

# Placerville school, community coping with loss

To the community,

School resumed today in the Placerville Union School District after the tragic loss of our dear friend and Schnell School principal, Sam LaCara.

We would like to thank our community and families for the outpouring of support for our staff and students – it is deeply appreciated.

At Schnell School, the return today was made successful through the efforts of an abundance of support staff who partnered with each of our teachers in support of both our teachers and our students. Every student heard the same message regarding this tragedy, followed by counselor and teacher led discussions. We feel this went very well, yet we encourage you to continue to have conversations with your children. The following message was read to all students:

“This is a very sad day at Schnell School. Our beloved principal, Mr. LaCara has died. It is hard to understand why horrible things happen. You will hear a lot of reasons for and discussions about this from your friends and families but nobody will have all of the answers. When events such as this happen, people react in many different ways. Today you will see people who are very sad, upset, angry or shocked. We all need to practice patience and respect for each other. Some of us will want to have quiet time or time to talk with an adult. As adults, we are expected to have all of the answers and control our feelings. You will see a lot of adults who are also very sad today. We can take some time to talk about this now and if you would like, you can share some of your memories of Mr. LaCara. Mr. LaCara was a fantastic principal, wonderful

friend and devoted husband and father. We will really miss him. Many of us will be feeling sad for a while. We will all help each other get through this and Schnell School will heal together. I will do my best to answer your questions but I may not have all the answers. “

Counselors were also available for staff and students at both Markham and Sierra schools.

Counseling and advice remains available for parents as well.

For those families who did not attend school today (Feb. 4), please know that we will continue to offer support services next week and thereafter, as needed.

A memorial service for Sam LaCara is scheduled Feb. 8 at 4pm at Green Valley Community Church, 3500 Missouri Flat Road, Placerville.

Information on the memorial service and memorial fund can be found on the Placerville Union School District website.

Mr. LaCara's family is requesting that, in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Sam LaCara Memorial Fund at the El Dorado Community Foundation, P.O. Box 1388, Placerville, CA 95667

Again, we want to thank all of you for your support and dedication to the students, staff, and families of the Placerville Union School District.

**Vicki Barber, superintendent El Dorado County Office of Education**