

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Monrovia Unified School District



Volume 11, Issue 51

April 2025

Monrovia Elementary Olympics



Torch bearers from our 5 Monrovia Elementary schools ignite the spirit of competition as they kick off the Monrovia Elementary Olympics!

Superintendent



Dr. Paula Hart Rodas
Superintendent

Celebrating Our Progress in Student Attendance & Elementary Olympics Success!

One of our top priorities this school year has been reducing chronic absenteeism, and I'm thrilled to share that we've made tremendous progress. During the [2022-2023 academic year](#), our district's chronic absenteeism rate stood at 26.4%. As of March 2025, we have lowered that rate to 15%—a tremendous achievement that reflects the dedication of our entire school community.

We know that regular attendance is essential to student success. When students are in class consistently, they stay on track academically, build stronger relationships, and gain the confidence and skills they need to thrive. This progress is a testament to the commitment of our teachers, staff, and administrators, who have created welcoming and supportive learning environments, and to the parents and guardians who have reinforced the importance of daily attendance at home.

Thanks to your partnership, our students are taking full advantage of the hands-on lessons, collaborative learning, and individualized support our schools offer each day.

In addition to celebrating academic gains, we're proud to recognize the spirit of teamwork and sportsmanship displayed at the 2025 Monrovia Elementary Olympics! Congratulations to all five elementary schools and the outstanding student-athletes who competed. A special shoutout to Plymouth Elementary for taking home this year's championship title!

We're also deeply grateful to the Monrovia High School students, staff, and community volunteers who helped make this event a huge success. Your energy and enthusiasm made the day unforgettable for our students and families. We're already looking forward to seeing what next year brings!

Thank you, once again, for your continued support and commitment to our students' growth and success. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected, and more vibrant Monrovia Unified community.



Board of Education



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President



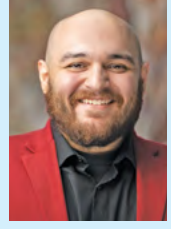
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Michael Ocon
Member

Monrovia Elementary Olympics



Our elementary runners were on fire, showcasing their sportsmanship in a friendly competition!

Leading the Way in Climate Action and Sustainability



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

As Earth Month kicks off, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) is demonstrating what environmental sustainability and climate resiliency mean in practice for education.

Environmental sustainability isn't just about surviving—it's about thriving. LACOE is working toward a regenerative approach that goes beyond minimums, replenishing what is taken from the environment to create better futures for students.

LACOE is developing a comprehensive 5-year Sustainability Action Plan in partnership with the Greater Los Angeles Education Foundation. This strategic roadmap will guide efforts to reduce energy consumption and waste in LACOE-operated schools while also supporting local education agencies with their sustainability goals.

The importance of this work is underscored by student perspectives. LACOE's Student Advisory Council

consistently ranks climate among their top three priorities. Students have expressed that people cannot defend something they're not intimately familiar with, highlighting why environmental education matters.

On May 1st, LACOE will host its 4th Green Schools Symposium at the Natural History Museum, designed to be "inspirational, educational, and actionable" for attendees. Participants will leave with practical knowledge about making their schools greener.

LACOE's green initiatives extend beyond planning to action, with programs including outdoor marine field study, Earth Month listening sessions and Clean Air Day pledges.

While some sustainability work happens behind the scenes—like HVAC upgrades, aerator faucets, and energy-efficient building materials—the impact is significant even when not immediately visible.

Environmental sustainability and education share the same goal: helping students thrive in the future. The work LACOE does today creates the conditions for that success tomorrow.





Calvin J. McKendrick
Principal

Robotics Engineer Nick Haddad Visits Bradoaks Elementary Science Academy with Mars Rover

Last month, our Bobcats experienced the incredible opportunity to learn from one of NASA's brightest minds, Nick Haddad, a robotics engineer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). Haddad is a key member of the team responsible for designing the cutting-edge robots that explore the surface of Mars, including the Perseverance Rover. His presentation took students on an exciting and educational journey into the world of Mars exploration.

During his presentation, Haddad shared the fascinating process of designing a robot capable of surviving on the harsh and unforgiving terrain of Mars. The rover's mission is to gather critical data and even search for signs of ancient life on the Red Planet. However, building a robot that can function in the cold temperatures and unpredictable Martian environment is no easy feat. Haddad explained how engineers at NASA tackle these challenges, ensuring that the rovers can navigate Mars' rocky surface

and operate in conditions that are vastly different from Earth.

One of the highlights of Haddad's presentation was his hands-on demonstration with real components from the Perseverance Rover. Students had the rare chance to see and touch the actual parts that have traveled to Mars, making this an unforgettable experience. Additionally, students got to witness a Mars Rover test model in action, watching it safely driving across them, mimicking the way the real rover explores the Martian landscape!

Mr. Haddad's talk also included a multimedia presentation, featuring photos, PowerPoint slides, and a video to help bring the story of Mars exploration to life. The special assembly was designed to inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers, offering students a rare glimpse into the innovative work that goes into designing robots for one of the most exciting scientific endeavors of our time.

This presentation is part of ongoing efforts to make space exploration accessible and exciting for young minds, sparking curiosity about the possibilities of future missions to Mars and beyond!



Canyon Early Learning Center

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



Angel Arias
Principal

Spring Fling

To kick off the spring season at CELC, we hosted a fun family “Spring Fling,” where parents and families joined us for lunch and created lasting memories together. Students were excited to show their families their favorite spots on the playground, with some demonstrating their physical skills on the play structure and others introducing their friends to their loved ones. It was a fantastic day full of joy and sunshine!

Spring has been a busy but fun time for our lil’ cubs. In early March, we celebrated school spirit with a Pete the Cat theme. Our lil’ cubs had a blast showing off their school spirit by participating in fun activities, such as wearing groovy sunglasses or their favorite shoes. We wrapped up spirit week with a special reading by our district nurse of Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons, and even Ms. Denine brought along her best friend, Pete, to help tell the story. The students were thrilled to receive a book from Pete as a special treat.

Our students had a special assembly where they got to experience Irish dancing. They were thrilled by the tapping of the dancers’ shoes on the hard floor and had the chance to try out some of the dance moves themselves. It was an exciting and engaging experience for everyone!

Before heading into spring break, we hosted our open house event, where families visited the classrooms to see the projects and lessons their lil’ cubs had been working on. Students were proud to show off the plants they’d

been growing, with one classroom even sharing a flower bed of freshly grown strawberries! Monrovia Reads was also present to distribute books for students to enjoy over the break, and Foothill Credit Union shared valuable community resources with our families.

It’s been a wonderful spring so far, filled with learning, community, and plenty of fun!



Canyon Oaks H.S. / Mountain Park

930 Royal Oaks Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-3000 • cohs.monroviaschools.net



Fil Lujan
Principal

Partnership Between Monrovia Community Adult School and Local Alternative Schools Provides Students Job Opportunities

In a remarkable collaboration aimed at improving student outcomes, Monrovia Community Adult School (MCAS) has partnered with Canyon Oaks High School (COHS) and Mountain Park School (MPS) to offer students access to valuable career opportunities. This partnership allows

students from these alternative schools to attend MCAS's Job Fair events, where they can connect with local employers and secure part-time jobs.

The February 5th MCAS Job Fair saw more than 45 employers in attendance, offering students a wide range of job opportunities. Prior to the event, COHS and MPS faculty conducted intensive workshops to prepare students for the fair. These workshops focused on essential job-seeking skills, including creating resumes, writing personal statements, and understanding the interview process. By equipping students with these tools, the faculty ensured they were ready to make a positive impression on potential employers.

The results speak for themselves. At the February Job Fair, eight students from COHS and MPS successfully secured part-time jobs, achieving an impressive 27% success rate. This outcome highlights the effectiveness of the partnership and the dedication of both the schools and the Monrovia Community Adult School in supporting student success.

This collaboration is more than just about securing employment—it's also about building student confidence and self-esteem. By providing real-world work experience, the program helps students develop important life skills and boosts their sense of self-worth.

"We are incredibly grateful to Monrovia Community Adult School for their ongoing support," said Mrs. Jolisa Grimmer, COHS/MPS School Counselor. "Together, we are helping our students realize their potential and take steps toward a successful future."

The partnership between Monrovia Community Adult School, Canyon Oaks High School, and Mountain Park School represents a commitment to student empowerment and success. With continued support, these students are well on their way to a bright and promising future.



Clifton Middle School

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



Ashley Leone
Interim Principal

Commitment to Academic Success

As Spring rolls around, the Clifton Middle School Cubs continue to demonstrate their commitment to achieving academic success and growth. Clifton's staff contributes to developing well-rounded and intelligent young people, those of which will serve as role models and shining stars throughout our community.

Our most recent Open House was an excellent opportunity for students, parents, teachers, and community partners to witness the rigorous, interactive, and (most importantly) fun learning environment that is present at Clifton. Displayed throughout our classrooms were spectacular student projects that showcased the experiential learning opportunities provided at Clifton. These projects illustrate how our educators facilitate teaching key standards in practical, real-world contexts. Other highlights of the night included a sample of Food ED's enrichment projects, an AVID college fair, and engaging activities from our award-winning Robotics Team. After Open House, anybody would feel proud to be a part of the Cub Nation!

Our Instrumental Program, once again, had an extremely successful showing at the Southern California School Band and Orchestra festival. Clifton's Band and Orchestra earned a superior rating! It is an honor for their creativity, discipline, and musical skills to be honored at such a prestigious festival. Furthermore, our band director, Mr. Weed, received several compliments about our students' politeness and manners. We are truly proud of our kids! In addition to our musicians, Clifton is also working to develop some of the next A-list actors. This Spring, we have two cannot miss theater performances in our auditorium: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Addams Family*. Thanks to our students' creativity and dedication, our entire community is in for a treat!

Clifton's leadership class continues to outdo themselves by uniting our student body and creating lifelong memories. They started the semester off with an entirely student-run Renaissance Rally to celebrate the students' first semester academic achievements. The energy in the auditorium was electric as students and families filled the seats to honor our Cubs and participate in exciting games and performances. Furthermore, in partnership with the PTSA, they planned the eighth grade dance. The theme was

"Under the Sea," and the entire cafeteria was transformed into the ocean floor. It was truly an incredible night!

Clifton Middle School is looking forward to finishing the school year strong. As always, at Clifton, we are proud of what we can accomplish and we continue to focus on a campus where every Cub is Courteous, Polite, and Respectful!



Mayflower *Elementary*

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



Michele Costarella
Principal

Poetry Month

April is National Poetry month and Mayflower Elementary School is celebrating with multiple school wide activities aimed at encouraging students to read and write more poetry. The celebration launched with a student reading of “Keep a Poem in Your Pocket,” by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers, and a fun-filled activity for all students. Students in TK through fifth grade participated

in creating a paper pocket and filling the pocket with a special poem or two. Proudly wearing their pockets all day, students eagerly shared their pocketed poems with each other. We are excited and look forward to a new activity each week this month. A large poetry banner will proudly be hung at Open House, comprised of poetry flags, displaying a hand written poem by each student. The month long celebration will culminate with classes enjoying “Poetry and Popcorn,” where students recite poetry of all kinds to classmates and enjoy popcorn while they listen.



Monrovia Community Adult School

920 S. Mountain Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-3035 • <https://monroviaadulthoodschool.com>



Monrovia Unified School District Hosts Successful Job Fair with Community Partners

Flint Fertig
Executive Director

On February 5th, Monrovia Community Adult School (MCAS), in collaboration with the City of Monrovia and regional workforce development agencies, hosted

an exciting Job Fair that brought together 45 employers and over 500 eager job seekers. This event, which was held on the MCAS campus, marked the 8th Job Fair organized by MCAS in the past 18 months. Some of these have been smaller Job Fairs that catered specifically to regional healthcare providers to help MCAS and partner adult schools in healthcare program graduates earn employment. Throughout this time, nearly 2,200 job seekers have connected with more than 125 local businesses, with over 260 individuals successfully landing new jobs.

The Job Fair was a powerful example of the community coming together to support workforce development. In addition to MCAS, key partners included the East San Gabriel Valley America's Job Center of California (ESGV AJCC) and the California Employment Development Department (EDD), all of whom work tirelessly to connect individuals with employment opportunities.



The event offered job seekers a chance to meet with hiring employers, learn about various career paths, and receive valuable guidance on improving their job search skills. Job seekers who applied for at least three jobs also received a free lunch from In-N-Out because of the City's generosity.

Monrovia City Councilmember Larry Spicer, a strong advocate for regional workforce development, attended the event and shared his vision for further collaboration.

"I'd like to see MCAS as an Affiliate American Job Center, and I'd like to see the county, MCAS, and the Monrovia Chamber of Commerce all working together to help Monrovians find good jobs in Monrovia," Spicer said. His commitment to expanding access to workforce resources has helped ensure that events like the Job Fair continue to be a success.

This partnership-driven initiative highlights the importance of community collaboration in addressing local employment challenges. By bringing together businesses, job seekers, and workforce agencies, the Job Fair plays a crucial role in fostering economic growth and creating new opportunities for residents of Monrovia and surrounding communities.

MCAS remains committed to supporting job seekers and fostering regional workforce development. MCAS has another massive Job Fair planned for May 13th and we encourage employers and job seekers to attend. The school and its partners look forward to continuing to serve the community and helping individuals build successful careers.



Monroe *Elementary*

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



Richard Morrison
Principal

Monroe Elementary Celebrates Winter with Music, Talent, and Athletic Spirit

Monroe Elementary School joyfully welcomed the winter season with a series of exciting events that brought our students, families, and staff together in celebration of community, creativity, and school spirit.

We kicked off the season with our beloved Winter Program, where students from every grade level took to the stage to spread holiday cheer through festive songs and spirited dances. The performances showcased the incredible enthusiasm and talent of our students, leaving families smiling and proud.

On Friday, February 28th, in collaboration with our fabulous PTA, Monroe hosted the Annual Family Dance. The school cafeteria was completely transformed into a lively dance club, complete with lights and music. The dance floor was buzzing with energy as students and their families danced the night away to popular hits played by a local DJ. It was a night of laughter, movement, and memories shared among our school community.

Another major highlight this season was Monroe's highly anticipated Talent Show, where the stage lit up with dazzling performances by our very own Monroe Lions. From magicians and musicians to dancers, singers, and skits, the variety of acts wowed the crowd and left everyone inspired. A special thank you goes to parent and PTA member Sarah Gallegos, whose dedication and many volunteer hours made the event a great success. The evening also served as the perfect occasion to honor our PTA Founders Day Awardees—Heather Whitaker, Karen DeClue, Dareesa Weir, Sarah Capoccia, Roxanne Ensling, Araceli Briones, Marisol Bermudez, and Heather Valadez—whose tireless support has made a lasting impact on the Monroe community. We are deeply grateful for their service and commitment.



Founders Day Awardees 2025



Talent Show 2025

To wrap up this exciting season, Monroe proudly participated in the annual Monrovia Elementary Olympics (MEOs). Our fourth and fifth grade students represented our school with pride and determination, earning multiple medals across a range of track and field events. The stands were electric with cheers from our school spirit squad and Monroe cheerleaders, who encouraged and supported their peers with enthusiasm. The day also featured engaging games and activities led by the Boys and Girls Club, with a delicious lunch provided by MUSD's Food Service Department. A special thank you to Monroe's coaches and parents, Katey Cabrera and Sonia Luginbuhl for their guidance and dedication which translated into our school's success. We also extend a big thank you to all district departments involved in making the event possible, and we offer our congratulations to Plymouth Elementary School, the 2025 MEO champions!

As we reflect on these wonderful events, we are reminded of what makes Monroe Elementary such a special place—community, creativity, and a shared spirit of joy. Here's to more amazing moments to come!



MEOs 2025

Monrovia High School

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



Adrian Ayala
Principal

Robotics Teams

The Monrovia High School robotics teams just finished another fantastic season, continuing their strong tradition of excellence. MHS has been acclaimed in the Southern California robotics FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) community for over a decade, winning numerous awards each year and hosting every main event. This most recent season saw both the growth of the program and outstanding achievements in an increasingly competitive field.

The season began last spring. The three legacy teams of MHS Robotics—Suit Bots, Kings and Queens, and Team Loki—began fundraising and hosting educational outreach events, such as Kings and Queens' STEM Night. They were joined by a new team, Dead Space, composed mostly of sophomores who decided to strike out on their own and create a bold new plan based on lessons learned during their rookie year. They executed their vision to the fullest extent, and their careful planning paid off. By September's season kickoff, all teams had developed a plan of action for finances, robot design, community outreach, mentorship, and sponsorship. They also recruited new MHS students to join the rookie team, Spectrum, and began teaching them how to build robots and understand the rules.



Teams Dead Space and Kings and Queens posing with their awards at the Wildcard Tournament at Notre Dame High School.
Eric Traeger, Jackson Night, Rowan Dorsey, Tiffany Lona, Samantha Zurita, Cai Scheidler, Ruby Chenault, Bethany Tate, Troy Garcia, Skyler Tran, Riley Rondaris, Emmanuel Gonzalez, Olivia Tang, Cosette Menard, Mira Chen, Ariel Chen, Ashley Ta, Brian Regencia

All five MHS teams competed in league meets throughout the fall, refining their robots and strategies from meet to meet. Each year, FTC unveils a new game with a unique set of objectives. The students worked collaboratively with randomly assigned alliance teams to win matches—an area in which MHS teams excel due to their gracious and professional approach to competition.

All teams performed exceptionally well at the February InterLeague Tournament. Two teams were promoted to a new Wildcard Tournament, introduced this year to accommodate the growing number of teams in the region. There, they garnered the top two awards: Kings and Queens won the 1st Place Inspire Award, and Dead Space won the 1st Place Think Award. This launched them into the Regional Championships, where they competed against the top 42 SoCal teams. Their strong performances ranked them 24th and 21st, respectively.

All students expressed pride in their hard work over the past year. Reflecting on the season, Kings and Queens captain Cai Scheidler said, "I am most proud of the fact that the robot with the mechanisms and drivetrain I designed and programmed from scratch made it to Champs as one of the best of SoCal." The goal next year is to make it to the 2026 World Championship.



Kings and Queens captain Cai Scheidler fixing their robot during the Regional Championship.



Team Kings and Queens strategizing during the championship competition.



Members from every MHS robotics team with their robots receiving a donation.



Team Dead Space and Kings and Queens during the SoCal Regional Championship finals.

Plymouth *Elementary*

1300 Boley St., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2400 • plymouth.monroviaschools.net



Jennifer Maljian
Principal

Plymouth Elementary Dragons Makes History with First Win at the Monrovia Elementary Olympic Games

For the first time in school history, Plymouth Elementary School proudly took home the championship title at the annual Monrovia Elementary Olympic Games. The energy was electric, the competition was fierce, and our Plymouth Dragons rose to the occasion in spectacular fashion.

Held at Monrovia High School, the Olympic Games brought together elementary schools from across the district for a full day of athletic events, team spirit, and school pride. Plymouth's 4th and 5th grade student-athletes displayed not only exceptional athleticism, but also tremendous sportsmanship, grit, and teamwork—core values that reflect the very heart of our school community.

From relay races to long jump and basketball, our students gave it their all. Each event was filled with moments of determination and celebration as our athletes pushed themselves and cheered on their teammates. Their

preparation, practice, and perseverance paid off in a big way, leading Plymouth to its first-ever overall victory in the Games.

But this win wasn't just about what happened on the field. Our students were lifted and inspired by the incredible support coming from the stands. Plymouth families, friends, and staff showed up in full force—decked out in school colors, waving signs, and shouting encouragement from the first event to the final awards ceremony. The unity and positive energy of our fans played a huge role in driving our athletes to success. This victory means so much to our school. It's a testament to our students' hard work and their dedication to representing Plymouth with pride and integrity. Watching them compete with heart and support one another was the true win.

The 2025 Monrovia Elementary Olympic Games will be remembered as a landmark moment in Plymouth's history—not just because of the trophy, but because of the way our school community came together to achieve something truly special. Congratulations to our student-athletes, coaches, and supporters for making this dream a reality. Go Dragons!





Amber Green
Principal

A Vibrant Month

March was a vibrant month at Santa Fe Computer Science Magnet School, full of memorable events that brought students, families, staff, and community members together to celebrate learning, character, and connection.

The month kicked off with our first-ever PTA Family Movie Night on March 14th, which was a tremendous success. Families gathered in the gym for a cozy evening of cinema, complete with popcorn and community spirit. The event wasn't just about fun—it also focused on wellness and support. We were proud to welcome several of our community partners in mental health and wellness, who set up resource tables and engaged in meaningful conversations with families about ways to support our students' well-being.

Just over a week later, on March 25th, our campus buzzed with excitement as we hosted our annual Open House. Classrooms were transformed into showcases of student creativity and achievement, with projects on display that highlighted the unique integration of computer science across all subjects. It was an evening filled with pride and purpose, as families explored their students' learning environments and engaged in conversations with teachers and staff. We were especially grateful to the community members and

partners who joined us for the evening, reinforcing the valuable connection between our school and the broader community. The energy and turnout reflected the strong partnerships that support our school's mission every day.

Closing out the month with joy and school spirit, we held our March Cougar Rally on March 27th, celebrating the Cougar Characteristic of Curiosity. With a playful Minion theme, students and staff alike embraced the fun as we recognized those who exemplify curiosity through their learning and leadership. The rally served as a reminder of the importance of asking questions, seeking knowledge, and remaining open to new ideas. These monthly rallies are a cornerstone of our school culture, both encouraging students to embody the values that help them grow and celebrate them not only as learners but as kind and engaged citizens.

As we look ahead to April, we remain energized by the strong sense of community that continues to thrive here at Santa Fe.



Wild Rose School of Creative Arts

232 Jasmine Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016 • 626/471-2500 • wildrose.monroviashools.net



Paige Ramos
Principal

Bear News

On Thursday, March 6, 2025 Wild Rose School of Creative Arts held a ceremony to open a time capsule buried during the 1999-2000 school year. We welcomed staff and students who buried the time capsule 25 years ago!

A quarter of a century ago, students, teachers, and staff gathered together with the hope of leaving behind something special for the future. And we were finally ready to uncover the treasures they left behind for us. We discovered a well preserved 5 gallon bucket buried under the cement lid that had been sealed extremely well. Our custodians Ms. Angela and Mr. Robert were challenged with opening the capsule and it was not any easy feat! Once opened we discovered that the items had been thoughtfully placed within zip lock bags to keep them protected and well preserved. Within the bags we found floppy disks, Pokémon cards, Beanie Babies, artwork, letters, newspaper clippings, and so much more.



Many students and staff members gathered which ended up feeling more like a small reunion. Mrs. Lahti, retired principal from Wild Rose joined us and provided a little history about the school during that time as it was under construction. Superintendent Dr. Hart Rodas joined

us to share a few words about the excited behind planning the event as well as Board members Daniel Gomez Tagle and Michael Ocon who were also in attendance for the special event.

The items remained on display in the front office for the week following the event. The next step is to decide what treasures will be buried next for the future Wild Rose bears to uncover.



Football 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: SchoolNewsKay@gmail.com (Please put Monrovia in the subject line)



Entries must be received by May 30, 2025
 From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.



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|--------------|---------------|
| Clipping | Personal Foul |
| Coach | Possession |
| Conversion | Quarterback |
| Cornerback | Roughing |
| Defense | Safety |
| Field Goal | Scrimmage |
| Flanker | Special Teams |
| Goal Post | Super Bowl |
| Interference | Tackle |
| Kicker | Tailback |
| Linebacker | Touchdown |
| Loss of Down | Yardage |
| Offsides | |

Congratulations to **Alex Pelayo**
 Winner of the November Word Search Contest!



School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

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