

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Manhattan Beach Unified School District**



Volume 1, Issue 2

May 2024



**Mira Costa Cheer, Badminton, Jazz, Drama/Tech, and ComedySportz HSL programs featured in KTLA 5 Morning News School Spirit Spotlight!**



**Julie T.**  
Teacher  
Member Since 2006



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Superintendent

MBUSD is a “Destination District.” We are supported by a close-knit community, the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation, and other local partners who value a high-performing public school district.

Throughout the year, the collaborative efforts of MBEF, PTAs/PTSAs, parents, and staff support enriching opportunities for our students. We host a STEAM night open to the community at our middle and high schools to share the diverse programming we offer students and showcase their STEAM accolades. The events highlight Invention Convention projects that make it to the national competitions annually. Continuing a tradition dating back to the 1980s, the Mira Costa High School 2024 Scholar Quiz drew over two hundred and fifty student participants who participated in a trivia competition tournament.

Elementary students showcased their mathematical prowess at the 7th Annual MBUSD Elementary Math Competition, answering questions beyond their grade level. Winners of this event advance to the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Math Field Day Competition.

In addition to our focus on maximizing the academic success of all students, MBUSD remains dedicated to a Climate of Care.



**7th Annual MBUSD Elementary Math Competition**



**MCHS Scholar Quiz Winning Team with Superintendent Dr. Bowes and MCHS Principal Dr. Karina Gerger!**



**MCHS Jazz Band Wins National Jazz Festival**



**Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) TOSA Patti McCullum, Dir of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Dr. Jonathan Erickson, and Meadows Principal Michelle Krzmarzick presented on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program and its positive impact on students at the California Department of Education (CDE) All Titles Conference.**

We are actively preparing to implement Ethnic Studies courses at Mira Costa High School to meet new state graduation requirements. There will be two courses titled Diversity and Cultural Studies, which are slated to debut next year, officially offered beginning in 2026. Our schools are committed to their No Place for Hate® program activities and events to cultivate a sense of belonging for all.

Our visual and performing art programs maintain their reputation for excellence, they were recognized locally and nationally. Achievements include the Mira Costa High School Jazz Band taking home 1st place at the 2024 National Jazz Festival, along with accolades for the Mira Costa and MBMS Orchestras, String Ensembles, and MBMS and Mira Choir groups receiving top ratings during festival season.

Behind every achievement lies the dedication of our exceptional administrators, teachers, and classified staff. We focus on the whole child, and MBUSD’s Personalized Learning Framework is designed to ensure that every student achieves academic success and is well-positioned to be a lifelong learner.



**Dr. Dawnalyn Murakawa-Leopard**  
Deputy Superintendent

## Modernization of MBUSD Facilities

The Manhattan Beach Unified School District is celebrating the successful conclusion of its Measure C and Measure EE local bond programs. On November 8, 2016, the voters of Manhattan Beach approved these two bond measures, providing the District with \$153M in facilities funding. Since that time, the District has used this funding to:

- Construct the 71,200 square foot Mira Costa Athletic Complex, replacing the original 65-year old gym
- Construct the new music building at Manhattan Beach Middle School
- Construct the new 3-story Multi Purpose Building at Grand View Elementary
- Construct two new 2-story classroom buildings at Pennekamp Elementary and Grand View Elementary, replacing some of the aging portable classroom buildings on those campuses
- Install a solar panel array at the new Mira Costa Athletic Complex
- Revise, enlarge, and improve parking lots at Meadows Elementary, Pennekamp Elementary and Grand View Elementary
- Construct two new fields and a new playground at Grand View Elementary



**Mira Costa Athletic Complex**

- Modernize classrooms at all five elementary schools, including
  - The installation of air conditioning in all classrooms
  - The installation of new vinyl floor surfaces in all classrooms
  - Improvements to storefront and casework in all classrooms
  - Upgrades to campus infrastructures at all elementary schools
- Update the infrastructure and provide classroom air conditioning at Manhattan Beach Preschool
- Provide ADA accessibility upgrades at all sites
- Replace and repair roofs at buildings throughout the District
- Provide new security fencing at all campuses

The District is grateful to the Manhattan Beach community for making these improvements possible and is currently updating its comprehensive Facilities Master Plan to identify the next phase of needed improvements at local schools.



**Grand View Elementary School ribbon cutting of three-story multi-purpose building**



**New MBMS Music Building Unveiled**





**Hilary Mahan**  
Executive Director

**Excellence in Education**

For the past four decades, the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation has focused on its vision of filling Manhattan Beach public schools with the inspiring enrichment opportunities essential to a high-quality education. These opportunities have built

a strong foundation for students in core subjects like language arts and math, hands-on experiences in science, art, and music, personalized instruction to meet individual needs, and inspirational opportunities to collaborate and connect with peers.

It is the consistent support of voluntary donations from the community that has allowed MBEF to make the bold decisions to impact the educational path of every student along their educational journey. This collective commitment to education equates to nearly 10% of the District’s annual budget each year and is directed towards specific educator positions and programs that are prioritized by stakeholders:

- Class Size Reduction — Grades 4-12
- Counselors Specializing in Academic and Guidance, Grades 6-12
- Counselors Specializing in College and Career, Grades 9-12
- Library Resource Specialists, Grades TK-8
- MakerSpace Specialists, Grades TK-5
- Music Instructors, Grades K-12
- Physical Education Instructors, Grades 1-5
- Science Lab Instructors, TK-5
- STEAM Pathway Electives, Grades 6-12
- Teachers on Special Assignment in Literacy, Math, and STEAM, Grades TK-12
- VAPA Pathway Electives, Grades 6-12

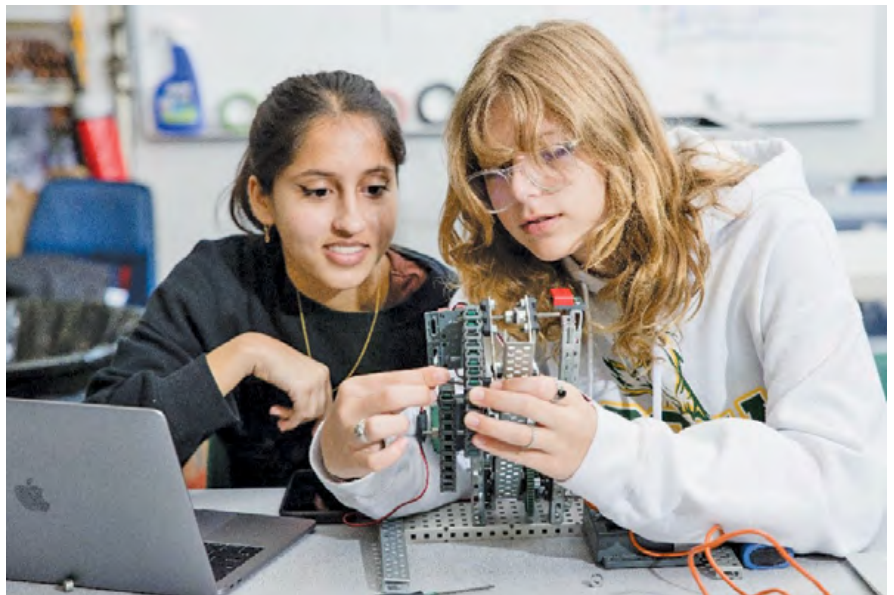
These opportunities enrich the educational experience and help prepare our students with the skills required for success in the 21st century. Skills like curiosity and determination with hands-on science lab experiences, creativity



**Counselors foster a sense of connection on campus and play an essential role in guiding students in planning for college or their next best step. Because of support through MBEF, our counselors have more time to mentor students on time management and organization, connect on individual needs, and monitor academic progress.**

and self-expression through visual and performing arts, confidence and team building with qualified PE teachers, problem-solving and analytical skills with mathematics, collaboration with peers in smaller classes, and self-awareness and goal-setting through counseling support.

These are the opportunities that cultivate a lifelong love of learning and drive MBEF’s vision forward.



**The important foundational concepts learned in STEAM-based classrooms and programs promote strategic critical thinking and creative problem-solving to ensure our students can navigate and engage in a 21st century global society.**

# PTA Council

[www.mbusd.org/PTA](http://www.mbusd.org/PTA)



**Erin Levin**  
President



**Jennifer Gale**  
Executive  
Vice President

## PTA Makes a Difference

Did you know that there are 3,874 PTA members in our seven Manhattan Beach PTAs? MB Council of PTAs thanks everyone who joined the PTA this year; without these volunteers, our programs and projects would not be possible. The Parent-Teacher Association is the

oldest and largest child advocacy association in America. It provides parents with guidance, resources, and expertise and helps them navigate their school experience. The PTA also provides timely information about National and state legislation affecting our schools and children.

Here in Manhattan Beach, the amazing, ongoing partnership of the PTA and MBUSD continues. We are extremely grateful to our volunteers for their time, energy, and passion for our schools. This year, PTA volunteered 75,000 hours on behalf of our schools. Our PTA provides school supplies and technology, capital improvements, academic, social-emotional, and VAPA programming, teacher appreciation opportunities, community support, and cultural and school-wide celebrations. Various PTA parent functions provide a forum for parents to voice their opinions, engage in discussions, and learn about what is happening at our schools. PTAs produce weekly newsletters and social media posts, informing the community of the latest school news and events. PTA is a constant voice for our children and strives to make our schools a better place to learn and grow!





**Heather Interien**  
Executive Director

**Beyond the Classroom**

MBX is proud to support academic, educational, musical, athletic, and co-curricular programs established for and in support of the Manhattan Beach Unified School District and the children that make it thrive. The breadth of support is wide and spans from the

installation of the West Field, campus improvements, a fully accredited summer school, after-school programs hosted at all five elementary schools and the middle school, ten plus summer camps, and the oversight operations of over forty-five Mira Costa High School Booster Clubs.



**New MCHS Pool Scoreboard**



**New MCHS Waller Stadium Scoreboard**

This past year, MBX has facilitated and helped fund the installation of the new Waller Field scoreboard and the Pool Scoreboard/Timer. These two incredible additions to the Mira Costa High School campus have already benefited so many students and will continue to do so for years to come.

At our “This Is Costa Part 2” event in March, families had the opportunity to attend up to three informational break-out sessions to learn about the MBX Foundation Summer School classes, academic clubs, athletics, music, and art programs. Each sports team and arts program had a classroom to answer in-depth questions and allow families to hear from current students, coaches, and advisors. Over 1,200 people attended, and the next “This is Costa” night will be hosted by MBX in Fall 2024.

We are proud to have continued our MBX Foundation Grants Program this year. Over thirty grants have been awarded to Manhattan Beach elementary schools, the Manhattan Beach Middle School, and many Mira Costa High School Booster Clubs. These grants have supported everything from lights in the auditorium to sports equipment and storage sheds.

MBX looks forward to continuing the support of children, coaches, administration, teachers, and advisors within our community.



**Emory Chen, MSW, MA Ed**  
Director  
Youth Services

## Addressing Trends Impacting Youth Mental Health and Substance Use

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) and the Beach Cities Partnership for Youth Coalition continue to increase awareness regarding our health priority of mental health and substance use by engaging stakeholders including youth, families and the Manhattan Beach Unified School District (MBUSD).

In fall 2023, more than 80 people attended a viewing of the documentary, “Screenagers: Under the Influence,” hosted by BCHD in partnership with South Bay Families Connected and MBUSD at Mira Costa High School. The documentary delved into how the tech revolution has reshaped adolescence and its effects on substance use, debunking myths and depicting strategies parents and schools can use to encourage healthy decision-making and supportive home environments.

The Beach Cities Partnership for Youth Coalition also hosted an education forum “What I Wish My Parents Knew: Dangers of Youth Substance Use and Fentanyl” at Manhattan Beach Middle School in spring 2024. The in-person event included a film screening of “Dead on Arrival,” a fentanyl documentary by Dominic Tierno and Christine Wood, followed by a panel discussion featuring young people in recovery from New Life House and Clarity Sober Living. Key takeaways from the event included the importance of open and honest lines of communication between youth and parents, addressing underlying mental health challenges, and the positive influence that trusted adults and peers can have as a source of support.

Adult attendees at these events had the opportunity to take home a free naloxone kit that included two doses of the opioid antagonist medication and an instructional pamphlet with a QR code to the “Administering Naloxone” video. BCHD’s supply of naloxone is from the California Department of Health Care Services’ Naloxone Distribution Project. For more information, visit [bchd.org/opioids](http://bchd.org/opioids).



**Congratulations to our Teachers of the Year 2024!**

**MBUSD**

 <b>Michelle Mangan</b> Meadows Elementary	 <b>Connie Liu</b> Pacific Elementary	 <b>Jeannette Shaw-Bueno</b> Grand View Elementary	 <b>Juliet Smith</b> Pennekamp Elementary	 <b>Danielle Weiss</b> Robinson Elementary
 <b>Stacy Wilder</b> MB Preschool	 <b>Dana Vaccaro</b> Manhattan Beach Middle School	 <b>Lilla Foster</b> Mira Costa High School		



# allcove Beach Cities

now open!

allcove is a place for young people (ages 12-25) to take a moment of pause and access a range of services that include:

- Mental health.
- Physical health.
- Substance use.
- Peer support.
- Family support.
- Supported education and employment.



@allcovebeachcities



Visit [allcove.org/beach-cities](https://allcove.org/beach-cities) for more information.

Tuesday - Friday  
1 - 7 p.m.

Saturday  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

(except during certain holidays)



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MAY 2024 **9**



**Manhattan Beach Unified School District**  
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WE OFFER TK-K AT FIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR, STUDENTS WHO TURN FIVE ON OR BETWEEN **SEPTEMBER 2, 2024 - JUNE 2, 2025**, WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL IN OUR TK PROGRAM.

STUDENTS WHO WILL BE FIVE YEARS OLD ON OR BEFORE **SEPTEMBER 1, 2024**, ARE ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL IN KINDERGARTEN.



**NOW ACCEPTING INTER-DISTRICT PERMITS FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR**

Find more information at [www.mbusd.org/permits/](http://www.mbusd.org/permits/)

*Congratulations!*  
**Mira Costa has 7 National Merit Scholarship Finalists!**






**Congratulations to our 2023-2024 District Teacher of the Year Michelle Mangan!**

**Congratulations to the Class of 2024!**






## The Health Impact of Bullying in Kids

In today's world, 1 in 5 children experience bullying online or in person. As a frequently reported disciplinary problem in schools, it encompasses behaviors such as being the subject of rumors or lies, being made fun of, being called names, insulted, threatened with harm, experiencing physical harm, and social exclusion.

Bullying is characterized by deliberate and persistent behavior aimed at asserting power over others. Categorized as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), it represents potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on a person's development.

Bullying can impair cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development, and increase the risk of various health problems such as depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and substance abuse.

Often, bullying is dismissed as a childhood rite of passage. Children may feel reluctant to tell adults due to feelings of embarrassment, which is why recognizing the early signs of bullying is instrumental in preventing the potential long-term effects on a child's development. Research shows that early and consistent parental involvement and support is a protective factor against bullying and long term consequences.

Signs of bullying parents can look for in children include:

- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide
- Planning to "get back" at those who've wronged them

Caregivers recognizing the impact of bullying is often the first step. Open communication and creating an environment where children's feelings are acknowledged and expressed freely help build resilience and emotional well-being. Further, caregivers should initiate conversations with teachers to discuss concerns regarding a child's well-being.

Addressing bullying requires collaborative efforts between caregivers, educators, and health care professionals. Child psychologists and school counselors can provide interventions suited to a child's well-being.

Want to learn more? Please call (714) 377-6993 or visit [millerchildrens.org/stramski](http://millerchildrens.org/stramski).



**Pablo, Age 6**

### At 11 months, Pablo was fighting for his life.

Today, he's got six candles on his cake.

Failing organs. Eight months in a coma. Fighting for every breath. At 11 months old, this is what Leukemia brought Pablo. The one bright spot, he was at MemorialCare Miller Children's & Women's Hospital where a team of top doctors, nurses, and specialists helped save his life. For over a year in the PICU, our highly-trained staff never stopped caring for Pablo and his family. **Caring is our calling.**

**Learn more at [millerchildrens.org/care](http://millerchildrens.org/care)**



MILLER CHILDREN'S & WOMEN'S HOSPITAL LONG BEACH  
CHERESE MARI LAULHERE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE  
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# Mira Costa High School

1401 Artesia Blvd., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 • 310/318-7337 • [www.miracostahigh.org](http://www.miracostahigh.org)



**Dr. Karina Gerger**  
Principal

## The College & Career Center at MCHS

The Mira Costa High School College & Career Center provides one-on-one college and career counseling meetings for students, exploration of community college options, assistance, and training in Naviance, college, and career search, resources, and information regarding the college admissions process.

The College & Career Center plans events annually. Among those are the College Knowledge Night in the fall, the College Application Case Study event in the spring, and several events and workshops throughout the school year that are intended for students and families of all grade levels. These events provide students and families with current information and allow them to learn more about the college admissions requirements ranging from coursework to testing, and alternative pathways such as career technical education, community college options, the different military branches, or even taking a gap year.

In addition to programming for all grade levels, the College & Career Center hosts over 150 college admission representatives every year. These college visits are a perfect opportunity for students to learn about program updates and learn first-hand about the college campus highlights they are interested in attending!

At the College & Career Center, college and career exploration begins in 9th grade and continues through graduation. We provide guidance and support through individual counseling sessions with students and parents to explore and assist with the college application process. Additionally, each year, the College & Career Counselors meet with 10th-12th graders during their English classes to accomplish grade-level specific goals.

Thank you to our CCC counselors Caryn Ramirez, Ruthie Robles, and Teby Yoder for their commitment to our students.



# Manhattan Beach *Middle School*

1501 N. Redondo Ave., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 • 310/545-4878 • [www.mbmswaves.com](http://www.mbmswaves.com)



**Jennifer Huynh**  
*Principal*

## Interactive Labs Bring Learning to Life

Students in Ms. Viviani's STEM Wheel class have chances to apply their learning in interactive labs. Specifically, this

year, students learned about squid anatomy in a full dissection lab. Through careful preparation and modeling, students could understand how the anatomy of squids function and how they differ from other animals or humans. Labs like these bring learning to life and continue to show how we continue to maximize their academic success and experiences.



# Grand View *Elementary School*

2617 Bell Ave., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 • 310/546-8022 • [www.gvpta.com](http://www.gvpta.com)



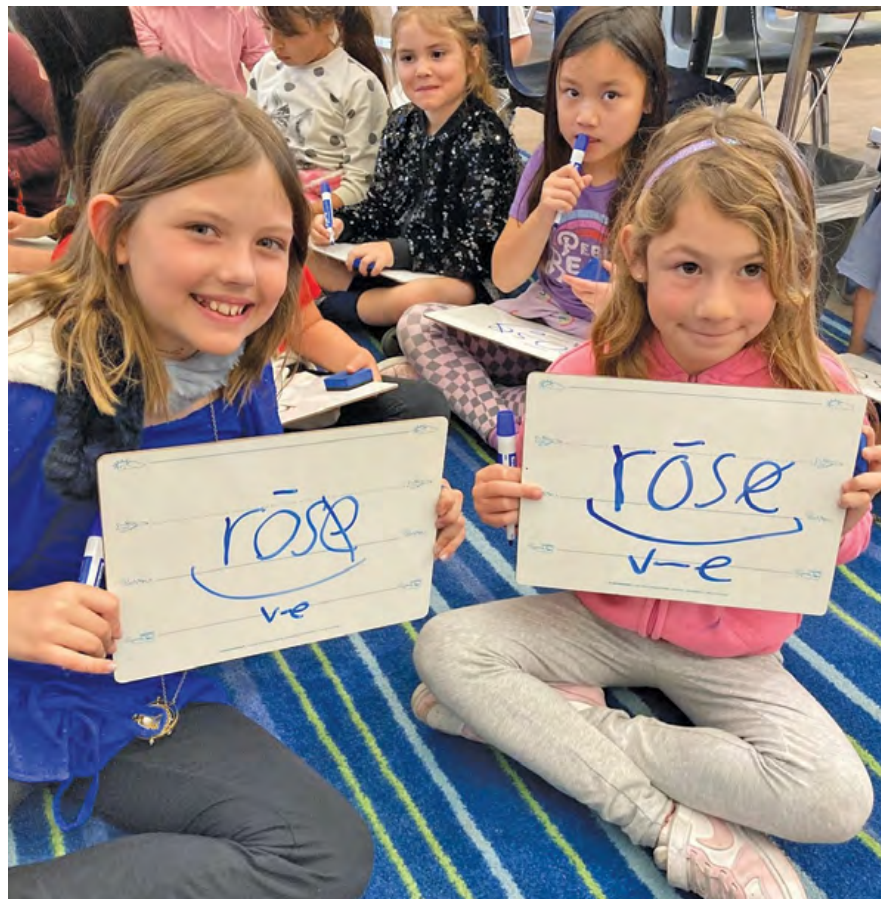
**Tara Grings**  
Principal

## Learning Phonics through Foundations Program

Second grade students have enjoyed learning phonics in engaging ways through the Foundations Program. Multi-sensory lesson components include: sky writing with fingers, tapping out sounds, marking letters and sounds, dictation, using letter manipulatives (magnetic letter tiles), and using whole-body movement.

Students have learned how to identify and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills when decoding multi-syllabic words. Using this program, students segment syllables into sounds (phonemes) and identify word structures such as vowels, consonants, blends, digraphs, and digraph blends.

Each lesson includes five critical components: phonemic awareness and phonics (also referred to as alphabetic), fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The second-grade team teachers are excited to see strong growth in their students' knowledge and mastery of phonics and phonemic awareness concepts. Thank you, MBUSD, for allowing us to pilot this phenomenal program with our students!



# Meadows Elementary School

1200 North Meadows Ave, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 • 310/546-8033 • [meadows.mbusd.org](http://meadows.mbusd.org)



**Michelle Krzmarzick**  
Principal

## No Place for Hate® Program Thrives

Meadows Elementary is thrilled to continue our third year of commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment through our No Place For Hate® (NPFH) committee, a program by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The committee's purpose is to improve our school climate through anti-bias and bullying prevention education. This group of fourth and fifth-grade students, led by

the principal, a parent, and our school librarian, work together to promote respect, acceptance, and kindness in our community. No Place For Hate® schools annually apply to renew their commitment by completing a minimum of three school-wide activities and following with reflection and action by the community.

Through school-wide, discussion-based, and active-learning activities, we examine identities, reflect on biased behavior, and learn new ways to challenge bullying. Our

first project was the introduction of the Peace Pole on our campus. The Peace Pole is an internationally recognized symbol of hope and unity that bears the universal phrase "May Peace Prevail on Earth." There are Peace Poles all around the world, and this year, MBUSD dedicated a Peace Pole to every school. We invited speakers from Mira Costa High School's Model United Nations program to present about promoting anti-bullying. After the dedication, classes took turns hosting the pole, and we now proudly display it in our school's cafeteria and refer to it often.

Our second No Place For Hate® project centered on books in our school library that contained messages of anti-bullying and anti-hate. Our NPFH committee read and reviewed dozens of books, then wrote book reviews that we display in our library. The third and final project was a school-wide assembly by a local martial arts instructor on how to be an upstander.

These activities promote Meadows as a place where every individual feels valued, respected, and supported.



# Pacific Elementary School

1200 Pacific Ave., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 • 310/546-8044 • [www.pacificschool.com](http://www.pacificschool.com)



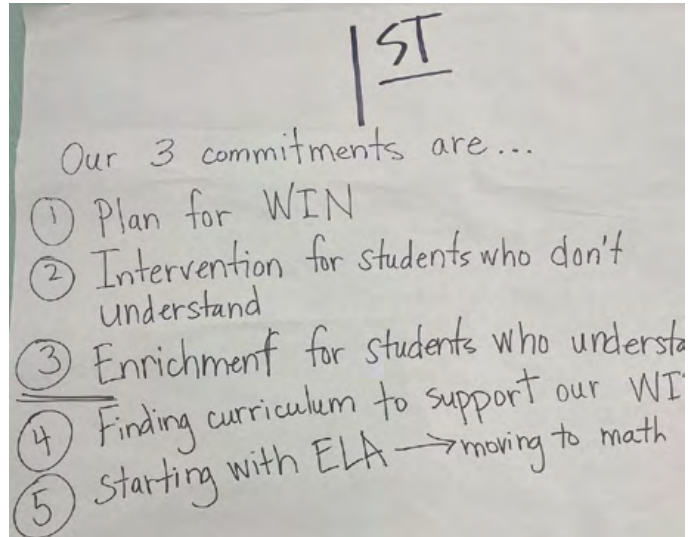
**Amanda Vavao**  
Principal

## Professional Learning Community (PLC)

At Pacific Elementary, our faculty and staff are committed to meeting all students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. We strive to improve student achievement through standards-based instruction that addresses the whole child. For this reason, staff work collaboratively to share best practices, review and analyze data, and plan lessons that target the unique needs of each learner. We accomplish this through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model.

Our teachers collaborate in small teams at least once a week for over an hour during dedicated collaboration time built into our master schedule. Our teams identify essential standards, skills, and behaviors during these meetings. They create common formative assessments, analyze data, and monitor student progress in the essential standards. They create collective commitments and share "what's working" to identify best practices across the grade-level teams for their current students.

Teachers determine who is and is not learning the most essential skills and decide what must be done next to ensure mastery. They set a goal (by date, skill, and measurement) and learn by comparing which practices are most effective at helping students learn. This reflective practice improves teaching effectiveness, enhances



student learning, and builds capacity for our teachers through meaningful collaboration. Our teachers know their learners, allow them to use voice and choice, and offer flexibility in their daily learning opportunities to maximize student interest and academic achievement.

Within the PLC community, there is a collective responsibility for student success, as "ALL students are OUR students," and a commitment to creating and maintaining a climate of care supporting every individual learner on our campus.





# Pennekamp *Elementary School*

110 S. Rowell Ave., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 • 310/798-6223 • [www.pennekampschool.org](http://www.pennekampschool.org)



**Sharon Witzansky**  
*Principal*

## The Importance of Phonological Awareness for Learning How to Read

Phonological awareness is integral to a child's journey to becoming a fluent reader. This term can be thought of as an umbrella and underneath it the precursory skills for reading fluently. The first step to acquiring phonological awareness skills would be at the word level: rhyming, alliteration, and recognizing that sentences are made up of individual words.

Next is the syllable level, when children can verbally hear and separate words into syllables. After that is the onset and rime level, the consonant before the vowel can be sounded out (onset), as well as the vowel and consonants that follow (rime). Finally comes phonetic awareness, which is gaining the ability to blend and segment words into individual phonemes. It cannot be emphasized enough how crucial it is for students to practice phonological awareness.



# Robinson Elementary School

80 S. Morningside Dr., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 • 310/318-5120 • [robinsonelementary.org](http://robinsonelementary.org)



**Jackie O'Sullivan**  
Principal

## Climate of Care at Robinson

We build upon the MBUSD's Climate of Care and Social Emotional Learning programs to develop the skills and characteristics needed to help students enjoy happy and successful lives. Robinson implements Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence's RULER program to contextualize and build students' emotional intelligence within their

experience of the world. RULER is a systemic approach to social and emotional learning and aims to infuse the principles of emotional intelligence, informing how leaders lead, teachers teach, students learn, and families support students.

RULER is an acronym for the five skills of emotional intelligence: Recognizing emotions in oneself and others, Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions, Labeling emotions with a nuanced vocabulary, Expressing emotions in accordance with cultural norms and social context, and Regulating emotions with helpful strategies. The development of these five RULER skills relies on four core tools: the Charter, Mood Meter, Meta-Moment, and Blueprint. These skills and tools have been introduced throughout the year to all stakeholders in the Robinson community.



Teachers are incorporating the RULER throughout their curriculum whenever it fits naturally. For example, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, a fourth-grade novel, follows the story of Karana, a Native American girl who is stranded on an island in the Pacific Ocean. Throughout the novel,

Karana's emotional state undergoes changes. Students in Mrs. Reaper's and Mrs. Weiss's classes cite evidence from the novel to support inferences about Karana's emotional state and how she evolves throughout the novel. Students work in teams to come to agreements using text evidence, and then they plot Karana's emotions on their classroom's *Mood Meter*. Students revisited this process throughout the novel and then compared their own emotions and feelings using the Mood Meter to connect reading comprehension skills to the district and school's goals for social-emotional learning.



# Manhattan Beach *Preschool*

1431 15th St., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 • 310/546-7655 • [mbp.mbusd.org](http://mbp.mbusd.org)



## Manhattan Beach Preschool's Annual Country Western Day: A Celebration of Farm Fun & Learning

Our highly anticipated Annual Country Western Day aligns with our monthly theme, which focuses on farms and farm animals.

On this special day, our school campus

**Shannon Huston**  
*Director,  
Early Learning*

transforms into a lively farmyard. Children rotate through various stations with farm-based games and

activities, from herding sheep to horse racing. Every corner echoes with laughter and learning.

One of the day's highlights is the bustling petting zoo, where children get up close and personal with an array of farm animals. From friendly roosters to fluffy sheep and alpacas, our little ones delight in the chance to interact with these furry friends.

Behind the scenes, our dedicated teachers work tirelessly alongside parent volunteers to ensure the event's success. From meticulous planning to setting up and cleaning up afterward, their commitment shines through, creating a seamless experience for everyone involved.

Country Western Day isn't just a day of fun—it's a culmination of a month-long exploration of the farm theme, where children immerse themselves in the wonders of rural life. This memorable celebration reminds us of the magic that happens when learning and laughter come together to create a truly memorable experience for our students & families.





Pastry • Fresh Baked Bread • Espresso  
Breakfast • Lunch

**kirari west**  
Bake Shop  
*Dedicated Gluten Free Facility*

Our entire inventory of  
food and products are gluten-free.

We are committed in serving crafted pastries to  
people who have gluten allergy and Celiac Disease.



[www.kirariwest.com](http://www.kirariwest.com)  
**(310) 376-5313**  
707 N PCH, Redondo Beach

## Empowering the Future:

### Integrating Artificial Intelligence in K-12 Education to Prepare Students for Tomorrow

*By Jose R. Gonzalez, LACOE's Chief Technology Officer*



**Debra Duardo,**  
**M.S.W., Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent*

LACOE is leading the way to explore the fascinating world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its potential impact on education. This technological wave has the potential to reshape the way educators teach and students learn, and I'm eager to delve into the insights it offers.

AI introduces the possibility of enhancing education by providing educators with new insights and tools to create more efficient and personalized learning experiences. While there may be concerns surrounding AI, integrating it into the educational landscape could be a transformative step in preparing students for a future deeply intertwined with technology.

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) has taken a commendable initiative to empower educators with the knowledge and skills needed to harness the capabilities of AI. Our comprehensive training program,

*See **EMPOWERING THE FUTURE** • Page 21*



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which includes workshops, webinars, and professional development sessions, and presenting at conferences demonstrates a commitment to demystifying AI and providing educators with a balanced perspective on its potential benefits and challenges. The ongoing training sessions offered by LACOE's Instructional Technology Outreach (ITO) team are particularly noteworthy, as they address crucial aspects like ethical considerations and strategies for leveraging AI to enhance student engagement.

LACOE's active participation in influential conferences like the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), and Learning, Innovation and Technology in Education (LITE) further solidifies our dedication to staying at the forefront of educational innovation. LACOE has made a mark by organizing an in-person inaugural AI Symposium, a testament to our commitment to fostering a deeper understanding of AI's role in education. The diverse panel discussions, featuring educators, government officials, administrators, and industry experts, underscore the collaborative effort required to navigate the integration of AI into education successfully.

See EMPOWERING THE FUTURE • Page 22



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**EMPOWERING THE FUTURE • From Page 21**

It's clear that AI should not be viewed as a replacement for educators but as a powerful tool that can amplify its impact. AI's ability to provide insights, identify learning gaps, and personalize instruction has the potential to revolutionize the classroom experience. The emphasis on AI's capacity to enhance student engagement, creativity, and critical thinking aligns with the core values of education.

LACOE's approach of involving all stakeholders – parents, students, teachers, and administrators – in discussions about AI integration is praiseworthy. It reflects an understanding that responsible integration requires a collective effort. Furthermore, the focus on continuous professional development and the development of guidelines for AI usage underscores the importance of a well-informed and cautious approach.

This is an exciting journey to discover all aspects of AI and its benefits and challenges are vital. It will take collaboration between educators, institutions, and technology to shape the future of education. The responsible and thoughtful integration of AI has the potential to create a more dynamic and personalized learning environment for students, and LACOE is eager to provide many perspectives through the journey as educators navigate this transformative landscape.

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As this year is quickly coming to a close I want to thank you for including *School News* among your reading choices. We are always only a click away. We are celebrating 25 years collaborating with school districts and the Manhattan Beach Unified School District *School News* is one of the most often requested by our readers.

Congratulations to the Class of 2024! We wish them the very best as they venture into the workforce or continue on to higher learning and perhaps to teach in this district. Have a fun summer!

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## Parent To Parent



Jodie Lynn

### A Helicopter Parent

**Q.** I have been a helicopter parent for so long that my children, ages seven and nine, are extremely apprehensive of taking any risks in various activities or doing anything where they may get even slightly hurt or disappointed. What have I done and how do I correct it?

**A.** There have been overbearing and overprotective parents for years; don't beat yourself up too badly. It's easy for parents to go overboard when it comes to their kids. However, this can continue into college years and beyond, but it doesn't have to. Your parenting style and the way you view your children will need to change. You'll need to allow them to get used to the idea that they can actually try things on their own. Go ahead and sign them up for things that they are truly interested in and will most likely do well at. A few successes will build their self-confidence and they will perhaps want to do more things that are new and different. It's the mistakes and bumps in life that we all learn from that make us stronger individuals, better able to handle future situations. We have to be allowed to fail.

Jodie Lynn is an award winning, internationally syndicated family/health and education columnist and best selling author. [www.ParentToParent.com](http://www.ParentToParent.com)

As seen on Good Morning America, CBS, KCAL9, NBC, ABC, E!, BBC Worldnews, France24, Hallmark Channel, Telemundo, BuzzFeed, Univision, LA Weekly & more.



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**Dr. Shari Sweetnam**

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The way we choose to spend our time and the activities in which we engage help form our value system. With a wide array of possibilities and opportunities, volunteering is a positive and vastly beneficial way of helping young people develop a strong sense of self.

Volunteering offers benefits spanning from the intellectual and spiritual to the educational and professional. As young people give of themselves and their time, they can learn about being selfless. In a busy world of “pursuit of personal happiness,” too often the intrinsic values of empathy and giving are the lessons that are overlooked. Helping others via a structured volunteer program is a positive and safe way to develop oneself in this regard.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, “The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others.” Teens who experience growth at an early age are likely to continue cultivating positive behavior and friendships.

Motivational Speaker, Founder of *The Brainpower Programs for Schools*, Author, Consultant, Radio Host contact: info@doctorshari.com, twitter: DrShariS, Youtube: Dr. ShariS, LinkedIN: Dr. Shari Sweetnam

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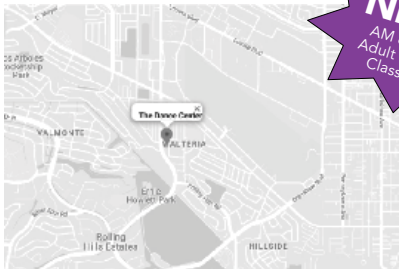
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## Positive Parenting



**Sandy Spurgeon  
McDaniel**

### Are You Disconnected?

This is one of the most difficult times there has ever been to be a parent. The extreme use of media and extended challenges of the pandemic have changed our children; thus, the way they need to be parented. And some needs of children never change.

All children need to feel connected. Can you see the difference between, "You're a good friend!" And "I really needed someone to talk to last night, thanks for being there." Instead of talking at children, talk to them; look into their eyes, be with them and listen. Since children often require constant attention, it is totally appropriate to say, "I want to hear what you have to say, and (cooking) needs my full attention right now. I'm turning the timer for 15 minutes. When you hear it ring, come and I will listen!"

Read to your children every night. Eat dinner together as a family. Play games together. Go on outings together. Don't talk on your cell phone in the car, talk to them. This precious time of being the architect of a child's life is very short. There are no re-runs in the parenting game; connect with your children so they feel valued and appreciated.

Sandy Spurgeon McDaniel is an author, taught school, raised two children, worked as a consultant to schools and has worked with children and families for 52 years. Sandy now lives in Meridian, Idaho. [ParentingSOS.com](http://ParentingSOS.com).

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