

# SANTA MARIA JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

## The Signal

Volume 3

March 2022

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear colleagues,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well. Approximately two years ago, our lives were upended in ways unimaginable. To date, we are still dealing with the effects of the pandemic and will continue to feel its impact for an undetermined time. (This recent Noozhawk [retrospective](#), written by our County Superintendent Dr. Susan Salcido, captures our trajectory in education the past two years.) In spite of this reality, I am proud and grateful of what you do every day, individually and collectively, to attend to the needs of our students.



As we come out of a strenuous time in our district the past three months, due to more than just the latest pandemic surge, it is important to reflect upon and re-emphasize our priorities that enable us to best serve our students and families. For example, we must continue to keep at the forefront of our work the principles that have guided our decisions:

- Student and staff safety
- Student learning and well-being
- Equitable access to a quality education

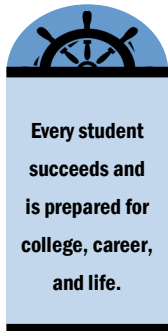
Safety comes in many forms, including physical security, health safety, mental health, and ensuring that we protect the most precious commodity parents and guardians send to us every day - their own children. This requires much from all of us: prevention and intervention, thoughtful planning and best practices, ethical behavior and leadership, support and accountability. These same expectations apply just as well to student learning, well-being, equitable access and quality programs. Just as important as what we do, is how we go about it; our words and actions matter.

As we near the last couple months of the school year, it is also important to recognize the amazing people in our district and the great things going on this school year, some of which are covered in this newsletter, media releases, our newly redesigned website, and other communications.

Together, our resilience will keep us moving forward. Together, our collective commitment to meeting the needs of all our students and families will continue to pave the path for our journey ahead. Thank you again for all that you do on behalf of SMJUHS.

Gratefully,

Antonio Garcia  
Superintendent



DATE	SITE
4/5/22	SMHS
5/17/22	DELTA
6/7/22	SSC

## SMHS BAND DIRECTOR SAMANTHA QUART

SMHS Band Director Samantha Quart will never forget marching alongside nearly 300 other band directors from all 50 states and Mexico as part of the Saluting America's Band Directors project at the 2022 Rose Parade in Pasadena.

The Band Directors Marching Band entertained the crowd with well-known music and an animated float down the famous parade route during the event held annually on New Year's Day.

"I was honored to be presented with the opportunity to fulfill a dream of marching in such a large scale and important parade while showing you can accomplish dreams at any age," Quart said.

Quart, who has been the band director since 2016, had been awaiting the event for over a year. It was originally planned for 2021 and postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. She played the sousaphone in the parade.

The Saluting America's Band Directors project was founded to recognize the exceptional instruction, character development, and inspiration provided by music educators everywhere.



### PVHS TIME CAPSULE / REUNION

The Class of 2012 is planning their ten-year reunion and has a time capsule to open when they celebrate! Principal Shanda Herrera has been in her principal position since 2011 and remembers the planning and excitement of the graduating class of 2012 as they added items to their memory capsule. Recently, former 2012 Senior Class President Nicole Torres reached out to Mrs. Herrera, and they laughed together trying to remember where the giant, five-foot, teal and black tube, of memorabilia had been hidden.



After a bit of investigation and a phone call, to now retired Assistant Principal Lee Davis, we were all reminded that the time capsule was not buried at all but was hidden in the ceiling tiles of the school administration building for safe keeping! When contacted, Mr. Davis shared that the time capsule was born out of conversations with the then senior officers about "memories" and ways to capture what was important to each senior. The giant, painted tube was donated by Jim Guiton with Baker Construction. For ten days, it was kept in Mr. Davis' office. One senior at a time was allowed to drop their "memory" into the tube for secrecy without peeking inside it. The tube was sealed during the graduation ceremony and labeled, "2012 Time Capsule – Do not open until 2022."

Alumni Wendy Ruiz and Nicole Torres are coordinating the ten-year celebration. Both female alums are college graduates from Cal Poly (Wendy Ruiz) and UCLA (Nicole Torres) and are working in their career major fields. They are in the process of finalizing the venue, food, and entertainment for the ten-year celebration and plan to open the capsule during the class reunion. Ticket cost and details for the June 24, 2022, event can be found on Instagram at [pvhs2012reunion](#).



Upper Pic: Left - Wendy Ruiz, Right - Nicole Torres

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: 50 YEARS OF SERVICE



Unless you know someone who has devoted 50 years to helping students, then you have never met a person like Righetti High School's Rosie Gauna.

Rosie, who recently retired, was honored in March with a celebration involving about 100 family, friends and staff inside the Warrior cafeteria. There was an FFA BBQ, performances by the Marimba Band and Ballet Folklorico, Jazz Band, and snacks from the Foods Class.

"The years went by so quickly," said Rosie who graduated from Santa Maria High School in 1968. "It didn't seem like 50 years. I consider myself blessed and proud to have worked with so many fine and wonderful students and dedicated staff I encountered throughout the years."

She began work with the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District when she was 21 years-old. For the majority of her time at RHS, she was an Instructional Assistant in the classroom but also held positions as a Community Liaison and most recently as an Attendance Technician.

"I felt like every class was having a different job," said Rosie, adding she also worked at Delta High School for one year during her career. "I loved working with the kids. I learned as much from them as they did from me. I guess you could say my heart will always be in the classroom seeing the students learn and grow."

The staff described Rosie as an "inspiration" and an example of a "true warrior." Warrior Student Body Bookkeeper Rikki Rodriguez, "The way Rosie shares her stories of Righetti shows how much she genuinely cares about the students and staff. Fifty years of dedication to our district does not go unnoticed. She has definitely made history and I am happy that we can honor her in such a special way."

"She loved helping the students and having the interaction with the parents and teachers," said Warrior Attendance Technician Felicitas Gutierrez. "She has taught me that her work ethic is to GO, GO, GO, and DO, DO, DO. She would uplift your spirits and talk about a better way to tackle life and not give up. She would always say, "Look forward and don't go back".

Rosie's favorite hobby is cake decorating. She belongs to several organizations including the Vietnam Veterans of America, American Veterans United, American Legion, and Midcoast Veterans Alliance. She's been married to her husband Jessie for 47 years, has two sons, and six grandchildren.

## ALICE TRAINING

The deadline for all employees to complete ALICE active shooter training is 4/14/22. It is a proactive, options-based strategy program to prepare individuals to handle the threat of an active shooter.

Please click on the link [learn.navigate360.com](https://learn.navigate360.com) to begin the required "ALICE for Schools" online training course. The username is your smjuhsd.org email address. Password: navigate2022

Non-District employees will use the smjuhsd.org email address as a username. The course does not need to be completed at one time. It may be completed intermittently.

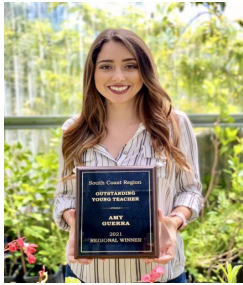
For e-learning status requests, contact Dina Araizaga at [daraizaga@smjuhsd.org](mailto:daraizaga@smjuhsd.org) or Ext. 4215.

**BANNERS** Several employees will be recognized by the City of Santa Maria as “Essential Workers” and will have their pictures placed on banners as part of the Hometown Heroes campaign.

The banners will be displayed along College Drive, starting at the roundabout on South College Drive and Southside Parkway, going towards Rotary Centennial Park.

They are: Amy Guerra – RHS Agriculture FFA Teacher, Donna Baker – SMHS Food Service Lead, Gabriel Ponce – PVHS Agriculture FFA Teacher, Luis Guerra - SMHS Agriculture FFA Teacher, Shawn Tracht – DHS Teacher, Trina Leornas- Hurtado – PVHS Teacher and Virgie Alarcon – SMJUHS Bus Driver. (Left to Right)

“This recognition is also on behalf of all district employees who were essential workers during the pandemic,” said SMJUHS Superintendent Antonio Garcia.



**TEACHING AWARD** RHS alumni and Media Arts Teacher, Jacob R. Gustafson, has been nominated and selected as the first winner of KSBY’s One Class at a Time program for 2022. He received \$500 in Visa gift cards.

Gustafson’s nominator described him as a, “thoughtful, positive, caring teacher” and “a teacher who sits by the door every day to personally greet students.” The program is designed to thank educators and mentors.

“Receiving this award is a huge honor. It was a total surprise and I want to thank my student, Jordyn Rae, for nominating me. Since taking over the film classes from Robert Garcia, I have tried to maintain his high level of student-focused instruction. I’m a Righetti alum and I had the privilege to take his classes when I went here. It meant so much to me to know that Mr. Garcia cared about me personally and I have tried to continue his supportive tradition. I also want to thank Arnold Feher, my mentor teacher at Pioneer Valley, for instilling in me the importance of putting students first and to create engaging cross disciplinary lessons. My success at RHS is due to the wonderful people that have mentored me, including my department chair Kizen Sugano, and the wonderful students that I am so fortunate to have. I love working at Righetti, and I feel so lucky to get to do what I do!” - Gustafson said.





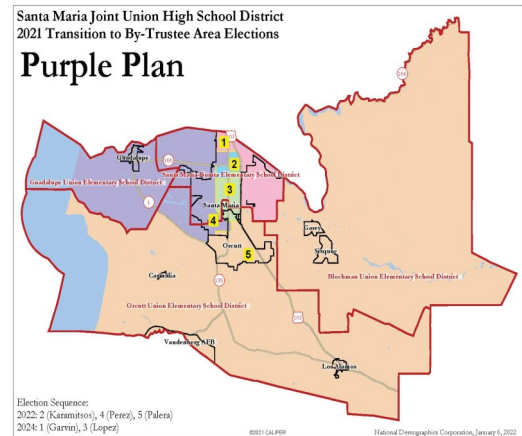
## NEW WEBSITE

The SMJUHSD new and improved school district website is up and running. It contains useful resources and information for employees and the community. You can access the district's new website via the same URL address as before: [www.smjuhsd.k12.ca.us](http://www.smjuhsd.k12.ca.us)

**TRUSTEE AREAS** On Feb. 8, the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District Board of Education adopted a final redistricting map during a school board meeting. The new voting boundaries take effect with the Nov. 2022 election.

Board members held several public hearings before they made the decision how the district's boundaries and neighborhoods should be represented. The process changed how voters elect school board members by transitioning from at-large elections to by-trustee area elections. The existing at-large election system gives voters the ability to vote for all of the board members. The new by-trustee area system allows voters to only vote for a candidate who lives in their district of residence.

The agreed-upon map (the purple plan) was reviewed and approved by the District's legal team and demographer. Those reviews ensured adherence to legal requirements and are based on the 2020 Census data. For more information, visit <http://www.smjuhsd.k12.ca.us/>.



## COACH OF THE YEAR: TONY PAYNE, ERHS

Righetti High School Varsity Football Coach Tony Payne, who took over the athletic program in 2018, was recently named the Santa Maria Times' All Area Coach of the Year.

The RHS Varsity Football Team captured the CIF-Central Section Division 5 championship. It's not only the school's first football CIF title but it is also the first 11-man CIF crown for any high school in the Santa Maria Valley.

Payne, who graduated as a Warrior in 1995 and played football there, previously served as an offensive line assistant coach on the team.

"It's an honor to be part of the Warrior football program and just a dream come true," Payne said.



## JOBS:

The Human Resources Department is still recruiting for multiple positions. Please check our website for vacancies and send the link to others you know that may have the skills we are seeking.

<https://www.applitrack.com/smjuhsd/onlineapp/>

