



SUMMER 2017-18

What's Cool About School

Superintendent Debra Kubin's Quarterly Newsletter

Supporting Each Other Through a Challenging Year

It is during our most difficult times that we find out what we're made of. This has been a challenging school year in many respects, and for the most part, we have responded with resiliency and compassion.

As school began, a gang-affiliated shooting occurred in the community. Although it didn't occur on school property, local students were involved, which triggered additional tension on campus.

In October, wildfires ravaged large parts of Redwood Valley and Potter Valley, displacing students and staff and leaving some with only the clothes on their back and a pile of ash where their homes used to be. Tragically, two Ukiah Unified students lost their lives.

In February, local students heard about the Parkland, Florida school shooting and weeks later, unverified threats of a possible school shooting in Ukiah (that turned out to be no more than rumors) sent ripples of anxiety through local schools.

In March, a beloved Oak Manor Elementary teacher, Patty Moore, passed away unexpectedly, leaving her colleagues and students stunned and saddened.

When we increased school counselors in recent years, I had no idea how busy they'd be or the depth of the issues they'd be working on with our students. I am grateful for their skill and dedication. I am also glad we hired an additional school resource officer at the

beginning of the year, allowing us to help defuse tensions, address violence and drug use, and reduce truancy.

We still have a lot of work to do in many areas, but our responses to many of this year's difficulties have shown we put community above self-interest and we have the capacity to demonstrate incredible kindness.

When students undergo traumatic events like losing a friend or teacher, being displaced from their home, or being scared that a school shooting is imminent, it is understandable that they may have trouble focusing on their schoolwork. Our primary goal is to keep students safe and to help them feel secure at school. The world is changing and this is becoming more difficult, but our goal remains.

When students feel safe, they can concentrate on the excellent educational offerings from our wonderful teachers. Many times, it is the relationship with a single, special teacher or other staff member who can make all the difference in helping a student feel safe and secure. Thanks to the many Ukiah Unified employees who fill this role for our students.

Thank you for everything you do to support your student and our schools.



Superintendent Debra Kubin

GET IN TOUCH!

You can call me at (707) 472-5002 or email me at dkubin@uUSD.net. For more information about UUSD and to find your child's school website, visit www.uUSD.net and click on the Schools menu.

PARENT / FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Safety Forum and Communication

First, I'd like to thank all the families who attended the safety forum in April. We received an array of well-considered, insightful ideas and are now in the process of figuring out how to prioritize and fund them. For those of you who didn't know about the forum, I encourage you to update your contact information with us. You can use the online Aeries parent portal or call your school and ask to speak with the family liaison to provide your phone, email and street address. This allows us to keep you up-to-date about school and district activities. Our automated phone calls and emails are the tools we use in the event of an emergency, so be sure we know how to get in touch!

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Ukiah High School Underwater Robotics "SeaPerch" Team Goes to Nationals

For months, a few small teams of Ukiah High School STEM Club students spent hundreds of hours after school and on weekends designing and refining underwater, remote-controlled robots to compete in the Northern California Regional SeaPerch competition, and on April 15, the junior team topped a competitive field of almost 40 teams from approximately 25 schools to represent Northern California at the 2018 International SeaPerch Challenge at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth in early June.

SeaPerch is an underwater robotics program that equips teachers and students with the resources they need to build an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) from a kit comprised of low-cost, easily accessible parts. To win the competition, students must use their knowledge of physics, engineering and mathematics to improve the "bot" (as they call it) to increase its speed and mobility as they maneuver it underwater.

Teacher and volunteer advisor Chatnaee Upton explained, "The competition has three parts: the challenge course, the obstacle course and the presentation, where students share the contents of their engineering notebook and answer questions about their process for the judges."

Supported by Upton and fellow teacher/advisor Edwin Kang, the students considered issues of buoyancy, balance, waterproofing, hydrodynamics, weight distribution and more, overcoming failure to get to the winning design.

STUDENT SAFETY/POSITIVE CULTURE

Students Share Their Thoughts on Safety and Campus Culture

To learn more about the most effective ways to keep students safe and improve campus culture, I went straight to the source; I asked middle school and high school students about what we, as a district, do well and what we need to improve.

They highlighted student clubs, academic competitions, sports, dances, rallies, peer counseling, student-to-student mentoring programs and many more events and activities as important contributors to the student experience. Students were particularly articulate and thoughtful when they described how much they value our programs to support social-emotional learning and well-being, repeatedly praising the work of our school counselors. They also shared their appreciation for our school resource officers (SROs), noting that having a trusting relationship with them makes it easier to report things that make them uncomfortable. Students also asked that folks drive more cautiously near school campuses—stopping for pedestrians, slowing down in parking lots and not parking in red zones.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

June 1	Employee Recognition, 6 pm	June 8	UISA Graduation, 6 pm
June 4	Title VI, 5:30 pm	June 9	Ukiah High Graduation, 9 am
June 6	South Valley Graduation, 7 pm	June 12	Board Meeting, 6:30 pm
June 7	Community Transition Program Graduation, 11 am	June 13	Summer School Begins
	Eagle Peak Promotion, 6 pm		UUSD Board Meeting, 5:30 pm
	Pomolita Promotion, 6 pm		