

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Lagunitas School District Welcomes Back Over 160 TK - 8th Grade Students under a New Name – Lagunitas Community School – and a Community-Focused Philosophy

School Year Starts off Strong with Newly Combined Elementary School and a Revitalized Partnership with the San Geronimo Valley Community Center

San Geronimo, CA – Last Wednesday, 162 children who live in Marin County's San Geronimo Valley returned to their public school campus for a brand new school year under a new name, the **Lagunitas Community School** – a child and family focused, community supported public school.

“For decades, the Lagunitas School District and the San Geronimo Valley Community Center have been held up as a model of what is possible when community based organizations and school districts work together. We recognize that the education system is far more effective when the whole child and their family are cared for through a network of key services. We are making a commitment to work with the local community to educate and support students while increasing equitable outcomes with a comprehensive approach that includes family and community connections,” says Laura Shain, Superintendent and Principal.

In spring 2023 the School Board voted to merge the two previous elementary programs (Open Classroom and Montessori) into one school that combines the best of both philosophies. Following that decision, the School Board voted to change the name of the TK - 8th grade programs to the **Lagunitas Community School** to better reflect the school's partnerships with the community and the close collaboration with the San Geronimo Community Center. Community Schools focus on the whole child and provide integrated services in partnership with the local community. As a result of the elementary merger, the District provided significant salary increases to teachers and classified staff.

The Lagunitas Community School includes a **TK - 5th grade elementary program** with 81 students located on the upper campus, a **6th-8th grade Middle School** with 81 students on the

lower campus, and a new “Enrichment Hub” at the lower campus which includes studios for science, garden, art, music, and library. The hub will feature a fully equipped “Makerspace” that is in development for all grades and will integrate all aspects of the STEAM approach (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) with hands-on engaging projects. The Makerspace is expected to officially open later this fall.

In partnership with the school district, the Community Center offers numerous valuable benefits and services to students and their families including, after school programs, tutoring, summer camp and class offerings. The Community Center staffs a noon wellness program for middle school students each day. They also lead the Student Wellness Ambassador Program (SWAP), oversee and administer school sports teams, and manage student internships in the local community. The school and Community Center work together to fund and bring assemblies and parent education seminars to our school.

“The San Geronimo Valley Community Center’s partnership with the Lagunitas School District allows us to care for children and families in a holistic way. In school and after school learning and activities can seamlessly come together to ensure that a child’s needs are being met, as well as supporting the whole family. By integrating social services, health, recreation, and wellness services, and enrichment and cultural opportunities into the school, together we can create better and more equitable outcomes for all of our residents,” says Alexa Davidson, Executive Director of the Community Center.

“The exciting changes at Lagunitas came about because the administration, teachers and parents collaborated on a shared vision. We have a dedicated teaching team that loves working together and our parent community is as engaged as ever. Together, we embrace our community school focus and are proud to offer a vibrant, enriching educational experience to the children and families of the San Geronimo Valley,” says Shain.

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