

Welcome Back!



August 2024

Dear Clay Families,

Welcome back to school for the 2024-2025 school year! We are excited to welcome you back on campus as well as welcome 14 new families to Clay for the first time!

We hope you have had a wonderful summer doing those things your family loves to do. Clay School has been busy this summer as well getting some projects done in preparation for more improvement to our already beautiful little school. We started with new carpet installation in Kindergarten through third grade. It looks beautiful and the rooms are almost like new. Our trees and grounds are trimmed up and looking healthy and safe. We have repaired the fascia board around our Administration building and Multipurpose room and installed new rain gutters. Finally, the long awaited primary bathroom remodel is underway. We will start the year under construction, but the demolition part will be complete and only the new will be under construction when school starts. It's about a 45 day project, so it will not be long at all and our primary will have brand new bathrooms with exterior access. Our parent club purchased some picnic tables and umbrellas to be placed out by the garden to shade students for pick up as well as some outdoor learning opportunities. Thank you board and parent club for continuing to assist in the improvements of our beautiful Clay School from year to year.

As I was cleaning out files this summer I ran across a huge COVID file of letters, documents, mandates, etc. that we all experienced during that unprecedented time in our world history. I wanted to throw that file away in frustration and then I paused. If it were not for difficult times in our lives, would we develop the character, perseverance, courage, strength and faith that we need to carry on through life? I started reflecting on my five years at Clay and together we have experienced some difficult times. Events that occurred that were out of our control that caused sadness, fear and wonder. We also have had some amazing times. We have started new events, broken fundraising goals time and time again and built new buildings with new furniture! In addition we have made a huge rebound academically and are making continued growth year to year. The key has been that we responded together. Through the difficulties and the prosperity, we worked together **One community, one goal, to exceed expectations**, which now serves as our school vision statement. We are a community that desires the absolute best for our kids. We want our kids to grow and excel in academics, athletics, the arts, good moral and ethical behavior, and ultimately, tremendous contributions to the community in which they choose to reside.

We are on this journey together and together we have built an incredible community that knows how to respond to adversity. We know how to be **champions**. We know how to demonstrate **COURAGE** during difficult times. We know how to be champions with **no limits** and work towards **transformation** and **renewal** as we pull out of the hard times. As a community we have fostered a champion spirit, to ardently defend our students and their purpose. Last year we worked on taking that champion status to **greatness** to truly exceed expectations as those who came before us set out as the vision of Clay. Remember David Cook said in his book, "greatness", that greatness is defined as "selfless exceptionalism" and he asked this question; "*What does it take to become the best of the best? Those who become champions set different types of goals than others.*" In his book he provides steps that include defining passions and perseverance which according to Angela Duckworth is defined as **GRIT**. Yes, we have discussed all of this the last five years, but as a community, we have demonstrated that when we seek greatness with selfless exceptionalism, great things happen!

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Judith Szpor, Superintendent/Principal**

As we've seen at Clay, life is a journey. The roads are unpredictable. Just like summer travel, we can have everything laid out, planned and organized, but that doesn't always mean things will go as planned. So this year, as we reflect on the last FIVE years, let's recognize the MOMENTUM that is behind us. Let's remember how we found JOY in hard times. Let's remember how we gathered together and made adjustments, sometimes physically, sometimes emotionally, but *together*, we kept Clay School MOVING to exceeding expectations. Without a doubt, we are Champions ***ON THE MOVE!***

So this year, I don't want to let go of any of what we have accomplished. We are stronger together, because of the journey we have traveled side by side. We are on the MOVE and we KNOW how to respond no matter what comes our way. Together, we will lock arms and with *greatness*, carry on through '24-25 with tremendous momentum doing our best to achieve and exceed expectations.

Of course we have academic goals. We are a school. But we all know that performance in one area always transfers to the other areas of our lives. If we learn to be kind and respectful at home, that transfers to school. If we learn to be organized, on time and give each task our best the *first time*, that will transfer with our students when they perform in sports, music, art, move on to high school and college, future careers, and ultimately as they raise their own family. We want to take each student's champion status and move them to greatness which is defined as "*the space beyond success where calling and legacy meet and a noble heart is required.*" In my opinion, this perfectly defines the calling here at Clay School and the desire of those who have come before all of us. No need to redefine, Clay is ON THE MOVE and we just need to keep on moving forward.

So, let's do this!

School starts on Wednesday, August 14th! Kids can be dropped off as early as 7:50 with a first bell that rings at 8:15 and a tardy bell that rings at 8:20. The gates lock at 8:20 and then you can enter through the office. As is tradition at Clay, we'd like to invite all parents to join us for that first morning opening where we start the year off together, yes, as *One Community!*

In addition, before school starts, **we'd like to invite you to our Back to School night on Tuesday, August 13th** where we will have a few food trucks available for dinner and then an opportunity to move throughout the classrooms and hear from the teachers as they give about a 20 - 30 minute orientation to their classroom. More specifics on that and so much more will follow. In addition, our Parent Club will have some booths set up and lots of information will be shared. It's a great evening to come and see each other again after a busy summer and get excited about a new school year!

Remember to get set up with Parent Square as that is our main form of communication as well as highlights on our website. <https://www.parentsquare.com/signin>

Please don't forget to check out our Clay School website as well. <https://www.clayschool.k12.ca.us/>

On our website you will find all the links to Parent Square, Aeries and Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/ClayElementaryCougars>.

Looking forward to seeing you all on Back to School night, Tuesday, August 13, 2023 from 5:00 - 8:00. More specific information will come.

This is going to be an EXCEPTIONAL year as we are ***ON THE MOVE*** as we continue to champion for ALL of our COUGARS!

Goooooooo Cougars!

Judi Szpor
Superintendent

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