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Velarde Elementary
Home of the Panthers



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August 2, 2022

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians of Velarde Elementary,

Welcome Back to School Year 22-23! I hope that everyone had a wonderful, restful and fulfilling summer. It is that time to return to Velarde Elementary for a brand new school year!

I am pleased and *honored to return to Velarde Elementary School with the Espanola Public Schools*. I am truly looking forward to continuing our journey together by working with and further getting to know our students and families.

Our goal at VES is to challenge every student with rigorous and meaningful instruction that is aligned with the NM Common Core State Standards, and provide students with a warm and safe environment. We value excellence in all of our students and expect that every student will put forth their best effort each and every day regarding their academics and behavior. Our teachers, staff and administration are fully committed to ensuring that your child is well educated and cared for physically and emotionally to the best of our abilities.

This school year; we have new staff joining our school team. Please welcome Mrs. Hermenia Yanez, our school cook; and Mr. Dennis Padilla, our cook-custodian.

We also have new faculty joining our school teaching team:

Mr. Carl Michael Carlson will be the 5-6 grade teacher. He was born in Casper, Wyoming, and moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, when he was three. While in highschool, he worked for a local newspaper, The Death Valley Gateway Gazette. At this tri-county weekly, he learned to write and shoot photos. In 1998, he moved to Los Alamos with his family. He soon found work as a public relations writer at the University of New Mexico – Los Alamos campus and later the Los Alamos National Laboratory. He also worked at the Roswell Daily Record as a general assignment reporter. In 2009, he graduated from the University of New Mexico with a bachelor's degree in political science and a journalism minor. His introduction to education came when he took a job as a substitute teacher at Albuquerque Public Schools while he was working his way through college. After relocating to Los Alamos, he worked for the Los Alamos Public Schools as an educational assistant in a behavioral program. During his time with the Los Alamos Public Schools, he enrolled in the Santa Fe Teacher Academy (Santa Fe Community College) and

earned teaching certificates in elementary and special education. In 2011, he took a job at Santa Rosa Consolidated Schools as a certified special education teacher, where he worked in the elementary, middle and high school. During his tenure, he earned endorsements in social studies, language arts and gifted education. He moved to the Jemez Mountain Schools in 2019 and taught regular education (middle school) and special education concurrently at a small school that primarily services the Navajo Nation. He used his time during the pandemic to finish his master's in special education from Eastern New Mexico University. Recently earning an endorsement in Computer Technology Education, he is looking forward to incorporating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) education into his classroom through problem and project-based learning strategies. He uses projects to assess learning of direct instruction. As a regular education teacher, he will use his background in special education to help all students succeed in their academics. In his spare time, he enjoys writing short stories, photography and playing Mario Kart on my Nintendo Switch. Mr. Carlson will also take on the role as the 21st Century Coordinator after school program, and he also plans on developing a school newspaper.

For our third and fourth grade class, Mrs. Pamela Manzanares, who is a certified elementary teacher of 34 years, will be teaching our students three days a week. She is an outstanding teacher who has experience in high academics and rigor (for example; she was part of a highly qualified teaching team that brought one elementary school up in their school grade from a long-standing failing school grade to a B in one single school year.) Her primary focus will be on Math and English Language Arts during the three days that she is with us at Velarde Elementary. The other two days, Karen Bozik, a non certified substitute will be working with the students. Ms. Bozik is not new to our school as she served as a 21st Century summer program tutor at VES this last summer. Our students will also have supplemental support with skilled tutors from the Embudo Valley Tutoring Association that will be going into the classroom. Ms. Amanda Padilla, our Educational Assistant will also continue to support our students with pull out and push in services. Mrs. Rosella Sinaloa, our district instructional coach will also be working with our substitutes as added classroom support. Please be assured that Espanola Public School District and myself are working very actively and diligently to find a full time certified teacher.

In the area of supplemental and fun specials:

We are also looking forward to bringing back 4-H, a supplemental nutrition program, and a gardening program, inclusive of hydroponic gardening, through the Rio Arriba County Extension Office. Conversations and planning are currently underway with the Rio Arriba County Extension Office for this effort. More information will be forthcoming.

We will continue to have Cooking with Kids twice a month. Ms. Victoria Montoya is our new cooking specialist. We are excited to continue this endeavor as it serves to enlighten our students to various varieties of food and cuisine around the world.

Mrs. Rachael Madovich will continue to serve as our long term substitute Physical Education teacher two times a week.

Regarding safety at Velarde Elementary School (VES): We have an open door policy at the school; however, please be advised moving into school year 22-23, VES and all Espanola Public School sites will require you to present your ID to receive a visitor's pass before entering all school site buildings. Espanola Public School staff have/will be receiving ALICE active intruder training this year as well.

You may access a standard school supply list on the Espanola Public Schools Website (see link attached.) https://www.k12espanola.org/students_and_parents/school_supply_lists
Or, you may pick up a copy at the school.

Mrs. Yolanda Gasca continues to be our school bus driver.

Please feel free to come visit, call or email me (monique.garcia@k12espanola.org) with any questions, concerns, or to simply visit.

Sincerely,



Ms. Garcia
Principal, Velarde Elementary School