

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Duarte Unified School District**



Volume 4, Issue 12

February 2023

## Unique and Memorable Experiences Taking Place Across All Campuses



**Duarte High School Students Enjoying Their Collaboration Time on New Library Seating.  
(Please see page 7 to read about the places students have on campus for them to unwind.)**

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**CANDICE W.**  
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## SUPERINTENDENT

### A Focus on Teaching and Learning

Duarte Unified School District (DUSD) has been unwavering in its commitment to high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for our scholars. We continue to place a high emphasis on growing student achievement each and every day we serve our students. As we move forward in an environment where the dangers of COVID are still present and the residual effects of a global pandemic present challenges, I am still optimistic about the progress of our schools and what the future looks like in DUSD. We have incorporated rigorous programs and effective strategies that will propel our schools into a promising future.

Duarte High School (DHS) and MIT High School are the two DUSD High Schools. Over the last several years, we have made significant investments in both campuses to provide our scholars with unique and memorable experiences. First, DHS and MIT have invested in Career Technical Education (CTE) programs such as Culinary Arts, Welding, and Film production. These unique pathways engage students in rigorous and relevant coursework that provides them with marketable skills that scholars can take with them in post-secondary life. The District's commitment to CTE is focused on the principle that we want DUSD scholars to have job-relevant skills that enhance their employability. And most importantly, we want to stay committed to the concept of preparing our scholars to be college and/or career ready.

Deepening our instructional practice is a core commitment of the Duarte Unified School District, and the focus on effective teacher practice is evident at all our District academy schools. A signature practice of the district is our "learning walks" protocol. This powerful activity places district staff, school staff, and district partners together, visiting classrooms and watching our educators and scholars learning and growing together. The most important component of the process is sharing all the great evidence of teaching and learning that happened during our visit and then sharing that information with the staff to reinforce all the excellent work we were able to see. This feedback opportunity grows the skills and knowledge of our entire learning community. When we observe good practice and share that good practice across our campuses, teaching and learning increases for everyone.

DUSD will continue to keep its focus on advancing student achievement for all its scholars. We have the right people, the right programs, and a clear focused strategy that will help us reach our goals. This year, we are learning a lot about new and different supports our schools will continue to need as we push forward. The challenges are big but we are excited about what the future looks like for DUSD.



**Dr. Gordon Amerson**  
*Superintendent*

### Un enfoque en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje

El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Duarte (DUSD) ha sido inquebrantable en su compromiso con las oportunidades de enseñanza y aprendizaje de alta calidad para nuestros estudiantes. Continuamos poniendo un gran énfasis en el aumento del rendimiento de los estudiantes todos los días que servimos a nuestros estudiantes. A medida que avanzamos en un entorno donde los peligros de COVID aún están presentes y los efectos residuales de una pandemia global presentan desafíos, sigo siendo optimista sobre el progreso de nuestras escuelas y cómo se ve el futuro en DUSD. Hemos incorporado programas rigurosos y estrategias efectivas que impulsarán a nuestras escuelas hacia un futuro prometedor.

La preparatoria Duarte (DHS) y la preparatoria MIT son las dos escuelas secundarias de DUSD. En los últimos años, hemos realizado importantes inversiones en ambas escuelas para brindarles a nuestros estudiantes experiencias únicas y memorables. En primer lugar, DHS y el MIT han invertido en programas de educación técnica profesional (CTE), como artes culinarias, soldadura y producción cinematográfica. Estos caminos únicos involucran a los estudiantes en cursos rigurosos y relevantes que les brindan habilidades comercializables que los académicos pueden llevar con ellos en la vida posterior a la secundaria. El compromiso del Distrito con CTE se centra en el principio de que queremos que los estudiantes de DUSD tengan habilidades laborales relevantes que mejoren su empleabilidad. Y lo más importante, queremos seguir comprometidos con el concepto de preparar a nuestros estudiantes para que estén listos para la universidad y/o una carrera.

Profundizar nuestra práctica instructiva es un compromiso central del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Duarte, y el enfoque en la práctica docente efectiva es evidente en todas nuestras escuelas académicas. Una práctica característica del distrito es nuestro protocolo de "caminatas de aprendizaje". Esta poderosa actividad reúne al personal del distrito, al personal de la escuela y a los administradores del distrito, visitando los salones y observando a nuestros educadores y estudiantes aprendiendo y creciendo juntos. El componente más importante del proceso es compartir toda la gran evidencia de enseñanza y aprendizaje que ocurrió durante nuestra visita y luego compartir esa información con el personal para reforzar todo el excelente trabajo que pudimos ver. Esta oportunidad de retroalimentación aumenta las habilidades y el conocimiento de toda nuestra comunidad de aprendizaje. Cuando observamos buenas prácticas y compartimos esas buenas prácticas en nuestras escuelas, la enseñanza y el aprendizaje aumentan para todos.

DUSD continuará manteniendo su enfoque en el avance del rendimiento estudiantil para todos sus estudiantes. Contamos con las personas adecuadas, los programas adecuados y una estrategia clara y enfocada que nos ayudará a alcanzar nuestras metas. Este año, estamos aprendiendo mucho sobre apoyos nuevos y diferentes que nuestras escuelas seguirán necesitando a medida que avanzamos. Los desafíos son grandes, pero estamos entusiasmados con el futuro de DUSD.

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### Duarte Unified to Expand Offerings to Pre-Kindergarten Students

*From the District*

At Duarte Unified we are excited to expand the opportunities we offer our youngest learners. This expansion is a new initiative for children afforded by the state that gives four-year-olds access to a quality inclusive pre-kindergarten program that builds a robust foundation for long-term student success and an excitement about school. Starting in the fall, children whose fifth birthday is from September 2 and before April 2 will be eligible for full day Transitional Kindergarten (TK).

Key Components of TK include:

- Developmentally appropriate learning and growth for the whole child: academic, social, emotional and physical
- Hands-on experiences, guided socialization, language development, and opportunities to learn through purposeful play
- Embracing diversity
- Integration into the school community
- Partnerships and resources for families

As part of this exemplary program that is housed at several of our campuses, we offer a Dual Language Spanish TK class at Beardslee Dual Immersion Academy. This class is intended for those families who would like a dual language pathway for their children. TK students enrolled in the Beardslee Dual Immersion class automatically progress through each grade of school learning in both English and Spanish toward the goal of biliteracy. TK students interested in this program do not need to have any experience with Spanish.

In addition to TK, parents may also choose to enroll in Duarte Preschool which offers a half day and full day year-round program for working families.

We know that Preschool and TK provide students with a jumpstart to their educational experiences that help foster long term success in school.

### El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Duarte Ampliará las oOfertas para Estudiantes Pre-escolares

*Del Distrito*

En el distrito de Duarte estamos emocionados de expandir las oportunidades que ofrecemos a nuestros estudiantes más jóvenes. Esta expansión es una nueva iniciativa para niños proporcionada por el estado que brinda acceso a niños de cuatro años a un programa preescolar inclusivo de calidad que construye una base sólida para el éxito estudiantil a largo plazo y el entusiasmo por la escuela. A partir del otoño, los niños cuyo quinto cumpleaños sea del 2 de septiembre y antes del 2 de abril serán elegibles para el Kindergarten de Transición (TK) de día completo.

Los componentes clave del kínder de transición incluyen:

- Aprendizaje y crecimiento apropiados para el desarrollo del niño en su totalidad: académico, social, emocional y físico
- Experiencias prácticas, socialización guiada, desarrollo del lenguaje y oportunidades para aprender a través del juego con propósito
- aceptando la diversidad
- Integración en la comunidad escolar
- Asociaciones y recursos para familias

Como parte de este programa ejemplar que se encuentra en varias de nuestras escuelas, ofrecemos una clase de TK de idioma dual en español en la academia Beardslee de inmersión dual. Esta clase está destinada a aquellas familias que deseen un camino bilingüe para sus hijos. Los estudiantes de TK inscritos en la clase de Inmersión Dual de Beardslee progresan automáticamente a través de cada grado de aprendizaje escolar en inglés y español hacia la meta de alfabetización bilingüe. Los estudiantes de TK interesados en este programa no necesitan tener ninguna experiencia con el español.

Además de TK, los padres también pueden optar por inscribirse en la escuela preescolar de Duarte, que ofrece un programa de medio día y de día completo durante todo el año para familias trabajadoras.

Sabemos que la escuela preescolar y TK brindan a los estudiantes un impulso a sus experiencias educativas que ayudan a fomentar el éxito a largo plazo en la escuela.

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## Covering the DUARTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



Dr. Amerson begins this issue with his message on page 3 regarding the District's focus on advancing student achievement.

Throughout this issue you will read articles on many topics that will make you wish you were a student.

Be sure to enter our word search contest on page 6 (all ages may enter). Our next issue is May 10.



## When you can be anything, be kind.

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**Grandma, Why Do You Have Cracks In Your Face?**

By Kay Coop | Illustrated by Melanie Florio

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**Jennifer Romero**  
*Principal*

### Learning About Farm Animals

Students at Beardslee Academy have been working hard to meet their academic goals. Students were recently recognized in grades TK-5 for their accomplishments from 1st trimester, and in grades 6-8 for their achievements from 1st and 2nd quarters. Students continue to be acknowledged not only for their long-term goals but also for their short-term goals. In addition to these celebrations, we recognized some of our English Learners who met all criteria and have been redesignated as English Proficient! We are very proud of all our students who were recognized.



In other news, Ms. Hannah and Ms. Mariela's pre-school classes have been learning about farm animals. A petting zoo was brought to campus and the students were able to engage with the animals. They had a great time and there were lots of smiles.

Our 5th grade students are gearing up for PALI science camp and they too will engage in lots of hands on experiences. Stay tuned, we will be sharing lots of photos from their upcoming trip.

## Fun Things and Places—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](mailto:Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com) Please put Duarte in the subject line.

**Entries must be received by April 15, 2023**

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift card to Barnes & Noble!

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FOREST



# Duarte High School

1565 E. Central Ave., Duarte, CA 91010 • 714/990-3221 • [www.duarteusd.org/dhs](http://www.duarteusd.org/dhs)



**Luis Haro**  
Principal

## Welcoming Spaces to Unwind and Recharge

Through our continued partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education's Community Schools Initiative, we recently opened a staff wellness center, known as our Staff Recharge Room. The focus of this room is for our staff to have a place where they can unwind, relax, and destress. The room focuses on natural design elements incorporating plants, natural materials such as wood, and features several comfortable seating options. There are mindful activities such as puzzles, a mini zen garden, mini

waterfall, a nature sound machine, and back massager. Our staff have been enjoying having a place on campus focused solely on staff wellness. In fact, since January there has been weekly events such as yoga, that have taken place in the Recharge Room during lunch.



**Students relaxing during lunch on newly purchased furniture in Duarte High School library.**



**Woodshop teacher Sean Siks unwinding with the mini zen garden while other staff pose for the camera.**

Also, newly debuted at Duarte High School is new library furniture. We want to ensure that students have places on campus where they can relax and unwind. We already have our Margaret's Place room on campus, which is open for drop-in counseling, individual and group counseling, and lunch activities, and this new library furniture helps us ensure that there are more places where students can hang out on campus to read, relax, or just hang out with friends.



**DHS staff enjoying some time together in the recharge room.**

## Duarte *Preschool-Child Development Center*

1433 Crestfield Dr., Duarte, CA 91010 • 626/599-5123 • [www.duarteusd.org/cdc](http://www.duarteusd.org/cdc)



**Sofia Valdez**  
*Director of Child Development Program*

### Providing Support to Empower our Families

After COVID-19, economic inflation has impacted our community. Consequently, many of our preschool families with young children have been disproportionately affected by it. At Duarte Child Development, we

are committed to providing various support channels to empower our families to seek the resources and community services they need to meet their needs successfully.

The Child Development Program proudly collaborates with Duarte High School, which is part of LACOE Community School Initiative that partners with Baby2Baby. Baby2Baby is a non-profit organization that provides children 0-12 years living in disadvantaged communities and poverty with bare living essentials. In the Fall, and through our partner collaboration, we assisted more than 80 of our families with boxes of diapers, baby wipes, strollers, playpens, and other necessities that our families struggle to afford. One of our preschool parents, Mrs. Ramos commented, “Muchas gracias, por la carreola, esto es de gran ayuda para nosotros que llegamos de Perú y no tenemos nada. Yo camino con mi hija todos los días para llevarla a la escuela”. “Thank you very much for the stroller; this is a great help for us; we just arrived from Peru and have nothing. I walk with my child to school every day.”



Last month, for the holidays, Baby2Baby gave us a donation of toys to bring joy and happiness to almost 140 children enrolled in the Duarte Preschool. Mr. Kouakanou, with tears, expressed, “Thank you very much; this is the best gift we have ever got for my newborn and the rest of my family.”

Moreover, we are thankful to our colleagues and partners at the DHS Falcon Family Center, who opened their doors to welcome the preschool families for a Family Night to support them thru the winter season by providing canned food, clothes, blankets, shoes, and much more. Our Child Development families and staff are grateful for such support and collaboration. As we continue supporting our needy families, we are eager to expand our network with community partners. We believe that

together we can make a difference.





**Dr. Kelly Lawson**  
*Principal*

### Exploring the Unit of Structures through Real World Experiences

Team Maxwell is getting back out there! After a couple years away due to the pandemic, Maxwell Academy students are getting back out into the community to extend their learning. Learning is so much more than information in books and the four walls of a classroom. Recently, the fourth and fifth graders took a field trip to the Natural History Museum where they explored further into their unit on Structures. There were skeletal structures, plant structures, and even the structure of a museum. Then, it was the second and third graders turn to inquire into the past at The La Brea Tar Pits. The students learned about fossils and what they can tell us about events that happened in the past. They even got see an active archaeological dig site and ask questions of the archaeologists. Lucky, lucky learners.

In the very near future, the seventh graders will experience medieval life at an educational program provided at Medieval Times. This connects to their in-classroom learning about feudalism and its structure. Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and first grade have big plans for a springtime visit to the Los Angeles Zoo

where they hope to encounter some new animal babies with their parents. Their inquiry checklist will likely include how they live in their environment, the physical features, and what they eat.

As an International Baccalaureate World School, we believe students learn best when thinking, asking, and doing. There is nothing like a real-world experience to solidify great learning. Thank you to all who help make these fieldtrips and experiences possible.



**Maxwell 5th grader examines the structure of a bat's skeleton at the Natural History Museum**



**Maxwell 4th and 5th graders posing with a large Triceratops skeleton.**

# Mt. Olive Innovation and Technology *High School*

1400 Mt. Olive Dr., Duarte, CA 91010 • 626/599-5900 • [www.duarteusd.org/MIT](http://www.duarteusd.org/MIT)



**Kevin Morris**  
*Principal*

## Students CHILL at MIT

At first glance, the title to this article “Students CHILL at MIT” may seem like students may be taking it easy on our districtwide Early Release Day, but actually quite the opposite--students are hard at work. CHILL is innovative, engaging, informative and life changing for many of our students. The acronym CHILL stands for Career, Health, Interventions, and Life-

skills Literacy. The goal of CHILL is to support and extend student learning through weekly guest speakers in the areas of career education, personal health, mental health, financial literacy, student enrichment, life choices and just how real world works.

CHILL guest speakers have included LA Metro, Oak Crest Institute of Science, Foothill Federal Credit Union, US Military, National Guard, Duarte Teen Center, Duarte Area Resource Team, LA County Sheriff Department, Outward Bound Adventures, California Conservation Corp, Job Corps, Citrus College, Universal Technical Institute, Home Depot, Planned Parenthood, Simply Divine Salon, Rusnak Pasadena, Trade Schools, Integrity College of Health, and Young and Hungry Now.

The CHILL guest speakers serve as role models while providing students a positive image of themselves in these positions in the not-so-distant future. There is always the chance that one of the speakers piques a student interest and provides the jump start they need to pursue particular careers and make advantageous life choices leading to a full and productive life.

## Valley View *Academy of Technology & Creative Learning (TK-6)*

237 Melcanyon Rd., Duarte, CA 91010 • 626/599-5500 • [www.duarteusd.org/vve](http://www.duarteusd.org/vve)



**Erin Fish**  
*Principal*

## Valley View Dolphins SWIM

The students of Valley View Academy are continuously working to meet our school PBIS expectations based on the acronym S.W.I.M. SWIM stands for Show respect, Work as a Team, Identify and Solve Problems, and Make Positive Choices. Students are recognized on a daily basis for meeting these expectations in the classroom, on the playground, and all-around campus. When a

student is caught meeting one of these expectations, they are recognized by staff and awarded a Dolphin Dollar. This month we are launching our first school wide SWIM Store where students can use their accumulated Dolphin Dollars

to purchase various types of prizes including snacks, school supplies, fidgets and other fun toys. The prizes selected for the SWIM Store were chosen based on student input through class surveys. The SWIM Store would not be a reality without the hard work of our PBIS team, support and donations from families, and student volunteers to help run it. Our Valley View Dolphins are eager to shop at the SWIM Store and we look forward to the upcoming months of positive behavior and recognition. In addition to recognizing students with Dolphin Dollars, we end every month with a Student of the Month assembly where one student from each class is recognized for demonstrating characteristics that align to our SWIM expectations in and out of the classroom. Keep up the great work Dolphins!



# Royal Oaks STEAM Academy (K-8)

2499 Royal Oaks Dr., Bradbury, CA 91008 • 626/599-5400 • [www.duarteusd.org/roe](http://www.duarteusd.org/roe)



**Dr. Esther  
Tamanaha**  
*Principal*

## 2023 PBIS Re-Launch

We are back in school and ready to SOAR! We have started this year re-launching PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support). During the week of January 9, a schoolwide PBIS implementation took place to remind students of class and school expectations. We also reviewed our S.O.A.R. chant that is said every day during our morning announcements. Following

the school expectations, students can earn SOAR dollars and cash them in at the SOAR store. For K-5th grade, the SOAR store is in the library. There, students can get cool prizes, ice cream and board games with Dr. Tamanaha, Play-doh with Ms. Salas, and popcorn with Dr. White. For 6-8th grade, the SOAR store is inside the Eagle's Café and students can buy prizes, pizza with Dr. Tamanaha, donuts with Mr. Navarro, and Royal Oaks merchandise. To culminate our PBIS review, students had a blast watching BMX stunt riders. We don't just fly, we SOAR!



**Stunt Masters gave a motivational assembly with bike tricks entertainment.**

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