



WINTER 2025-2026

ROOTS & WINGS

Корни и Крылья الجذور والأجنحة Raíces y Alas 根与翼

At Pacific Grove Adult School,

our students truly embody the spirit of *Roots and Wings*. This season, we're proud to shine a spotlight on our wonderfully diverse English as a Second Language (ESL) community — learners who are deeply *rooted* in our local community while other community members are taking community education classes, expanding their *wings* to new opportunities through language.

Our classrooms are a vibrant tapestry of cultures, with approximately 20 different native languages represented among our English learners. Each student brings unique life experiences, traditions, and perspectives that enrich our school community and reflect the beauty of Pacific Grove's diversity.

At the same time, our Community Education Language students are spreading their own wings — learning new languages, exploring global cultures, and building bridges of understanding across communities.

Together, our students, teachers, and staff nurture what we call a "Culture of We" — a learning environment where everyone feels welcomed, heard, respected, and included. It's a place where every culture, background, and belief is celebrated and valued.

At Pacific Grove Adult School, our roots keep us connected, and our wings help us soar.



“There are two lasting bequests we can give our children: one is roots, the other is wings.”

Wurzeln und Flügel

根之翼

Mga Ugat at Pakpak

Nā 'A'a me Nā 'Eheu

जड़ें और पंख

Raíces e Asas

Racines et Ailes

ریشه و بال

Radici e Ali

뿌리와 날개

PGAE Mid-year Snapshot

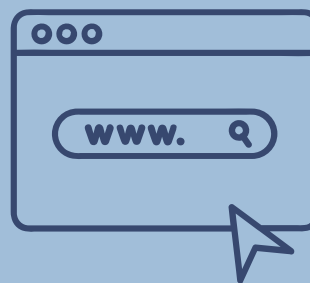


1,483

Students

2,167

Enrollments



113

Courses Offered

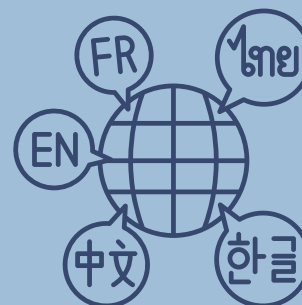
Different Native Languages

35

(Students)

21

(Staff)



Different Countries of Origin

66

(Students)

16

(Staff)



EXPANDING OUR HORIZONS THROUGH LANGUAGE

At Pacific Grove Adult School, learning new languages opens the door to global connection, cultural appreciation, and lifelong growth. Our Community Education Languages program proudly offers 15 foreign language classes – from beginning to advanced levels – allowing students to explore the beauty of communication across cultures.

Whether learners are preparing for travel, reconnecting with their heritage, or simply seeking a new challenge, our language classes provide a welcoming and engaging space to learn together.

Each semester, our students share their enthusiasm for exploring new languages and cultures – and they're always eager for more! The growing interest in world languages reflects the curiosity and global mindset that make Pacific Grove Adult School such a vibrant learning community.

Currently, we offer classes in Spanish, French, Farsi, Italian, and Russian and adding German for the winter session. If there's a language you've been dreaming of learning, we'd love to hear from you – your ideas help us shape future course offerings. At Pacific Grove Adult School, we believe that learning a new language doesn't just expand your vocabulary – it expands your world.



NEW RUSSIAN LANGUAGE CLASS!

By Natalia Lukovenko, Russian Instructor

One day this fall, our Russian language students explored the fascinating letter “Ы”—a sound unique to the Russian alphabet. To bring the lesson to life, they learned that this letter appears in the word “сырники,” a beloved Russian breakfast dish made with cottage cheese.

Students first watched a short video showing how сырники are prepared, and then enjoyed tasting authentic Russian сырники, lovingly made by the Russian wife of one of our students. The dish was served the traditional way—with sour cream, honey, and sweetened condensed milk.

In every class, our students not only expand their Russian vocabulary but also experience the country's rich food and cultural traditions firsthand. It's a delicious way to learn!



Transitions



Well Wishes

As we welcome new staff to our PGAE family, we also want to take a moment to thank those who are leaving us to pursue new opportunities. Your dedication, hard work, and commitment to our students have left a lasting impact on our school community. While we will miss you, we are excited for the next chapter in your journey and wish you nothing but success and happiness in your future endeavors. Once a part of the PGAE family, always a part of the PGAE family!

MICHELLE KERKHOFF, PGAE ADMIN. ASST.

It is with deep appreciation and a touch of bittersweet emotion that we announce the retirement of Michelle Kerkhoff, who has been a cherished member of the Pacific Grove Adult Education team since 2013. Michelle first joined PGAE as a clerk for Parents' Place and later as an evening clerk in the front office. In 2015, she became an Administrative Assistant IV, a role supporting the principal and staff with exceptional dedication, warmth, and professionalism.

Michelle and I began our journey in education together more than 26 years ago in a southern California school district, and having the privilege of working beside her again at PG Adult School has been one of the great gifts of my career. Words can't fully express how fortunate I've been to share an office with her these past years. Her support, kindness, calm presence, and unwavering dedication to our school community have made a lasting impact on staff, students, and families alike.

Although Michelle is closing this chapter of her educational career, she is beginning an exciting new one—working alongside her husband to build and grow their nonprofit Counseling Center in Monterey. We know this next step will allow her to continue serving others in meaningful and compassionate ways.

And while she may be retiring from her role in the district, this is certainly not goodbye. You will still see Michelle here at Pacific Grove Adult School—this time as a lifelong learner, taking classes and staying connected with the community she has helped shape.

Please join us in celebrating Michelle's remarkable service and wishing her joy, fulfillment, and continued success in her next chapter. She will always be a treasured part of the PG Adult Education family.

ZEHUNNA SZESTOWICKI, IPP INSTRUCTOR

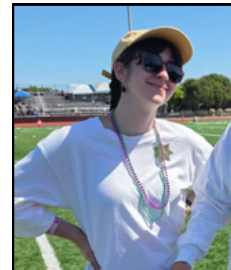
Pacific Grove Adult Education extends our warmest congratulations and best wishes to Zehunna "Z" Szesztowicki, as she continues her commitment to lifelong learning! Z will be returning to the university to pursue her Master's Degree, a remarkable step that reflects her dedication both to her own growth and to the specialized field of working with adults with disabilities.

Z began her career with PGAE working with neurodivergent adults as an aide in our Independent Pathway Program (IPP). Her compassion, skill, and unwavering support for students quickly became evident, ultimately leading to her well-earned promotion to Instructor in March 2024.

Z is known for her kind heart, her calm presence, and the genuine care she brings to every interaction. She is truly loved by all students, families, and colleagues.

We are incredibly proud of her accomplishments and grateful for the lasting impact she has made in our program. Best wishes, Z, as you embark on this exciting new chapter!

Best Wishes to Michelle and Z on their next adventures!



Welcome New Staff!

- **Greg Ludwa**, High School Diploma/Equivalency
- **Brittni Light**, Yoga for 50+
- **Natalia Lukovenko**, Russian
- **Mo Amad**, iPhone Made Easy
- **Karen Maassen**, Mat Pilates & Line Dancing
- **Chris Logue**, German
- **Octavio Martinez**, CSUMB Service Learner, High School Diploma Math Tutoring
- **Tony Angelo**, Volunteer, Citizenship Prep
- **Sabrina Heilpern**, Clerk
- **Diane Cates-Pegis**, Administrative Assistant



Transitions

DIANE CATES-PEGIS, PGAE ADMIN. ASST.



Michelle handing over the key to the castle to Diane!

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce Diane Pegis in her new role as Administrative Assistant IV for Pacific Grove Adult Education. Diane has been a dedicated Clerk III, supporting our Parent Education programs with care and commitment for the past 12 years.

Families know her not only for her professionalism, but for the way she creates a welcoming environment where every parent, caregiver, and child feels seen and supported. Her ability to connect with people, guide them through their first steps in our programs, and offer reassurance during moments of uncertainty has become a hallmark of the Parent's Place and Parent Co-Op experience.

Diane's transition into this new role feels like a natural continuation of the leadership she has quietly modeled for years. She brings deep institutional knowledge, a calm and thoughtful service-minded approach to problem-solving, and an unwavering commitment to our mission of fostering belonging, equity, and meaningful partnerships with families.

As she steps into the Administrative Assistant IV position, Diane will carry forward the same spirit of service, collaboration, and integrity that has shaped her work since the beginning. We are confident that her contributions will continue to strengthen our programs and support the success of our students, families, and staff.

Please join us in congratulating Diane on this well-earned achievement and in celebrating this exciting next chapter in her journey with Pacific Grove Adult Education!

Staff Spotlights

FARZANA KHAN, IPP IA



Hi everyone! My name is Farzan Khan, and I've had the privilege of serving as an Instructional Assistant in IPP, the Adults with Disabilities Program at the adult school for over four years. What I love most about my work is the resilience, strength, and grace my students show in the face of their challenges. Their sense of humor and positive energy have taught me how to be a better person, and every day feels exciting and meaningful.

In my role, I enjoy leading a variety of activities with our students, including book club, culinary sessions, and even volunteering at the aquarium. I feel truly blessed to be part of a dedicated and compassionate team that is deeply committed to the growth and wellbeing of our students.

Throughout my life, I have been fortunate to live in many different cities across three continents. Because my father was in the civil service, our family moved often. I spent time in Shrivvenham, England, just two hours from London, and lived in multiple cities in Pakistan, including Islamabad, Lahore, and Rawalpindi—where my children were born. I earned both my undergraduate and master's degrees in English and Psychology from Lahore, and later worked as a first-grade elementary school teacher, a role that strengthened my passion for education.

Today, I continue that passion through my work with adults with disabilities in the Independent Pathway Program, where I find joy, purpose, and connection every single day.

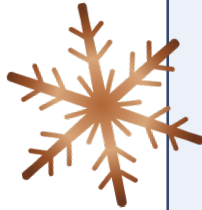
Some fun facts about me: I love trying new recipes I discover online, and I enjoy taking long walks through the beautiful streets and coastline of Pacific Grove.



Staff Spotlights



SUNITA KHATRI ACHARYA, CHILDCARE IA



Hi Everyone! My name is Sunita Khatri Acharya, and I am an Instructional Assistant at the Pacific Grove Adult Education Childcare Center, where I work with children ages 18 months to 3 years old. I joined PGUSD in 2024 and feel grateful every day to be part of such a supportive and welcoming community.

I am originally from Nepal and moved to the United States in 2023. Before coming here, I spent 12 years teaching at the primary, lower secondary, and secondary levels. I hold a Master's Degree in English Literature, a Bachelor's Degree in Education, and a Bachelor's in Humanities and Social Sciences with concentrations in English Literature, Sociology, and Anthropology.

When I arrived in the U.S., I knew I wanted to continue working in education. However, I quickly realized that British English—what I had learned and taught in Nepal—was different from the English and accents I encountered in everyday life here. To improve my communication skills and adapt confidently, I enrolled in ESL classes at Pacific Grove Adult School. I took pronunciation, literature, and conversation courses, which helped me strengthen my listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. My goal was to gain the confidence needed to secure a job in my field—and I am proud that I achieved it.

Once I began working at the Childcare Center, language barriers no longer felt like obstacles. I learned new words daily from children, families, and colleagues, and everyone was incredibly supportive. As I continued working, I realized the importance of deepening my knowledge in early childhood education, so I enrolled at Monterey Peninsula College. I have now completed 18 ECE units and am able to apply what I learn in my coursework directly to my work with children. This learning journey has not only improved my teaching practices but has also enriched my relationships at home with my daughter and husband.



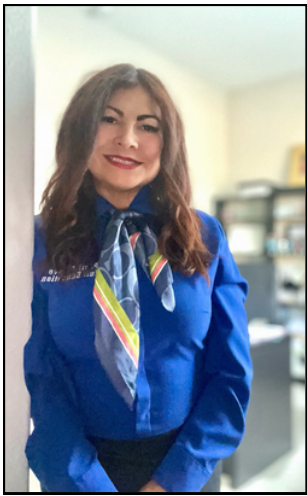
Fun Facts About Me:

- I speak three languages fluently: Nepali, English, and Hindi.
- I love memorizing song lyrics and recording my voice.
- I enjoy researching new topics in my free time and reading literature—The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho is one of my favorite novels.
- I have crossed Thorong La Pass in the Himalayas at an elevation of 17,769 feet above sea level!
- I never give up on my goals, and helping children smile is the greatest joy of my day. I am truly thankful for the children, families, and colleagues who make my life happy and beautiful. I look forward to continuing to grow, learn, and contribute to our wonderful PGUSD community.



Staff Spotlights

CLAUDIA RODRIGUEZ, SPANISH INSTRUCTOR



Hello all! My name is Claudia and I have been a Pacific Grove Adult School Spanish Teacher for over 3 years now. I was born in Jalisco, Mexico, famous for being the birthplace of Tequila (which you know very well haha!). I hold a master's degree in Marketing & Advertising, and in my free time I love writing poetry and books, but I also like being active by playing beach volleyball and dancing (you know, I am Latina).

I truly enjoy guiding my students not only in the language but also through the rich cultural heritage of the Hispanic world. I am passionate about introducing them to writers, artists, sculptors, and painters, helping them develop communication skills that strengthen their connection with the Spanish-speaking community.

For me, every class becomes an exchange of cultures, experiences, and perspectives that enriches everyone involved.

**FELIZ
NAVIDAD**

Student Spotlight

**KENZA ADDISON,
INDEPENDENT PATHWAYS PROGRAM STUDENT**

Kenza Adassen is a long-time PGUSD student who is continuing her lifelong learning journey through the Pacific Grove Adult School's Independence Pathway Program. Kenza is an enthusiastic lifelong learner who especially enjoys attending Monterey Peninsula College, where she takes Adaptive Physical Education and Life Skills with Assistive Technology Teacher, Mr. Copeland.

This fall, Kenza earned a remarkable achievement—she was named the winner of the High Tech Center's Fall Semester 2025 Stock Market Contest! Starting with a virtual \$100,000, Kenza demonstrated impressive market insight, finishing the 15-week contest with a gain of \$12,150 (12.15%). Her portfolio, led by Eli Lilly (LLY),

Google (GOOG), and Apple (AAPL), was exceptionally well diversified across 13 companies, including Wendy's, McDonald's, Target, Ross, and Amazon. In a close competition with more than 25 students participating, Kenza secured the win by less than \$200, setting a new record as the most profitable stock picker in the contest's history. Kenza will return next semester as the defending champion and record holder. Keep up the great work, Kenza!



Campus News

Here's What's Happening Around the Campus

PGAE ESL Classes Plan A Winter Cultural Celebration!



Join us on **Thursday, December 11th, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** for the ESL Department's **Winter Cultural Celebration**, a vibrant showcase of the many cultures represented

at our adult school. The event will feature student-created displays and delicious foods from around the world—complete with dish names and recipes—along with a lively talent show of music, dance, and cultural readings, and a beautiful fashion show highlighting traditional clothing from our diverse communities. This joyful gathering reflects our district's **"Culture of We"** and honors the rich diversity that makes our school such a welcoming and inspiring place to learn.

Kiwanis Santa Project Toy Drive

The Pacific Grove Adult School is proud to support the Kiwanis Club in their annual Kiwanis Santa Project, a community tradition that helps ensure children across Monterey, Pacific Grove, and Carmel experience the joy of the holiday season.

Working alongside local fire departments, Kiwanis collects and distributes toys to boys and girls in need, with deliveries made directly by our area firefighters. We invite staff, students, and community members to participate in this meaningful project.



Toys must be brand new and unwrapped.



Every donation—big or small—helps bring the Christmas spirit to children who might otherwise go without. **Donations will be accepted through December 18th.**

A donation bin is available in the main building. Thank you for helping make the holidays brighter for families in our community.

You are also invited to join the community **Wrap Party on December 19 at 5 p.m.** in the **Monterey High School gym**, where volunteers will help wrap gifts before they are delivered.



Holiday Food Drive for the Food Bank for Monterey County

This holiday season, the Pacific Grove Adult School is proud to support the Food Bank for Monterey County in their efforts to ensure every family in our community has access to nourishing food. The winter months bring increased need, and the Food Bank plays a vital role in helping local children, seniors, and families enjoy a warm and supported holiday season.

We invite staff, students, and community members to contribute to our Holiday Food Drive by donating non-perishable food items. Even a single can or box can make a meaningful difference for a household in need during this time of year.

Two donation bins are available in the main building for your contributions.

Thank you for helping spread generosity and care throughout our community this holiday season.



Winter Session Info

Tech Updates

Class Price Increases

Our adult school has long been committed to offering high-quality instruction at very low cost, and in past years we were even able to reduce fees to support greater access. Our staff have worked hard to reduce expenses wherever possible (e.g. reducing printing), and we continue to implement additional cost-saving measures such as limiting overtime and reducing the use of unnecessary substitutes.

However, amid ongoing budget constraints and rising operational costs, we must implement modest class price increases in order to sustain our valuable programs and continue serving our community with the excellence you expect. We appreciate your understanding and remain dedicated to providing meaningful, affordable educational opportunities for all.



Important Dates to Remember



- **December 10, 2025**
 - Registration opens for Winter Session
- **December 11, 2025**
 - ESL Cultural Celebration
- **January 05, 2026**
 - Winter Session Begins
- **January 19, 2026**
 - PGUSD closed for MLK Jr. Day
- **February 6, 2026**
 - IPP-ATP Valentine's Day Dance and Celebration



Here are some important updates from PGAE's IT Technician extraordinaire, Manuel Villagomez:

Securly

A site-filtering tool called Securly will be installed on all devices at the school to block potentially dangerous websites or activity on our computers. If you have trouble accessing sites needed for instruction, please submit a Tech Ticket.



E-Waste Removal



We are working on clearing out and disposing of old, unused electronics and computers by December. Equipment might include old non-working printers, broken or out-of-date iPads, old or damaged cables, speakers, etc. If there is equipment in your classrooms that you know is no longer used, please submit a Tech Ticket.

Windows Upgrade

All devices at the school that have Windows installed will be upgraded to Windows 11 in the coming weeks. This week I will be working on updating devices that have Windows 10 to Windows 11.

Tech Support Tickets

Please remember to use the Tech Ticket tool to submit requests for tech support. Go to <https://www.pgusd.org/>, click *Staff Login* at the top (make sure you are logged in with your PGUSD Gmail account), click *Support* at the top and see a dropdown menu. Under *Technology*, click on *Timely Tech Ticket*.



New This Winter!

New Classes!

As you may know, PGAE offers a wide variety of classes each session, and as the community's needs arise, we strive to bring them the classes that they request!

COMPUTERS

Internet Safety - Wednesdays 5:30-7:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

iPhone Photography - Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Conscious Parenting - Tuesdays 6-8 p.m.

LANGUAGES

German - Mondays at 6-8 p.m.

French 1A - Wednesdays 4-5:30 p.m.

French Amis - Tuesdays 5-7 p.m.

English for Hospitality & Customer Service

A new contextualized ESL class for Hospitality Workers is starting this Winter Session! In collaboration with Pebble Beach Resorts and other hospitality industry partners, PGAE is offering this free English class that supports English learners who want to



strengthen their communication skills for work in hospitality and customer service settings. Students develop the language skills needed for welcoming guests, describing services, responding to requests, and interacting professionally with supervisors and coworkers.

The multi-level ESL class is open to all and will be held at the Pacific Grove Adult School on Tuesdays 4-5:30 p.m.



Explore Careers in Education



A new one-week course is launching this Winter Session to support adults interested in pursuing careers in education and early childhood education. This class introduces participants to a variety of roles in school settings, outlines training and credential requirements, and connects learners with financial aid options, apprenticeships, and degree pathways at nearby colleges and universities. Individualized advising is included to help participants plan their next steps.

The course will be held at Pacific Grove Adult school on the week of March 2-5.

Entrepreneurial Mindset for Adult Learners

This new course helps adults build an entrepreneurial mindset — a flexible, opportunity focused way of thinking that supports both career growth and small-business aspirations. Through real-world examples, group



activities, and reflective exercises, students will develop practical practical tools for creative problem-solving, goal-setting, and leadership. These skills are valuable for anyone looking to start a business, advance in their current role, or take ownership of their personal and professional goals.

The class meets Mondays from 2–3:30 p.m. in Room 4 at the Pacific Grove Adult School.

Program Highlights

Independence Pathway Program Artapalooza: A Celebration of Creativity, Confidence, and Community

PGAE's Independence Pathway Program (IPP) students and staff recently attended and participated in an amazing local event called Artapalooza. Artapalooza is more than an art show—it's a celebration of creativity, confidence, and community! This year's event brought together talented artists, musicians, and performers from across our community to showcase the incredible abilities of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. From inspiring artwork to powerful live performances, the event reflected the heart of inclusion and the joy of artistic expression. The stage came alive with performances by students from our own Independence Pathway Program, Latizmo Hip Hop Productions, and the New Hope Band—each group representing the creativity, confidence, and spirit that make Artapalooza so special.



Artapalooza is organized by Art Abilities, a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities through art. Their mission is to empower people of all abilities by fostering creative expression and celebrating the unique voices of every artist. To learn more, visit www.artabilities.org. PGAE's IPP students go to art classes weekly at Art Abilities.



Artapalooza guests enjoyed delicious food and a hot cup of Captain + Stoker Coffee, proudly served by PGAE's own Independence Pathway Program students. Meanwhile, students from the Art Abilities class had the opportunity to shine as they auctioned their original artwork, sharing their creativity with enthusiastic supporters.



Artapalooza truly showcased the power of art to bring people together—celebrating ability, inclusion, and the vibrant creativity that makes the Pacific Grove community so special.

Stay
Creative



PGAE ESL Teacher, Soleil Turell, Presents at State Conference

This fall, a teacher from PGAE's excellent ESL department, Soleil Turell, presented at the annual CATESOL conference in Hayward. CATESOL is the association for teachers of English to speakers of other languages (e.g. ESL or EL teachers) in California. There she co-presented with a teacher from a Bay Area adult school on how to implement a project-based learning experience for students through students' personal interests and cultures, particularly food cultures.

The presentation, titled "Creating a Student Cookbook Collaboratively While Building Technological Confidence," provided strategies for teachers to build on existing student skills and experiences while teaching them English skills, collaboration skills, and technology skills that are relevant for work, school, and personal growth.

Workshop participants developed a cookbook to model for students and were provided with a project-based lesson plan template that teachers can use to guide students in creating a class cookbook. Participants also learned how to use AI to generate content relevant to students' needs and interests; prompts provided were each connected to a larger teaching goal and learning objective.

Soleil is also the coordinator of CATESOL's statewide Curriculum Writers Interest Group. And earlier this year, Soleil and two other PGAE ESL teachers - Melodie Bahou and Amir Monfared - also attended the international TESOL conference in Long Beach, CA (TESOL is the parent association to CATESOL). They brought back many valuable teaching strategies and resources to share with their peers at PGAE and provided training for the ESL department.

PGAE commends Soleil on her leadership in her field across the region and state!



Soleil Turell, Amir Monfared, Melodie Bahou

PGUSD Facilities Master Plan Needs Your Input!



The Pacific Grove Unified School District (PGUSD) Facilities Master Plan serves as a framework for the growth, modernization, and long-term development of our campuses. Designed to address both current and future needs, the FMP provides a strategic roadmap for capital improvements that support safe, equitable, and innovative learning environments.

Although the final project master list derived from the FMP is still being finalized through PGUSD Facilities Subcommittee, its development is guided by several key priorities:

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The FMP outlines long-range strategies for maintaining and improving district facilities, identifying capital projects needed to support students, staff, and evolving educational programs.

PRIORITIZATION

Projects are prioritized by the PGUSD Board of Education with a focus on student safety, accessibility, and equitable access to comfortable learning environments.

SUSTAINABILITY

The plan emphasizes environmentally responsible, sustainable design and construction practices to ensure long-term stewardship of district resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The district continues to incorporate community input through meetings, surveys, and online engagement tools to ensure the plan reflects shared perspectives and needs. This is where you as stakeholders can be a part of the decision making process for your individual sites needs.

PACIFIC GROVE ADULT SCHOOL FACILITIES UPDATE

For Pacific Grove Adult School, the scope of work scheduled to begin this summer (2026 Quick Start Projects) can be found in this [LINK](#) on page 184 to Board Adopted Facilities Master Plan. This work is part of the broader Measures B and D bond program, a 10-year facilities improvement initiative designed to enhance safety, accessibility, modernization, and long-term sustainability across our district.

Please take a moment to read through the plan for PGAS. The District will be sending out a site specific survey in the coming days where your input is crucial to properly define site specific project priorities. For example, HVAC replacement, as it relates to safety and facility improvement.

Thank you all so much for your commitment to this process. Remember that we all have a voice about the priorities of this bond measure and the project-specific information contained in the Facilities Master Plan.

Thank you again for your engagement and dedication as we move forward together!



What's New in California Adult Education

Adult Education across California continues to grow and adapt to meet the diverse needs of our communities. From policy changes and funding challenges to new opportunities for innovation and equity, this year brings both change and promise for programs like ours at Pacific Grove Adult Education.

Policy Changes and Access to Education



This summer, the U.S. Department of Education issued a new policy restricting access to federally funded adult education and career technical programs for adults without legal status. California's Attorney General has since filed a lawsuit challenging the change, as it may affect immigrant learners who rely on adult schools to build language, literacy, and workforce skills.

At PGAE, we remain rooted in our belief that education should be accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for all learners. We continue to serve our diverse community with compassion and equity at the heart of what we do.

Funding Challenges Across the State

The federal government has withheld approximately \$100 million earmarked for adult education programs in California, leading to financial uncertainty and staffing challenges for some schools.

Here in Pacific Grove, we are grateful for the continued support of our district and community partners, which allows us to sustain quality programs and provide the stability our adult learners deserve.

Equity, Innovation, and Best Practices

A new statewide report from the California Department of Education and the Community Colleges Chancellor's Office highlights strategies that close equity gaps among adult learners — such as integrated education and training (IET),

wrap-around support, and strong pathways to employment and college.

PGAE's programs reflect these same principles, connecting students to College and Career Navigators, workforce training, and supportive services that help them reach their goals.

Digital Learning for a Modern World

The statewide technology network, OTAN, is revising California's Adult Education Digital Learning Guidance to include real-world examples from local programs that successfully integrate technology into instruction.

At PGAE, our flexible and accessible learning options — including online and hybrid courses — help adult learners balance work, family, and education while mastering 21st-century digital skills.

Staying Connected Through CAEP

The California Adult Education Program (CAEP) has issued its 2025–26 Beginning-of-Year updates, focusing on accountability, data, and recognition of innovative programs. These updates guide adult schools in improving outcomes and celebrating excellence in education.

At PGAE, we are proud to be part of this statewide network of educators committed to lifelong learning, equity, and opportunity for all.

Looking Ahead

As the landscape of Adult Education continues to evolve, Pacific Grove Adult Education remains deeply committed to nurturing both roots and wings — providing a stable foundation of support while helping our learners soar toward their goals.

Together, we continue to build a Culture of We, where every student feels seen, supported, and connected to our community of care and learning.



State-Level Advocacy for Adult Education

Kristen Arps, PGAE's Assistant Principal/Program Coordinator, has been selected to represent Region 10 of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) on ACSA's statewide Council of Adult Education Leaders. There are 15 local education agencies that offer adult education services in ACSA Region 10, which spans Monterey County, Santa Cruz County, and San Benito County. In this three-year appointment, Kristen joins other adult school leaders from other regions across the state to advocate for legislation that advances public adult education and to promote adult education to government officials, state agencies, professional organizations, industry, school districts, and communities at large.

The Council's next meeting in April will coincide with Legislative Action Day in Sacramento, when hundreds of educators and students lobby for equity, support, and investment in California's schools, including our adult schools that provide vital instruction, training, and support services to adult learners and families to help them reach their educational, professional, and personal goals.

Kristen's role on the Council of Adult Education Leaders continues Pacific Grove Adult Education's legacy of leadership at the local, regional, and state levels. Principal Barbara Martinez has served in many leadership roles over the years in ACSA and the California Council for Adult Education (CCAIE), including as ACSA's Vice President of Legislative Action. PGAE has and will continue to advocate for access to high quality education for all learners, from 0 to 100!



Kristen Arps at AE Council Meeting in Sacramento



Barbara Martinez advocating in Washington DC

Happy Winter Holidays!

As we approach the holiday season, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your dedication, compassion, and unwavering commitment to our adult learners. Your work transforms lives every day, and our school is a place of opportunity and belonging because of your efforts. We hope this season brings you rest, joy, and time with the people who matter most. Thank you for all you do!

We look forward to continuing our important work together in the new year.

Happy holidays!

Barbara and Kristen