A Time of Learning for All of Us
The start of the 2020-21 school year has been a time of learning for all of us in the Monrovia Unified school community. With continuous changes still playing a role in our planning, we have had to adapt and I am pleased to say we have met these challenges.

I’d like to applaud our students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff for the wonderful job they are doing navigating distance learning.

Since we launched distance learning in spring as an emergency measure, our instructional program has become more vigorous, innovative and engaging, ensuring our students receive the tools and resources they need to be successful.

With programs such as Pear Deck, Nearpod, and Edpuzzle, which we purchased this school year, our teachers have the ability to create interactive presentations and develop digital lectures. The District also purchased supplemental programs that include Gizmos, Reflex math, and iStation. These programs support online learning in subjects like science, mathematics, and language.

In October, our Board of Education also held its virtual 2020-21 State of the Schools Address. Though not how we originally planned, the Board presented to our community the successes over the last school year, shared how the District has navigated COVID-19 and distance learning, and detailed the challenges ahead.

During these uncertain times, Monrovia Unified’s school community has shown immense strength. I am thankful for the patience and dedication of our community. The lessons of this nontraditional school year will stay with us and enrich our schools as we make our safe return to classroom instruction.

As we move forward, Monrovia Unified will continue to make health and safety decisions in accordance with the state and local directives, in consultation with our community and with the best interests of our students in mind.

YOUR GOALS ARE NOT ON HOLD. WE’RE HERE TO HELP!

Winter session begins Jan. 4
Spring semester begins Feb. 17
APPLY TODAY!
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This is our last issue for 2020 and let’s hope that 2021 brings us a healthy world.

In this issue you will read articles on topics such as Rock Gardens promoting kindness and positivity, Celestial Family Night, a STEM Lab, and Honoring Scholarships. Parents and students are adapting during this difficult time. Teachers are certainly doing their best. As Jennifer Jackson, Principal of Clifton Middle School said, “Thank a teacher, send a note of appreciation, reserve judgement, and become an ally.”

We are pleased that converting School News to digital has been well-received by our loyal readers. We will continue with digital the rest of this school year and then reassess the options of adding print again next school year. I appreciate your many nice comments when you email your contest entries. This issue did not have space for a contest, but I’ll include one in the January issue.

If you would like to join our sales team working from your home, please email me for information (kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com).

Happy Holidays from the School News Staff!
Rock Garden

New to our campus is a Bradoaks Rock Garden whose purpose is to bring kindness and positivity through the creativity of rock painting. #BradoaksRocks is a group that was formed by fifth-grade teacher Mrs. Gero to provide a way to build community and promote uplifting messages in this challenging time where students and staff cannot be together. Students and families are encouraged to have fun painting rocks with motivational words or uplifting paintings and place them in the Bradoaks Rock Garden where they can be an inspiration to others. Each month, there will be a different theme for rock painting. The Bradoaks Rock Garden is in front of the school office under the tree with the red bow and all are welcome to participate. Our world could use more examples of kindness and ways to uplift others and our Bobcats are leading the way!

Canyon Early Learning Center

Going Above and Beyond

Canyon Early Learning Center has had a strong start with its Distance Learning Program for the 2020-2021 school year. Canyon Early Learning Staff has gone above and beyond to create a very engaging Distance Learning Program for its Preschool students. The Canyon Early Learning Center incorporates a variety of instructional strategies and virtual formats to keep Canyon Early Learning Center Preschools learning and engaged in the virtual environment. Canyon Early Learning Center Staff uses a combination of live instruction, Google Classroom Assignments and Zoom meetings and interactions to help students grow and develop.

Canyon Early Learning Center Staff is seen in this picture delivering instruction and engaging students during the Live Instruction portion of the Distance Learning Program. Canyon Early Learning Center work very hard to create learning activities that are engaging for students and their families and that are aligned to Preschool Foundations and Framework.
A Year to Remember

The year 2020 will be one to remember... and forget. It has been a year full of surprises and full of challenges. Despite the ups and downs of distance learning, our students and staff have persevered through it all.

Not only have our teachers continued to grind through the daily zoom meetings, they have been beacons of hope for our students both socially and emotionally. With the uncertainty that our alternative programs have experienced, they have continued to be blessed. From the donation of mobile internet connection devices to Chromebooks, Mountain Park and Canyon Oaks have been able to leverage resources from kind community members in order to provide more opportunities for our students to achieve success. Recently, Mr. TeDese Ross and Mr. Calvin McKendrick were able to distribute these devices with the help of Frontier Communications and the California Emerging Technology Fund. Thank you to all!

Flint Fertig
Principal

Week in the Life

There is no training or manual that could have prepared our teachers for the experience of the 2020–21 school year. Teachers have found themselves in a whole new world of adapting to pedological shifts layered with technological learning curves.

What people may not realize is that teachers want to be in their classrooms, want to physically be interacting with students, and miss these interactions terribly. In the absence of this possibility, they have risen to the occasion and are working tireless hours to teach the standards, plan lessons, collaborate with peers, analyze data to inform their instruction, pull students who might be in need of extra support, administer assessments, attend all types of meetings, provide opportunities for students to connect to the school, write positive referrals, communicate to our counseling team, attend professional learning events—the list goes on. Clifton is proud of the teaching staff who have stepped forward and stepped up all while balancing their own personal challenges with the unintended consequences of the pandemic. A typical week right now is filled with a minimum of 25 Zoom sessions on average. This does not include the time spent outside Zoom for planning, collaboration, professional learning or student meetings with families.

For this, we ask for your grace for those who have chosen this noble profession. Thank a teacher, send a note of appreciation, reserve judgement, and become an ally. Our teachers need you more than ever. On the flip side, we know how challenging this time period has been for families, and we thank every person who has contributed to supporting their child through distance learning. We truly are in this together!
Learning Pods

Mayflower School is pleased about the recent launch of student learning pods on our campus. In partnership and coordination with the Boys and Girls Club of the Foothills, supervised cohorts of students are now engaging in distance learning on a daily basis here at school.

The Boys and Girls Club, a longtime community partner of Mayflower, has been operating teen learning pods at their Shamrock facility for several weeks. Their knowledge of current safety protocols and established routines aided in the swift transition and opening of pods at Mayflower. The pod staff is proudly serving Mayflower children of essential workers and others, with plans to expand the program soon.

Students are given a health screening upon arrival; are seated for learning in a safe, socially distanced setting; and enjoy multiple outdoor activities throughout the day. The students are closely supervised and are offered one-on-one support with their synchronous and asynchronous learning needs.

What a great support these learning pods have been to our Mayflower community!

Michele Costarella
Principal

Monroe Elementary

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Learning Pods

Like other schools in our district, Monroe successfully opened our first learning pod on October 14th. Cheerful and nurturing staff members greeted our Mighty Lions and a Clifton Cub at our drop-off lane on Alta Vista Ave. and Olive Ave. Before entering our campus, staff members took the students’ temperatures and completed the health screening protocol. After that, they escorted our students on to our campus, and taught them how to maintain social distancing and keep their masks on while they learned.

All day, our participating students, effortlessly followed all health and safety protocols and engaged in rigorous standards based instruction with their teachers on Zoom, Google Classroom and other virtual platforms. Monroe is excited to offer this valuable resource to additional students in our community!
Monrovia High School
845 West Colorado Blvd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2800 • mhs.monroviaschools.net

Honoring Outstanding Scholarship

Monrovia High School is proud to announce the distinguished accomplishments of five different Wildcat Seniors of the class of 2021. Four students have been named as National Merit Scholarship Commended Students as part of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). Students James Delisio, Charlie Heatherly, Hailey Sarmiento and Zachary Szymkowski each scored in the commended range on the 2019 PSAT exam. This places these four outstanding Wildcats among the top 50,000 scores in more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2021 competition.

MHS is also happy to celebrate senior Adam Marin for being recognized by the College Board National Recognition Program as a National Hispanic Scholar for his performance on the 2019 PSAT exam. Adam's performance places him in the top 2.5% of PSAT Latinx test takers.

The NMSC states that “these students represent a valuable national resource and their accomplishments are vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation.” On behalf of the entire Wildcat Nation, we congratulate these outstanding MHS students!

Kirk McGinnis
Principal

Celestial Family Night!

Plymouth hosted an astronomical event! In September, Plymouth students participated in our Moon & Stars Family Night! Our PTA did an amazing job transforming this annual event into a virtual format, providing fun-filled STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) activities for children and their families.

The event began with a welcome video featuring a moon-themed music performance by Dr. Gero and a read-aloud from Ms. Annette from the Monrovia Public Library. Students made their very own lava lamps during a live guided activity. They gazed at a night sky and viewed demonstration by members of the Old Town Sidewalk Astronomers. And throughout the weekend, families took driving tours of the solar system! This incredible tour included a 6-foot sun hanging at the front of our school and the eight planets designed to scale and positioned at locations throughout Monrovia.

What a stellar event for our Plymouth families!

Dr. Greg Gero
Principal
**Bear News**

Wild Rose School of Creative Arts is BEARY CREATIVE!
Our generous PTA donated $1000 to our school for an art project.

The staff at Wild Rose organized a school wide Grab-n-GO to distribute ceramic bear banks, acrylic paint, and a paint brush. Each student was given the opportunity to share their creative and artistic abilities with this project. This would not have been possible without the support of our amazing PTA, we appreciate you!

**STEM Lab takes Flight**

Despite the challenges of distance learning, the Santa Fe Paxton Patterson STEM Lab has begun in this school year! Under the guidance of Science Department chair Donna Monje, two periods of this elective class have already generated much student interest and excitement.

“It’s very enjoyable—the experiments are really fun,” seventh-grader Michael Pamintuan exclaimed. “In one lab, I cooked an egg and learned how it turned from a liquid to a solid using heat conduction. In my science class, we were learning about heat conduction as well. I also learned that I liked to cook. I had always wanted to learn to cook.”

When the Bobcat Fire erupted last month, Mrs. Monje’s students drafted emergency evacuation plans for their homes and communities. Some students did not have all of the online drafting skills or software to complete their projects to the level of sophistication they envisioned.

“I gave them Google Platform tools to see what they could create,” Mrs. Monje said. “The students demonstrated tremendous problem-solving skills in how they created their plans. Discussing these plans in light of the fire brought their learning to the real world.”

Students in the STEM Lab class learn from different modules as diverse as video production, food science, drafting, pneumatics and computer science. The learning modules in the lab give middle school students opportunities to explore science, technology, engineering and mathematics while creating connections between this knowledge and future careers. When these students arrive at Monrovia High School, they can continue to explore their passion at the next level in the multiple career and technical-education pathways available to them. Not only will they receive credit toward their diploma for these classes but experience will also enhance their college and career readiness.

Mrs. Monje has also included lessons on the eight dimensions of wellness in her STEM Lab. She motivates her students to explore by giving them ample opportunities to work together.

“Even during our Zoom classes, I put them into breakout rooms to discuss science problems, and they apply what they’ve learned during our lessons to find solutions,” she said.

**Wild Rose School of Creative Arts**

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