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**RIO SCHOOL DISTRICT CUTS RIBBON ON
LONG-AWAITED NEW SCIENCE LABS
Approximately 400 attend grand opening and open house**

OXNARD, Calif.– The [Rio School District](#) celebrated the renovation of Rio del Valle Middle School’s locker rooms into state-of-the-art science laboratories Feb. 18 with a grand opening event that included numerous science activities, an open house and a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Oxnard Chamber of Commerce.

Six Rio del Valle science students were honored as “Future Scientists” for their enthusiasm about science. Rio del Valle “Future Scientists” included sixth-graders Fernando Castellanos and Lizette Martinez, seventh-graders Jake La Rosa and Bianca Delanguin, and eighth-graders John Sampang and Earianne Bihis.

McCarthy Construction, Amador Whittle Architects, Staples Construction and Crispin & Associates were recognized for their work on the labs and landscaped courtyard. Eighty people, including Lourdes Solorzano from Supervisor John Zaragoza’s office and Oxnard City Councilmember Dean Maulhardt, attended the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Approximately 400 students and their families participated in science activities during the event. CSUCI chemistry professor Dr. Phil Hampton and his students conducted science experiments with the attendees, and Rio del Valle students and the after-school science club demonstrated their science projects.

“This has been a long-anticipated day, and we are thrilled to celebrate this monumental achievement with the community,” said Superintendent Sherianne Cotterell. “On behalf of our students and families, we extend our utmost gratitude to our board for finally making this dream come true.”

Built in 1961, Rio del Valle serves 630 sixth- through eighth-grade students in the Rio community. The idea of new science labs at the school was first proposed to voters as Measure-R, a bond measure voters passed in 1997. The district was to use General Obligation Bonds to renovate the labs and make upgrades at its other schools.

The funds meant for the labs were redirected to other projects. After coming on board in 2006, Cotterell determined the district could fund the project by refinancing bonds to a lower interest rate. The Rio School District governance board unanimously supported the move, and the resulting revenue freed up funds to build the labs.

The school now has two identical labs separated by a landscaped courtyard featuring a large periodic table of elements. The labs feature an ActivBoard, an interactive whiteboard that projects images, video and audio. Each lab features higher ceilings and tinted windows that allow for natural lighting.

The [Rio School District](#) encompasses six elementary and two middle schools and the Community Day School. There are more than 4,400 students in the district, which serves the unincorporated community of El Rio, the RiverPark development and portions of the city of Oxnard. For more information, visit www.rio.k12.ca.us.

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