

CUSD

A DESTINATION DISTRICT

Upcoming events and reminders:

Board Meeting November 25
at 6:30 pm in Board Room

Thanksgiving School Break
Wednesday-Friday,
November 26-28, No School

Holiday for 12-month
Employees November 27-28

Finance Sub-Committee
Meeting December 4 in D.O.
Break Room

KAGAN

Partners take turns, one solving a problem while the other coaches.

1. Partner A solves the first problem.
2. Partner B watches and listens, checks, coaches if necessary, and praises.
3. Partner B solves the next problem.
4. Partner A watches and listens, checks, coaches if necessary, and praises.
5. Partners repeat taking turns while solving problems.

✧ District Update ✧

This document is to keep you abreast on upcoming items, current issues, and public relations on the many things happening in the District.



With the advent of the new common core, the use of all of our technology, and the pace we get into in order to do what is best for our kids, the temptation is to lose focus on the most important part of our work. We make little to no progress in our work if we forget why all of us are here. Too often it is much too easy to neglect the relationships of the people around us which includes our students and peers. People are important, and the most important people in our lives are those we influence the most. A memory that sticks in my mind is the time I visited a campus several years ago walking down the hallway with adults watching several students walk by heads and eyes down with no acknowledgment by these educators of their presence or even existence. I knew immediately students were not a priority in that school. Caring about kids is not always an emotion nor is it always manifested in some type of feeling, but it has to express itself anyway by sheer discipline and determination, especially during the times we feel less likely to display that caring. In other words, if we care about people, and if we care about the most easily influenced people, we consistently show it and express it. That day I witnessed adults ignoring kids taught me a lesson because I put myself in those kids' shoes and how important it was for me to be acknowledged at a tender age. What about that kid who had a bad day at home, or the kid who was already angry at adults, or that one student who thought so little of herself that she did not feel worthy to be acknowledged? These thoughts go through our heads because there is a reality to them.

As I mentioned, true caring is about demonstrating that we care. One of the best ways to demonstrate the fact that we have the best interests of those around us in mind as the highest priority is leaving each and every student with a legacy of learning. What does that mean? That means we make it a practice to acknowledge the learning of every kid every day. If what we want best for our kids is a priority, then their learning and learning well has to be a priority. The new common core, the use of technology, our sometimes frantic pace, etc., all can be tempered with the one hope that brought us to our work: we have a direct connection with every kid that makes a difference in their daily growth and destiny.

Every Corcoran Student Can Achieve!

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the latest news!

Quotes & Proverbs

"No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship." ~James Comer

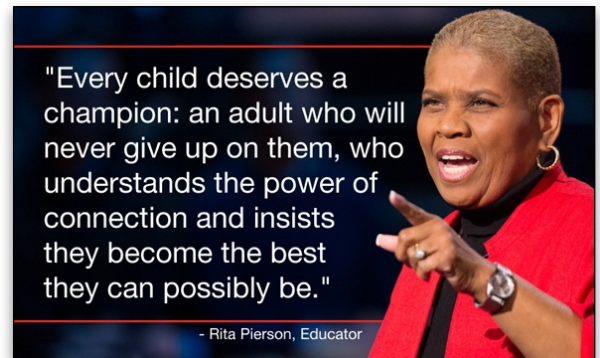
I showed a Ted Talk video to all staff a few years ago featuring National Teacher of the Year Rita Pierson. She drew some laughs when she talked about her low-achieving students and the results on their tests. She stated they were so low she cried. She asked herself, "How am I going to take this group from where they are to where they need to be in nine months?" She knew from her mother's many years of success as a teacher that no learning occurs without developing relationships with one's students. She knew her school year would be long and arduous without the joy of building her students' confidence. She also knew kids don't learn from people they do not like either!

Her strategy was to get them to believe. She told the class at the beginning of the year, "You were chosen to be in my class. I am the best teacher and you are the best students to demonstrate to other classes and students just how we do it!" The kids responded, "Really?" She said, "Yeah!" She even had them say to themselves daily, "I am somebody, I have places to be and places to go!" She emphasized the principle that if you say it enough, it starts to sink in.

Her approach with her students is summed up in the following experience: She had the kids take a quiz with 20 questions. One of her students received 2/20, and she put +2 with a smiley face. The student asked her, "Is this an 'F'?" The teacher answered with a "Yes." The student asked, "Then why did you put on my quiz a smiley face?" She said, "Because you did not get any right the last time, and this time you got plus 2; you're on a roll! You are going to do even better next time aren't you?" The students replied with an emphatic "Yes!"

She later went on to say to the audience, "You see, minus 18 sucks all the life out of you, and +2 says that I am not all that bad."

She understood the reality about failure and success. Failure is not final, and improvement is the objective. She understood how we as people (especially the younger ones) have a tendency to beat ourselves up, and when we do that we tend to give up. No student likes to keep trying something that frustrates and causes failure. Here is the power of the message about relationships and teachers: everyone is affected by a teacher and adult. If we love our kids, our kids will respond, and failure will not be an option.




**We're
proud
of you!**

CUSD Staff are Finalists

Corcoran Unified School District has four reasons to be very proud! J.J. Albert, Corcoran High School Assistant Principal, is a nominee for the KCOE Administrator of the Year; Janet Hansen, John C. Fremont 2nd Grade Teacher, is a nominee for the KCOE Teacher of the Year; and Cheryl Santos, Corcoran High School Activity/Athletic Secretary, is a nominee for KCOE School Employee of the Year. The Excellence in Education event will be held April 14. There will be a special edition of the newsletter in December featuring the honorees.

In addition, Gerard Perreault, John Muir's Music Teacher and Band Director has been selected as one of the finalists for the California League of Middle Schools Region VII Educator of the Year award. That event is scheduled for December 3. There will be an article on Mr. Perrault in the newsletter following the event.

Equal Opportunity: The Corcoran Unified School District is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education. District programs, activities, and practices shall be free from discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, or genetic information; the perception of one or more of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

CHS Band & Colorguard Earn Trophies

The High School's Panther Pride Band and Colorguard performed their 2014 Field Show "Music from Phantom of the Opera" at two recent competitions.

They earned a second place trophy at the Orange Cove Invitational on November 1 and the following Saturday took fourth place in the Lemoore Tiger Classic. Band Director Chad McCoy said that in addition to practicing during school rehearsals,

the group spent many countless hours marching on the field outside school hours, learning the music and movements. "The hard work certainly paid off," he added, "and we hope to play our field show during the football playoffs. Thank you to everyone who came out to support us at our field shows this year."



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CUSD APP yet?



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- View calendar info
- Access school and staff info
- Receive important alerts



Caught in the Act

Christine Spencer



What is your work history, including at CUSD? My work history is many and varied. I began my teaching career in 1993 (back when dinosaurs ruled the earth) at American Fork, Utah teaching English at the high school. The next year we moved to Corcoran and I subbed for a year before being hired to teach ESL (English as a Second Language) at the Kings Lake Education Center. I loved this job and the people I worked for, especially my students. After about 7 years, we moved to Tulare and I started teaching ESL and Concurrent students working for the Visalia School District, first in Ivanhoe, then at the Adult school. 5 years passed and I changed jobs. I taught Distance Learning and ESL for the Tulare Adult School for another 5 years. About three years ago, I quit my job and went back to school to complete my California teaching certificate and my Master's Degree in one year. Upon completing that, I taught 8, 9, 11, and 12 graders at a charter school in Porterville for one year, and then taught ESL again for Visalia. Much to my surprise, now I am back in Corcoran, teaching high schoolers in the Continuation class. My career has certainly been wonderful so far and I have enjoyed each job that I have had, and during my initial interview for this latest and greatest position, I felt like I was coming home.

What is most rewarding to you when working with students or in your job? The most rewarding aspect of my job is when a student grasps a previously unknown concept. I feel accomplished when a student lights up with sudden understanding and curiosity. This is what makes me a teacher.

What special project(s) are you working on with the students or in your job? We are currently building student writing portfolios. Students write every day and periodically are asked to evaluate their writing and to select one for publication. This entry is displayed on the wall of the classroom for all and sundry to peruse. Over the course of the year, students will have created a writing portfolio that will demonstrate their thoughtful, improved writing.

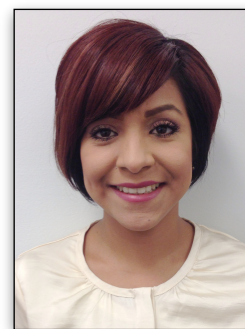
Who has been the biggest inspiration in your life? My biggest inspiration is someone you may know. The man who has kept me sane and focused (as much as possible) is my husband, Ken. He has a motivating work ethic and dedication to the teaching profession. When I was ready to quit or fall apart from stress, he invariably supported me and helped me to become a better teacher and person.

Tell us a little about yourself: I have four children ranging in age from 21-14 and a collection of pets (much to my husband's chagrin) that currently stands at two cats and 3.5 dogs. I love to read and watch movies. The sports I like to watch live are baseball, volleyball, and basketball. I don't care for football since it's much too complicated for me. I like to garden and ride bikes and laugh. A lot.

If the world were listening, what would you say? If the world were listening to me, I'd say, "Buck up, little camper. Everything's going to be fine. Just try to be a little better today than you were yesterday. Oh what a frumpitious wheeze! Chumble spuzzi!"

Kings Lake Director Keith Airheart says, "Christine Spencer is an excellent teacher, who is caring and motivates her students. She guides her students towards success and they know that she respects them and they respect her. She creates a positive, growth mindset and safe learning environment. The students thrive in her classroom. They feel valued and do their best for Mrs. Spencer, themselves and all involved. She works well with and supports our staff. She has taken on the responsibilities of our PBIS Coach and ran our CAHSEE testing. Christine Spencer has been a superb addition to our students,

Esmeralda Loera



What is your work history, including at CUSD? Before I was given the opportunity to join the Corcoran High School Staff, I worked for the famous In N Out Burger. I worked there for 6 years and loved the fast work environment, but it wasn't something I wanted to do forever. I was hired in August of 2014 as a Campus Safety Supervisor. Then a great opportunity came along where I had the chance to apply for the Academic Career Coach job, which is my current position, where I get to learn more on how the school meets the Academic needs of students.

What is most rewarding to you when working with students or in your job? The most rewarding feeling I have when working with students, is knowing that I can help them get experience for the real world. As I have mentioned below, a project such as Junior Ethics helps students prepare themselves for real world situations. Helping students with Scholarship information is also rewarding since I can help students in their quest to further their education.

What special project(s) are you working on with the students or in your job? Junior Ethics is the project I'm currently working on with students. Students can learn how to make ethical decisions in school, the workplace, and daily life situations.

Who has been the biggest inspiration in your life? I would have to say my Mother is my biggest inspiration. She has taught me to never give up on my goals. That no matter what life throws your way you always have to make the best of it. I have to thank her for the education she was able to give me and without her wise words and her care I wouldn't be where I'm now.

Tell us a little about yourself: I'm married to Octavio Barajas and together we have a daughter who is three years old. She keeps us busy at all times. I have a bachelor's degree in Criminology with the option of Victimology. I knew I wanted to work with kids since I was in high school. This job opportunity helped me fulfill that goal. I enjoy family time; no matter how busy we are we always make time for family.

If the world were listening, what would you say? To stay Humble no matter what you do or who you are. Always remember where you came from. And stay true to yourself.

CHS Principal Antonia Stone says, "Esmeralda is a dynamic employee, and we here at Corcoran High School are very fortunate to have her on board with us."

Technology In Early Childhood

by Leanne Shellhamer, CUSD Academic Technology Coach

Technology in Early Childhood/Teaching with technology in preschool and kindergarten classrooms. This is my new favorite website: <http://technologyinearlychildhood.com>. Karen Nelson (pictured at right) focuses on using technology in preschool and kindergarten, but most of her ideas will work across all grade levels. She also writes code (aka program computers).



She talks about managing student iPads in the classroom and understands that technology does not replace good teaching. My students have loved using some of her QR code math and sight word activities. She provides all the resources needed and gives a very clear narrative on how she used them. Karen has also written many posts related to professional development for teachers. It is also helpful that she often posts links to more information at the end of her posts.

Some of her suggested links/books that she blogs about are pictured below:

