

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the San Marino Unified School District



Volume 4, Issue 8

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Safe Learning Environments



Focused on Safe Learning Environments



**Dr. Linda
de la Torre**
Superintendent

San Marino USD is highly focused on providing safe learning environments. Safe learning environments are essential for our students to excel academically, socially, and emotionally. Our district understands that learning cannot take place without first ensuring that all students are safe from physical harm. This begins with comprehensive school site safety plans and practicing drills

that are both scheduled and unscheduled.

Our district has a strong partnership with local law enforcement and we work closely together to assess any potential threats to school safety. We train all teachers, staff, and administrators to keep students safe in the event of an intruder on campus and our police department responds to all calls in the community in under 1.5 minutes. We have invested in a school emergency alert and crisis management system that is used by all employees. Our campuses are inspected regularly for safety hazards and in the event, one is identified, it is immediately resolved or the area is off limits until such time as it can be rectified. Our campuses have security cameras, fencing, and staff who are trained to evaluate and report safety issues.

Another important aspect of a safe learning environment is our strict anti-bullying policies wherein you may report bullying either to a teacher, or administrator, on our school's website, or through an anonymous tipline. Our schools also have strict rules prohibiting any form of discrimination or hate speech. Our students are able to report such behavior without fear of retribution.

Providing a safe and inclusive learning environment means students should feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions without judgment or ridicule. Our teachers work hard to create classrooms where students feel respected and free to express themselves as individuals. Students from various backgrounds feel included and supported. One way the District does this is to encourage teachers to celebrate diversity and facilitate the learning and exploration of different cultures in the classroom.

To ensure social-emotional well-being, our district has trained counselors and school psychologists who are able to identify signs of mental health issues and provide support or referrals to appropriate professionals. We have a social-emotional learning curriculum at the elementary schools and a wellness center at the middle and high schools that are staffed by trained counselors.

Creating a safe learning environment also involves building and maintaining positive relationships between teachers, students, and their parents. Our parents are partners in their children's education and we communicate with them regularly. We want our parents to feel comfortable contacting our teachers with any concerns.

Finally, a safe learning environment is fundamental for students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our schools have programs and highly trained personnel that ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students and that our campuses provide the safest learning environments possible.

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Safe Learning Environments

By Shelley Ryan, President

SMUSD's top priority is to ensure that all students feel safe, engaged, connected, and supported in their classrooms and schools. These "conditions for learning" contribute to our students' academic achievement and success and are associated with improved grades and test scores, strong attendance, positive relationships, decreased inappropriate behaviors, and can narrow achievement gaps.

The need to establish positive conditions for learning is clear, but what exactly does it take for schools to achieve this? SMUSD's faculty and staff understand that students must feel welcomed, supported, and respected. Building a positive, safe school climate and ensuring students are ready to learn requires school expectations that promote positive adult and student relationships and work to keep students engaged in the classroom.

Differentiated learning is one instructional approach that could promote engagement. This student-centered approach to learning tailors instruction to students' unique strengths and needs and engages them in challenging, standards-based academic content. Personalizing learning, similar to project-based learning, helps students develop thinking critically, using knowledge and information to solve complex problems, working collaboratively, communicating effectively, learning how to learn, and developing academic mindsets.



Students must feel connected to teachers, staff, and other students. SMUSD focuses on students' social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL helps students understand and manage their emotions and interactions with others and build the skills necessary to communicate and resolve conflicts. Our SEL programs have improved students' social competence, self-awareness, connection to school, positive interactions with others, and academic performance. SEL practices can create a positive, safe school environment that supports students' deeper learning.



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



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March is a wonderful month when we celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday and Read Across America. Reading is the foundation for learning and it doesn't take money to enjoy reading. We are fortunate to have public libraries and in some communities little book deposits to trade books. One can even travel to far away places while simply enjoying a book in a favorite chair.

Be sure to enter our word search on page 11 to be entered in a drawing to win a gift card to Barnes & Noble.

Our next issue is May 10.



San Marino Unified School District



**TK-1 REGISTRATION
STARTS MARCH 1, 2023**

**2-12 REGISTRATION
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San Marino Schools Foundation

1665 West Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7014 • www.smsf.org

The Schools Foundation Provides Its Yearly \$2million Grant to the District

By Alison Moller, 2022-2023 President

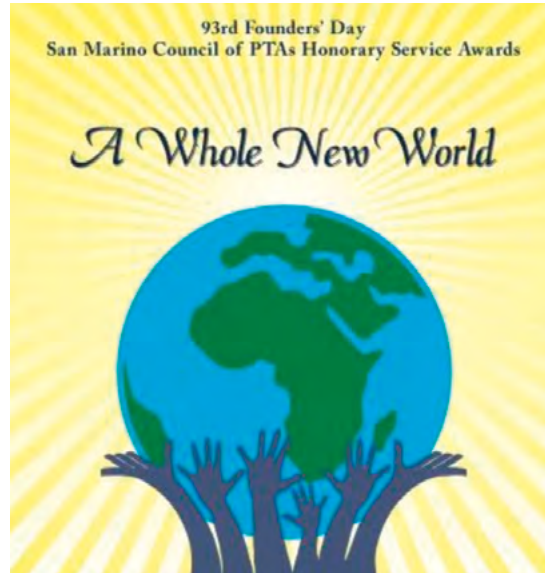
As President of the San Marino Schools Foundation I am proud to report that the Foundation has fulfilled its \$2million pledge to the District to provide supplemental financial support to our schools. The Foundation's contribution enables the District to fund 20 additional teachers, five at each of the District's four schoolsites. This annual Foundation pledge not only showcases the impact of our donors' generosity and collective commitment to advance educational excellence at our schools, but helps provide a safe, supportive environment where all students can thrive.



The Foundation's grant to the District closes the gap between what state funding provides and what community expectations of educational excellence require. The Foundation's stable contributions, funded by yearly donations from parents, community, and corporations, as well as earnings from its endowment fund, allow the District to responsibly rely on these additional funds for over four decades.

Thank you to all our generous donors.





PTA and Our Children: Better Together

By PTSA Council President Jacqueline Chuang

The well-being of our students is the heart of the San Marino PTA's work and we are proud to partner with our school administration to care for our children. Our fundraising contributes to a safer school environment from campus security measures to wellness efforts. Our volunteers provide additional adult supervision as part of safety crews, walking school buses, and chaperones for dances and after school activities. We fund PE programs that promote health, self-esteem and positive sportsmanship. For emotional enrichment, PTA brought Books and Yoga to the elementary schools and helped support the HMS Zen Den and SMHS Titan Wellness Center.

The PTA is proud to help foster safe learning environments at all the school sites. We are deeply grateful to the amazing volunteers who make our work possible. Congratulations and thank you for honorary service award recipients for 2023!

The San Marino PTA Council is proud to announce our very special Honorary Service Award recipients for 2022-2023! Please join us in celebrating these amazing volunteers at Founder's Day on March 22, 2023 at the HMS Auditorium.

The Honorary Service Award is awarded in special recognition of outstanding service to the children and youth of the City of San Marino.

Congratulations to our Honorary Service Award recipients:

Janice Segimoto (PTA Council)
 Alan Chen (PTA Council)
 Olive Choa (SMHS)
 Danica Hughes (SMHS)
 Wil Rose (SMHS)
 Cathy Newton (HMS)
 Sara Lee (HMS)
 Christine Hyun Song (HMS)
 Francesca Gill (Valentine)
 Dania Sigler (Valentine)
 Pauline Zeitlin (Valentine)
 Julia Greer (Carver)
 Hwannie Shen (Carver)
 Edward Zee (Carver)

The Continuing Service Award is awarded in special recognition of ongoing or longtime service to the children and youth of the City of San Marino.

Congratulations to our PTA Council Continuing Service Award recipients, Kathryn Oliveros and Jennifer Park!

The work the PTA does is only possible because of our incredible volunteers. Thank you all for all that you do!

Carver Elementary School

3100 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 626/299-7080 • www.carverschool.us



Stuart Caldwell
Principal

Learning is Fun!

Carver is a magical and joyful place. There is evidence of that to be seen on a daily basis. Sometimes magic and joy reveal themselves in the simplest of ways.

On one of our many rainy days (okay, a deluge to be sure), the energy of our parents and kids both walking to school and hurrying out of their cars was apparent. Can you feel it as you look at the parade of umbrellas and cars? It's impressive how many folks choose to walk, even when the rain is falling.

Kids and parents enter Carver's gate daily with smiles and energy. They know that they are loved and cared for. They find joy in learning! Not even a bit of rain can put a damper on that.

Recently Carver had our Spring Student Council elections. It was amazing to see and hear our 5th grade candidates giving their speeches. They showed grace, humility and a can-do spirit. Our Carver family can be encouraged in the knowledge that the kids coming through our gates will become exceptional leaders in their time. Carver is about much more than academics. As a community – teachers, staff, parents, district leadership, and our community partners – we work to help our students to develop into incredible people. Our students showcase their strong interpersonal skills regularly. Our Student Council elections provide just one example of that.



Key to Carver's success is that Pioneers know how to have fun, and we collectively work to provide lots and lots of opportunities for our students, staff and parents to enjoy some incredible moments together. On March 9, 2023 we held our first ever Dance-a-thon. We had hundreds of parents and family members present as each class did a dance. Braver folks joined in while the kids showcased their particular numbers. Our staff even came together, in a wonderful spirit of pride and unity, to do a flash mob dance for the kids (and wider audience). This incredibly positive event culminated with our 5th graders leading everyone off of the dancefloor (the upper blacktop) via a Conga Line.

Carver is a truly amazing place! Our students, teachers, staff, families, and community members all work to make it so. And one thing we know for sure is that when we collectively put our minds to something we can make it happen. Carver Rocks!



Huntington Middle School

1700 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7060 • www.hehms.us



Daryl Topalian
Principal

Universal Design for Learning

Huntington Middle School teachers are implementing UDL strategies to create safe learning environments that promote equity, accessibility, and inclusion for all learners.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for designing flexible, accessible, and inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of all learners, including those with disabilities and diverse backgrounds.

To create safe learning environments, Huntington Middle School is using some of the following UDL strategies:

1. Provide multiple means of representation: This means presenting information in different ways to cater to different learning styles and abilities. For example, teachers can use visual aids, such as diagrams, videos, or images, to accompany written text or spoken instructions.
2. Offer multiple means of action and expression: This means providing students with various ways to demonstrate their understanding and skills. For example, teachers can allow students to express their ideas through written assignments, verbal presentations, or creative projects.
3. Incorporate multiple means of engagement: This means creating learning experiences that are interesting, relevant, and challenging for all learners. For example, teachers can use real-world examples, collaborative activities, or gamification to engage students in the learning process.



4. Create a positive and inclusive learning culture: This means fostering a welcoming and respectful environment where all students feel valued and supported. For example, teachers can use inclusive language, celebrate diversity, and provide opportunities for student voice and choice.
5. Provide accommodations and assistive technology: This means providing additional support and tools for students with disabilities or specific needs. For example, teachers can use assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software, or provide extended time for assessments.

HMS will continue to strive as one of the top middle schools in the nation. The UDL framework and a vast array of robust VAPA programs, competitive athletics and extracurricular activities make HMS a school where every student is an active and valued learner.



San Marino High School

2701 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7020 • www.sanmarinohs.org



Jason Kurtenbach
Principal

Block Scheduling

San Marino High School is focused on providing the best opportunities for its students in the areas of academics, the arts, athletics, and activities. In doing so, we always keep in mind that our primary mission is to create and maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Balancing these goals demands that we consider and review all aspects of the school experience. To this end, beginning in the fall of 2023, San Marino High School will embark on two substantive changes that we believe will create a safer environment, one that will put a premium on student-wellness and increase their ability to be the best prepared they can for college and career.

The first change is that SMHS will soon be on a block schedule. In California and the United States, about 80 percent of the top 100 high schools are currently on some form of block scheduling. The potential benefits of this are too numerous to mention, however, here are a few that we are hoping to exploit:

With block scheduling, students will have the ability to develop more depth of understanding. They will have less to manage by only attending three classes a day, which potentially reduces stress. There is more time spent on learning, which also provides staff with the ability to work with their students in more one-to-one or small-group instruction.

The second and perhaps most exciting change is the addition of our new Titan Medical Arts Academy. Rising freshmen and sophomores can begin the TMAA by taking on-campus courses offered through PCC dual-enrollment. This will give them the opportunity to both explore medical careers and learn valuable skills and content.

We believe this will help our students prepare for matriculation at colleges and universities, and also give them a leg up on students from other schools. They will also move through the Academy by interacting with high-level medical training devices, as well as work within the framework of AP Seminar, AP Research, and AP Capstone.

We are already looking for ways to develop new and more diverse academies as we continue to learn, grow, and change to meet the needs of our students and community. Go, Titans!

Valentine Elementary School

1650 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 626/299-7090 • www.valentineschool.org



Whitney McAlpine
Principal

School Safety

Valentine Elementary continues to focus on improving school safety for our students and staff. We are committed to ongoing safety training through professional development and emergency drills. Annually, we practice earthquake, fire, lockout and lockdown drills. These drills help us feel confident in our abilities and help prepare everyone at Valentine Elementary. We value the partnership in working with our parents

and community, our district office, and local city first responders. Together we innovate and adjust to ensure we continue to provide a safe learning environment where students learn beyond their potential and thrive. Valentine Elementary also understands the importance of social-emotional well-being in our students, teachers, and staff members. Our work and focus on social-emotional learning through our school counselor and Second Step curriculum also contribute to our safe school environment as students learn to communicate better, solve problems, and deepen their emotional regulation abilities. Thank you to our Valentine Viking community and educational partners for their continued support and partnership in ensuring our safety priorities.



**San Marino Police Department
with kindergarten students at Valentine Elementary**

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Aubtin's Review



Aubtin M.

Be Brave

Title: *Geronimo Stilton – The Treasure Of Easter Island*

Author: Elisabetta Dami

Geronimo Stilton is a best-selling author running a newspaper called *The Rodent's Gazette*. He lives in New Mouse City, Mouse Island. Geronimo's sister Thea went to Easter Island in hope of finding treasure there. But then she was captured by pirates! Geronimo went to Easter Island looking for the same treasure in hope of finding Thea. Can Geronimo find Thea? Will he also find the treasure that Thea had been looking for in the first place? I recommend you read this book to find out.



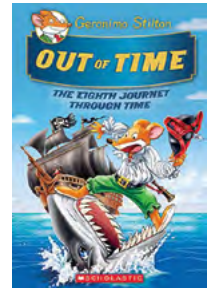
This book is very funny and makes me laugh. I hope it will make you laugh too. This book also has very nice graphics and pictures.

Fun Ride through History

Title: *Geronimo Stilton – Out Of Time*

Author: Elisabetta Dami

Geronimo Stilton is a best-selling author running a newspaper called *The Rodent's Gazette*. He lives in New Mouse City, Mouse Island. Geronimo and his friends are at the museum for a very special event. Then three artifacts went missing and director of the museum asked Geronimo to help. Geronimo goes off on a journey through time by a time machine. He meets Alexander the Great, Cleopatra, Sir Francis Drake and Mozart. Can Geronimo find all the artifacts before time runs out?



This is an adventurous, historical, educational and a very funny book. I enjoyed learning about famous people in the history in such a fun book. I hope you will too.

Aubtin is a 1st Grader. When not playing, Aubtin does writing, reading, and drawing. He also likes sports, swimming, music, computers, and trains. He cares a lot about his family and friends.

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 Please put San Marino in the subject line.

Entries must be received by **May 30, 2023**

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

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| CARNIVAL | CAMP |
| HOME | SEASHORE |
| SCHOOL | FARM |
| PARK | ZOO |
| SLIDES | HIKE |
| SWINGS | BIKE RIDE |
| ROAD TRIP | REUNION |
| PARTY | CRUISE |
| MOVIE | SKATING |
| POOL | VIDEOS |
| FOREST | |



Congratulations to Isabella Loh
Winner of our November Word Search Contest!



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