



REPORT TO THE

Community



2024-2025

CERES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent's book club helps students discover joy of reading

For students, reading can sometimes feel like one more school assignment. Dr. Amy Peterman, in her first year as Superintendent of the Ceres Unified School District, set out to change that perception. Driven by a lifelong passion for reading, Dr. Peterman envisioned a district-wide book club that would transform reading from a task into an adventure – inspiring students to experience the magic of getting lost in a great story.

The *CUSD Reads Superintendent's Book Club* debuted in October 2024 during "National Book Month." Participation was simple: Any student in grades TK-12 who read any book on their own time

From October through March, CUSD students across all 20 schools read nearly 5,500 books and turned in reviews.

could write a review and earn a reward – stickers, wristbands, book-marks, reading lights, and more. Students could also read a book to someone else, have a book read to them, or listen to an audiobook. Very



The CUSD Reads Superintendent's Book Club kicked off in October 2024 to spur students' interest in recreational reading. Any student in grades TK-12 who read a book on their own time, had a book read to them, read to someone else, or listened to an audiobook could write a review and earn monthly rewards. At left, *Dork Diaries: Tales from a Not-So-Best Friend Forever*, received a 4-star review from student Starla. Below, book club members wrote reviews and collected rewards from Superintendent Peterman.

young students, or those with unique needs, could draw a picture in lieu of writing a review. With every review or picture turned in, students' names went into drawings at each school for an e-reader.

The response from students was remarkable! From October 2024 through March 2025, CUSD students across all 20 schools read nearly 5,500 books and turned in reviews.

To foster participation in the book club, school libraries and the Ceres public library created book displays reflecting monthly themes such as

Kindness/Friendship and Heritage/History/Family. Several teachers invited Peterman to their classrooms to read to students and hand-deliver their book club rewards.

"I still remember reading the Harry Potter series for the first time," Peterman told students. "While I was reading one book, the author was still writing the book that was coming next. I was so excited to go to the bookstore or the library to pick up that next copy and dive right

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Voters say 'Yes' to Measure Y

First project complete at Mae Hensley Junior High; others underway

In November 2024, Ceres voters approved the Ceres Unified School District Campus Safety/Classroom Repair Measure known as Measure Y. This school bond measure will provide necessary funding to update and repair school facilities, enhance campus security, and improve learning environments across the district.

Safe, well-maintained schools that foster a sense of belonging directly contribute to student success and well-being.

As campuses mature, periodic updates are essential to support evolving educational programs and accommodate growth. Measure Y funding will allow the district to proactively address aging roofs, HVAC systems, plumbing and other infrastructure,

as well as upgrade classroom technology, energy efficiency, and security.

The first Measure Y project was completed over the summer at Mae Hensley Junior High, where classrooms in the 600 building now have a new, energy-efficient roof. Additional projects are planned or in progress district-wide. To view a list, please click [Facilities Master Plan](#).

A Citizens' Oversight Committee made up of local



Above, workers reroof the 600 classroom wing at Mae Hensley Junior High – the first in a lineup of projects funded through Measure Y. At left, a classroom wing takes shape at Sam Vaughn Elementary.

citizens has been established to ensure that Measure Y funds are used as promised, while providing independent oversight for accountability and transparency. By law, bond dollars must be used only for facility improvements, not for salaries or other operating expenses.

Safe, well-maintained schools that foster a sense of

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Superintendent

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Student Support Services

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Personnel Services

Kristi Britton, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent,
Business Services

Paul Rutishauser, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent,
Educational Services

The Ceres Unified School District is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees elected from Trustee Areas. For more information, including a meeting schedule, please visit <https://ceresunifiedsdca.sites.thrillshare.com/page/board-of-trustees>.

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To request printed copies of this report, please email CUSD Communications at communications@ceres.k12.ca.us.

CUSD Employees of the Year

2025

Classified*



Confidential



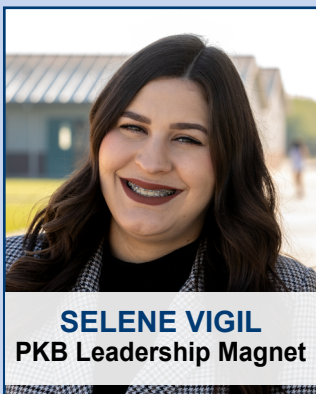
Elementary Teacher



Secondary Teacher*



Administrative Assistant



Administrator



2024

Classified*



Confidential



Elementary Teacher*



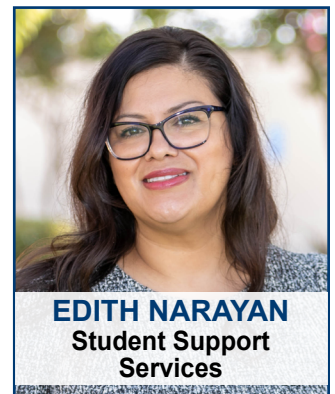
Secondary Teacher*



Administrative Assistant



Administrator



** Also Stanislaus County Employee of the Year*

Stanislaus Board Member of the Year



The Association of Stanislaus County School Boards has named Ceres Unified School District Trustee **Lourdes Perez** as its 2025 Stanislaus County Board Member of the Year.

Elected to the CUSD Board in 2009, Trustee Perez has made it a priority to be an informed, effective, and accountable governance team member who brings to the Board a unique perspective as a highly involved parent and Ceres community member. She is passionate about the transformative power of education to improve student futures.

In her professional role as Director of Local Policy with Public Health Advocates, Trustee Perez champions student success and wellbeing at a broader policy level. She also holds an elected role on the California School Boards Association's Delegate Assembly. In 2021, Trustee Perez was honored with the Central Valley Latino Leadership Award presented by Rep. Josh Harder.

Association of CA School Administrators Region 7 Administrators of the Year

2025

**Student Services
Administrator**



SHARON CARTER
Educational Services

**Middle Grades
Principal**



MATT HUTSELL
Blaker-Kinser JHS

**Elementary
Co-Administrator**



MAGGIE HARTUNG
Sinclear Elementary

2024

**Elementary
Principal**



**STEPHANIE
PIMENTEL**
Adkison Elementary

**Secondary
Co-Administrator**



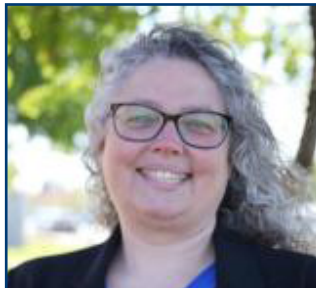
MARIANNE ASHBY
Whitmore Charter
(now Argus/Endeavor)

**Elementary
Co-Administrator**



LAURA MARSHALL
Caswell DLA
(now Mae Hensley JHS)

**Special Education
Administrator**



JANELLE DEGREEK
Student Support Services

**Confidential
Administrator**



MARILYN CROFT
Superintendent's Office

CUSD Mission

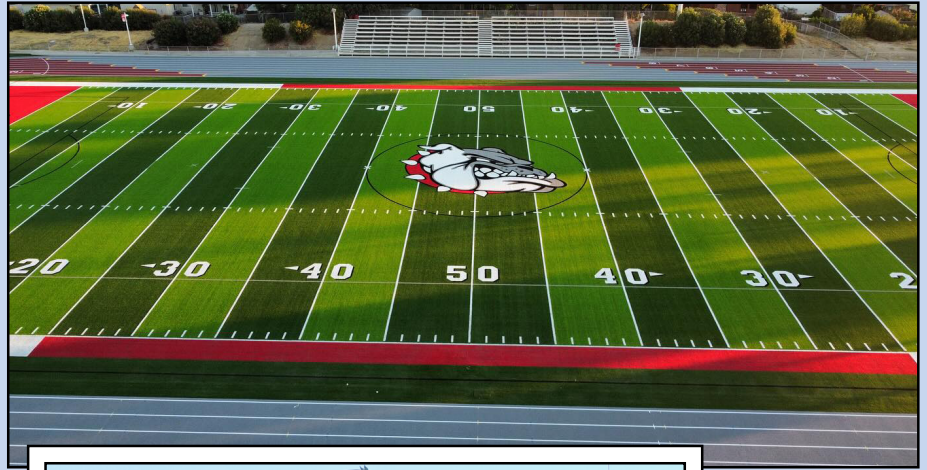
Our students will achieve mastery of academic standards in a safe and supportive environment. We will provide a quality, balanced education that results in academic excellence, and career preparation with attitudes and skills necessary to produce self-directed, productive citizens.

Bulldogs score renovated stadium; Hawks to have new facility fall 2026

Ceres High School Bulldogs began the 2024-25 school year with a fully renovated football stadium. Gone were the patchy grass field and dirt track; in their place, a modern facility boasting an AstroTurf field, all-weather track, new scoreboard, and other upgrades.

With input from educational partner groups, CUSD leveraged reserve funds to renovate the stadium to a standard comparable with other area high schools.

For decades, the stadium has hosted home games for both CHS and Central Valley High School, which opened in 2005 without a stadium of its own. That's about to change. This year, the district broke ground on a new stadium for the Hawks, set to open in fall 2026. Phase 1 will include an artificial turf field and all-weather track, home and visitor bleachers, and a combined ticket booth, restroom, and concession building.



BIG WINS FOR STUDENT ATHLETES:

Above, the renovated CHS Stadium features an AstroTurf field and all-weather track. At left, district officials and project leads broke ground on the CVHS Stadium, set to open in fall 2026.

WINNER WINNER!

Third-grader Gibran was elated when Dr. Peterman dropped by his classroom to present him with a new e-reader! Students who turned in book reviews between October 2024-March 2025 had their names entered in their school's drawing for a free Kindle.



CUSD Reads (continued from page 2)

back into that story!”

Peterman notes that reading is central to academic success, along with a host of other benefits that include:

- Builds vocabulary and comprehension
- Develops critical thinking
- Improves memory
- Decreases stress
- Increases confidence
- Supports empathy

“And it’s fun!” she adds.

Check out *CUSD Reads* in the news by clicking the Ceres Courier articles [Peterman promotes reading with Superintendent's Book Club for CUSD students](#) (Oct. 9, 2024) and [Superintendent Promotes Reading](#) (Dec. 23, 2024).

The *CUSD Reads Superintendent's Book Club* is back for its second year from October 2025 through March 2026. Visit the [CUSD Reads Website](#) for details.

Congratulations, Classes of 2025!

Click school name to view more photos.



CUSD Demographics 2024-2025

22 Schools

- 12 Elementary Schools (includes 2 English/Spanish dual-language)
- 2 K-8 Magnet/Charter Schools
- 3 Junior High Schools
- 2 Comprehensive High Schools
- 1 Continuation/Alternative High School
- 1 Charter High School
- 1 Adult Education Program

13,628 Students

- 7,344 Elementary
- 6,284 Secondary

86.4% Free/Reduced Meals Program Eligibility

Student Ethnicity

- 81.0% Hispanic/Latino
- 9.7% White/Caucasian
- 5.7% Asian
- 1.2% African American
- 2.3% Other/Not Reported

30.9% English Learners

2025-2026

School	Principal	Phone
Elementary Schools		
Adkison Elementary School	Stephanie Pimentel	(209) 556-1600
Caswell Dual Language Academy	Ismael Maldonado	(209) 556-1620
Don Pedro Elementary School	Tonya Shuford	(209) 556-1630
Fowler Elementary School	Arti Narayan	(209) 556-1640
Hidahl Elementary School	Melissa Adams	(209) 556-1650
La Rosa Elementary School	Lori Mariani	(209) 556-1660
Lucas Elementary Dual Language Academy	Angelica Mariscal	(209) 556-1720
Virginia Parks Elementary School	Justin Tate	(209) 556-1670
Sinclear Elementary School	Shane Hulin	(209) 556-1680
Sam Vaughn Elementary School	Kristin Lilly-Porter	(209) 556-1690
Westport Elementary School	Shelli Trine	(209) 556-1700
Walter White Elementary School	Heather Houtchens	(209) 556-1710
K-8 Magnet/Charter Schools		
Patricia Kay Beaver Leadership Magnet	Libby Callahan	(209) 556-1730
Whitmore Charter School of Arts/Technology	Steve Merchant	(209) 556-1610
Junior High Schools		
Blaker-Kinser Junior High School	Matt Hutsell	(209) 556-1810
Mae Hensley Junior High School	Laura Marshall	(209) 556-1820
Cesar Chavez Junior High School	Rogelio Adame	(209) 556-1830
High Schools		
Central Valley High School	Casey Giovannoni	(209) 556-1900
Ceres High School	Kimberly McNeil	(209) 556-1920
Argus and Endeavor Continuation/Alternative	Marianne Ashby	(209) 556-1800
Whitmore Charter High School	Steve Merchant	(209) 556-1617

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Measure Y (continued from page 3)

belonging contribute directly to student success and well-being. Voters' support of Measure Y reflects the community's partnership with the district in building safer, stronger schools and a brighter future for every student.

Thank you to the parents, grandparents, educators, local leaders, and others who came together to support Measure Y. As projects take shape, the district extends heartfelt thanks to Ceres voters for their trust and support.

CUSD Town Halls 2025-26

CUSD's 2025-26 Town Hall series begins Thursday, Oct. 16, 2025, with a discussion on the dangers of social media. Phone (209) 556-1559 to reserve free childcare.

CUSD NUMBERS TO KNOW

Educational Services/Curriculum	(209) 556-1520
Student Support Services	(209) 556-1550
Student Services	(209) 556-1533
Child Welfare & Attendance	(209) 556-1540
Special Education	(209) 556-1530
Preschool	(209) 556-1545
ASES After School Program Office	(209) 556-1548
Adult Education	(209) 556-1557
Business Services	(209) 556-1560
Child Nutrition Office	(209) 556-1580
Transportation Office	(209) 556-1595
Personnel Services	(209) 556-1510



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