to anonymously report safety concerns such as bullying, self-harm, or violence.

As of October 27, the STOPit app is available on all middle school students' Clever portal. Students click the app and follow prompts to report concerns. All students learned how to use STOPit during PE classes, and families received email information.

Reports are managed by La Entrada administrators and counselors, with support from the San Mateo County Safety Team. Staff can review reports, reply to students, create response plans, and escalate concerns when needed.

Families can also access STOPit on personal devices using [this link](#) or by searching "STOPit" in their app library.

Transportation Staff Shortage

This year, LLESD anticipates occasional bus route cancellations due to ongoing staffing challenges in our transportation department, which—like many [across the nation](#)—is affected by a significant bus driver shortage.

We will make every effort to cover routes with substitute drivers when possible, but substitute availability remains limited. We appreciate our families' patience and understanding as we work through these challenges together.



Walking Trail Closure Along San Francisquito Creek / Santa Cruz Ave



The City of Menlo Park recently closed the walking trail along San Francisquito Creek near Santa Cruz Avenue due to significant erosion that has made the path unsafe for travel. The LLESD recognizes that many of our students and community members regularly use this trail, and we understand how disruptive its closure may feel.

According to the City, there is currently no safe alternate route because of the lack of sidewalks in the area. The City's Public Works Department is actively exploring solutions and potential infrastructure improvements; however, they have indicated that repairs or alternative pathways may take at least one year to complete. In the meantime, all users are urged to avoid the area and seek alternate forms of transportation for safety.

We appreciate the City's partnership and commitment to community safety. Updates about the project and future plans will be posted on the [City's website here](#).

For questions or comments, community members are encouraged to contact the City of Menlo Park's Public Works Department at publicworks@menlopark.gov

Digital Wellness: Understanding the Developing Adolescent Brain

When: Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 6:45 pm

Where: La Entrada Middle School MUR

Join the La Entrada PTA for a special parent education presentation on the [Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development \(ABCD\) Study](#) — the largest long-term study of children's brain development and health in the U.S.

SRI's [Dr. Fiona Baker](#), leading sleep and brain development researcher, will share fascinating insights into how children's and teens' brains grow and change, and associations between screen use, sleep, behaviors, and emotional health, as well as how families can use this information to promote digital wellness and balanced screen use at home.

Don't miss this opportunity to understand your child's developing mind and learn practical strategies to support healthy habits and success—both online and off!



Fun Run

When: Sunday, November 16, 8:30am

Where: Las Lomitas Campus

LLEF and the LL PTA invite you to join us for a morning of wellness activities and the annual Fun Run.

- **9am:** Munchkin March for children in grade 1 or below
- **9:30am:** 1 mile and 5K course
- **9-11am:** kids' yoga, hydration station/decorate your water bottle, dance, Sterling the Bubblesmith, Emmy the Atherton police dog, gratitude crafts, and more

Please [RSVP to attend and register to run/walk](#).

Many volunteers needed! Please [sign up to volunteer](#).

Presented by Pacific Coast Dermatology with support from Pediatric Dentistry of Palo Alto

Stay Connected

Important Dates

Wednesday, November 5

Board Meeting

Time: 6:30–9:30pm

Location: La Entrada MUR

Thursday, November 6

LLII Coffee Event

Time: 8:45–9:45 a.m.

Location: La Entrada MUR

Tuesday, November 11

Veterans Day (no school)

November 10, 12-14

Minimum Days/Conferences

Wednesday, November 12

Digital Wellness Event

Time: 6:45pm

Location: La Entrada MUR

Sunday, November 16

Fun Run

Time: 8:30–11am

Location: Las Lomas Campus

November 24-28

Thanksgiving Break (no school)

Get Involved



We have a few spots left for interested parents on some of our design teams and committees.

Contact eburmeister@llesd.org

Interested in volunteering at our brand new after-school math center?

Email aanagnostou@llesd.org

Resources

District Website

<https://www.llesd.org>

Las Lomas PTA

<https://www.laslomaspta.org>

La Entrada PTA

<https://www.laentradapt.org>

Las Lomas Education Fund

<https://www.llef.org>



**Las Lomas
Elementary
School District**

Inclusive. Engaging. Inspiring.