

Tulare County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news galleryweek

October 1, 2025

ECE receives federal grant to support central kitchen and expand nutrition in partnership with FoodLink for Tulare County



Last week, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program was awarded federal funding of over \$765,000 to support its new central kitchen and expand children's nutrition beyond the classroom.

Currently, ECE partners with FoodLink for Tulare County to provide weekly Smart Packs to children at four of its 19 Head Start sites. This helps ease the burden of food insecurity for many families. Last year 7,072 packs were given to Head Start families each Friday. Thanks to the new grant and the continued partnership with FoodLink, the

Smart Pack project will expand to approximately 20,000 packs during the 2025-26 school year and increase to 27,000 packs in the 2026-27 school year.

Smart Packs contain wholesome, shelf-stable foods and a generous selection of freshly harvested fruits and vegetables. The packs are designed to nourish growing children and support family wellness after school and on weekends.

The federal grant will also support the purchase of equipment for ECE's new central kitchen, which is currently under construction at TCOE's property on North Akers Street in Visalia. The central kitchen will replace four of the six kitchens currently in operation. Once complete, the kitchen will serve as the site to prepare meals for 11 of ECE's child development centers, as well as La Sierra Charter School and University Preparatory High School. Over 2,000 meals and snacks will be prepared daily from the new location.

ERS to hold instructional materials fair and training

To support Tulare County school districts in adopting new mathematics instructional materials, Educational Resource Services (ERS) is hosting a training during the morning of October 29, followed by a full-day materials fair on November 19.

The 2025 Mathematics Instructional Materials Adoption Toolkit Training this month was created to assist district leaders in navigating the adoption process. The

training will provide guidance for evaluating instructional materials, tools to measure support for all students, including multilingual learners, and resources needed to make informed, student-centered decisions.



Attendees at the full-day Mathematics Instructional Materials Fair will have the opportunity to preview the materials submitted for the 2025 California Mathematics Instructional Materials Adoption and talk with publishers about their materials. The publishers on hand will also conduct breakout sessions to highlight key features contained in their programs.

To register for the Adoption Toolkit training on October 29, visit <https://tulare.k12oms.org/147-270243>.

To register to attend the Instructional Materials Fair on November 19, visit <http://tulare.k12oms.org/147-268933>.

Educators of the Year honored at awards dinner



Last week, TCOE and the Central California Chinese Cultural Center honored three teachers at the annual Confucius' Birthday/Educators of the Year Awards.

In March, Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Tim Hire and Wendy Jay, a member of the Chinese Cultural Center board of directors, surprised the three honorees – Alicia Bovetti of Rocky Hill Elementary School (Exeter), Carmen Diaz of Alpaugh Elementary School, and Ricardo Florez of Tulare Union High School. The three were selected as the elementary school, middle school, and high school educators of the year, respectively, in an awards program that was founded in 1994.

The program was created to celebrate the birthday of Confucius, China's great philosopher and advocate for universal education. Around the world, Confucius' birthday is a time when communities often honor their teachers. Since the creation of the program, TCOE and the Chinese Cultural Center have recognized 90 Tulare County teachers.

For more information and to see the tribute video for this year's honored teachers, visit tcoe.org/EOTY.

Around the County

COJUSD opens Aquatics Complex, expanding access to water safety and recreation

The Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District (COJUSD) officially opened its long-anticipated Aquatics Complex on September 24, marking a historic milestone for the rural Central Valley communities of Cutler and Orosi.



The grand opening celebration featured performances by the Orosi High School band, live mariachi music, cheerleaders, and after-school programs. Community members and local officials gathered to celebrate this momentous occasion.

The state-of-the-art facility is the first of its kind in the region and represents a powerful investment in health, safety, and opportunity for more than 17,000 residents. In an area that has long lacked access to formal swim instruction and water safety education, this facility addresses a critical community need.

The facility is now operational for educational programming only during regular school hours, serving students through an integrated water safety curriculum and physical education classes.

COJUSD anticipates opening to the public in Summer 2026, ensuring all operational details are properly established to serve the community safely and effectively.

For more information on the complex, which includes a competition and community pool, visit <https://www.cojUSD.org/news>.

For more coverage of the complex,
visit <https://www.visaliatimesdelta.com/story/news/local/2025/09/30/cutler-orosi-aquatics-complex-ribbon-cutting/86376212007/>.

Editor: [Robert Herman](#), Communications Director

Contributors: Nayirah Dosu, Jennifer Fisher, Jaime Burnitzki, Alex Elliott

To receive the News Gallery Week, sign up [here](#), or contact Jennifer Fisher
at jenniferf@tcoe.org or (559) 733-6172.