

As you all know, the beginning of the school year is my favorite time of year. Not only is it the opening of one small chapter of a long journey, but it is a time for new beginnings and new opportunities. As I reflect on my time here in LCSD1, I continue to be humbled by the amazing principals, staff, teachers, and parents that I have the privilege of working alongside. Our work has brought a strategic plan, *student readiness, healthy environments, and community partnerships*. Together, in just a few short years, we have built a strong community, enhanced our Parent Advisory Council engagement, and launched amazing programs; the dual language programs, Leader in Me, STEM, and JROTC at South High School. We have increased college-level classes, Career and Tech Ed including, updates to our AG farm. There have been many other wonderful and important opportunities for our students that have come to life through our *Elevate LCSD1* strategic plan.

Our focus on SEL through Sources of Strength has helped hundreds of community members, staff, and students find their voice and bring a common focus to our wellness and health. The partnership with HealthWorks has brought needed medical support to our families through a mobile van program that visits our schools. Not to mention, our focus on equity and diversity has shown increases in the data. Students, like me, who learned English as a second language and our students who struggle with secure housing are exhibiting growth on our state assessments. Our partnership with LCCC will provide housing opportunities for our housing-insecure students and they too will have success. The students of Arp Elementary, no longer have to go to school in a building that is inadequate. Together, we have made a difference. *Please check out our most recent video update regarding our strategic plan.

I find myself reflecting over this time because although being the superintendent of LCSD1, has been a wonderful opportunity, I have determined it is time for me to begin a new chapter. I wish I could personally, thank each of you. As you launch into the new year, please remember to focus on joy, choose kindness, value each other, and remember, to walk like a penguin when it is icy. LCSD1, our students their future!

With Gratitude,

Margaret Crespo