



# Back to School *in Napa County*

Napa County Office of Education

2016-2017

# A Message from Napa School Superintendents

**W**e've heard many people say over the years that education is the only sector that hasn't changed since the days of the horse and buggy.

The story goes on to say that if time travelers from 1900 came back today, they wouldn't begin to understand modern communication, transportation, manufacturing, or entertainment, but they would feel perfectly at home in a classroom, because it would be so similar to the ones in which they had been educated.

To which we might say, "Come on in and see!" In so many ways our schools have been transformed into lively and exciting places where children collaborate to solve real world problems, debate ideas, consult with people from around the world in real time, and explore history, science, geography, and the universe through both virtual and augmented reality. You might find students using Google Cardboard to visit a museum, dive deep under the sea, or look at an area of London today overlaid with how it looked during World War II. Students are programming robots, using 3D printers to create actual tools they've designed, and making

their own movies. Even our preschool students are navigating iPads and learning literacy skills by interacting with engaging content that both inspires and delights them.

More and more students are participating in community service activities, internships, outdoor education, and educational challenges and competitions with students from around the state and nation. High school students in auto and culinary career pathways are running businesses. Students at all grade levels are taking action to improve their neighborhoods by contacting elected officials and explaining the issues. We've implemented the rigorous Common Core Standards, which most adults find as challenging as our students. We're excited to see a renewed focus on the arts, as well as on career and technical education, and we've provided numerous additional services to address the social, emotional, and mental health needs that many of our children bring to school with them.

Learning opportunities no longer stop when the school bell rings at 3:00 p.m. After-school programs provide a place for homework, tutoring, enriched

and expanded curriculum, as well as recreation activities, and students are served a nutritious supper while they are there. Five-week summer programs served about 300 middle school students as well as almost 1,000 elementary school students who needed additional support. Parent Universities provide parents the opportunities to improve their literacy and computer skills, as well as learn how to be their child's best support and advocate.

As we begin the new school year we are excited that graduation rates have gone up and Napa County exceeds the state average, and suspensions and expulsions have gone down. We appreciate the financial support of the community through the Vintner's Strategic Initiative, NapaLearns, and Festival Napa Valley. We are grateful to Community Projects for the many grants they give to teachers for special projects, and to the Education Foundations in each district that provide extra services to our students. If it takes a village, as the saying goes, then we are in the right place.

*The Superintendents of Napa County*



**Barbara Nemko, Ph.D.**

Napa County Superintendent of Schools  
Napa County Office of Education



**Esmeralda Mondragon, Ed.D., Superintendent**

Calistoga Joint Unified School District



**Cheryl Lynn de Werff, Ed.D., Superintendent**

Howell Mt. Elementary School District



**Ron Kraft, Ph.D., Superintendent/President**

Napa Valley College



**Patrick Sweeney, Ed.D., Superintendent**

Napa Valley Unified School District



**Ken J. Burkhart, Superintendent**

Pope Valley Elementary School District



**Marylou Wilson, Ed.D., Superintendent**

St. Helena Unified School District

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Barbara Nemko, Ph.D., Superintendent  
2121 Imola Avenue, Napa, CA 94559  
707-253-6810 • www.napacoe.org

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## Free Bilingual e-Books and Games for Preschoolers

In the U.S. 46% of children enter kindergarten lacking essential early reading skills which are critical to school success.



To address this issue, Napa County Office of Education (NCOE) and NapaLearns have made it a priority to increase early literacy opportunities for every preschool age child in Napa County with the Footsteps2Brilliance (F2B) bilingual early literacy app. This valuable tool has been successfully implemented in the state preschool classrooms run by NCOE, and available to the community at large, and teachers and parents are seeing dramatic improvement in their students' readiness for kindergarten.

All Napa County preschool age children have access to the F2B app at no cost. The F2B library includes the Academic Language Program for Students series which consists of 18 illustrated and animated eBooks in English and Spanish. In addition, there is a bilingual non-fiction series featuring 26 Alphabet Animal books, Nursery Rhyme Karaoke, Aesop's Fables and a phonics series called Mega Mouth Decoders, along with over 200 educational games related to the books. The Footsteps2Brilliance app can be downloaded on most any tablet or mobile device, and accessed on a computer so that children are able to use the program both in their preschool and at home.

Napa County parents and preschool teachers

interested in a login can register at [myf2b.com/parent/Napa](http://myf2b.com/parent/Napa). For more information contact Lori Hill, [lhill@napacoe.org](mailto:lhill@napacoe.org), or visit [napacoe.org/footsteps-2-brilliance/](http://napacoe.org/footsteps-2-brilliance/).

## Teaching Important Life Skills

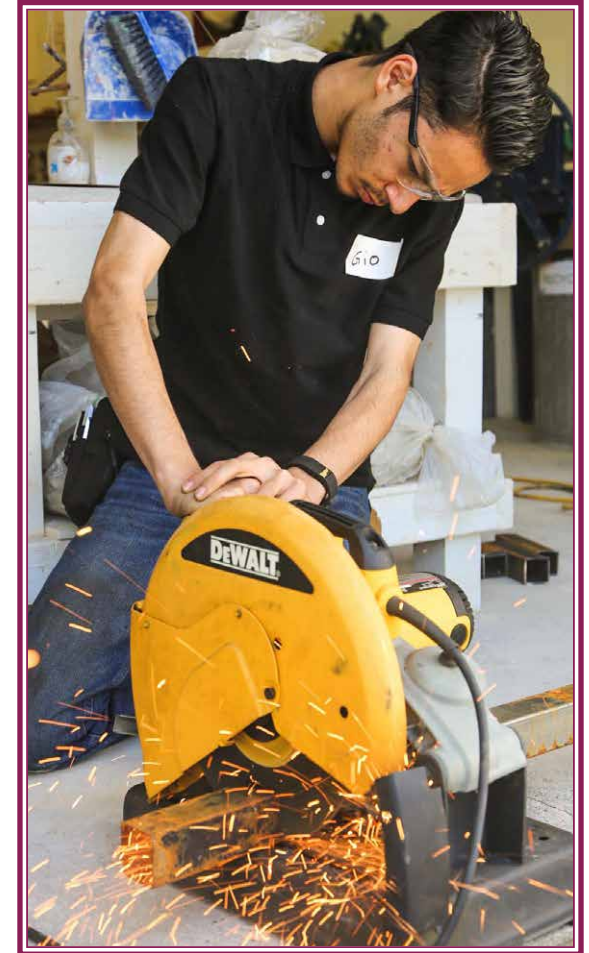
NCOE's Community Programs Department implements the Botvin Life Skills Training program in middle and high schools in 107 classrooms reaching 2,864 students each school year throughout Napa County. Life Skills is a substance abuse and violence prevention program based on more than 30 years of rigorous scientific research. In addition to helping students resist drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, the program also effectively supports the reduction of violence and other high-risk behaviors.

The program has three levels that support students as they gain knowledge of the impacts of substance use and the skills to resist peer pressure and make healthy choices. Life Skills provides a safe, non-judgmental environment for students to have the courage to speak up, ask for help, and take action towards getting support they need. For more information visit [napacoe.org/tupe/](http://napacoe.org/tupe/).

## High Schoolers Thrive with Super School Project

During the 2015-16 school year, the NCOE Court and Community School program (CCS) applied for the XQ Super School Challenge Grant which could provide up to \$10 million to develop an entirely new approach to high school. The XQ team, which includes school administrators, teaching staff and community members, worked for several months creating a blueprint which redesigns the high school experience for the students. NCOE's proposal has been accepted and moved on to the second round. CCS staff are committed to creating more engaging and meaningful academic, social/emotional, and vocational programs for the students.

In addition, in response to the interests of students, parents and staff, the CCS launched an arts exploration pilot program: 20 students visited Nimbus Arts in St. Helena for four 3-hour sessions to learn various artistic disciplines of the students'



choosing. Professional artists worked with the students to sculpt, paint, weld, and practice digital photography. Because the program was such a success, in the upcoming school year every NCOE student will be able to attend six 3-hour classes at Nimbus Arts to explore the arts with local professionals. NCOE thanks community member Phil Lofaro for helping to arrange this opportunity for students. Watch the students share their dreams for school at [tinyurl.com/xqschool](http://tinyurl.com/xqschool).

## Enjoy Working with Children? We Have a Job for You

Did you know if you have a Bachelor's degree, it qualifies you to be a substitute teacher in Napa County? Are you retired and looking for something

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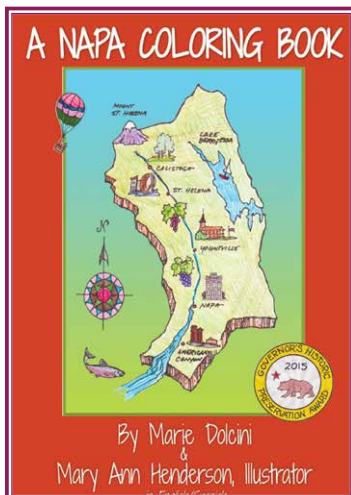
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to do? Substitute teaching can provide a flexible work schedule - you can work as little or as much as you choose. It may just be the right job for you! Substitutes are needed to start work immediately. Please contact NCOE's Credentials office at 253-6825 or email [mstornetta@napacoe.org](mailto:mstornetta@napacoe.org).

## Coloring Napa County History

For the past two years Napa County third-graders have received *A Napa Coloring Book* from Napa County Landmarks (NCL), a local organization dedicated to protecting, educating and advocating for historic preservation and architectural heritage. *A Napa Coloring Book* is a professionally illustrated, bilingual coloring and activity book that



promotes Napa's history and cultural heritage to local youth, Spanish speakers and families. The coloring book was created by Marie Dolcini, a writer and NCL board member, and illustrated by Mary Ann Henderson, a Bay Area artist.

The 36-page book spans pre-history to the present day in a compelling introductory format that's appealing to all ages.

Copies are available for sale on the NCL website at a cover price of \$10. Funds raised will go toward reprinting subsequent editions.

Those interested in purchasing a copy of *A Napa Coloring Book*, or carrying them for sale, can contact NCL at [info@napacountylandmarks.org](mailto:info@napacountylandmarks.org), 707-255-1836, [www.napacountylandmarks.org](http://www.napacountylandmarks.org).

## You Can Make a Difference Today with AmeriCorps

Each year, NCOE welcomes over 200 AmeriCorps members from all over the country to serve in schools and non-profit organizations in Napa County and throughout the state of California.

AmeriCorps members commit to a year of service, where they make a vital difference in the lives of children and families as mentors, tutors, and community leaders.

AmeriCorps members receive professional development and valuable coaching from community mentors as well as an educational award to pay for future education or student loans. Members begin their service in August and September, 2016.

If you know of someone who wants to make a difference and would make a great AmeriCorps member, please contact [americorps@napacoe.org](mailto:americorps@napacoe.org).



## Special Recognition

NCOE received the **Collaboration Nation Grand Prize** of \$50,000 in technology in 2015. Awarded by the tech company CDW-G, in partnership with eSchool News, NCOE was recognized for its dedication to student success, collaboration and innovative use of education technology.

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics announced in 2015 that NCOE had been named one of the **Bright Spots in Hispanic Education**.

NCOE was awarded a 2015 **Golden Bell Award** by the California School Boards Association for the Digital Early Learning program.

NCOE's Digital Early Learning program, supported by NapaLearns, received the **Partners in Educational Excellence award** in 2016 from the Association of California School Administrators.

## Teacher Externships Keeps Skills Top Notch

Through the CA Career Pathways Trust grant, Career Technical Education teachers, along with core academic teachers, have the opportunity to participate in summer externships with local employers and industry members. A teacher externship is a type of professional development that allows teachers to learn, through direct experience,

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**American Canyon High School teachers Elizabeth Hawkins, left, and Y Vu, learned to make cheese through their externship at Achadinha Cheese Factory in Petaluma.**

the most up-to-date workplace practices, skills and technologies used in industry. Teachers learn information about the trends, skill requirements and career opportunities in industries related to their content area. They are then able to bring real examples about the kind of teamwork, problem solving, communication and creativity used in the workplace back to their classrooms in order to prepare students for the world they are about to enter.

Summer of 2016 externships included American Canyon High biotechnology and math instructors at Bio-Rad, the Napa High medical science instructor at Collabria, and culinary instructors from St. Helena and Vintage High at the Culinary Institute of America and Family Farmers.

Businesses interested in hosting an externship can contact Gillie Miller, College and Career Readiness Director, 253-6830.

## Teachers and Classified Staff Honored

Five exceptional teachers have been selected as the Napa County Teachers of the Year 2017: Jennifer Ellison, Phillips Elementary, Denise Keller, American Canyon Middle School, Tom Lewis, Harvest Middle School, Suzanne Morgan, Shearer

Elementary School and Dana Simon, Robert Louis Stevenson Middle School. Ellison will also be considered for California Teacher of the Year. The public is invited to a Napa County Board of Education meeting celebrating the Teachers of the Year on September 6, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. at the Napa County Office of Education.

The Napa County Classified School Employee



**Debbie Raines, center, California Classified School Employee of the Year, with Dr. Barbara Nemko, Napa County Superintendent of Schools, and Mike Pearson, Principal of Vintage High School**

of the Year program highlights the contributions of classified school employees to support the education of California's public school students. The 2016 Napa County Classified School Employees of the Year are Ashley Bradford, Calistoga JUSD (child nutrition), Margarita Rodriguez, St. Helena High School (office & technical), and Therese Skjold-Jesch, Vintage High School (paraeducator). Debbie Raines of Vintage High School was also selected and honored as the California Classified School Employee of the Year in the area of support services and security.

## Improving Reading Skills for Middle School Students

Project READ for Middle Schools is an intensive five-year program dedicated to increasing the reading and English language arts proficiency

and outcomes of all students—including students with disabilities, English learners, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students—in a selected group of California middle schools.

Project READ focuses on training teachers to incorporate reading strategies in their content area instruction, supporting school-level implementation teams and leaders in guiding process, providing coaching and an online community for building skills, and involving parents and family in their students' reading achievement.

READ is a special project of the California Department of Education, funded by a grant from the federal Office of Special Education Programs and housed at NCOE's Research and Professional Development Center.

Currently in its fourth year, the project will also begin identifying exemplary sites to share their success with other schools across the state.

Visit [caspdg.org](http://caspdg.org) to learn more about Project READ and the evidence-based practices used by participating middle schools.

## Meet the Napa County Board of Education

The Trustees of the Napa County Board of Education provide leadership to support the success of public education. They collaborate with the County Superintendent of Schools to govern the County Office.

Their responsibilities include approving the office's budget, assuring appropriate educational environments and curricula for students, determining the salary of the County Superintendent of Schools, and serving as an appellate panel in areas such as denials of student inter-district transfers, expulsions, and denials of charter school petitions.

They also serve as the County Committee on School District Reorganization with approval authority in respect to all proposed changes of school district boundaries.

Regular board meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 3:00 p.m. and are open to the public. Members of the public are invited to speak on any topic during public comment, or to address an item on the agenda. Please call to verify time and location, 253-6810.

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## Attention Napa Students: Don't Miss the Fun!

**North Bay Science Discovery Day** (October 29, 2016): To stimulate the excitement of learning Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), don't miss this event at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. Info at [northbayscience.org](http://northbayscience.org).

**Learnstorm Math Contest** (January 2017): Students can sign up and work on the Khan Academy website to get better at math and learn new skills. They will see their progress add up toward personal goals. Participants can earn rewards and recognition including a chance to attend an epic, in-person final event. Ask your child's teacher to sign-up for the Kahn Academy Learnstorm Math Contest, or your student can sign up on their own. Contact Seana Wagner at [swagner@napacoe.org](mailto:swagner@napacoe.org), 265-2351 to learn more.



**Are You Ready for the 5th Grade Challenge?** (March 2017): Watch local celebrity grown-ups challenge some of Napa's finest 5th graders on questions from the Common Core. As an audience member you will also get to play, too.

If you are interested in joining the fun, or know

a 5th grader who would love to play, contact Seana Wagner at [swagner@napacoe.org](mailto:swagner@napacoe.org), 265-2351 to learn more.

**Reach Higher National College Signing Day** (April 26, 2017): School sites and community supporters celebrate College Signing Day by wearing their favorite college gear and sharing why a postsecondary degree is important to them on social media using the hashtag #ReachHigher. For more information visit [whitehouse.gov/reach-higher](http://whitehouse.gov/reach-higher).

## Expanded Learning Rocks!

NCOE's Community Programs Department provides before, after, and summer school programs to upwards of 4,000 elementary and middle school students through the COOL School and ACE programs.

These programs offer safe and inclusive learning environments that foster positive

relationships and remove barriers to learning.

The program offers a range of engaging activities including art, science, sports, technology, and other project-based learning activities to participating students.

Students who aren't working at grade level have access to individualized tutoring through these programs to

support academic success.

Students are at the heart of our work and our dedicated staff provides students positive, adult role models who provide targeted academic support as well as mentoring support to build resiliency and encourage 21st Century Skills.

## Vintage High School Boasts Top Student Chefs!



Eight students from four high school culinary programs competed in the third annual Northern California High School Cook-off on May 14, 2016 in St. Helena High School's culinary kitchen. The team from Vintage High School took home the trophy.

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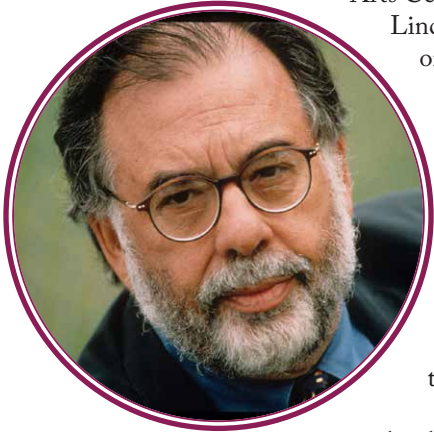
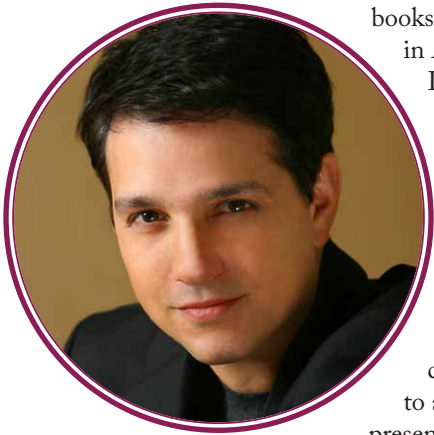
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## Napa County Reads Celebrates *The Outsiders* with Macchio and Coppola

“Stay Gold, Ponyboy” conjures images of one of the most beloved books and movies in American Literature, *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. The Napa County Reads Committee invites the community to a special presentation celebrating this classic coming of age tale. *The Outsiders* director Francis Ford Coppola and star Ralph Macchio will discuss their experience making this beloved film at The Napa Valley Performing Arts Center at the Lincoln Theater on November 4, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. The event will also feature art and drama by local students inspired by the story. Middle school students around Napa County will be reading *The Outsiders* in the fall in preparation for this event. The community is invited to join



local students in reading the book as a community-wide book club. Napa County Reads is a coalition of educators and community members dedicated to improving the reading experiences of students throughout Napa County with an emphasis on middle schools.

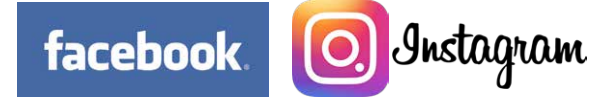
Tickets are available now from the Lincoln Theater, [lincolntheater.org](http://lincolntheater.org). The cost is \$15 for adults, students are free. Get your tickets early – this event is expected to sell out. Visit [napacoe.org/napa-county-reads/](http://napacoe.org/napa-county-reads/) or call NCOE at 253-6999 for more information.

## Report Bullying Anonymously

Tip411 is a program that provides a simple and anonymous way for students to report incidents of bullying and cyberbullying, as well as other risky behaviors such as drugs, alcohol, suicide threats and weapons.



## Stay Connected with NCOE



## NCOE Quick Facts

Provides fiscal oversight and critical business services to the five Napa school districts.

Operates 23 preschool classrooms to help students succeed in Kindergarten and beyond.

Delivers educational services to over 350 infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Provides before school, after school, summer school, and tutoring programs to 4,000 students.

Offers Community School programs serving 150 middle and high school students who face serious life challenges.

Provides leadership for a countywide college and career readiness program serving over 1,600 students.

Manages the Napa County Teacher Induction Program, a two-year professional development experience for first- and second-year teachers.

Operates the Research and Professional Development Center managing multiple programs for educational professionals through the California Department of Education.

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