



# Welcome Back to School

## Dear GVA Community

Welcome back for the 2023-24 school year at Great Valley Academy. Staff is so excited to see the return of their students and greet the new members of our school community. We have terrific things planned for the year as we continue to champion a *safe, loved and learning* environment for your children, as well as our adults. In my second year as Superintendent/CEO at GVA, I am still amazed at my luck to have become part of such an outstanding educational organization. Student-focused, dedicated to growth and always living our purpose, we here at GVA strive to help students become the best versions of themselves and the best friends at the same time. With character as a bedrock of the GVA Way, staff support students' individual progress and help them recognize their role in the successes of others.

This year's theme at GVA is **Connections**. We understand the importance of relationships and of making strong, healthy connections at school. We want our students to be curious about the world and about each other. We want them to practice 'otherishness' in their thoughts and actions. Together we're stronger and when one of us succeeds we all do.

In the book, *The Good Life, Lessons from the World's Longest Scientific Study of Happiness*, author Robert Waldinger, shares three key take-aways. First, having social connections is better for our health and well-being. Second, having higher-quality close connections is more important than the number of connections. Third, having good relationships is not only good for our bodies but for our brains. And Shawn Achor, from this same Harvard study, states that, "The greatest competitive advantage in the modern economy is a positive and engaged brain...happiness fuels success, not the other way around." The Superintendent's Campaign this year shifts from the Science of Happiness to the Advantage of Happiness, which is, of course, based in science. My goal is to get into classrooms again this year to share this information and activate students' imaginations with stories and activities that connect with and relate to the GVA Way.

As always, I will communicate through ParentSquare and our school website, but if you haven't seen the increased presence of GVA on social media, take a look. GVA is everywhere! Thank you again for choosing Great Valley Academy as the school for your children. We are so happy to have them and you as part of our community. See you tomorrow, bright and early for the first day of a great new school year.

**Thomas Anderson**

**Superintendent/CEO**



Modesto Campus • 3200 Tully Rd, Modesto, CA 95350 • (209) 576-2283

Salida Campus • 5901 Si

sk Rd, Modesto, CA 95356 • (209) 545-7500

Homeschool Office • 1209 Woodrow Ave. Suite C-1, Modesto, CA 95350 • (209) 576-2233

[www.greatvalleyacademy.com](http://www.greatvalleyacademy.com)