

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Monrovia Unified School District



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Welcome Back to School!



Monrovia Unified School District's Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services Dr. Geoffrey Zamarripa joined staff members at Clifton Middle School as they warmly welcomed students back on the first day of school with colorful, uplifting signs and big smiles.

Board of Education



Rob Hammond
President



Maritza Travanti
Vice President



Selene Lockerbie
Clerk



Daniel Gomez Tagle
Member



Michael Ocon
Member

Superintendent



Dr. Paula Hart Rodas
Superintendent

Welcome to the 2025-2026 School Year!

Dear Families and Community Members, I am thrilled to welcome you back for the 2025-2026 school year! Our halls are once again bursting with the excitement of students, educators, and staff, ready to embark on another year of learning and growth. As we roll into a fantastic new school year, I look forward to sharing key updates and information that will keep you informed and engaged with our district's ongoing

efforts to provide the best educational experience for all students.

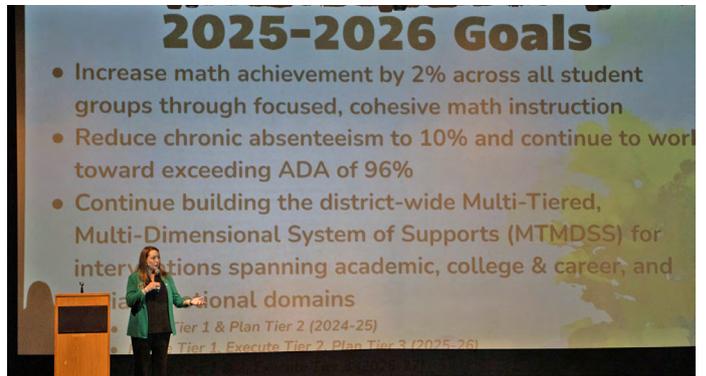
Over the summer, our district's leaders came together for an engaging leadership retreat focused on continuing our work within the strategic plan further driving our district toward our North Star of the MUSD Learner Profile. During this retreat, administrators collaborated intensively around how we can bring to life our district's Mission, Vision, and Focus Areas, and Learning Model in our schools every day for our students. This strategic alignment is crucial as we strive to meet the needs of every learner in the district and prepare them for a successful future. The leadership team also participated in partnership with Monrovia Community Adult School's Empty Bowls Project by crafting ceramic bowls to be sold at a fundraiser to help people with food insecurities. The team also donated over \$450 worth of food to a local food bank as part of the project.

The school year officially began with our district-wide Welcome Back Assembly entitled "Keep Growing", a celebration filled with energy and enthusiasm and focused on continuing to build a bright future for the students and community of Monrovia. Students showcased their talents through captivating performances, and we celebrated our longevity employees with years of service recognitions for tireless efforts in making Monrovia Unified a great place to work and learn. I am also proud to share that Canyon Early Learning Center Elementary earned the Spirit Award for their incredible school spirit and dedication during the Welcome Back Assembly event. Most notably, we



recognized and celebrated the academic achievement gains of 2.5% in Math and 1% in ELA that our students realized during the 2024-25 school year. These improvements were made by the collective efforts of our teachers, staff, students, and parents across the district working in partnership.

Looking ahead, my goals for the 2025-2026 school year include a focused effort to further increase math achievement across all student groups by 2%, ensuring that every student has the support they need to succeed in this critical area. We are also committed to reducing chronic absenteeism to 10%, as regular attendance is vital to academic success. Finally, we are continuing our work toward building a district-wide Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domian System of Supports (MTMDSS) to provide targeted interventions that meet the diverse needs of our students in three key areas - academic, social/emotional, and college and career.



Finally, I want to thank all the parents, guardians, and students who attended our recent Back-to-School Nights across the district. The turnout was truly impressive, and it was inspiring to see so many families engaging with teachers and staff, learning about the curriculum, and getting a firsthand look at the classrooms where your children will be learning and growing this year. These events are crucial in building strong partnerships between home and school, and the positive energy from those evenings has set a fantastic tone for the year ahead.

Together, I believe we can make this school year one of the best yet filled with opportunities for every student to thrive. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in our shared mission to inspire and empower our learners.



Bradoaks Elementary Science Academy

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



Calvin J. McKendrick
Principal

Bradoaks Elementary Hosts Informational Event with District Leaders on Campus Restoration

Bradoaks Elementary Science Academy recently held a special edition of “Cookies with the Principal,” welcoming families and several Monrovia Unified School District leaders for an important informational session. Organized by PTA President Mrs. Natalie Yohn, the event provided a valuable opportunity for parents to engage directly with district officials and learn more

about the future of the Bradoaks campus following the January 31, 2024 building fire.

Guests in attendance included Board of Education Vice President Maritza Travanti, Board Member Michael Ocon, Superintendent Dr. Paula Hart Rodas, and Chief Business Officer Dr. Greg Gero. Principal Calvin McKendrick hosted the event, which featured a detailed presentation from Jacob Velorio of School Leaders, who collaborated with Dr. Gero to provide a building repair update.

The presentation outlined the full timeline of events since the fire and highlighted the progress that has been made toward rebuilding. Key next steps include submitting plans to the Department of State Architects (DSA) by

September 12 and presenting the construction contract for Board approval at the September 10 meeting. If approved, construction is expected to begin in fall or winter of 2025.

The targeted completion date for the project is January 2026, with a tentative move-in scheduled for January or February. The project will also include ADA accessibility upgrades during the summer of 2026, ensuring compliance and ease of access for all students and visitors.

Renovations will focus on the ‘J’ building, which will undergo extensive improvements including new casework, flooring, ceilings, and the rebuilding of damaged walls. Doors and windows will be replaced and the roof will be reconstructed. Four HVAC units damaged in the fire will also be replaced. Additionally, restrooms and interior wall surfaces throughout the building will be renovated.

To meet ADA standards, the project will include the addition of accessible pathways from the parking lot to the building, restroom compliance upgrades, and enhanced lighting for improved visibility and safety.

The event was a strong example of Bradoaks’ ongoing commitment to transparency, parent engagement, and creating a safe, modern learning environment. Families appreciated the opportunity to ask questions, share concerns, and learn about the promising path forward for the Bobcat Nation.

Canyon Oaks H.S. / Mountain Park School

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



Fil Lujan
Principal

Welcome Back, Mountain Lions!

We are excited to welcome all of our students and families back for a brand-new school year! As we begin this journey together, we are pleased to share a number of updates and enhancements that have been designed to support student success and create a more engaging educational experience across our alternative school programs.

One of the most significant updates this year is the launch of a new bell schedule at Canyon Oaks High School (COHS). This revised schedule features extended class periods, giving students more time to dive deeply into their lessons, ask questions, and engage in thoughtful discussions. These longer periods also give teachers more flexibility to implement creative and comprehensive instructional strategies that will enrich classroom learning.

In addition to the bell schedule changes, we’re excited to announce the establishment of an America’s Job Center of California affiliate office right next door at the

Monrovia Community Adult School (MCAS). Through a strong partnership with MCAS, the City of Monrovia, and the Monrovia Unified School District, we are now offering paid internships for COHS and eligible Mountain Park School students. These after-school opportunities will allow students to gain real-world work experience in local businesses and organizations. Each student intern will complete a minimum of 140 hours of paid work, giving them the chance to develop job skills, earn a paycheck, and build valuable professional connections.

As we move forward into this new academic year, we encourage all students and families to embrace these exciting changes and take full advantage of the opportunities available. Our staff is committed to supporting every student in reaching their full potential in a positive and productive learning environment.

Here’s to a fantastic year ahead! For more information about the COHS bell schedule, MPS appointment windows, or the Tardy Make-Up policy, please contact the main office at (626) 471-3000.

Welcome back—and let’s make this our best year yet!

Canyon Early Learning Center

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



Angel Arias
Principal

CEL C September School News Article

Canyon Early Learning Center joyfully opened its doors for the 2025–2026 school year with a very special start for our families. We began with a Parent Orientation and workshop where families were welcomed to learn all about our CELC policies, procedures, and the heart of our school—our mission and vision.

Parents also had the chance to hear directly from staff about the exciting curriculum that their children will be using this year, a program designed to introduce our little Cubs to colors, numbers, shapes, and letters in fun and engaging ways. Parents were not only participants but active learners, discovering how CELC will partner with them through various family engagement opportunities throughout the year.

Our very first family engagement event, the Grandparents Picnic, was a heartwarming celebration. Grandparents joined their grandchildren on campus and took part in hands-on activities such as playdough fun, story time, and creating artwork together—treasures that could be taken home as lasting keepsakes. Afterward, grandparents and grandchildren enjoyed a picnic lunch, choosing to eat in classrooms or under the shade of our beautiful campus. It was a special time for families to share laughter, learning, and love, creating memories that will surely be cherished for years to come.

The first official day of school on August 14th was full of energy and excitement. Families were invited to walk alongside their students, exploring their classrooms during a guided tour from teachers. During these tours, teachers shared more about the learning journey each child will take this year, offering parents insight into classroom routines and expectations. Our little Cubs were eager to discover their new spaces, meet their teachers, and start making new friends. Smiles, laughter, and even a few proud tears filled the air. Families also captured these special moments with photos by the “My First Day of Preschool” sign, making the day extra memorable. The CELC staff were just as enthusiastic to meet the new students and families as the children were to begin this exciting chapter—it was truly a successful and joyful first day.

It has been a CUBTASTIC start to the school year, filled with learning, laughter, and community connection. We are so proud of the way our students have jumped into this new adventure, and we are excited to see all the growth, fun, and special moments the rest of the year will bring at Canyon Early Learning Center!



Clifton Middle School

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



Ashley Leone
Principal

Off to an Inspiring Start

Clifton Middle School's staff and students have hit the ground running with the start of the 2025 – 2026 school year. Clifton's staff was excited to welcome our 7th and 8th graders back to school. With engaging lessons already underway, new programs taking shape, and a strong sense of school spirit, this school year is off to an inspiring start.

This school year Clifton will be using the Arts and Music in Schools Funding to bring new opportunities for students within the realm of the Arts. We will have after school clubs such as The Cricut Club, as well as Design and Discovery Club. Through a partnership between Monrovia USD and Center Stage, there will also be Performing Arts opportunities to provide a variety of art outlets to our students. During the school day, Clifton continues to offer Music, Drama, and Art as electives. These programs foster creativity and innovation while building confidence and self-expression.

Clifton's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Elective Program, is thriving under the leadership of Mrs. Alfieri. She has already arranged for students to attend a University of California,

Los Angeles football game. They also toured Azusa Pacific University and had the opportunity to watch a NCAA volleyball game. The excitement does not stop there, AVID also has a scheduled visit to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). These activities spark enthusiasm for college, motivate students to pursue higher education, and expose them to the wide range of opportunities available after high school.

Clifton Middle School is eager to launch another year of learning, growth, and community. 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 School

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



Caitlin MacDonald
Interim Principal

Mayflower Elementary School Back-to-School Night

Mayflower Elementary School kicked off the 2025-2026 school year with a warm and welcoming Back-to-School Night event on Wednesday, August 20th. Families, students, and staff gathered on the blacktop to begin the evening together as a school community. The event began with a warm welcome from Interim Principal,

Mrs. MacDonald, who shared her excitement for a fantastic year ahead and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve the Mayflower community.

The evening was made even more special with the presence of district leadership and board members who came to show their support for Mayflower. Board President Rob Hammond, and board members Daniel Gomez-Tagle and Michael Ocon joined the event to connect with families and celebrate the start of the new school year. In addition, members of the district's executive cabinet — Superintendent Dr. Paula Hart-Rodas, Dr. Greg Gero, and Dr. Geoff Zamarripa— attended to support Mayflower and share in the excitement of this community gathering.

Following the welcome, the amazing Mayflower teachers and staff were introduced to the families, showcasing the dedicated team that makes the school such a special place. After the introductions, teachers headed to their classrooms to prepare for family visits. Before families went inside, PTA President Joanna Gee addressed the crowd, sharing exciting upcoming events and ways for families to get involved in supporting the school community. In addition, the PTA had a volunteer



booth set up, giving parents the opportunity to stop by, ask questions, and sign up to help with various programs and events throughout the school year.

Families then visited classrooms to meet teachers, explore learning spaces, and gain insight into what their children will experience this year. The evening was filled with energy and excitement as families connected with staff and learned how to play an active role in making the 2025-2026 school year a success at Mayflower Elementary.



Monrovia Community Adult School

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



Flint Fertig
Executive Director

The Grand Opening of the Monrovia AJCC Affiliate Is a Huge Success

On Thursday, August 14, the Monrovia Community Adult School (MCAS) marked a major milestone with the Grand Opening of the Monrovia America's Job Center of California (AJCC) Affiliate. The event brought together a diverse group of community leaders, educators, elected officials, and residents to celebrate the

launch of a vital resource for job seekers, students, and local businesses.

Collocated on the MCAS campus, the new Monrovia AJCC Affiliate is part of the East San Gabriel Valley AJCC (ESGV AJCC) network, under the leadership of the Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). The Monrovia Unified School District (MUSD) Board of Education approved MCAS as an AJCC co-location site on April 16, 2025, recognizing the value it brings to Monrovia's economic and workforce development.

Over 90 guests attended the event, including MUSD Board President Rob Hammond, Vice President Maritza Travanti, Clerk Selene Lockerbie, Superintendent Dr. Paula Hart Rodas, and Assistant Superintendents Dr. Greg Gero and Dr. Vanessa Landesfeind. Monrovia Mayor Becky Shevlin and all four City Council Members, Larry Spicer, Sergio Jimenez, Tamala Kelly, and Edward Belden were also present, reflecting strong city support.

Other attendees included Monrovia City Manager Dylan Feik, Monica Banken, Policy Deputy for County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, and representatives from the offices of U.S. Congressman Gil Cisneros, State Senator Sasha Renee Perez, and State Assemblyman John Harabedian. Key workforce leaders such as Kelly LoBianco, Director of LA County DEO; Jorge Marquez, Chair of the LA County Workforce Development Board; and Dr. Philip Starr, Executive Director of Managed Career Solutions, were also in attendance. Staff from MCAS, LA County DEO, Managed Career Solutions, and community members helped round out the celebration.

The Monrovia AJCC Affiliate offers a wide range of free services to help individuals prepare for and secure meaningful employment. Key programs include:

- Classroom Training Funds, which support individuals in earning licenses or certifications to improve job prospects;
- Work Experience Funds, offering paid internships for Monrovia youth and MUSD students aged 14–24;
- Incumbent Worker Training Funds, to help businesses upskill their current employees;
- Business Support Services, recruitment assistance and funding to help retain skilled workers.

With its strategic location at MCAS and a network of strong community partnerships, the Monrovia AJCC Affiliate is poised to make a lasting impact on local workforce development.



MUSD Board President Rob Hammond and Monrovia City Council Member Larry Spicer cut the ribbon at the Grand Opening of the Monrovia AJCC Affiliate. Dr. Paula Hart Rodas, Ms. Kelly LoBianco, Mr. Flint Fertig, Ms. Maritza Travanti, Ms. Monica Banken, Mr. Rob Hammond, Mr. Jorge Marquez, Ms. Becky Shevlin, Dr. Philip Starr, Mr. John Russell, Dr. Tamala Kelly, Mr. Edward Belden.

Monroe Elementary School

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



Richard Morrison
Principal

Welcoming Students Back for a Bright New School Year

Monroe Elementary buzzed with excitement as we welcomed both returning and new students to the 2025–2026 school year. The start of the year is always a special time, filled with fresh opportunities, new friendships, and the joy of learning. This year, the enthusiasm is even greater as our school community comes together to celebrate not only the return of our Mighty Lions, but also the many improvements made to our campus over the summer.

Throughout the break, Monroe Elementary underwent a series of upgrades designed to create an even better environment for teaching and learning. Classrooms have been refreshed, technology has been updated, and several areas across the school have received enhancements that will benefit both students and staff. These changes reflect our ongoing commitment to providing a safe, engaging, and inspiring place for children to learn and grow.



Teachers welcome students back to school on the first day.



Mrs. Iler, Interventionist, first day of school

Another exciting change at Monroe Elementary is the consolidation of the Spanish Dual Immersion program on our campus. We were thrilled to welcome Dual Immersion students from Wildrose School of Creative Arts, who have joined us to continue their bilingual learning journey. In addition, Monroe—along with the other four elementary schools in our district—has expanded to include sixth grade, providing students with even more opportunities to learn and grow in a supportive environment.

As the year begins, Monroe Elementary is focused on building strong partnerships with families, celebrating student achievements, and nurturing a love of learning. From classroom lessons to extracurricular activities, every opportunity is designed to help students reach their highest potential.

With the energy of a new school year and the excitement of an improved campus, Monroe Elementary is ready to make 2025–2026 a year to remember. To our Mighty Lion families—welcome back! Let's make this the best year yet.

Monrovia High School

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



Dr. Matthew Rainwater
Principal

A Dynamic Start

The new school year is off to a dynamic start at Monrovia High School. Our vision of graduating students who are prepared to succeed in the 21st century and make a positive difference in their lives is rooted in a supportive and inclusive campus culture, and our recent student rally was a powerful example of that spirit.

Just before our first home football game, the entire student body gathered to celebrate our Wildcat pride in our beautiful Event Center. The rally was a high-energy event, with student-athletes, cheerleaders, and the marching band leading the excitement. Students and staff cheered together, showcasing a sense of unity and shared identity. The event was not only about building excitement for the game, but also about reinforcing the strong bonds that connect our students. As the new principal of Monrovia High School, I can already

see that this kind of positive energy and collaboration is a hallmark of our school, fostering an environment where students feel supported and encouraged to thrive.

In addition to our vibrant school spirit, Monrovia High School offers a wide range of programs that contribute to a well-rounded educational experience. From our award-winning MASA (Math and Science Academy) and Humanities Academies to the rigorous coursework in our Early College Program, we provide pathways for all students to pursue their passions and prepare for their future. We are also excited to be reestablishing our Wildcat Theater program and focusing our commitment to CTE (Career Technical Education) pathways, which give students opportunities to develop practical skills and explore careers in fields such as digital design and automotive science. These diverse offerings, combined with a dedicated staff, create an exceptional learning environment where every student has the opportunity to achieve their highest potential.



Monrovia High School students rallied together and displayed their Wildcat pride before the first home football game of the season.

Plymouth Elementary School

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



Jennifer Maljian
Principal

Back-to-School Night

Plymouth Elementary School hosted its annual Back-to-School Night this past week, drawing an impressive turnout of students, families, and community members. The event marked a warm and enthusiastic kickoff to the 2025–2026 academic year, creating a positive and engaging atmosphere for all in attendance.

From the moment doors opened, the school buzzed with excitement as families had the opportunity to explore classrooms, meet teachers, and learn more about the academic and social-emotional support services offered at Plymouth. Teachers welcomed parents and guardians into their learning spaces, sharing classroom expectations, curriculum plans, and upcoming projects. This open dialogue allowed families to gain a clearer understanding of their children's daily routines and academic goals, helping to strengthen the vital home-school connection.

One of the evening's highlights was the opportunity for families to connect with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which set up an engaging and informative booth near the main entrance. PTA representatives shared details about upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and initiatives aimed at enhancing the student experience throughout the year. Parents were encouraged to get involved, and many signed up on the spot to contribute their time and talents to support the school community.

In addition to classroom visits and PTA engagement, families were introduced to a wide range of school support services. Staff from the counseling department, special education team, reading interventionists, and enrichment program coordinators were on hand to answer questions and provide insight into the resources available to students. This comprehensive approach to student success reflects Plymouth Elementary's commitment to meeting the needs of every learner, both academically and emotionally.

Back-to-School Night is one of our favorite traditions because it allows us to come together as a community, build strong relationships, and ensure that every child has the support they need to thrive this year.

As the evening concluded, families left with a clearer understanding of what lies ahead this school year and a renewed sense of connection to the school community. Plymouth Elementary's Back-to-School Night once again proved to be a meaningful and successful event, setting a strong foundation for a collaborative and joyful 2025–2026 school year.



Santa Fe Computer Science Magnet School

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



Michele Costarella
Principal

Renaissance Team Shines as Leaders of School Spirit and Student Success

At Santa Fe Computer Science Magnet School, a powerful group of young student leaders is making a lasting impact on school culture and student life. Known as the Renaissance Leaders, this vibrant team of 30 seventh and eighth grader Cougars is guided by the inspiring leadership of teacher, Mrs. Lisa Herald, who works passionately to help students cultivate a school environment rooted in excellence, honor and Cougar pride.

The Renaissance Group is more than just a leadership team. It's a movement. Focused on building a positive school climate and culture, these students take the lead in celebrating and honoring student achievement, promoting positive attendance, and encouraging academic success across campus. Their work plays a vital role in unifying the school community and making every student feel seen, supported, and motivated.

From organizing spirit weeks and pep rallies to recognizing students for their hard work and dedication, the Renaissance Leaders bring energy and enthusiasm to every corner of campus. Through creative campaigns and student-led initiatives, they help foster a sense of pride and connection that reaches well beyond the classroom.

Looking ahead, the Renaissance Leaders will represent Santa Fe CSMS at the upcoming Renaissance World's Greatest Schools Conference in October, where they will connect with student leaders from across the region, gain new tools for leadership, and return even more equipped to elevate their school community.

Mrs. Herald shared, "These students are passionate about making Santa Fe a place where everyone feels like they belong. Their energy is contagious, and their dedication is truly inspiring."

The Santa Fe community is proud of its Renaissance students and the example they set for peers and future leaders alike. Their commitment to school spirit, student recognition, and academic excellence is a shining example of what happens when students are empowered to lead.



Wild Rose School of Creative Arts

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



Paige Ramos
Principal

Back to School at Wild Rose School of Creative Arts: A Season of New Beginnings

Wild Rose School of Creative Arts is buzzing with energy, creativity, and excitement. The 2025–2026 school year has officially begun, and with it comes a wave of new faces, fresh ideas, and a continued commitment to artistic exploration and academic growth.

As I enter another inspiring year of leadership, the first days of school are truly a special experience. As I stood at the front doors welcoming families on the first day, I can't help but have a great sense of pride. There's just something magical about the first day of school. It's not just about getting back into routine — it's about opening the doors to possibility. We're not just welcoming students; we're welcoming storytellers, artists, creative thinkers, and the leaders of our future.

This year, Wild Rose is thrilled to introduce a record number of new students and new staff to our creative community. From kindergarteners grasping their new backpacks wide-eyed with excitement, to upper-grade students transferring in for the school's renowned arts-integrated curriculum, the campus feels more alive than ever.

Classrooms are already humming with activity — music echoing down the halls, paintbrushes gliding, laser focus on social emotional learning, and students collaborating on imaginative projects that fuse learning with artistic expression. Teachers, both returning and new, are committed to the Wild Rose mission: At Wild Rose School of Creative Arts students are collaborative learners who

utilize a growth mindset to problem solve, think critically, and communicate creatively. We foster a culturally responsive, nurturing, and inclusive community.

We are excited that changes this year will support the expansion of the school's visual and performing arts programs. New faculty members bring expertise in digital media, theater production, and cultural arts, giving students even more avenues to explore their creative voices. Our fall show is *Frozen, Jr.* so mark your calendars and join us November 14th and 15th.

While the arts are a defining feature of Wild Rose, the foundation of the school's success lies in community. Whether you've been here for years or just joined us this fall, you're part of the Wild Rose family. We grow together, we create together, and most importantly — we support each other.

