



PRESS RELEASE

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Dolland Elementary Parent Workshop Highlights NLMUSD Commitment to Safe Online Communications

La Mirada – Vigilance and strong communication are the keys to maintaining a safe and rewarding online experience for school-age children, concerned parents learned at a Cyber Safety workshop at Dolland Elementary School on Feb. 5.

The workshop, presented by the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified Instructional Technology Department, centered on common sense practices that parent and child can agree on, as well as an overview of popular mobile phone apps and the proliferation of cyber threats such as bullying, predators, ID theft and online addiction.

“Cyber safety is a paramount concern for our community,” NLMUSD Superintendent Dr. Hasmik Danielian said, “We are committed to providing education and resources for parents who have had difficulty keeping pace with rapidly evolving modern technology.”

Cathy De Alba, a District Technology Integration Coach, led the discussion with a PowerPoint presentation outlining numerous strategies for being a good digital citizen. De Alba urged Dolland parents to sit down with their children to discuss and sign an Internet Agreement detailing family rules and safe habits regarding online activity.

De Alba stressed that although parents cannot monitor their children’s online activity 24 hours a day, they can take steps to ensure children keep themselves safe, think first and keep a healthy balance between their online and physical activities. She advised parents that building trust with their children and paying close attention to their moods were invaluable tools in helping children develop safe online habits.

“If your child is on the computer, make sure they are where you can see them,” De Alba said. “Make them understand you have the right to look at what is on their phone and delete anything that may be inappropriate. However, you cannot be too strict. Communication is the key.”

Graciela Romero, who has two children that attend Dolland, signed the Internet Agreement after attending a Coffee with the Superintendent monthly meeting. The Cyber Safety workshop was organized as a direct result of parent consultations with Dr. Danielian.

“It’s a matter of safety. Your child is online and you don’t know who is on the other side,” Romero said. “I worry about bullying, but also, in many cases, it is the parents trying to catch up with their children. There is always something new to learn.”

In addition to the Cyber workshop, a 10-week computer class for adults has begun at Waite Middle School. Parents who have never had an email address or touched a computer keyboard before are meeting twice weekly for ten weeks. They are learning the Microsoft Office suite of programs with curriculum centered on how to protect their children on the Internet by monitoring their use and adding filters to their computers. They are also learning how to use the Internet to support their students in other ways, including the college and financial aid application process – much of which is now accomplished online.

“I congratulate our parents for participating in the workshop and in the computer classes,” NLMUSD Board of Education President Karen Morrison said. “As a District, we want to do everything we can to help parents understand the importance of cyber-safety. These parents are taking the time to learn about the importance of Internet safety and stepping out of their comfort zones to learn new skills.”

NLMUSD has also built a comprehensive resource library for parents, students and teachers on its website with a series of links, including suggestions for setting rules for mobile phone use and “myths and truths about internet safety” supporting the concepts of digital citizenship.

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Photo Captions:

1. *Cathy DeAlba, Technology TOSA for Norwalk-La Mirada Unified, leads a Power Point presentation on Internet security during a Cyber Safety workshop held at Dolland Elementary School in Norwalk on Feb. 5.*
2. *Cathy DeAlba and Dolland Principal Lorena Sierra meet with concerned parents to discuss tips on how to maintain a safe and rewarding Internet experience for their children after the Cyber Safety workshop held at Dolland on Feb. 5.*

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