

SPRING BREAK BEGINS  
AFTER A MINIMUM DAY ON  
THURSDAY, MARCH 29;  
SCHOOL RESUMES MONDAY,  
APRIL 9.



NEWS ABOUT STUDENTS AND  
SCHOOLS IN THERMALITO  
UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
DISTRICT

## *in focus*

*Comprehensive new curriculum is the result of a year of study  
and evaluation by district teachers*

# DISTRICT ADOPTS—AND IMPLEMENTS—NEW CURRICULUM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Thermalito students in every grade are learning to read, write and develop their English skills using two newly-adopted and implemented English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum packages.

Transitional kindergarten through fifth graders are using the McGraw Hill “Wonders” curriculum. Nelson Middle School students

in grades six through eighth work with the “Study Sync” curriculum, also by McGraw Hill.

Curriculum selection involved study and input from almost two dozen TUESD teachers. After evaluating the four state-recommended curriculums, some teachers pilot tested the top two choices to see how they compared

in “real” classrooms, says Lisa Cruikshank, Thermalito’s Director of Special Projects.

“We’re pleased with the selection,” Cruikshank says. “Both are robust in technology and have English Language Development (ELD) embedded into the curriculum.”

This means, she explains, that students who are learning English are working with similar concepts

in ELD as they are in the ELA lessons. Almost 20% of Thermalito’s students are English learners.

The curriculum also includes an elaborate intervention program. Wonders, as well, has a strong early literacy component to teach ELA to the district’s youngest students.

Important elements of both curriculums are teaching critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity—all of which are emphasized in the California State Standards.

“There is lots of writing, including performance-based activities in which students conduct research from different sources of information on the same topic,” says Cruikshank. “For example, in an assignment about volcanoes, students read and dissect an article, watch an informational video and then study an actual eruption from the news online.

“This type of performance-based writing is much more in depth than a simple book report or summary of what they’ve read. Our students are applying what they’re learning and how to express themselves clearly.”



*Reading intervention support teacher Sue Russell works with a Sierra Avenue student during a reading assessment. The new curriculum has a strong early literacy component.*

# Thermalito teachers learn from each other to fine-tune their teaching—and improve education for all students

*Grade-level collaboration means teachers gather together throughout the school year to share the best instructional practices—and every Thermalito student benefits!*

Sierra Avenue teacher Susan Russell looks forward to the multiple sessions she has throughout this school year with Thermalito's other three reading intervention teachers.

"Being able to collaborate with my colleagues is priceless," notes Russell. "Since we work at different school sites, it's great that we can have this time dedicated to working together.



Through this we've updated our multiple-measure district literacy assessments to reflect the new language arts curriculum and the rigor of the California State Standards. We've also structured protocol for those assessments.

"The best part, however, is sharing our best practices with each other. It's gratifying to share what is working for ourselves as well as learn techniques from each other to help meet the needs of our struggling reading students."

This type of grade-level collaboration, says TUESD Director of Special Projects Lisa Cruikshank, is not only appreciated by teachers but results in better education for Thermalito's students.

"The new California State Standards are actually making our teachers really think critically," says Cruikshank. "Through grade-level collaboration, teachers are supporting each other, sharing best instructional practices and ideas that improve teaching and learning.

"They're excited to see what others are doing

in their classrooms and learning how to incorporate new ideas into their own teaching."

Lauren Albert, a teacher for 14 years who is now at Poplar Avenue, concurs.

"The real power in grade level collaboration will come as we meet after our assessments have been administered and scored," says Albert. "Then we can review how our students performed and ask one another how we taught a specific concept to get the best results.

"When we reteach using these new ideas, students who may not have understood or remembered something may now be able to access the information," Albert adds. "Our kids will benefit immediately if we take our collaboration seriously and implement the new knowledge that we learn from our colleagues."

Grade-level collaboration at Thermalito occurs during six all-day sessions during the school year as well as during four after-school meetings. Michelle Sanchez, from the Butte



County Office of Education, facilitates the collaboration.

"Working with Michelle has given us insight into the grade levels above and below our grade level," says TJ Hildebrand, a second grade teacher at Sierra Avenue. "All of this helps us provide better instruction for our students."

Hildebrand points out that grade-level collaboration helps teacher better align their teaching practice to state and national standards.

"Maybe the best thing it has given us is simply time with our colleagues to discuss what is working and what isn't. We have the time to address curriculum areas that are lacking or just aren't working effectively for our students here in Thermalito.

"And that means more success for our students."



# TUESD develops a plan for its schools

Every school district in California must develop an annual Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). More than just a technical requirement, the LCAP is a process involving parents, community members and educators as they develop an overall plan for the district.

The LCAP describes the district's plan for its students, annual goals, actions and the budget the district will use to achieve the goals.

## TUESD LCAP Goals

**Goal 1.0:** All students will attain proficiency in State Standards in all content areas.

**Goal 2.0:** All students will attain proficiency in literacy through reading and writing.

**Goal 3.0:** The District will facilitate a safe and positive school culture and climate.

LCAP meeting dates (all meetings held in TUESD Board Room)

May 29: 3:30 pm June 19 & 26: 6:30 pm

# New employee reaches out to community

Pang Xiong is a big believer in communications and community—and her job at TUESD is proof of that. As the district's new Community Communication Liaison, Xiong's job includes increasing parent and community involvement in Thermalito schools.

"I work with the district's website as well as its social media accounts," she says. "I also meet with parents and community members and help coordinate outreach."

"My goal is to be a bridge to connect the schools and our community and parents."

Pang is a Thermalito resident who is committed to the community and our children's education.

"I served as a board member for Thermalito in

the past, my children attended our schools and I worked at the local Community Employment Center as a Career Advisor/Resource specialist for the past six years helping a diverse population with career development.

"I enjoy helping and educating the people in our community with the available resources."

"I've lived in Thermalito for over 15 years and I'm committed to this community and to this district," she continues. "People stay in Thermalito for a reason: It's a close-knit community where they feel connected."

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to work in education in Thermalito," Xiong explains. "I love education because knowledge truly is power. Education leads to a brighter future. I'm so happy to be a part of connecting families and our community to our great schools."

"I'm also excited to share how community members and parents can volunteer in our schools."

Xiong enjoys crafting of all kinds—including crocheting, scrapbooking and sewing.



## Xoxwm Nyob Rau Hauv Daim Ntawv No—

Hu rau TUESD lub Office, 538.2900, yog xav tau daim xovxwm uas txhais lus Hmoob:

Kev kawm tshiab qhia ntawm Askiv

Thermalito Xib Fwb kev sib koom tes

TUESD tsim tswv yim rau tsev kawm ntawm.

Neeg ua haujlwm tshiab

Si Aeries los saib koj tus mi nyuam kev kawm ntawv

Txog sijhawm rau npe kawm ntawm Kindergarten

Tsev kawm ntawm muaj Open House

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**Superintendent**

Greg Blake

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THERMALITO UNION  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
400 GRAND AVENUE  
THERMALITO CA 95965  
530.538.2900  
WWW.THERMALITO.ORG

**It's Time For Kindergarten Sign-Ups**

**Transitional Kindergarten**

**Must be age 5 between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2, 2018**

**Kindergarten**

**Must be age 5 by Sept. 1, 2018**

Visit your neighborhood school:

Sierra Avenue Plumas Avenue Poplar Avenue



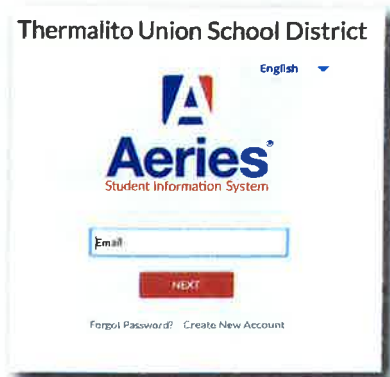
**LOG IN TO AERIES FOR WEALTH OF SCHOOL INFO**

Wondering how your student is doing in school? Not sure about the date for an upcoming campus event? Thermalito parents and guardians can find all that information—and more—by logging in to their free “parent portal” Aeries account.

The online portal system allows confidential access to student grades and attendance. With our newest module, Aeries Communication, parents receive information about the events and other important notifications regarding their student’s school. They can access and receive information by email, text and/or phone.

“This streamlines communication so that our parents and guardians get the latest information about their students and schools quickly and efficiently,” notes Superintendent Greg Blake.

Questions about how to create a Parent Portal account on Aeries? Contact your school’s secretary for assistance.



**Open House**



**Heritage/Pioneer Community Day School**

April 10<sup>th</sup> 5pm-7pm

**Plumas Avenue**

April 24<sup>th</sup> 5:30

**Poplar Avenue**

April 26 5:30pm

**Sierra Avenue**

May 2<sup>nd</sup> 5:30pm

**Nelson Avenue**

May 15<sup>th</sup> 5:30-7pm

*For parents, families and community members*