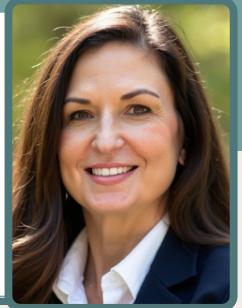


# Introducing...

Superintendent Burmeister is happy to introduce the following educators he will recommend for Board approval to new roles within LLESD at the April 15, 2026 Board meeting. We're thrilled to have such gifted professionals leading LLESD into its next chapter.

**Debbie Petish** has been selected as the district's **Director of Curriculum and Instruction**, a critical leadership role in LLESD supporting the district's continued focus on instructional excellence. Most recently, Dr. Petish served as Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, where she led efforts to strengthen teaching and learning and build coherent instructional systems. After earning her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, she held a variety of school-site and district-level roles, building deep expertise in instructional leadership. In LLESD, Dr. Petish will lead the district's instructional programming as the organization moves from recent operational demands to a sustained focus on instructional experiences and student outcomes. Originally from Michigan, she is also the proud parent of a 10-year-old son.



**Tish Whiteley** has been selected as the next **Principal of La Entrada**, continuing a strong commitment to student-centered leadership and instructional excellence. Ms. Whiteley currently serves as LE's Assistant Principal and has spent the past 9 years serving the Menlo Park community as a teacher, instructional coach, and school leader at neighboring Hillview Middle and Laurel Elementary, as well as La Entrada—where she has found her professional “home.” During her 2 years at LE, she has partnered with students, staff, and families to build a connected community grounded in trust, collaboration, and belonging. In this role, she will lead the implementation of the new schedule and continue to align curriculum and instruction toward rigorous, engaging learning and strong student outcomes, while ensuring the intermediate and middle grades are fun, safe spaces where students love coming to school.



**Kate Cook** has been selected as the district's **Mathematics Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)**, supporting a continued focus on strong, aligned math instruction. Ms. Cook brings over 20 years of experience, including 14 years in LLESD at both Las Lomitas and La Entrada, and previously served as the district's Math TOSA. With a background in international math education research and experience differentiating instruction to support all learners, she brings a strong understanding of the district's students and instructional priorities. In this role, she will lead implementation of the revised middle school math pathways, guide adoption of new curriculum, and support educators in aligning instruction with the California Mathematics Framework while strengthening K–5 practices to meet diverse student needs through rigorous, engaging learning opportunities that provide both support and challenge.



**Kellie Morris** has been selected as the district's **Literacy Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)**, continuing a strong commitment to literacy. Prior to 20 years of classroom teaching in LLESD at both Las Lomitas and La Entrada, Ms. Morris served as a classroom teacher, trainer, and Literacy Facilitator with the Los Angeles Unified School District. During her time in LLESD, she also completed a previous assignment as a TOSA, supporting inclusion and belonging initiatives and building strong relationships and a deep understanding of the district's needs. In this role, she will facilitate the district's continued transition to curriculum and instruction grounded in the Science of Reading, guide the adoption of new instructional materials, and support La Entrada's shift to a two-period CORE—ensuring that all students develop as confident, capable readers and writers.



**Daniella Lefer** has been selected as **La Entrada's English Learner (EL) Specialist**, supporting multilingual learners in grades 4–8. Ms. Lefer brings over 30 years of experience in education, including the past 10 years as a reading specialist, with a strong commitment to developing students' language and literacy skills. In this role, she will lead efforts to strengthen services for multilingual learners and partner with the Las Lomitas EL Specialist, the district's Literacy TOSA, and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to support research-based practices grounded in the Science of Reading and language acquisition. Through this work, she will help ensure strong, coherent support for students in LLESD's diverse and globally connected community.

