



CALIFORNIA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

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TAKE 5 BRIGHT SPOTS & PROMISING PRACTICES

JANUARY 2024

Take 5! is a monthly spotlight of *promising practices* happening at county offices of education throughout the state, rotating the five that are featured and the focus areas covered. The map coordinates with the location of the stories featured this month from across our state. You can view past *bright spots* by clicking the link at the bottom of this page.



Schools as Centers of Wellness

With national studies indicating that 1 in 5 children and youth have diagnosable emotional, behavioral, or mental health disorders and with 1 in 10 facing severe challenges affecting their daily functioning, the initiation of school-based mental health and wellness has been a game changer for students and families. Alarming, as many as 80 percent of young individuals do not receive necessary mental health care and in Sacramento County, an estimated 50,000 students have diagnosable mental health disorders, with upwards of 40,000 not receiving the care they need.

That's why for the last 4 years, the **Sacramento County Office of Education**, in collaboration with the Sacramento County Department of Health Services, initiated Schools As Centers of Wellness. To date, more than 65 clinicians are placed in 40 school sites, and recently more than 100 new staff—who include mental health support staff and clinicians—have been onboarded to work with school communities.

[Learn More Here](#)

[Supporting Mental Health Services in Schools](#)



The Youth Mental Health Development Academy in **San Joaquin County** prepares high school students to support their peers throughout the school year. A group of dedicated students from high schools across the county start the school year trained and ready to support the mental health and well-being of their classmates through a peer leadership program that provides training around mental health, suicide prevention, human trafficking, substance abuse and school violence.

[Learn More Here](#)



Vocational Training to Integrate Students with Disabilities into Careers and Society

Learn more about vocational training programs at the **Merced and Fresno County Offices of Education**, featuring unique programs that exemplify how valuable students with disabilities can be to the workforce. Most of the students, ages 18-22, are diagnosed with varying degrees of autism and/or other disabilities, and are in special education in the county office's adult transition program. Despite their limits, the students obtain skills as part of the county office programs working with a local hotel's housekeeping program and a coffee shop (Merced), and at Kids Café (Fresno).

[Learn More Here](#)



College and Career Ready: OC Sophomore Pursues AI-powered Solution to Wildfires

Meet Ryan Honary, a high school student in Orange County. He's created a company dedicated to early wildfire detection using artificial intelligence. And he's the subject of a new video series, "College and Career Ready," featuring **Orange County Department of Education** Deputy Superintendent Dr. Ramon Miramontes. Ryan has already received a number of grants and honors for developing a platform that leverages A.I. to predict where and how fires will grow. In the first "College and Career Ready" segment, Dr. Miramontes sits down with

[Learn More Here](#)

Ryan to talk about his wildfire prevention technology, his company SensorRy AI, his interests, and his advice for other aspiring innovators.



Understanding COE Role in Juvenile Court and County Office-Operated Community Schools

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While county offices don't govern or oversee local school districts, they do provide essential services to help them operate smoothly. This includes offering professional development for teachers, supporting student performance initiatives, providing fiscal support and aiding in the creation and approval of Local Control and Accountability Plans. In addition, many county offices serve the most vulnerable student groups in their areas.

We wanted to highlight specific student programs administered by COEs, which include juvenile court schools as well as county-operated community schools that serve students who are referred by their home districts or other agencies. If you've got two and a half minutes to spare, we hope you'll take a look.

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