# **Next Generation Science Standards** extend to Orinda elementary schools

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**By Audrey Spindler** 



Wagner teacher Erin Crowe's third-graders make salad and herb butter Dec. 15 at the school garden.

Photos Lilana Spindler

Orinda has made considerable changes regarding NGSS in its most recent form of garden education.

The school's teachers apply ways like developing and using models of the rock cycle in fourth grade classes. The NGSS em-Concepts, Science and Engineer- fifth-grader exclaimed. ing Practices, and Disciplinary Core Ideas. Within these notions, through activities like the recreideas of cause and effect, inquirybased learning, and application such as those of the Miwok tribe; of key objectives across multiple third grade children work on areas of science are stressed.

Common Core Standards and en- tribe. "Students were unfamiliar hance each student's understand- with the tule fibers, the availing and appreciation for this out- able natural resource for Miwok door environmental classroom," Wagner Ranch first-grade teacher ate its buoyancy and flexibility Linnea Burnette said.

tory instruction, kids are influ- Chase said. enced by these standards. "Stunotebook entries are used to sup-

Text Generation Science port discourse, view patterns and ing and utilizing structures such of different things under microscopes, such as chia seeds, soil samples, moss and organisms.

At an outdoor lesson on Jan. these principles in grades K-5 in 24, students of Chelsea Rustigan's class used microscopes to study plant health and calculated soil volume. "I could look into phasize three areas: Crosscutting these microscopes all day!" one

Team effort is encouraged ation of Native American ways, building miniature tule canoes in "[The teachers'] rich lessons small groups, or tribelets, to exd activities are aligned with perience the community of the building, but came to apprecias they fashioned the tule into Through outdoor, participa- boats," third-grade teacher Susan

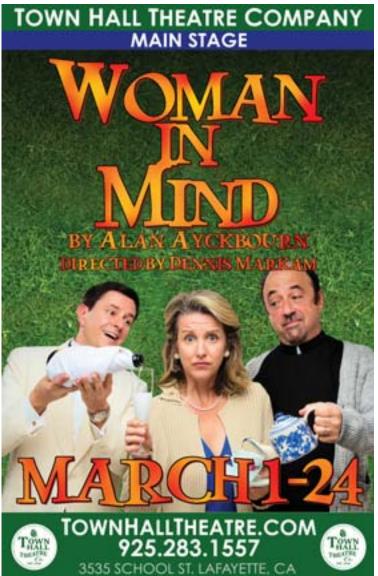
In the second grade, children dents are responsible for taking practice discussion and observanotes, answering focus questions, tion through the studying of rocks and drawing conclusions. Their by sifting in creeks, sorting rocks, using microscopes, and build-

Standards, guidelines imple- systems over the seasons and mented across the United States within the garden," fourth/fifthas of April 2013, have been grade teacher Annalisa Brucker adopted in 19 states as of No- explained. When given free time, salad. vember, and have continued to such as recess, some students visdevelop as schools work toward it the garden, which is adjacent to not transcended all areas of alreplacing old science curriculum the school, to help work around with NGSS. The Wagner Ranch the area or to continue studies Elementary School garden in from their classes. In class, students get a glimpse of a number

as adobe bricks. Sometimes students benefit from the more practical purpose of a garden, making

While the wave of NGSS has ready strong science curricula, it has changed past patterns of science education in Orinda elementary schools.







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Wagner Elementary School teacher Megan Natal's fourth-graders make weatherization models Jan. 31 at the Wagner Ranch School garden.