
For Immediate Release

Administrators Welcomed to New Roles in Livermore Schools

The Board of Education of the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) has approved new school site leadership at high schools and middle schools in preparation for the 2019-20 school year. Kelly Bowers, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools said, “Our district is ever-changing and flexing to accommodate professional growth and infuse our schools with new perspectives.” Each administrator is spending time over the summer preparing for his or her new role and looks forward to the start of the school year.

Livermore High School



Helen Gladden has been no stranger to Livermore High School (LHS), and is thrilled about the appointment as principal – viewing the move as “heading home” after serving in the District office as Assistant Director of Curriculum and Special Projects. She spent a decade at LHS as an English teacher, department chairperson, professional development lead, accreditation coordinator, and finally as vice-principal. Gladden entered the field of education after a 20-year career with the federal government, and has been with LVJUSD for 14 years. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Rhetoric from UC Berkeley and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from California State University, East Bay. “I look forward to working with the entire LHS community to build a support system that prepares students for post-high school pathways,” Gladden says. “I believe that preparation requires not only academic support but also a concerted effort to develop self-confidence, resilience, and compassion in our students.”



Darrel Avilla is also an LHS Cowboy at heart and returns via this appointment to serve as a vice-principal. He most recently served at Del Valle, one of our nation’s 2017 model continuation high schools, where he served as principal. “I believe my diverse experiences as an educator will be helpful in supporting all students, parents, faculty, and staff. All students can learn, and it is our responsibility to support them in achieving at their highest level. I hope to carry forward my passion and vision for educating and supporting all students with my work at LHS,” said Avilla.

Not only does he bring passion, but he is also a veteran educator having worked as a

teacher, coach, athletic director, and site administrator at Livermore High School, Granada High School, and Del Valle Continuation High School. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration and his Master of Science in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation from Saint Mary's College in Moraga.

Darrel and wife Patricia, principal of Christensen Middle School, live in Livermore and have raised three children who are graduates of Livermore High School and are all career educators.

Granada High School



Matthew Hart is taking the lead as principal of Granada High School (GHS) and has served LVJUSD students for 20 years, both as a teacher and administrator. “Granada has been my educational home for 20 years, and I’m excited to build on the foundation that has been established and to help teachers continue the work of the past few years,” says Hart. “This is an incredible opportunity for me, and I appreciate the support of our district, our school-site staff, our students, and their families.”

For the past four years, he has been a vice principal – three of those years at GHS. Prior to that, he taught English at GHS for 16 years. Hart was the English department chair for six years, the WASC Self-Study Coordinator, the supervisor for facilities, and GHS’s state testing coordinator. He holds his Bachelor of Arts in English from

California State University, Fresno and a Master of Arts in English Literature from California State University, Hayward.



Jessica Mann joins the GHS staff as vice principal, and is particularly excited about serving at an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, as she, herself, was an IB student in high school. She has worked for the Tracy Unified School District for the past eleven years where she has served as the Assistant Principal of Williams Middle School and, before that, as a teacher and social science department chair at Kimball High School. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from UCLA and a Master of Arts in Educational Administration and Leadership from the University of the Pacific.

Mann is dedicated to fostering positive relationships with students, staff, families, and community members. She has implemented social-emotional learning programs to support students in their acquisition of emotional coping, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. She brings with her positive, progressive discipline model centered on behavioral interventions. Mann is committed to supporting teachers in their teaching practices, and working with staff to create relevant, rigorous lessons. She is passionate about instilling a life-long love of learning in her students.

Mann lives in Castro Valley with her husband, a teacher at Dublin High School, her son and her dog. She enjoys reading, cheering on the San Francisco Giants, and traveling.

Del Valle Continuation High School



Erik Taylor will step into the position of principal at Del Valle Continuation High School. “My focus in this role is to implement programs to help increase Del Valle’s student academics, social-emotional needs, and future career paths. I’m committed to the students of Del Valle and hope to showcase their successes with the Livermore community,” said Taylor.

Taylor has been an educator and administrator in LVJUSD for the last 15 years, and served as the District’s Integrated Technology Specialist, as vice principal of Christensen Middle and Livermore High Schools, and as vice principal at Del Valle Continuation High School. He worked closely with the Del Valle staff to support students’ development of academic proficiency and improvement of their problem-solving skills.

Taylor holds a Bachelor of Arts in History with a minor in English from California State University, Chico, and a Master of Arts in Educational Technology Leadership from California State University, East Bay. Taylor is the past president of the Livermore Management Association (LMA) and currently serves as Region Six State Representative for Educational Options of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA).

East Avenue Middle School



Holly Ellison joins the LVJUSD leadership team in the role of vice principal at East Avenue Middle School. Having spent the majority of her career working with middle school students, Ellison is committed to helping these students transition from children to teenagers. “I am a strong advocate for equity in education, addressing the needs of the whole child, and helping all students find their unique paths to success,” she said. “I look forward to collaborating with and supporting the staff and families of East Avenue Middle School as we work collectively to ensure our students thrive.”

Ellison has been an educator for 22 years, having spent the majority of her career in Dublin Unified School District (DUSD). She earned her Bachelor of Arts in English at UCLA and Master of Arts in Educational Administration and teaching credential at San Jose State University. Her career as a classroom teacher includes teaching English, history, and Spanish to students in grades six through

eight. While teaching, she also served as the World Languages department chair and as a coach and mentor for new teachers.

For the past five years, Ellison was the Response to Intervention (RtI) Coordinator at her school site where she worked with students, teachers, and families to create programs and provide support to ensure all students were given opportunities to experience academic success. She also played a pivotal role in creating social-emotional learning opportunities for students as well as positive behavior interventions and support. As the RtI Coordinator, she was instrumental in her school receiving both a Gold Ribbon Award from the State of California and recognition as a National School of Character. Ellison has also held the position of principal of DUSD's secondary summer school program for the past five summers.

Outside of school, Ellison enjoys spending time with her two sons, a college sophomore and a high school junior. She loves traveling, yoga, hiking, reading, and trying new foods and restaurants.

Mendenhall Middle School



Tom Fletcher will move to the role of vice principal at Mendenhall Middle School. For the past five years, he has served as vice principal at Livermore High School and has held leadership roles in the areas of athletics, master scheduling, WASC, testing, staffing, special education, facilities and staff development. “I’m looking forward to applying my knowledge of high school to the middle school environment to prepare our students for this transition. I want to bring my positive leadership experience, passion for equity, strong interpersonal skills, and deep connection to the Mendenhall community.”

Fletcher has worked in education for 26 years, serving LVJUSD at East Avenue Middle School, Vineyard Alternative High School, Granada High School and Livermore High School. He has taught social studies, and has served as leadership advisor, department chair, activities director, athletic director and basketball coach.

Fletcher earned his Bachelor of Arts in Social Science from California State University, Sacramento, his CLAD credential from UC Berkeley, and his administrative credential as well as his Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership from CSU East Bay.

His wife, Megan and his two children work and attend school in our district. Fletcher grew up in Livermore, graduated early from Vineyard Alternative High School, and is an active member in the Livermore community.

Joe Michell K-8 School



Ravi Prabhala joins the leadership team at Joe Michell K-8 School after serving as vice principal at Mendenhall Middle School in 2018-19. Prabhala's previous experience as a science teacher gave him the opportunity to launch the Project Lead the Way STEM program at East Avenue Middle School, where he also coached boys and girls basketball. Prior to becoming an administrator, Prabhala served several years as an Integrated Technology Specialist. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Genetics at the University of California, Davis and continued his education with a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of the Pacific, and a Master of Science in Educational Leadership at California State University, East Bay. Prabhala is excited to serve the Michell K-8 community. He is passionate about cultivating student-centered classrooms,

providing authentic learning opportunities for students, and empowering students with voice and choice in their learning.

Superintendent Bowers is grateful for the years of service past administrators have given to LVJUSD. Vicki Scudder, former principal of Livermore High School, now serves in the Curriculum Department. PJ Daley, former principal of Granada High School, has accepted a leadership position in another district. Alex Eckert, former vice principal at East Middle School, has moved to the private sector. Risha Krishna, former vice principal of Joe Michell K-8 School, has accepted a principal position in another district.

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ABOUT LIVERMORE VALLEY JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

LVJUSD is an award-winning district that serves more than 13,900 students in transitional kindergarten through 12th grade at nine elementary campuses, two K-8 schools, three middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and two alternative schools. The LVJUSD features International Baccalaureate Programmes and a STEM pathway, TK-12. The mission of the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District is to ensure each student will graduate with the skills needed to contribute and thrive in a changing world. For more information about the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, please visit www.livermoreschools.org

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Photos courtesy of LVJUSD.