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School News

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Covering the Monrovia Unified School District

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www.SchoolNewsRollCall.com

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2015

Welcome to the 2015-16 school year!

By the Superintendent and Board of Education

As we send off our 443 graduates from the Class of 2015 to colleges from Oregon to Washington D.C., we usher in the Class of 2027 filled with 426 inquisitive, energetic, and delightful kindergarteners. We would also like to take this time to wish our retirees the very best as they transition to a world without bells. Their transition rings in the newest members of the Monrovia family, pictured here at our annual New Employee Breakfast.

As trustees of the District, our goal is to offer even greater opportunities to each new class of Monrovians – in order to garner even greater successes. In fact, last year, we spent quite some time creating a template to implement over the next few years: the 2015-2020 MUSD Strategic Plan. We will devote some time in the coming months detailing more of the specifics. At this time, though, we would like to thank the many representatives from classified and certificated staff, parents, community, chamber, and city for their time, dedication, and expertise in developing such a thoughtful and forward-thinking plan.



Monrovia Unified School District Strategic Plan 2015 – 2016

Our Vision:

- Our students will be ethical, compassionate individuals who
- Graduate from high school prepared for college and/or career
 - Contribute and adapt to an ever-changing world by being resourceful and responsible citizens
 - Embrace diversity

Our Values:

- We believe all students can learn and achieve at high levels.
We believe all decisions should focus on what is best for students.
We believe all people should be treated with respect and dignity.
We believe transparency and collaboration promote our mission and that honesty, responsibility, and trust are the foundation of a healthy community.
We believe student success also depends upon a strong partnership with parents and community members.
We believe in celebrating success.

Student Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate ethical and responsible behavior.
2. Students will collaborate and communicate as they think critically and creatively in all subject matters.
3. Students will take what was learned in one situation and apply it to new situations.
4. Students will resolve interpersonal problems or conflicts peacefully and positively.
5. Students will be stewards of their environment.
6. Students will use technology responsibly to enrich knowledge.
7. Students will develop responsibility for their own learning.
8. Students will exhibit emotional, mental and physical wellness.
9. Students will explore college and career options and demonstrate and understanding of school-to-career pathways.

Our Mission:

Inspire students to engage in meaningful learning in a safe and nurturing environment that embraces diversity.

Challenge students to be ethical, productive members and leaders of the community.

Our Goals:

1. Student Achievement - Provide opportunities for all students to achieve at high levels as evidenced by completing “a-g” requirements, participation in postsecondary opportunities, and matriculating through career pathways courses.
2. Learning Environment - Provide innovative, collaborative, safe and well-kept learning environments that foster communication, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, responsibility and resilience.
3. Professional Learning - All teachers will deepen understanding and knowledge of the new standards, including Common Core, Next Generation Science, C3 Framework (Social Studies Standards: College, Career and Civic Life), and be able to apply teaching strategies and technology integration to better understanding and achievement in specific content areas for all students, including English language learners allowing these students to have access to the full range of the curriculum.
4. Climate - All staff will support an environment at each school or site where all (students, staff, and parents) feel safe and welcomed, while providing intervention services for those students who have barriers to learning based on personal and socially-related challenges. Additionally, teachers will integrate activities and curriculum to promote positive social-emotional growth and development of students in order to increase attendance, academic performance, and an awareness of future life goals.
5. Fiscal Responsibility - Ensure student needs are at the center of all fiscal decisions.

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Covering the MONROVIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Welcome back to another school year! Is it just me or was that the fastest summer ever?

In this issue we asked the principals to share their bios with you. It is always fun to learn about their college choices, their families, hobbies, etc.

We will be publishing every other month this school year with our next issue November 10 just in time for Thanksgiving. In the meantime, have a Happy Halloween!

Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices.

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Karina Quezada '08, M.A.Ed. '09 and '11
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Bradoaks *Elementary*

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



Aimee Dyrek
Principal

Wild About Learning

Bradoaks Elementary School boasts achieving the California Department of Education Distinguished School Award not once, but twice! Bradoaks is a school that is known for its strong community involvement and caring staff. Bradoaks students are constantly celebrated for their strong work ethic academically and behaviorally. The school community gathers together twice a month on the school's front lawn. During this flag ceremony, students and staff are recognized for their contributions to the school. Honor pins are handed out to students who have displayed high standards of citizenship and effort. Building rapport with students and families is essential to student success. The Bradoaks Bobcats are wild about learning!

Having grown up in the neighboring city of Arcadia and having family in Monrovia, Principal Aimee Dyrek feels a special connection to the Monrovia community. This is Mrs. Dyrek's second year as principal of Bradoaks. Mrs. Dyrek is a graduate of Grand Canyon University and Northern Arizona University, and she did her administrative coursework at Adams State University in Colorado. This year marks the start of Mrs. Dyrek's 20th year of service in education. She has worked as an elementary teacher, a middle school teacher, a high school teacher, a mentor teacher, an instructional coach, a district staff development specialist, and an assistant principal. Mrs. Dyrek looks forward to another great year at Bradoaks!

Canyon *Early Learning Center*

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



Mariana Sanchez
Director

Preparing for Tomorrow's World

The Canyon Early Learning Center is committed to providing an exemplary early childhood educational experience, one which meets the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of each child.

Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff strives to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences that encourage hands-on exploration, discovery, and important critical thinking and problem solving skills. We empower children to believe in themselves and value diversity. We are also dedicated to working in partnership with our parents and the greater community to seek new ways to prepare today's child for tomorrow's world.

Mariana Sanchez has been the director of the Canyon Early Learning Center for the past four years. She obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology from Sonoma State University and a master's degree in educational administration from CSU Los Angeles, with additional coursework in developmental psychology. She also completed her Pupil Personnel Services Credential, and an administrative credential, at Point Loma University.

Since 2007, she has served the Monrovia Unified School District as an elementary counselor technician and elementary school counselor, and has spent most of her professional career working with young children and families in community based settings.

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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

Strong Captain!

Canyon Oaks High School and Mountain Park School are designed to provide an atmosphere in which students with a wide range of needs and educational abilities can excel in a nontraditional setting. Staff members provide a safe and caring learning environment where students achieve success, discover and take part in career pathways, and develop both a sense of self-worth and responsibility. The Monrovia Adult School is MUSD's largest school, serving the needs of over 2,000 students and helping adults reach both their educational and career goals for over 75 years.

Flint Fertig has served the Monrovia Unified School District as the director of Adult, Alternative and Career Technical Programs for over seven years. In that capacity, he directs all aspects of operations for three schools and ROP services, including instructional leadership, budgeting, program planning and execution, management and facilities oversight, and grant writing.

Mr. Fertig has served California schools for 20 years as teacher, assistant principal, principal and director for a number of different schools. Two of the schools in which he served as an administrator were named California Distinguished or Model Schools under his leadership: West Covina High School and Canyon Oaks High School. Mr. Fertig has a proven track record of developing and empowering staff such that underperforming schools are transformed into award-winning institutions.

Mr. Fertig has been a chairman for numerous WASC accreditation visiting committees, currently serves on numerous employment-related boards in the SGV, and is a critical voice in the SGV career technical adult education community.

Mr. Fertig has a B.S. from Brigham Young University, an M.A. from Chapman University and an M.A. from La Sierra University and is near completing his Ed.D. from La Sierra. He will readily admit that Stacey, his wife of over 20 years, is his better half, and together they are raising four wonderful children.

Clifton *Middle School*

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



Jennifer Jackson
Principal

Enriching Lives

Clifton Middle School, a 2014 California Business for Education Excellence Honor Roll School and a 2013 California Distinguished School, is an amazing middle school nestled in the foothills of Monrovia, with a phenomenal group of staff members dedicated to changing lives, saving lives and impacting futures. Clifton is starting a new Cub Academy this year, an opportunity for intervention or enrichment depending on the need of every student. Clifton is also continuing the journey with second-year competitive robotics and debate teams. Finally, the teachers are working diligently to deliver the Common Core State Standards focused on student collaboration and rigor in preparation for students moving on to high school.

Jennifer Jackson, a Monrovia Unified School District alumna, is starting her fifth year at Clifton. She has been an educator for the past 16 years, serving as middle school teacher, high school teacher and high school assistant principal prior to her current role as principal. She obtained her bachelor's degree in biology from California Polytechnic University, Pomona, and a master's degree in teaching from Azusa Pacific University. She completed her teaching credential at Azusa Pacific and her administrative credential at Point Loma and National Universities.

Mayflower *Elementary*

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



Dr. Tamar Kataroyan
Principal

Celebrating 365!

Mayflower Elementary School has a rich history of providing world-class educational experiences to meet the unique needs of all of our students. Our staff takes pride in helping our students reach their full potential by providing quality instruction and a safe and nurturing environment to learn in.

The 2015–16 school year's motto is "Celebrate 365," by which enthusiasm for learning is fostered and celebrated each day. The last few months have been filled with celebrations for the Mariners. We were selected as Honor Roll recipients of the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence (CBEE), a very prestigious recognition. Also, we recently were awarded the Kaboom Grant for \$20,000 for our playground equipment, leading the nation in votes. Our students continue to excel both academically and in our numerous extracurricular activities.

Our principal, Dr. Tamar Kataroyan, graduated from the University of Southern California, earning her doctoral degree in K–12 educational leadership. Prior to becoming the principal at Mayflower, she served as elementary and high school teacher, varsity basketball coach, dean of attendance and high school assistant principal. Dr. Kataroyan earned a Division 1 Basketball scholarship to the University of California, Irvine, where she was a four-year scholar athlete. Additionally, she is a co-founder of a youth outreach program called FIT, which guides children to develop a healthy social, emotional and physical balance.

Monroe *Elementary*

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



Cynthia Lathrop
Principal

Promoting Diversity and Understanding

The Monroe Elementary School community is proud of its rich, award-winning history in Monrovia. One of the city's oldest schools, Monroe celebrates student academic success, cultural diversity, and parent involvement.

For instance, the Monroe Unicycle Club entertains the Monrovia community at parades and school events as our Lions "roar" with pride. Monroe's Spanish dual-language immersion program sets itself apart from all the other schools in the area as well. Students begin to learn Spanish and English in kindergarten or transitional kindergarten. The goal is for each child to be able to perform at grade level and then become bilingual and bi-literate by the time they finish the fifth grade.

The program also embraces diversity and promotes cultural understanding. Plans are being made to continue this dual-language program through middle school and high school.

Monroe's principal, Cindy Lathrop, also encourages school visits, and regularly hosts school tours. "It's amazing to see the students in action," she says. "The teachers set high expectations for the students, and the students rise to meet them."

A longtime Monrovia resident, Cindy Lathrop has been principal of Monroe for the past six years. A graduate of Cal Poly Pomona and CSU Fullerton, she has served the Monrovia Unified School District for over 30 years in a variety of capacities. She was an elementary school teacher, a mentor teacher, an instructional coach, and a district program coordinator. Her children both attended Monrovia schools.



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Monrovia *High School*

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



Kirk McGinnis
Principal

Home to Scholars and Champions

Monrovia High School, “Home to Scholars and Champions,” has a rich history of providing world-class educational experiences to the youth of Monrovia since its founding in 1893. The Monrovia Wildcats are provided with academically rigorous classes with a robust offering of award-winning co-curricular and athletic opportunities. Monrovia High School has earned a full six-year accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and in the spring of 2015 was awarded the California Department of Education’s Gold Ribbon Award!

Monrovia High School is proud to offer a full selection of Honors and Advanced Placement courses, an Early College Cohort program, and Career and Technical Education to prepare students for college and career after high school. The school is home to a robust Math and Science Academy, an award-winning music department, a nationally recognized video production class, and countless Rio Hondo League and CIF championship athletic teams. There are over 50 student clubs and organizations, which allow students to hone their educational, creative, and community-service skills. The Monrovia High School staff takes great pride in educating the whole child, while making authentic connections with students during their four years in high school.

Principal Kirk McGinnis, a Monrovia resident for 15 years and the former principal of Mayflower Elementary School, is a graduate of the University of California, Santa Cruz with a master’s degree in education from California State University, Los Angeles. All four of his children are Monrovia Unified School District students, and his oldest daughters, who graduated from Monrovia High School in 2015, headed off to college this year. He has a passion for making connections with students, staff, and the community in order to continue the rich traditions of Monrovia and Monrovia High School.

Santa Fe *Middle School*

148 West Duarte Rd., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2700 • www.MonroviaSchools.net



Dr. Caroline Sweeney
Principal

A Sense of Family

Santa Fe Middle School students enjoy an array of activities for a well-rounded education both during and after the school day.

During the school day, Santa Fe prides itself on offering students rich elective programs to build 21st-century technological skills, to cultivate the inner artist, to improve musical prowess, to enable students to speak in different languages, and to grow in the language of compassion through Renaissance and leadership.

After school, students may be found on the field or in the gym participating in football, basketball, volleyball, softball, or soccer.

You might find a Cougar eighth-grader tutoring a sixth-grader in Project Pass, working in Homework Club, or even designing a robot to continue the tradition of excellence with our award-winning robotics team.

The staff of Santa Fe prides itself even more on maintaining a sense of family. They teach the Common Core State Standards in the classroom and learn about their students throughout the day. It is not uncommon to see teachers and students walking the halls at snack or lunch discussing the latest sports game or eagerly anticipating the latest book series turned into a motion-picture release. These seemingly insignificant moments are the ones that bind the Cougar community and remind them that strength and success come from the work of the collective.

Dr. Caroline Sweeney, principal of Santa Fe Middle School, earned her undergraduate degree at University of California, Berkeley in history, two master’s degrees from Azusa Pacific University, and a doctoral degree from the University of Southern California.

Plymouth *Elementary*

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



Suzanne Heck
Principal

A Tight Community

Plymouth school is home to the dragons! Since 1952, Plymouth school has been the home school to families living in the Mayflower Village area of Monrovia. Once dairy farms, Plymouth is nestled in a cozy cul-de-sac with a view of the San Gabriel Mountains. For nearly a dozen years, Plymouth has participated in the science Olympiad, earning several silver and bronze medals. Plymouth Dragons added more students this year, with two dual-immersion Mandarin program classrooms for 2015–16, which has 40 students enrolled. With a staff of 20 teachers and nearly 410 students, Plymouth is a tight community where academics and positive relationships come together.

Principal Suzanne Heck has been an educator since 1994. She taught second, third and fifth grades at Bradoaks Elementary for 12 years and attended Cal State Fullerton’s Educational Leadership Program. In 2007, Mrs. Heck became the principal at Canyon Early Learning Center and Monrovia’s state-funded preschool, and in 2011, she was appointed as principal at Plymouth Elementary and has served five years.

Mrs. Heck lives in San Dimas, California, with her husband, David, who is a homemaker and part-time real estate agent. Mrs. Heck is mother to two children: Zoe, age 10, and Dylan age 8.

Wild Rose *Elementary*

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



Stacy Ayers
Principal

Student Success

Stacy Ayers began her successful Monrovia career in 1996 as a second-grade teacher at Monroe Elementary School. With 10 years of leadership under Principal Ayers, Wild Rose has received the California Distinguished School Award, the Title I Achievement Award, four Golden Bell Awards, and the California Business for Educational Excellence award.

Principal Ayers continues to provide great vision. She inspires her students to succeed, and also supports her staff to achieve the highest-quality instruction through effective 21st-century practices. Wild Rose staff members are truly planting the seeds for student success through creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

Wild Rose is known for implementing innovative programs that help support student learning outside the core subject areas. The school recently received an award for their “iTouch into Foreign Language” program. This year Wild Rose is also implementing “Power Hour,” a time where each child can receive interventions and enrichment at their own learning level.

Wild Rose also offers a K–5 visual arts program. Students are exposed to an artist per month, and thus have the opportunity to eventually leave the school with an extensive portfolio in art. The fourth-grade students at Wild Rose can also participate in dance activities through the California Dance Institute.

Principal Ayers notes that, “Student excellence can be measured in many ways, and we try to provide experiences where all students can find personal success.”

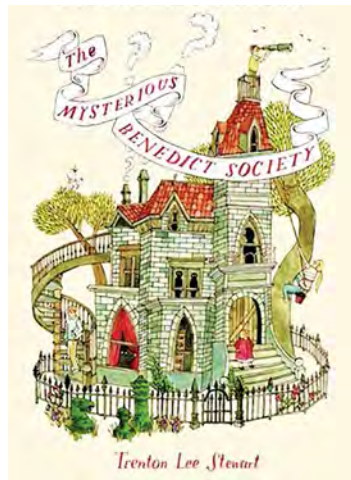


A Page Turner!



Lucy Davis

The Mysterious Benedict Society
 Author: Trenton Lee Stewart
 Mr. Curtain has created a machine to brainwash the world. This story follows four kids that are sent on a secret mission to stop him. Danger is everywhere, and each child has personality traits that help him or her during their adventures. Constance is my favorite character because she is funny, spunky, and fiercely independent! There are lots of twists and turns so readers must pay close attention to keep up with the story line.



This is a young adult book that I feel both boys and girls will enjoy. If you enjoy science fiction and mysteries, this is a great book for you!

I would give this book five bookworms out of five, because I really enjoyed the suspense in the story. I'm really looking forward to reading the next book in this series!

Lucy Davis is a 4th grade student at Beryl Elementary in Redondo Beach. Besides reading, she enjoys riding her bike, theatre, and playing guitar.

'Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!'



Kate Karp

This collection arrives just in time for the beginning of the school year, when teachers are scoping out their annual plans and parents are looking for some good, entertaining stuff to enhance their children's knowledge base. *Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!* is a real find—a brass-and-woodwind-heavy hail to the Civil War era. The collection is a compilation of traditional songs, some familiar and others obscure, as well as tunes written by artist Lloyd H. Miller in the sense of the era and what came out of it for better or worse. In the CD, Miller tells the traditional story and sings the well-known tune of radical abolitionist John Brown and adds his own lyrics and music to flesh out the hero's activism and bravery. "Follow the Drinking Gourd," the hymn to Harriet Tubman's night-sky navigation to the land of freedom, is given a celebratory treatment. Another lesser-known Brown—Henry Box Brown—reached the North in another singular way: he shipped himself in a box to Philadelphia, and Miller thought he'd make a great subject for a song. He was right. Equally obscure and of note is the story of Weeksville, one of the first free black enclaves. Weeksville was established in Brooklyn in the 1830s by a former slave, and Miller graced it with a song, too.



A sequenced narration of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address squares the corners of this enlightening collection. And best of all, an online curriculum guide is in development to further link this rich era to our present.

Kate Karp is an editor for *School News Roll Call* and a freelance writer and editor.

Curious George Goes to the Zoo—Word Search Contest

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 October 15, 2015.
 From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

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