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School News

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Covering the Monrovia Unified School District

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A Legacy of Success



Board of Education congratulates Bradoaks Elementary School Principal Aimee Dyrek who has been selected as the recipient of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Region XV Promising Administrator of the Year.

Board of Education congratulates Wild Rose Elementary School Principal Stacy Ayers who has been selected the recipient of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Region XV Charter Leadership Award.

*By Katherine Thorossian
Superintendent*

Success has many fathers; failure is an orphan. This loose translation from the original Latin aptly describes the state of affairs in Monrovia's schools.

We are enjoying a great deal of success—success that could not occur if everyone was not working together to promote student achievement. Teachers experience success firsthand in the classroom. Whether it is celebrating a child reading his or her first book or a former student returning to say “hi,” these personal treasures serve as the foundation for the more public successes we have garnered from external sources.

Five schools within the Monrovia Unified School District—Monrovia High School and Bradoaks, Mayflower, Monroe, and Wild Rose Elementary Schools—have been named Gold Ribbon Schools. This is the highest distinction awarded to any school by the California Department of Education. The recognition highlights signature programs developed and instituted by each of the schools, yielding strong academic growth in their respective student populations.

Mayflower Elementary School and Clifton Middle School were named Honor Roll recipients by the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence—the only award given by California business leaders. Coincidentally, these are the two schools within the district that were awarded facility improvement grants, thanks to unparalleled community support. Students relish the opportunity to crawl and climb their way through their new playground structure at Mayflower Elementary School. The students and teachers at Clifton Middle School eagerly await the realization of their brand-new science lab, thanks to the \$100,000 grant from Northrop Grumman, which was secured through yet another community-based effort.

While classroom and community efforts are critical to the continued growth of our schools, leadership also matters. To that end, Wild Rose Principal Stacy

Ayers has been selected to receive the Administrative Leadership Award for the West San Gabriel administrative organization. She was selected from 10 local districts because of her excellent leadership and mentoring qualities. In addition, Bradoaks Elementary School Principal Aimee Dyrek was selected as the New Administrator of the Year for the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) in Region 15—that is, she was the administrator chosen from 56 school districts which form the region.

All our signature programs—from the Mandarin Dual Immersion program at Plymouth Elementary School to Grammy-Award-winning teacher Tony Ellis' instrumental music program at Santa Fe Middle School—will be showcased during the upcoming Open House season. The incredible successes of all these programs are a testament to the many “fathers” Monrovia schools enjoy. Please feel free to visit any of our schools to learn more about the amazing opportunities afforded to the students of the Monrovia Unified School District so they will continue to mature and succeed in school, in college, and in their chosen careers.

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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



The Superintendent's message highlights the success of the Monrovia Unified School District. As with everything in life, working together results in success and this District is an excellent example.

This is such an exciting and interesting time to be a student. The articles in this issue highlight students learning about the basics of gardening and the reality of robotics for the future. Oh to be a student again...

Our next issue is May 11. It is hard to believe celebrating the class of 2016 is just around the corner!

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Bradoaks *Elementary*

930 East Lemon Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2100 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Aimee Dyrek
Principal

Outstanding Opportunities

The Bradoaks Elementary School campus has been filled with action. Most recently, parent-teacher conferences were held to strengthen the home-school partnership. These conferences give teachers an opportunity to review student progress, target areas of need, and boast about student growth.

As our school focuses on student achievement, we are happy to announce that over 50 of our students regularly attend before-school intervention sessions. We commend our students and families for their dedication to utilizing this valuable time.

After school, our Gifted And Talented Education (GATE) program has started a new partnership with the City of Hope! The City of Hope will be providing our students with genetics workshops. Our GATE students most recently went to an Asian sauce manufacturing factory and will be taking their next field trip to California Polytechnic University, Pomona!

Our new afterschool karate camp has been wildly popular. The money raised was donated to Bradoaks for our technology fund. Our fourth- and fifth-grade students have started preparing for the Monrovia Elementary Olympics, and our after-school basketball season is well on its way! Students also take part in afterschool arts, vocal, and instrumental music.

The afterschool Garden Club has started working on the Bobcat vegetable garden. After receiving a \$3,000 grant from a local home improvement warehouse store, parents and students rolled up their sleeves and got dirty renovating our garden. Thank you to Bobcat PTA parent Stephanie Stonick for her hard work in applying for this grant!

The Bradoaks community prides itself on a culture of tradition coupled with creativity and innovation! Our newest addition is Family Game Night! Bradoaks' first family game night was a huge success! Parents and students filled the cafeteria to play bingo, eat snacks, dance, and build community. Stay tuned for the next Family Game Night.

Canyon *Early Learning Center*

1000 South Canyon Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2001 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Mariana Sanchez
Director

Our Garden

The CELC Canyon Cubs have enjoyed the past couple of months exploring our vegetable beds full of cauliflower, broccoli, and brussels sprouts. The garden has engaged our young children by providing them with an interactive environment to observe, discover, experiment, nurture, and learn.

The garden has been a living lab where the children use real-life experiences to learn math, science, and nutrition. It gives them an opportunity to be actively engaged in the learning process.

The garden also provides children with sensory experiences such as texture, smell, color, sound, and tastes. It is a place where their curiosity is sparked through the changing colors of leaves, or the appearance of



a cauliflower, or the sight of a praying mantis on a nearby rock.

It is exciting to hear the rich conversation that takes place in the garden as the children explore and share their discoveries with friends.

Canyon Oaks H.S./Mountain Park/ Monrovia Community Adult

930 Royal Oaks Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-3000 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Flint Fertig
Principal

Keep Calm and Write On

By Calvin J. McKendrick, Assistant Principal

Just last month, the staff at Canyon Oaks High School and Mountain Park School initiated an instructional movement that allowed teachers the opportunity to improve student writing skills across the curriculum.

After much research and staff development, teachers and administrators began implementation of the Document Based Question Project (DBQ), a teaching method that helps students read with understanding, think straight, and write clearly.

Our alternative schools hosted a two-day, campus-wide All Write assessment in January. Students gathered in their second-period classes and learned how



to prepare to write a cohesive essay by analyzing documents, working in groups, sorting evidence, and developing writing roadmaps.

Not only are students feeling surer of their writing capabilities, they are also more willing to articulate their thoughts, express feelings, and defend their opinions. They will continue to focus on their objectives to explore ideas, think at higher levels, synthesize information, and create writing masterpieces.

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Clifton *Middle School*

226 South Ivy Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2600 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Jennifer Jackson
Principal

All A-Bot Ingenuity!

In January, Clifton's two FTC robotics teams, the Hippie Bots and Bio Bots, competed at de Toledo High School in West Hills. Both teams competed in a field of 24, which included 19 high school teams.

The Bio Bots went 2-3 in match play, and the Hippie Bots had an impressive performance overall. The Hippie Bots flawlessly executed a masterful game plan on their way to going 5-0 in match play. This earned the Hippie Bots the number-two ranking going into the championship rounds, but they were eliminated in a decisive game number three by a narrow margin.

Clifton made such an impressive run against high school teams in their first year of robotics. They brought their ingenuity to life through their hard work, dedication and teamwork. The construction of our new \$100,000 Fab School Lab will provide additional resources for these teams to thrive in future competitions.



Mayflower *Elementary*

210 North Mayflower Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2200 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Dr. Tamar Kataroyan
Principal

Celebrate 365

At Mayflower Elementary School, we continue to Celebrate 365! In January, we kicked off our new Power Start and Power Finish programs, which take place in the computer lab on Monday and Wednesday in the mornings and after school. Students use the time to receive targeted help on homework, read books, or use the computers for our various Common Core State Standards integrated applications.

Our program attendance grew so quickly that it allowed us to create a Mariner Mentors group, which is comprised of our fifth-grade leaders, who come to help students in need. In addition, we began our new netbook training sessions for fourth- and fifth-grade students, which takes place on Tuesdays in the morning and after school. Our goals are accomplished through the hard work and dedication of our students, our caring and dedicated staff, and our extremely supportive parents. It takes a village to raise a child. At Mayflower, we take pride in and ownership of helping each child strive for his or her full potential.

In addition, we held our second literacy campaign of the year. We raised the school-wide goal from 1,300 book reports to 1,500, and our students once again met our expectations by turning in 1,515 book reports as a school. We also added an additional challenge for 100-percent participation in each class. Twelve classes met this challenge and earned root-beer float parties.

Our goal is to inspire and motivate all of our students to strive for their best each day and to make positive growth in all areas of their lives.

Monroe *Elementary*

402 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2300 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Cynthia Lathrop
Principal

Foreign Language Academy

The Foreign Language Academy at Monroe Elementary (FLAME) is accepting applications for the 2016-17 school year. Students of this program, now in its sixth year, are expected to be bilingual and biliterate in Spanish and English by the time they leave fifth grade. Bilingualism as well as respect and appreciation for other cultures are two of the program goals. Second-language study also helps to develop critical thinking and reasoning skills that are beneficial in all academic areas.

Early on, in kindergarten or TK, the majority of the school day is spent speaking Spanish. In fact, kindergarten students often aren't even aware that their teacher is able to speak English. A different teacher is responsible for the English portion of the day. English is introduced into the curriculum naturally until it is used for half their learning day in fourth and fifth grades.

Beginning in kindergarten, students are counting, adding and subtracting numbers, writing complete sentences, and speaking to each other in Spanish. By the first grade, students can write multiple sentences. The students use grade-level-appropriate reading and math materials in all grade levels.

The dual-immersion program will be expanding to sixth grade at Clifton Middle School in August of this year.

Parents who are interested in learning more are invited to attend a school tour at Monroe on any Monday morning at 8:30 a.m. Please call the school office with any questions. Kindergarten and transitional-kindergarten registration for both the dual-immersion and traditional programs began in February. Visit Monroe's school office between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. to receive a registration packet.

Monrovia *High School*

845 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2800 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Kirk McGinnis
Principal

Mentoring Young Minds

The award-winning Math And Science Academy (MASA) at Monrovia High School is creating young educators with the MASA Mentors program. MASA mentors work in groups of five to eight students and spend their free time planning math or science workshops, which they then teach to fourth- and fifth-graders at our local Monrovia elementary schools. These workshops provide our younger students with engaging, rigorous, hands-on learning in the math and science field, with the goal of engaging the scientists of tomorrow.

Lessons must include relevant topics that are appropriate for elementary school students, often including PowerPoint presentations, and hands-on activities that younger students can perform. This year's MASA Mentors workshops include making lava lamps, tessellations, making ice cream, density, DNA candy, rocket balloons, sublimation, surface tension with milk and soap, corn-starch lava, and endo/exothermic reactions. All five elementary schools in our district have hosted MASA Mentor workshops at their school sites.

Gavin Ford, a fourth-grader at Bradoaks Elementary School, said, "I go to these workshops and then get to teach some of them to my class the next day. I got to show my class how to make lava lamps and what density is. It is fun."

MASA Mentors Avery Warren and Annabelle McGinnis shared, "We're really grateful to have the opportunity to inspire these young students to enjoy math and science, just like we do. It is fun to teach the elementary students—and when we do, it helps us to understand it even better."

MASA Mentors currently includes about 70 students, who are continually striving to create engaging and enriching learning experiences. We may be kindling the next Nobel Prize winner here in Monrovia!

Plymouth *Elementary*

1300 Boley St., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2400 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Suzanne Heck
Principal

Ni Hao, Monrovia!

The dual-language Mandarin program at Plymouth School is thriving. We began the program in the fall of 2015 with 40 kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten students. With two experienced teachers, both fluent in Mandarin, the program is off to a great start.

Research has shown that students educated in bi-lingual programs reap so many benefits. They are more flexible in their thinking and tend to do better on high-stakes tests. Bilingual students will also have more advantages in the global marketplace of the future.

Students in this foreign language program experience English and Chinese during their school day. Learning to count, to identify colors, shapes, days of the week, and seasons, and to sing songs in Chinese are at the heart of this unique district program. Students spend half of the instructional day learning how to read and form "simplified" Chinese characters. For the remainder of the day, they learn Common Core State Standards in English.

This program is not just a foreign language program; it works to build a global perspective for students. Students are learning about the Chinese culture, including traditional songs and cultural traditions.

Plymouth provides an excellent education for all of our students. But for those families interested in pursuing bilingual opinions, Mandarin is available for students entering kindergarten in 2016–2017. For those who don't meet the age criteria, Plymouth is also offering a free, afterschool Mandarin program on Tuesdays and Thursdays in March from 3:30–4:30 p.m. Look for flyers in the green folder next month and return the interest form to your child's school.

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Santa Fe *Middle School*

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Dr. Caroline Sweeney
Principal

Prove It

Those two words in the title encapsulate everything that Santa Fe is working on. The instructional focus of Santa Fe is "a schoolwide effort to have all Santa Fe students use evidence to support claims."

Where is this happening? Everywhere!

Ask a Santa Fe student what it means to "TAP," and you may be surprised by the answer. You might think it's a dance move, but it's actually an acronym for success.

TAP: T = Turn the question into a statement. A = Answer the question. P = Prove it through evidence in the text.

Every day at Santa Fe, students are asked to TAP. They might be reading a document in social studies, get a question, and TAP it. In math, they are given a word problem and they have to TAP it. Science may consist of completing a lab, and the analysis is done by TAP. In English, the reading comprehension on their current novel must be completed in the form of TAP. In PE, asking for verbal feedback is done using the TAP structure. All questions need to be answered completely, with evidence to back up their stance.

In the age of how and why, we are working on students articulating their positions and are seeing great strides in the level of interaction with the sources because of our expectations. Our students are not only gaining knowledge but they are also able to share with you what they are learning, using language that is appropriate for their grade-level.

What does this mean for Santa Fe? For Santa Fe, this means (T) that all students are growing. (A) We know this because students are able to communicate with us their understanding through TAP. (P)

Keep up the good work, Santa Fe, and go Cougars!

Wild Rose *Elementary*

232 Jasmine Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2500 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Stacy Ayers
Principal

Working Together

Forty-five Wild Rose parents recently attended a 10-week course offered by the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE).

This program taught our parents how to navigate the school system so that they can help promote a meaningful interaction with other parents, teachers, and administrators. The program's main purpose is to help our children improve their academic performance and promote a college-going school culture.

PIQE's other mission is to connect our families, schools, and community so that they will all become partners in engagement. The ultimate goal is to empower and transform our low-income and Spanish-speaking parents so that they can each participate in their children's education.

The classes were offered on the Wild Rose campus in both morning and evening sessions, and were held in English and Spanish. Babysitting was provided in English and Spanish as well. Wild Rose commends these parents for their dedication to becoming more connected to our school.



Rules!

One word in the list is NOT in the word search. When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com (Please put Monrovia in the subject line)

Entries must be received by April 15, 2016

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

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