



EAST WHITTIER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August. 30, 2016 CONTACT: Valerie Martinez, Marika Bastrmajian PHONE: (909) 445-1001

East Whittier Introduces New Elementary Administrators Following Start of 2016-17 School Year

EAST WHITTIER – The East Whittier City School District has appointed two new principals and an assistant principal to kick off the new school year at Orchard Dale and Ocean View elementary schools.

Leading Ocean View Elementary is a 16-year veteran of the District, Tim Strand; Renee Mackay will helm Orchard Dale Elementary as principal after working in education for 18 years; and Kim Songer, who has 26 years of experience in education, will serve as assistant principal at Ocean View Elementary.

“We have a group of all-star school administrators taking the reins in two of our schools this year and I couldn’t be prouder to call them part of my leadership team,” East Whittier City School District Superintendent Mary Branca said. “I extend my congratulations to these leaders who are passionate about helping our students reach their fullest potential.”

Strand began his career at EWCSO serving the students of East Whittier Middle School as a social studies teacher, assistant principal and principal. During his 14 years at EWMS, not only did Strand leave an impact on students and fellow co-workers, but he also met his future wife. The couple has a daughter – a former student at Ocean View Elementary and EWMS – and two dogs.

“I am excited to lead Ocean View Elementary,” Strand said. “I have worked hard to assist EWCSO students with reaching their academic goals and I look forward to continuing the District’s mission of seeing every student achieve success as the principal at Ocean View.”

Songer, who has also joined the Ocean View team as assistant principal, brings in almost three decades of experience in education. Her experience includes teaching all grade levels over her 26 years at Leffingwell Elementary School.

“I have experienced just about anything any teacher is going through which gives me great insight into their needs,” Songer said. “Also, having worked with three prior administrators, I have seen great examples of strong leadership and I have taken what has worked the best and molded that into my own leadership style.”



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Mackay, who joins Orchard Dale Elementary as principal, has worked at the elementary and middle school levels during her almost two decades in education.

"Having the experience in many different roles and facets of education, I have a well-rounded view of education from many perspectives," Mackay said. "It is my passion to help empower students, teachers and parents to become leaders."

EWCSB Board of Education President Dimitri Elbling said the new principals and assistant principal will contribute to the District's culture of excellence and collaboration.

"These new principals and assistant principal will be amazing assets to their respective schools and communities," Elbling said. "They are all joining us with exceptional track records, which fall in line with the hiring practices of our District and our goal of preserving an administration built on a strong foundation of excellence."

Here are more details on the new administrators' backgrounds:

Renee Mackay

Principal

Orchard Dale Elementary School

Prior to joining East Whittier City School District, she has been a teacher, instructional coach, digital learning coach, facilitator for the English Language Arts Curriculum Council, GATE facilitator, administrative designee and district parent symposium coordinator.

Tim Strand

Principal

Ocean View Elementary School

Strand started working for East Whittier as a seventh-grade language arts/social studies teacher at East Whittier Middle School in 2000. In 2008, he was promoted to assistant principal at East Whittier Middle and then principal in 2011. Two years ago, Superintendent Mary Branca brought Strand to the District headquarters as assistant superintendent of personnel. While he enjoyed working in the District's administration, Strand missed being a principal and working with students and staff, leading him to apply for the top job at Ocean View.



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Kim Songer

Assistant Principal

Ocean View Elementary School

This is her 27th year in the EWCSO, most recently at Leffingwell Elementary. She has taught all grades but has spent most of those years teaching fourth grade. She has also worked as a learning specialist for 7 years. Songer's children spent their elementary days at Leffingwell.

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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

EWCSONewAdmins1: East Whittier City School District veterans, Tim Strand and Kim Songer, are the new principal and assistant principal at Ocean View Elementary.

EWCSONewAdmins2: Renee Mackay brings her vast experience in education to her new role as principal of Orchard Dale Elementary.