



PRESS RELEASE

Poway Unified School District

15250 Avenue of Science ■ San Diego, California 92128-3406 ■ www.powayusd.com

Phone (858) 521-2707 ■ FAX (858) 485-1075

For Immediate Release
September 21, 2022

CONTACT: Christine Paik, Chief Communications Officer
PHONE: (858) 521-2707 **EMAIL:** cpaik@powayusd.com

Poway Unified to create new elementary Global Languages and Culture Program with over \$1 million dollar grant from Avery-Tsui Foundation

(San Diego, CA) – The Poway Unified School District (PUSD) is excited to announce that the Avery-Tsui Foundation has awarded \$1,088,336 over five years to fund PUSD’s new and innovative WongAvery Global Languages and Culture Program. The program will expose all PUSD elementary school students to a variety of world languages and international cultures, as well as encourage international cooperation and collaboration. The languages that students will learn are Mandarin, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, Spanish, and American Sign Language, expanding to include Hindi, Arabic, and French in the future. These languages were selected due to the demographics of the population PUSD serves as well as the languages the U.S. Department of State has identified as the most critical-need languages.

Most world language programs in public education start in middle and high schools, but PUSD’s WongAvery Global Languages and Culture Program will allow students as young as five years old to begin their journey in another language. While individual elementary immersion programs in Spanish (Valley Elementary) and Mandarin (Adobe Bluffs Elementary) already exist in PUSD, the new program will be among the first of its kind to make world language exposure a universal experience for ALL elementary students Districtwide. “This has always been a long-term vision and passion of mine, to be one of the first large public school districts in the country that provides all of our students, K-12, access to world language instruction. We believe this will allow our students to be competitive in the global market, providing extraordinary opportunities for future careers,” said Superintendent Dr. Marian Kim Phelps.

All 27 PUSD elementary and two K-8 schools and their students will have the opportunity to experience instruction in all of the languages, rotating every 5 weeks to the next language. The classes will be taught through various models that will include in-person and virtual, as well as collaboration and connection with students and teachers across the globe. This model has already been piloted in some PUSD schools, such as Connect Academy,

Design39Campus, Del Sur Elementary, Tierra Bonita Elementary, and Adobe Bluffs Elementary, with a Districtwide expansion starting in November 2022. “We want to spark a love of peace and a lifelong curiosity about the world around them,” said Eddie Park, Director of Global Languages and Innovative Programs for PUSD.

In recognition of this significant philanthropic gift, the PUSD Board of Trustees will honor the Avery-Tsui Foundation Board of Directors, Sally WongAvery, Natasha Wong, and Tom Hom, at their meeting on **Thursday, October 13, 2022, at 6 pm**. “My mother and I are passionate about world language education, and we are happy to support PUSD in launching this innovative program at all elementary schools,” said Natasha Wong, Vice Chair of the Avery-Tsui Foundation. PUSD is honored to partner with the Avery-Tsui Foundation to be a leader in world language education in this country.

About the Avery-Tsui Foundation

The Avery-Tsui Foundation is a private San Diego-based foundation founded by husband and wife Dennis S. Avery and Sally T. WongAvery to empower, enable, and encourage others. Through the foundation, the family has funded many notable charitable projects both locally in San Diego and abroad, including supporting East Asian collections, research, and scholarly activities at the UC San Diego Biomedical Library (subsequently renamed the Sally T. WongAvery Library), funding the building of the WongAvery Music Gallery, at state-of-the-art rehearsal and recital space at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, as well as establishing the Stephen Hawking Chair in Cosmology at the University of Cambridge. Upon Dennis Avery’s passing, Sally WongAvery succeeded her late husband as Chair and CEO of the Avery-Tsui Foundation in 2012.

###