

## PRESS RELEASE



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### **CUSD Lead Counselor Kristen Ereno Will Focus On College And Career Readiness**

Kristen Ereno, newly hired as the Lead Counselor for Coronado Unified School District, is juggling many balls but is particularly focused on serving student needs in the areas of college and career readiness.

Ereno is in her third year in the district and was originally hired as a career counselor and Career Technical Education (CTE) and WorkAbility Program Coordinator. Her new position as Lead Counselor incorporates those duties along with additional responsibilities.

“I’m excited to continue my work with the CUSD team. I’m really passionate about students who don’t have any idea of what they will do after high school graduation. I would like to see every student leave CHS with a plan and I want them to see that there are so many different possibilities available to them,” she shared.

At this time of the year, with college applications in full swing, she is busy making sure students get the support they need in the college process. “We have multiple colleges and universities on campus every week and we offer virtual, lunch, and after school college ‘visits.’ Also right now we are holding weekly (every Monday) college application workshops for students. They can literally finish a CSU application during lunch,” she explained.

Ereno doesn’t want to just focus on college and career planning for students in the fall of their senior year. “I want to create college and career events to help inform students at all grade levels about postsecondary options,” said Ereno. She and her team are planning ‘Career Day’ and ‘Options After High School’ events for the spring. “We learned some lessons last year and this year we will hold these events during the day so we can get more student participation,” she shared.

Ereno has been tasked with district-wide counseling initiatives and will be working closely with the Director of Learning, Dr. Megan Battle to assist in areas such as course sequencing, developing policies and procedures around early graduation, transcripts, and master schedules. She is also part of the team that is building a CUSD Graduate Profile.

Another initiative Ereno is particularly passionate about is expanding internship opportunities for high school students. “We have grown the program from a few students with internships at the

Coronado Historical Association to 45 students now doing official internships. And it's still growing," she shared.

As the leader of the counseling team, the list of things-to-do and goals that Ereno has is impressive. At the top of that list is to "develop systems and structures for a more efficient and cohesive counseling department in all three domains of school counseling: academic, college/career, and social/emotional." She also will work on consistent use of data to support student placement, master schedule, and the needs of subpopulations of students; streamlining and increasing communication between the counseling department and families and students; and increasing the number of UC/CSU A-G eligible students.

Since Ereno came to CUSD she has co-written \$1.2 million in Career Technical Education (CTE) grants with Director of Special Programs Shane Schmeichel. "It's probably my least favorite thing to do; writing grants is not fun, but it's lucrative!" she laughed.

Originally from Colorado, Ereno has an administrative credential from National University, and a masters degree in Education, with a concentration in counseling and guidance, from Point Loma Nazarene University.

Not only does she bring 11 years of experience in education counseling (most recently as the Head Counselor at Eastlake High School) to the district, she also has the unique perspective of someone with a wide range of life and work experience. She earned a bachelor degree in sports medicine from Colorado State University and worked for seven years in corporate accounting in the sports and entertainment industry. She also has experience in social work, and after college she helped her parents open a group home for foster teenage girls in Colorado.

Ereno has been in San Diego since 2004. She and her husband Patrick have two children, four-year-old Maverick and two-year-old Mia. "They are at great ages and absolutely the best kids ever. We have so much fun with them!"

PHOTO:

Coronado Unified School District Lead Counselor Kristen Ereno with her husband Patrick and children Maverick (4) and Mia (2).



