



Chino High senior Kayla Arcoverde-Johnston revs up her classmates at the school stadium as part of a special welcome back program. Kayla is the Associated Student Body Class of 2017 Secretary and in the Chino High Color Guard. The students in the stadium stands learned the school's Alma Mater and fight song, and played class games.

Chino High throws a big welcome back day for students

The first day of school was a day of surprises for Chino High students.

For the first time, the school year began with a variety of events meant to inspire students to be the best they can be.

Students – in alternating groups -- were treated today (Monday, Aug. 15) to a pep rally and games in the school stadium, a mini counseling workshop under the lunch shelter, a school rules session in the multi-purpose room, a motivational speaker in the gym, and a PowerPoint in classrooms on using cell phones to keep abreast of assignments and grades.

The first day ended with the Chino High Band and Colorguard performing and marching through the campus, leading students out of their classrooms to the front of the school.

The welcome back day was the work of Chino High activities director Jasmine Norman; teachers MaryBeth Gibbons, Melanie Kent, Don Schumann, Annette Hatch, Breanne Lerma; and former teachers Cora Filipi and Samantha Smith. Norman and Filipi attended the California Association of Activities Directors Conference in March with the idea of looking at what successful schools do. They attended several workshops and interviewed staff members from those schools and learned that nearly all of them held a big event on the first day of school to kick off the new year.

The organizers said they hope the event at Chino High will change students' answers from "nothing" to "It was awesome!" when asked what they did at school on the first day.

Norman said she hopes the grand kick-off and other actions planned for the remainder of the school year will increase participation and morale at the school.

The organizers plan to monitor the response by watching students' social media, surveying students and Chino High staff, and using student identification technology to see if students participate more in school functions, such as sports games, dances, and theater productions.

Norman said they also want to target students who have never been to any school function. She plans to gather those students together in the future for a casual lunchtime meeting, to ask them what kinds of activities they would like to attend.

She also wants to identify "unconventional leaders" on campus to encourage them to engage their crowd into school events. She said Chino High has several groups that could fit that category, including skateboarders and Whovians (students who are enjoy the science-fiction television show "Doctor Who").

"Maybe we'll have a foreign film festival in the future," Norman said.

(See more photos below)



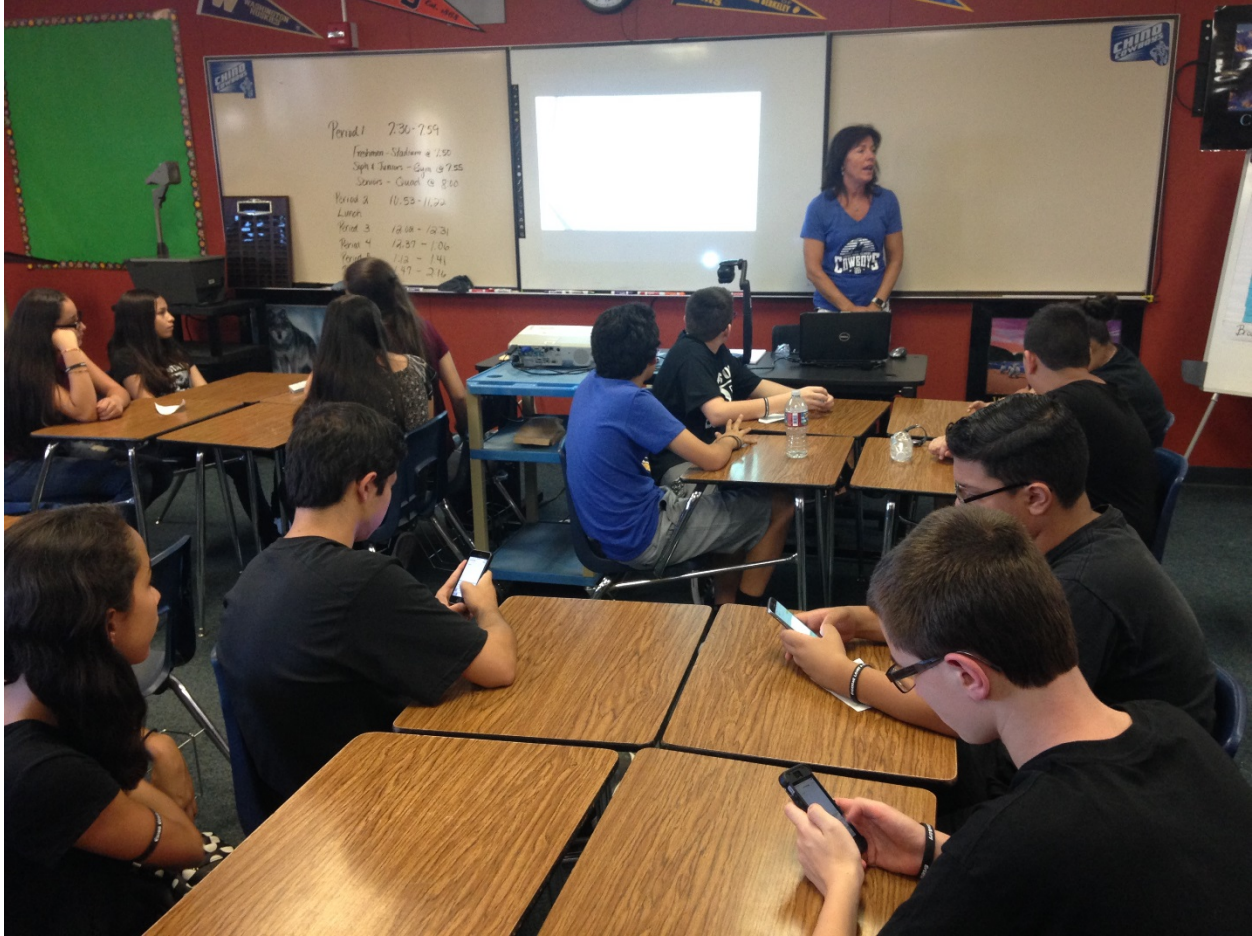
Motivational speaker Keith Hawkins tells Chino High students his personal story in the school gym. He told them that success begins with believing you can succeed.



Chino High counselor Gail Heisel distributes pencils so students can check off areas they would like work on during future interactive workshops. Among the topics are goal setting, organization, relationships with parents and friends, careers, time management and other skills. The students also learned about counseling services, vocational education programs, and the work permit process.



Chino High Assistant Principal Rachel Pittman was among the speakers on dress codes, codes of conduct, transcripts, and student responsibilities in the school's multi-purpose room.



Chino High teacher Diane Murillo instructs students on how to use their cell phones to access computer applications for classroom assignments, reminders, and grades.



Chino High Band and Color Guard marches across campus, leading students out of their classrooms at the end of the first day of school.



Chino High students watch as the school's Color Guard marches by during a recessional at the end of the school day today (Monday, Aug. 15).



Chino High Band, led by director Doug Bowden (in orange cap), performs a number for students in the school's quad area.



Chino High Color Guard members dance as part of their performance on the first day of school today (Monday, Aug. 15).