

Welcome to Crestview Preparatory: Q and A with Head of School Baudelia Chavez Taylor

Description



A few weeks ago, I stopped by [Crestview Preparatory](#) in La Canada to chat with head of school Baudelia Chavez Taylor. Iâ€™d never seen this absolutely charming school, but Iâ€™ve heard parents buzzing about it since Baudelia left the Center For Early Education about three years ago to become Crestviewâ€™s head of school.

Baudelia is immediately likable, personable and low-key. As we talked, I saw her genuine passion for the school, as our conversation flowed from big picture education trends like STEM, Maker Spaces and Robotics (yes, Crestview has these programs) to whatâ€™s happening in the schoolâ€™s Harry Potter garden which functions as a science lab of sorts. The school plants fruits and veggies that local wildlife animals wonâ€™t eat, hence the gorgeous Kumquat tree.



Crestview is very close to Pasadena and is accessible for families who live in Eagle Rock, Atwater, Silverlake, Los Feliz and other areas including the San Gabriel Valley. The school is a blend of traditional and developmental philosophies, with a focus on *respect for childhood*. One big change Baudelia instituted since taking over the school is a new homework policy. Now, there is “must-do” homework and “may-do” homework. Homework, Baudelia notes, must reinforce and relate to classroom work. The school has a lot of impressive programs like a robust technology program where kids start learning about computers in kindergarten where, as part of the curriculum, they learn to take apart a computer and put it back together, treating the computer as a “family” of parts that combine to create a whole. In later grades, robotics, coding and maker activities round out the program. The school garden is a real-life laboratory, where students plant and grow various fruits and vegetables, with the goal of learning why certain plants flourished and others withered.



The school is small, with 155 students total for grades K-6, so Baudelia knows each student and their family personally. She beams with pride as we walk around the campus, peeking in classrooms. She gives credit to her team of teachers, administrators and staff at the school as we walk around the campus. Parent volunteers, she notes, do a lot of work at the school too. Baudelia is no stranger to the secondary school application process, so when it's time to apply for secondary school, she takes a hands-on approach beginning in 5th grade to help families find the right school for their child. I really like the way she described extracurricular activities, an important part of the secondary school process. She noted that a student can participate in the traditional activities like soccer and piano, but she believes in a broad definition of what comprises a student's passion like reading voraciously outside of school, which can show a secondary school a student applicant who is studious, patient, imaginative and typically, a very strong writer. So what if your kid doesn't play soccer! See the [impressive list of schools](#) where Crestview kids enroll for secondary school. On my way out, I grabbed a copy of the school's newspaper, *Crestview Blastoff*. How cool is that!



Can you talk a bit about your background and experience? What brought you to Crestview?

I started my career as a teacher at LAUSD working with bilingual students at the middle school level. In 2001, I moved to The Center for Early Education in West Hollywood. I joined as a teacher in the early childhood and moved to the elementary several years later, landing in the third grade- my favorite grade to teach. From there, I joined the administration as the Director of Early Childhood Programs and led the early childhood division for several years before starting my headship at Crestview.

The opportunity to lead Crestview was a blessing, as the moment I visited the school it felt like home. At that time, I was ready to begin a headship and the small size of the Crestview community was perfect. I was drawn to its commitment to elementary education and to providing a balanced school experience to its students.

How would you describe the school's educational philosophy?

Crestview's philosophy is centered around the "respect for childhood" and balance in education. We strive to provide structure and nurture as we deliver instruction. We provide hands-on experiences that our students anchor conceptual understanding around.



Crestview describes itself as “the neighborhood school”. What are some things you do to build a strong school community of parents and students.

Amongst the students, we help build community through our Reading Buddies program. We pair students in kindergarten and third grade, first and fourth grade, and second and fifth grade each year. They initially begin their interactions by reading with each other, as the year progresses they work on projects together, they working on community service initiatives and come together to play on a weekly basis. This allow them to build a strong rapport and feel connected across grade-levels.

With our parents, we have many opportunities for them to volunteer on campus. We also have parties throughout the year that parents attend to get to know each other and build community. We have host families that welcome new families.



Each school has a unique culture. How would you describe Crestview?

Crestview is a small but mighty school, focused on educating children 5 to 12 years old. It is a welcoming environment that is nimble and dedicated on being reflective. We honor the voices of all constituents and encourage conversation about learning and development.

Parents worry about placement into 7-12 schools. Crestview students go on to top schools in SGV and LA area. What does the school do to help students get into top secondary schools?

Families are supported in the secondary school process by Crestview. We begin the process in fifth grade into the sixth grade year. The head of school meets with every family to discuss the student's profile, advice focus in the summer, and suggest schools to consider. Students are given mock interviews and practice in writing essays to prepare them for the admission's process. [Here's a list of some of the schools are graduates attend.](#)



Crestview offers CTY online for gifted students who are eligible. Can you describe this unique program?

We identify current students in accelerated in mathematics through teacher referral, year-end grade-level tests, and ERB standardized testing results on the independent school norm. When identified they are still responsible for completing their grade-level work as they are provided with above grade-level material according to their individual level. We subsidize the courses for our students.



What advice would you offer parents who are applying to Crestview? Any tips for getting their child in?

I advice families to be themselves, we are interested in authenticity. We are child advocates and work hard to make the process a welcoming one for prospective families. We want parents and children to feel comfortable and share who they are with us.



CRESTVIEW BLASTOFF

NEWS AT
ROCKET
SPEED

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Fifth Graders Adopt a Beach

By Sienna V.

In Service Learning, the fifth graders have been working on a project to make the world a better and cleaner place to live in. They have been doing a project called Adopt a Beach with Heal the Bay. Heal the Bay is an environmental non-profit based in Santa Monica that invites the local community to help our planet.

On December 9, Mrs. Jones's fifth grade class went to Will Rogers State Beach in Pacific Palisades and helped clean it up. It was a great experience and they learned so much. It helped spread awareness to the fifth grade class about how dirty beaches really are, and it led to an even bigger project! Since they found so much styrofoam, part of the fifth grade is working on banning it. Another group of fifth graders is working on bringing some trees to Crestview to replace the ones we lost a few years ago. Fifth grade is helping the world one step at a time!

The Adopt a Beach program also requires them to do a school clean up and a park clean up. Nine fifth graders



Fifth graders clean up Will Rogers State Beach on December 9.

volunteered to do the school clean up. You might have seen them on Tuesday, January 17th cleaning up our school. There is going to be another clean up for our school soon so that they get a certain amount of time completed. They have also chosen to clean up the

Hahamongna Park on March 17, along with their second grade reading buddies! Although it is a lot of work, no one ever said making the world a better place is easy (even if we are doing it one step at a time).

Shooting For Success: Crestview Rockets Basketball



Shooting hoops on Crestview's court

by Keaton L. and McKenna D.

This year, Mr. Alfredo has started giving students a chance to play on a school sports team. Right now, he is focusing on a boy's basketball team. Their practices are on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. So far, in the fall there was a successful football team, and we hope that the basketball team will be just as successful, if not more.

While these players are working hard and shooting for success, Mr. Alfredo has been conducting the basketball unit in PE classes. Now that all the students understand basketball, they are all waiting in anticipation for the team's first game at Barnhart, on the 24 of January, which is a Tuesday. Come if you can and support our newest Crestview team!

For more information, visit, www.crestviewprep.org

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