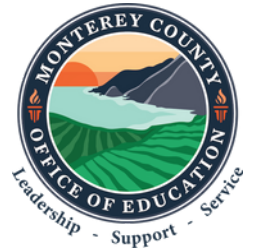




2023-24

Annual Education Report to the Community





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A MESSAGE FROM

Dr. Deneen Guss, Monterey County Superintendent of Schools



Dear Monterey County Residents,

As your Monterey County Superintendent of Schools, I recognize the value of transparency and accountability. I am pleased to present the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) 2023-2024 Annual Education Report to the Community, which highlights the progress, achievements, and challenges our educational community has experienced over the past year. This report reflects MCOE's commitment to ongoing improvement, our dedication to student success, and our focus on enhancing the well-being of our community.

In this report, you'll discover key insights into various facets of our educational programs, including our initiatives, outcomes, and impact. From the communities we serve to the intricacies of school funding, from academic milestones to extracurricular achievements, and from advancements in teaching strategies to our ongoing efforts in community engagement, this document provides a comprehensive look at our educational journey.

MCOE remains deeply committed to delivering the leadership, support, and service excellence required to prepare Monterey County's diverse student population for success. Through innovation, collaboration, and a shared vision for the future, we strive to empower students to become lifelong learners and responsible global citizens. Our success is also inextricably linked to the dedication and support of our community members and partners, parents, students, and staff members. Your involvement, feedback, and partnership have been vital in shaping our initiatives and fostering positive change in our educational system.

I encourage you to explore the contents of this Annual Report, celebrating the incredible work happening in our public schools while reflecting on the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Together, we will continue building a thriving learning environment where every individual has the chance to reach their fullest potential.

Sincerely,

Deneen Guss, Ed.D.,
Monterey County Superintendent of Schools



Dr. Deneen Guss, the County Superintendent of Schools, is elected by Monterey County voters and serves as the chief executive officer of the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE). She oversees all MCOE programs and works to promote collaboration between schools, colleges, universities, government agencies, and community organizations. Her duties include monitoring and approving school district budgets, advocating for education with legislators and the public, and managing all hiring and human resource decisions within MCOE.

Meet our Cabinet



Dr. Ralph Porràs

Deputy Superintendent



Dr. Caryn Lewis

Assistant Superintendent
Educational Services



Elizabeth Arabia

Assistant Superintendent
Special Education



Dr. Ernesto Vela

Assistant Superintendent
Student Services



Dr. Colleen Stanley

Chief Business Official



Leigh Butler

Chief Human
Resources Officer



Adam Gavalla

Chief Technology Officer



Teri Pimentel

Communications and
Public Relations Officer

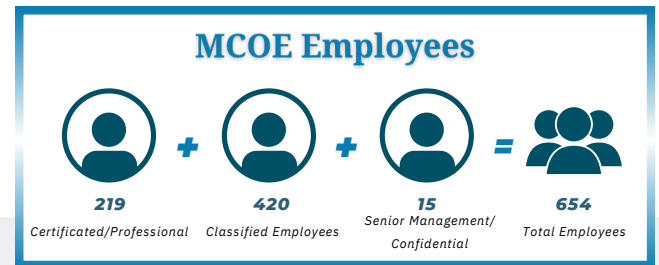
WHAT DOES MCOE DO?

The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) provides leadership, support, and service to approximately 73,661 students and over 11,000 school staff members countywide. The strength of our county's educational system is derived from the vast diversity that can be found in our 135 schools, working to serve all students.

Some of MCOE's Organizational Responsibilities:

- Collaborate with school, industry, and community leaders to address countywide educational issues
- Organize and facilitate professional learning opportunities
- Provide financial oversight for school districts
- Coordinate countywide student and staff safety and emergency preparation programs
- Support school districts with their Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
- Host employment recruitment fairs
- Provide leadership in the area of information systems, computing, and telecommunications
- Process paychecks for school employees throughout the county
- Educate our youngest learners through the Early Learning Program
- Support teachers and administrators as they obtain their clear credentials
- Coordinate and provide services for migrant, foster, and homeless children and youth
- Provide direct instruction to Special Education, Alternative Education, and operates two charter schools.

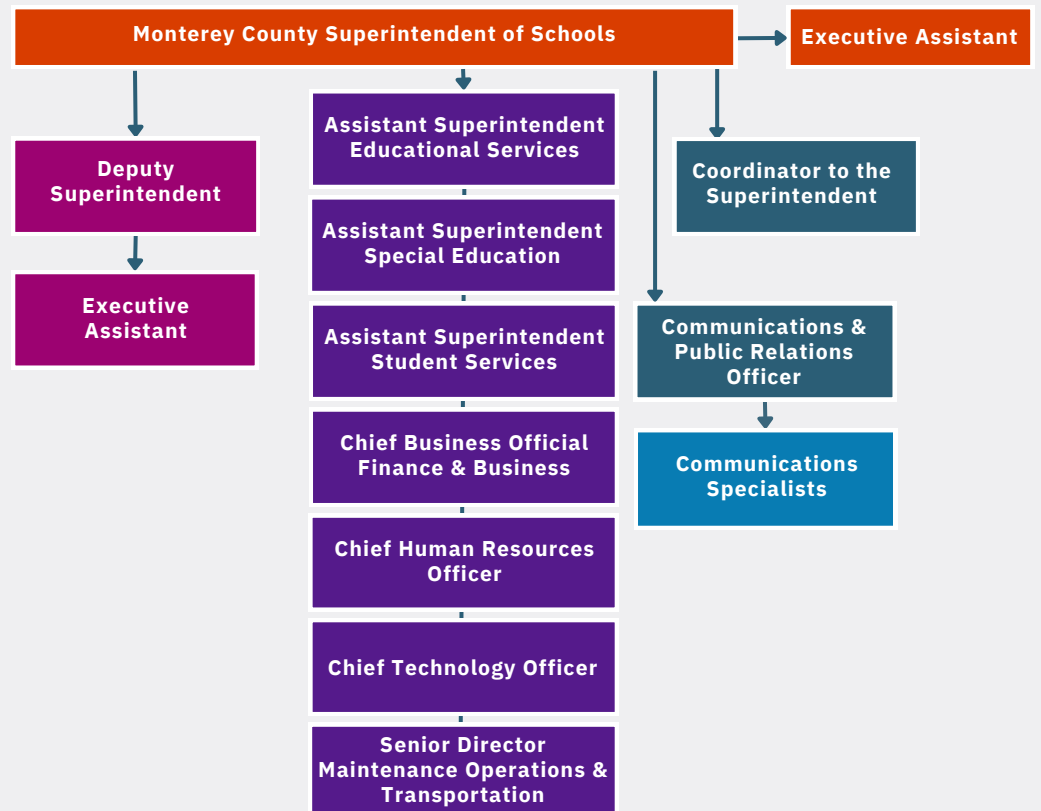
MCOE DIVISIONS & ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



MCOE Divisions



Organizational Chart



MEET OUR COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

1



Annette Yee Steck
Trustee Area 1

2



John McPherson
Trustee Area 2

3



Heather Owen
Vice President
Trustee Area 3

4



Janet Wohlgemuth
President
Trustee Area 4

5



Jaime Fernandez
Trustee Area 5

6



Mary Claypool
Trustee Area 6

7



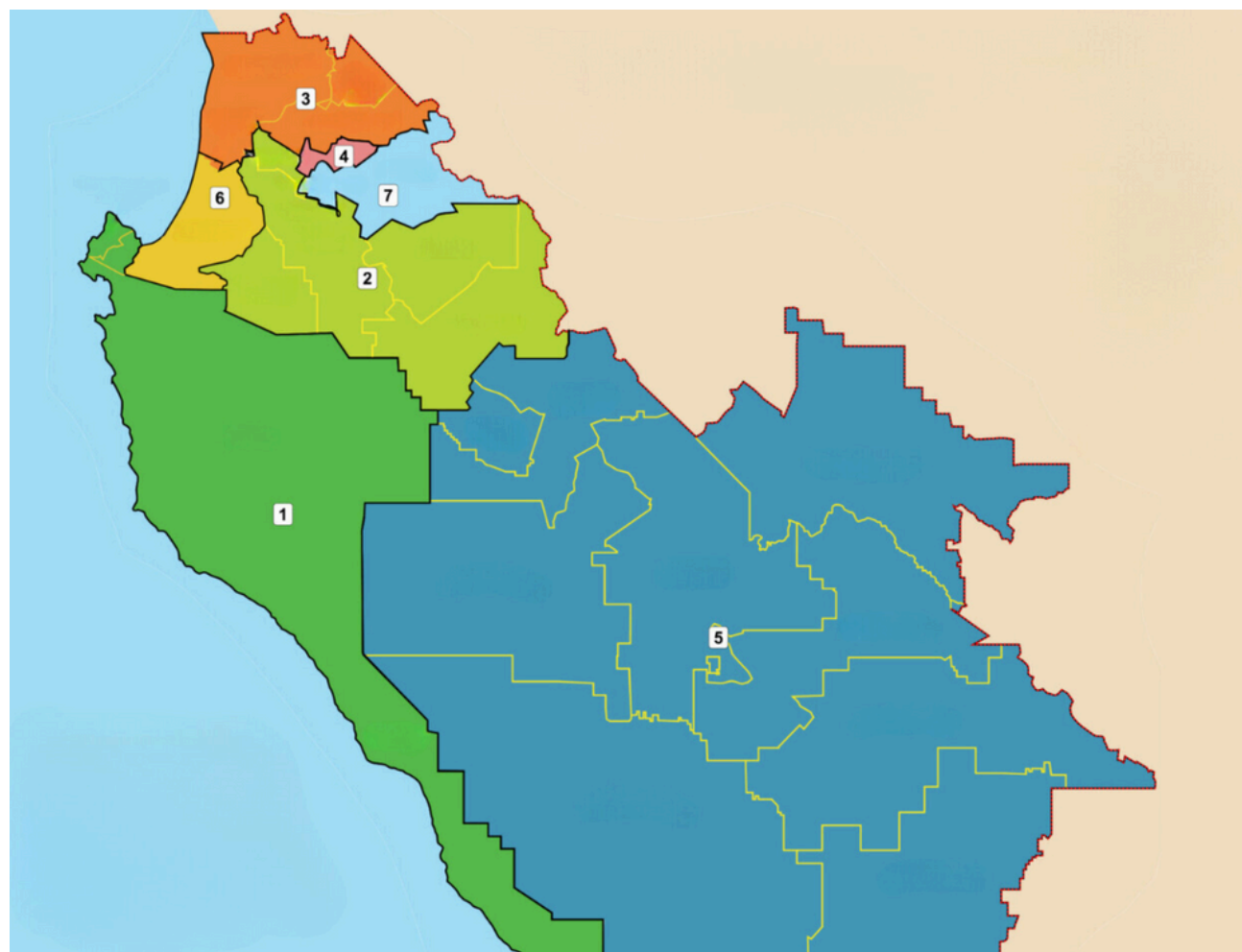
Sandra Ocampo
Trustee Area 7

The Role of the Monterey County Board of Education

The Monterey County Board of Education (County Board) is comprised of seven members who represent individual trustee areas of the county. Each member is elected by the voters of their trustee area and serves a four-year term. The County Board supports and guides the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) in providing leadership and services to Monterey County's 24 school districts.

The primary responsibilities of the County Board include:

- Adopting, evaluating, and updating policies consistent with the law and the County Board's vision and goals
- Collaborating with the County Superintendent of Schools so that the shared vision, goals, and policies of MCOE can be implemented
- Providing community leadership on educational issues and advocating on behalf of students and public education at the local, state, and federal levels
- Adopting the annual budget and reviewing interim financial reports of the County Superintendent of Schools
- Approving the curriculum and maintaining accountability for student learning in schools and programs operated by MCOE
- Conducting hearings on student expulsion appeals and interdistrict transfer appeals
- Providing oversight for any County Board authorized charter school
- Conducting matters of school district organization



ENROLLMENT BY THE NUMBERS

Student Demographics and District Enrollment

District Enrollment 73,661 Total

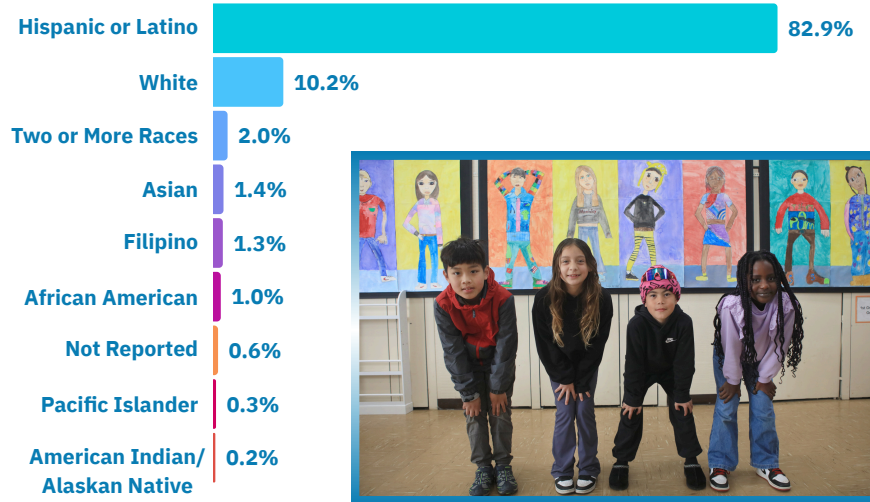
Alisal Union	7,339
Big Sur Unified	18
Bradley Union	39
Carmel Unified	2,159
Chualar Union	262
Gonzales Unified	2,017
Graves Elementary	36
Greenfield Union	3,332
King City Union	2,552
Lagunita Elementary	61
Mission Union	127
Monterey County Office of Education ...	1,845
Monterey Peninsula Unified	9,252
North Monterey County Unified	4,435
Pacific Grove Unified	1,727
Salinas City Elementary	8,206
Salinas Union High	16,225
San Antonio Union	144
San Ardo Union	86
San Lucas Union	78
Santa Rita Union	3,186
Soledad Unified	4,700
S. Monterey County Jt. Union High	2,731
Spreckels Union	888
Washington Union	746

Charter Enrollment 2,070 Total

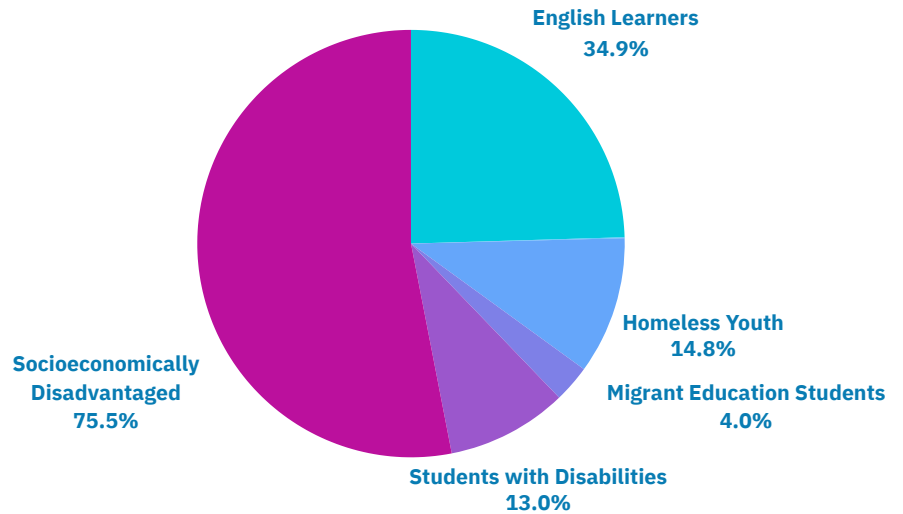
Bay View Academy	501
Big Sur Charter	85
International School of Monterey	424
Learning for Life Charter	128
Monterey Bay Charter	474
Monterey County Home Charter	241
Oasis Charter Public	162
Open Door Charter	55

Source: California Department of Education, DataQuest, 2022-2023

Enrollment by Ethnicity



Enrollment by Subgroup



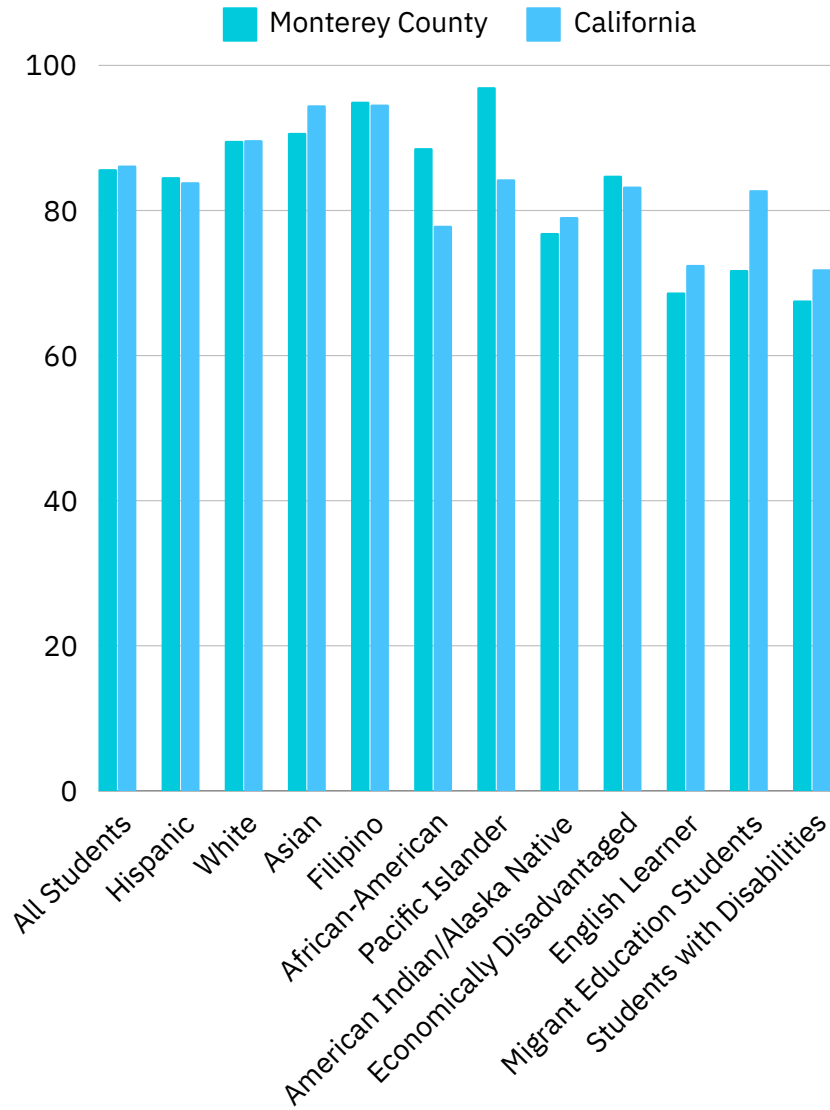
Source: California Department of Education, DataQuest, 2023-2024



GRADUATION RATES

Graduation Rates are a Critical Measure of Student Success

Monterey County Compared to California



Source: 2022-23 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate.
www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesacgr.asp



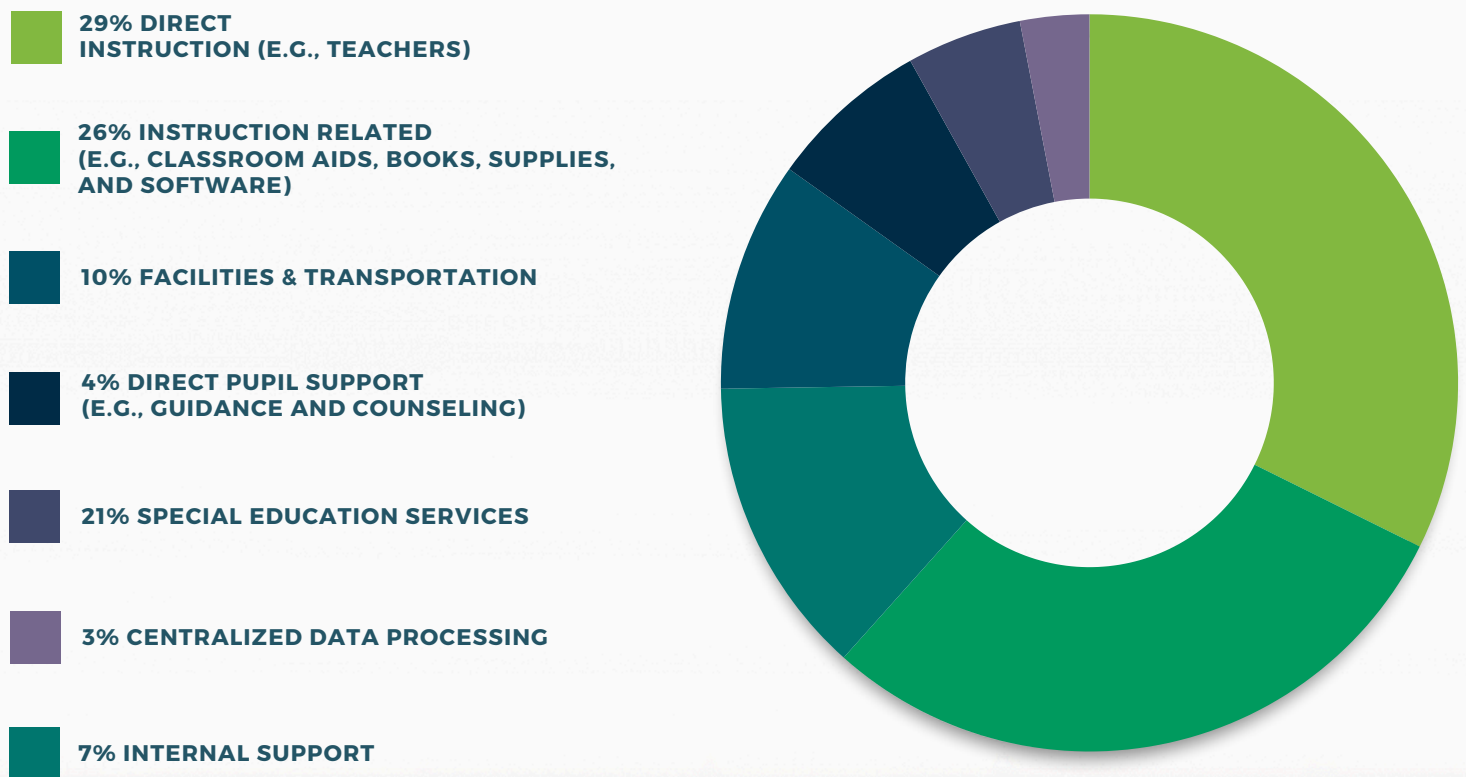
MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION BUDGET

Who the Budget Supports

The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) provides leadership, support and service to 24 public school districts, eight charter schools, and approximately 73,661 students in Monterey County. MCOE serves as an intermediary between the California Department of Education (CDE) and the school districts.

MCOE's wide range of programs and services support professional learning, leadership, and continuous improvement in our County's school districts and schools. MCOE provides direct instruction to special populations of students and offers support to educators and administrators countywide. Business and information technology services are also provided to the 24 school districts, eight charter schools, community colleges, and MCOE departments.

100% of our budget supports students, educators, and districts



Source: Monterey County Office of Education, Finance and Business Department 2022-2023



HOW SCHOOLS ARE FUNDED

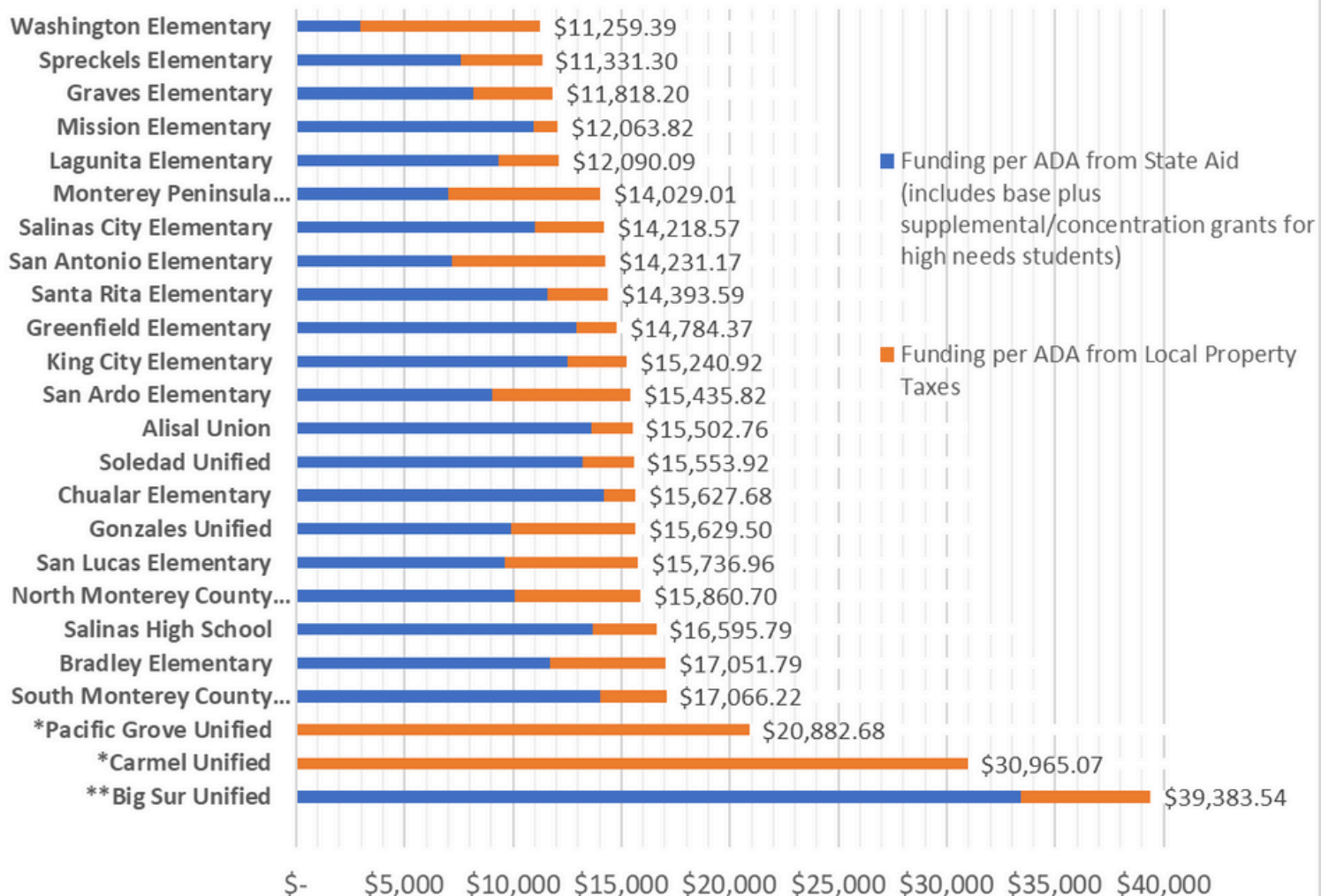
Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) for Monterey County

California public schools are funded through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) with a focus on supplemental funding for high-needs students. The LCFF provides a base funding level connected to each district's average daily attendance (ADA). ADA is the number of student attendance days divided by the number of days in the regular school year. A student attending school every day equals one ADA. LCFF funding is allocated through the Principal Apportionment and is funded through a combination of local property taxes and state funding from the State School Fund and Education Protection Account.

*Some districts, known as “basic aid” or “community funded” districts, are funded entirely through property taxes and receive no general purpose state aid. They also retain any excess property taxes within their district. In Monterey County, two districts are basic aid: Pacific Grove Unified and Carmel Unified.

**Under the LCFF legislation, elementary schools in one-school school districts are required to meet distance requirements (EC Section 42280-42286) in order to qualify for Necessary Small School (NSS) funding. A necessary small high school qualifies for NSS if the district has 50 or fewer pupils per square mile of district territory. Currently only Big Sur Unified is funded as a Necessary Small School.

Funding by LCFF Source and per ADA



SCHOOL SAFETY

Working to Address the Fentanyl Crisis in Monterey County

Leaders Gather for Inaugural Safe and Healthy Schools and Communities Coalition Leadership Breakfast

The inaugural Monterey County Safe and Healthy Schools and Communities Coalition (MCSHSC) Leadership Breakfast was held in February where Monterey County leaders gathered for a morning of information sharing and next steps surrounding the health and safety of students and the community. Highlights from the event included the MCSHSC's achievements, 2024-2025 goals, and recognition of outstanding organization leaders making significant impacts on the health and safety of Monterey County students. Topics of discussion covered the opioid and fentanyl crisis, creating wellness centers in schools, law enforcement's role in education, active shooter and incident command training, and effective threat assessments.



At the Leadership Breakfast, the first-ever Monterey County Safe and Healthy Schools and Communities Coalition Leadership Award was presented to coalition partner Montage Health Prescribe Safe for their outstanding work in providing multi-faceted approaches to the fentanyl crisis and providing resources and support for those affected by addiction. The award was presented to Dr. Reb Close and Dr. Casey Grover. Additionally, the Child Abuse Prevention Council presented their annual Longevity, Commitment, and Service Awards, honoring Natividad Medical Center Child Advocacy Center Dr. Melissa Egge and the Monterey County Human Trafficking Symposium Partner Agencies, which included the Monterey County Board of Education, Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE), Monterey County Department of Social Services, Community Human Services, and the YWCA, for their commitment to addressing the complex challenges of human trafficking.

The MCSHSC is a multi-agency collaborative that includes representatives from education, law enforcement, first responders, behavioral health, child welfare, probation, juvenile justice, and other youth-serving agencies and organizations throughout Monterey County. The coalition's mission is to identify and address the health and safety needs of the county's children and youth by developing and implementing best practices in emergency preparedness, youth mental health, crisis prevention and response, the use of common response protocols, providing training opportunities, and multi-agency collaboration that is supported by a legally sound information-sharing framework.



The Monterey County Office of Education provides a comprehensive array of services and programs that address issues involving and/or related to ensuring our county's schools are safe, healthy, and inclusive places for student learning.

To learn more, visit MCOE's Safe and Healthy Schools webpage at www.montereycoe.org/divisions-services/safe-healthy-schools.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

Providing a whole approach to learning for early development



MCOE Opens New Early Learning STEAM Discovery Academy

The Monterey County Office of Education's (MCOE) Early Learning Program celebrated a significant milestone with the grand opening of the Hartnell STEAM Discovery Academy. The Early Learning STEAM Discovery Academy is located on the Hartnell College Alisal Campus in Salinas and caters to community members and college students with children ages 2 to 5 years old. The heart of the academy's mission is a commitment to foster exploration and innovation through the integration of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM). The academy features three Head Start classrooms and a State preschool inclusion classroom, serving approximately 80 children.

MCOE's Early Learning Program, supported by Head Start and the California State Preschool Program, is dedicated to enriching the lives of children and families across the county. Offering comprehensive services, including child development education, mental health referrals, and access to nutrition and health services, the program serves hundreds of children at 17 sites throughout the county. These services are available at no cost to income-eligible families, including families participating in CalWORKS, working full-time, attending school, or enrolled in job training, ensuring equitable access to high-quality education for all.

Early learning programs lay the foundation for lifelong learning by fostering cognitive, social, and emotional development during a critical period of brain growth. Early exposure to structured educational environments enhances language and literacy skills, numeracy, and problem-solving abilities, setting the stage for future academic success. Additionally, these programs provide essential socialization opportunities, helping young children develop important social skills, emotional resilience, and positive behaviors.



MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM



MONTEREY COUNTY BOARD DEDICATES BUILDING

County Board Honored Harvey Kuffner's Legacy with Dedication of Educational Center

The Monterey County Board of Education recently named a newly purchased facility the Harvey Kuffner Educational Center, paying tribute to the late Harvey Kuffner for his lifelong commitment to enhancing educational opportunities for students and families across Monterey County. This center was established as a hub for professional development and community engagement, continuing Kuffner's legacy in the educational landscape he deeply cherished.

Mr. Kuffner was first elected to the Monterey County Board of Education in 1996, representing Trustee Area One with unwavering dedication for more than 25 years until his passing in 2021. During his tenure, he was re-elected six times, held the position of Board President on three occasions, and was known for championing expanded learning opportunities while prioritizing fiscal responsibility. His philosophy on education and his enduring impact is encapsulated in a quote from Franklin Delano Roosevelt that graces the County Board Agenda: "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can always build our youth for the future."



In January, Mr. Kuffner's family, friends, and colleagues gathered to celebrate the official dedication of the Harvey Kuffner Educational Center, unveiling the building's new signage in a heartfelt ceremony that underscored his lasting influence on the Monterey County educational community.

MONTEREY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

MCSBA Honors Special Kids Connect with Excellence in Education Award

School governance team members from across Monterey County gathered for the annual Monterey County School Boards Association (MCSBA) dinner, where they honored Special Kids Connect with the 2024 Excellence in Education Award. As a far-reaching organization within Monterey County, Special Kids Connect plays a pivotal role in helping families navigate the intricate landscape of services available for children with developmental disabilities and provides a diverse array of programs and services, including parent workshops, resource fairs, and recreational programs.

MCSBA, an organization consisting of all school board members throughout Monterey County, endeavors to promote excellence in schools and promotes the highest levels of achievement for all students by providing education and training programs to assist board members in carrying out their responsibilities and govern more effectively. Since 2007, the MCSBA's Excellence in Education Award has been awarded annually to an individual or organization that has had significant and transformative impacts on students' lives.



NEW FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER OPENS



MCOE Family Resource Center Positively Impacts Community

The Monterey County Office of Education's (MCOE) new Family Resource Center, located at the Salinas Community School in North Salinas, offers a range of resources and services to support students and families, connecting them with essential assistance. Services include food aid, school and hygiene supplies, parenting classes, health services, legal advice, citizenship classes, and referrals to agencies providing more comprehensive support. This past year, the center also hosted public law clinic workshops and fentanyl awareness classes for parents and staff.

This year, in partnership with the Salinas Community School and Family Resource Center, key collaborators included the Monterey County Probation Department, Monterey County Behavioral Health, Door to Hope, Monterey College of Law, Wonderwood Ranch, Food Bank for Monterey County, Bilingual Radio Station KHDC 90.9, Ventana Wilderness, Goodwill, Sun Street Centers, and Partners for Peace, among others.

The Salinas Community School Family Resource Center plays a pivotal role in promoting student success and community well-being. It fosters a welcoming environment that encourages parental involvement and strengthens the school-family relationship, which is vital to student achievement. MCOE remains committed to enhancing collaboration through the Family Resource Center, expanding services, improving educational outcomes, and nurturing a thriving and connected community.



STUDENT SERVICES

Empowering Students and Communities

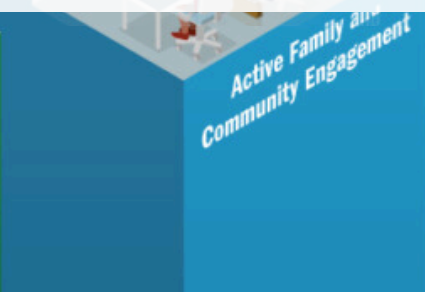
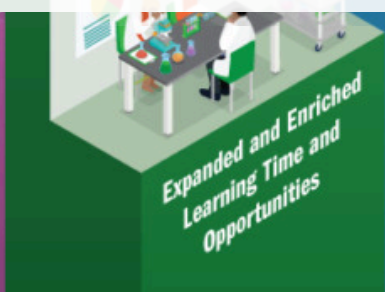
Central Coast Regional Technical Assistance Center (CC R-TAC)

The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) is proud to serve as the Central Coast Regional Technical Assistance Center (CC R-TAC), a significant initiative of the California Community Schools Partnership Program under the California Department of Education. Through this role, MCOE provides essential support and guidance to foster the development and growth of community schools across Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura Counties.

The Monterey County R-TAC team offers targeted technical assistance, working closely with community agencies and educational organizations to advance the Community Schools Strategy. Through collaborative, goal-oriented coaching, the R-TAC team empowers schools and partners by delivering the expertise and resources necessary to build and sustain effective community school models.

Community Schools offer a holistic approach that integrates academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and active community engagement. This equity-driven model follows the Community Schools Framework, structured around four foundational pillars: Integrated Student Supports, Expanded Learning Time and Opportunities, Active Family and Community Engagement, and Collaborative Leadership and Practices.

Beyond its technical assistance role, MCOE embodies these principles by operating its own community school, actively contributing to the mission of educational equity and community-centered school transformation.



Meet the R-TAC Team



Learn more about MCOE's CC R-TAC



College and Career Fair for Students

MCOE's Alternative Education Division, alongside the Monterey County Home Charter School, held a dynamic College and Career Fair for students. The Career Fair hosted over 20 representatives from a diverse range of institutions and organizations, aimed at providing students with valuable insights into various pathways. Students had the opportunity to engage directly with representatives, gaining firsthand knowledge about different career options and educational programs.



This interactive exchange was instrumental in helping students explore their interests and aspirations, as well as understand the requirements and opportunities associated with various professions.

STUDENT SERVICES

Empowering Change

Foster and Homeless Education Summit Bridges Gaps

Over 200 professionals from diverse backgrounds gathered for the Central Coast Foster and Homeless Education Summit for a day of enlightenment and collaboration. The summit, coordinated in partnership with both the Santa Cruz and San Benito County Offices of Education, provided a platform for attendees to delve into crucial topics surrounding the education of homeless and foster students. The event featured a rich array of workshops and breakout sessions designed to equip professionals with the necessary tools and insights to better support vulnerable at-risk youth. Each session offered valuable insights and covered a spectrum of pertinent issues, from educational barriers to holistic support systems.



The Summit's Keynote Speaker Kevon Lee, an esteemed author, public speaker, and community advocate, stimulated discussions with his own experiences in foster care. Lee's empowering speech underscored the urgency of collective action in addressing the unique challenges faced by foster and homeless youth, emphasizing the power of education as a catalyst for change. The education summit also featured a young adult who gave a firsthand glimpse into the experiences and aspirations of foster and homeless youth.

Amidst the wealth of knowledge shared and the formed connections, the summit served as a channel for renewed dedication to the well-being and success of vulnerable youth across the community.

Learn more about MCOE's Student Services at www.montereycoe.org/divisions-services/student-services.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING SYMPOSIUM

Combating the Human Trafficking Crisis in Monterey County Through Awareness and Education

The Monterey County Office of Education's (MCOE) 7th Annual Human Trafficking Symposium was held in May at Monterey Peninsula College, with the goal of raising awareness and educating the community about the risks and illegal practices associated with human trafficking. MCOE collaborated with key partners, including Rising Worldwide, Set Free Monterey Bay, Monterey County Rape Crisis Center, Community Human Services, the Coalition to End Human Trafficking, Monterey County Department of Social Services, and the YWCA, to provide vital education for students, families, and community members. Additionally, the Rotary Clubs of Monterey County united to raise funds and generously prepared and served breakfast and lunch to the participants.

This year's symposium featured a compelling keynote address from Jesse Leon, a Social Impact Consultant, Certified Diversity Coach, and author of "I'm Not Broken: A Memoir" and "No Estoy Roto: Una Memoria." The event also offered breakout sessions, resource tables, and a powerful survivor panel. Presenters shared critical information, personal survival stories, and resources to help attendees better understand the complex issues surrounding human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children in Monterey County.

MCOE's Human Trafficking Symposium was initiated after a County Board of Education board member attended a workshop highlighting the prevalence of human trafficking, that included Monterey County as a hotspot due to its high percentage of immigrants, numerous trucking and agricultural businesses, and gang-infused communities.

The average age of a child trafficked for sex is between 12 and 15. Traffickers often use social media, gaming, and dating apps to find victims. In 2020, the Polaris Human Trafficking Hotline reported a 125% increase in recruitment through Facebook and a 95% increase through Instagram.

MCOE's Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program and Homeless Children and Youth Services Program serve our County's most vulnerable children and youth who have the potential to be targeted and exploited. These MCOE programs work closely with agencies and community-based organizations to help make school district personnel, as well as youth, aware of the realities of human trafficking and to support victims of this tragic crime.



SPEECH & DEBATE TOURNAMENT

MCOE's Migrant Education Program Hosts 13th Annual Regional Speech and Debate Tournament

The Monterey County Office of Education's (MCOE) Migrant Education Program, Region XVI, held its 13th Annual Regional Speech and Debate Tournament, drawing over 250 migrant students from three regions: Pajaro Valley Unified's Migrant Education Region XI, Santa Clara County Office of Education's Migrant Education Region I, and MCOE's own Migrant Education Region XVI.

Competing students from grades 6-12 chose to participate in either Spanish or English, with each preparing extensively by researching assigned topics, drafting written statements, and practicing their speeches. The competition showcased impressive skill and confidence, with each student receiving enthusiastic support from peers and delivering compelling arguments that captivated the judges.

Qualifying winners moved forward to represent their regions at the California Department of Education Migrant Education Speech and Debate State Tournament. This annual event highlights the dedication and talent of migrant students and reinforces MCOE's commitment to providing empowering educational opportunities.



VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (VAPA)

MCOE's Commitment to Arts Education through VAPA and Prop 28

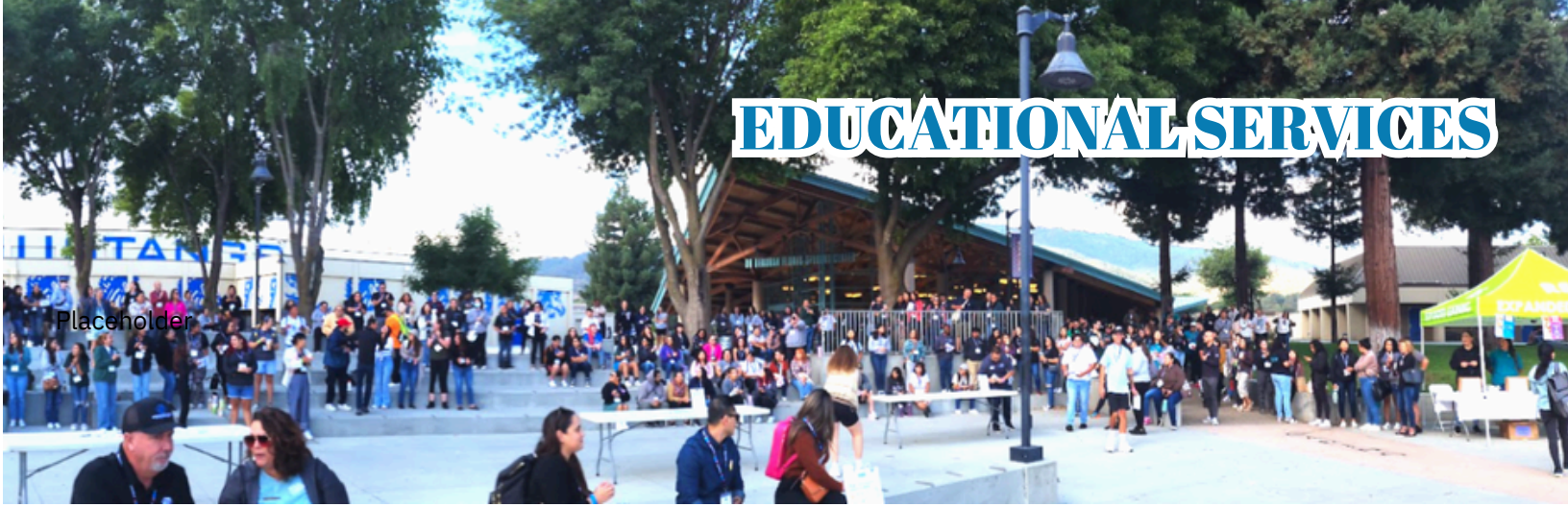
The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) is dedicated to providing students with equitable access to high-quality Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) education, recognizing it as a crucial part of a comprehensive, well-rounded curriculum. MCOE empowers educators to develop engaging content, deliver exceptional instruction, and build resilient arts programs that inspire students.

To support school districts, MCOE provides guidance in implementing VAPA content standards, integrating arts into core subjects, and developing STEAM programs that reach all learners. Services included tailored professional development, leadership assistance with Arts and Music in Schools funding (Proposition 28), and the coordination of the MCOE Arts Convening, a countywide collaborative focused on sharing federal and state updates, enhancing arts education, and strengthening arts-focused instruction and learning across Monterey County.



Proposition 28, a California measure passed in 2022, significantly enhances funding for arts and music education in public schools by requiring the state to annually allocate a portion of its general fund for these programs. This sustained investment helps enrich academic experiences by nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness among students. VAPA programs play a crucial role in the holistic development of students. They contribute not only to academic success but also to personal growth, social skills, and future opportunities, making them an essential component of public education.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES



Placeholder

2023 Region 5 ReV Up Expanded Learning Conference

The 2023 Region 5 ReV Up Expanded Learning Conference, held in September at Gilroy High School, drew an impressive crowd of over 600 participants representing all Region 5 counties: Monterey, Santa Clara, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. The event was a testament to the conference's far-reaching impact within the educational community that support students TK-12 through state and federally funded After School Education & Safety (ASES), Expanded Learning Opportunity Program (ELO-P), and federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), including High School After School Safety & Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs). The event was co-led by Monterey County Office of Education's Educational Services Leadership Systems & Support Team.



ReV Up serves as the dynamic kick-off professional development event to support school district and community-based organization staff who implement before, after school, intersession and summer programming. Under the overarching motto of "lead with love," ReV Up emphasized the importance of fostering positive, supportive, and inclusive learning environments.

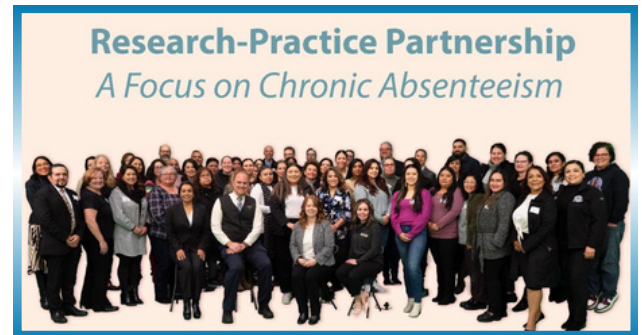
Chronic Absenteeism Showed Improvement

In October, the California Department of Education (CDE) publicly released chronic absenteeism data for the 2022-23 school year, and favorably, Monterey County saw an annual chronic absenteeism rate reduction of 6.5%, from 28.7% to 22.2%. The reduction was more significant for Monterey County schools than it was for California as a whole, which also saw reductions. Overall, Monterey County has the fifteenth lowest rate amongst the 58 counties in California.

Leading to this success, school districts across Monterey County have implemented positive strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism for all students, with an additional focus on students who are experiencing homelessness or have significant barriers that create obstacles to consistent and regular attendance.

Notably, four districts in Monterey County engaged in collaborative action through a Research-Practice Partnership with the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence and have shown larger improvements than the county as a whole and larger improvements than districts in California on average. Working together, district teams engaged in continuous improvement practices to address the persistently high levels of chronic absenteeism.

Chronic Absenteeism is a leading indicator of academic success, including standardized test scores and graduation rates. Students are considered to be chronically absent if they are absent for 10% or more of the full days they were expected to attend school. Attendance is key to school success and MCOE is eager to continue co-designing responsive systems that maximize resources to further boost school attendance and student success.



EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Reading is the Foundation for Future Learning

The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) continues to support local educators through Dream Big Monterey: The Science of Reading Academy, completing its second year. The academy equips teachers with research-based tools and strategies to enhance literacy instruction for students aged 4-8. Co-designed with state and local literacy experts, the academy leverages neuroscience research to prioritize key reading skills such as phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. By helping teachers understand the cognitive processes behind reading, the program enables teachers to tailor instruction to meet the specific needs of their students. Thanks to a generous sponsorship from Taylor Farms, providing \$1,000 per teacher, the academy continues to offer high-quality resources and professional development to educators throughout the county.



CalMCSCS Grant Boosts Computer Science Learning



The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) was awarded as a co-recipient of the California Mathematics, Science and Computer Science (Cal MCSCS) Professional Learning Grant and assumed the lead of the Computer Science Steering Committee and Communities of Practice. This past year, MCOE led Cal MCSCS professional development opportunities for educators, organizing comprehensive training workshops designed to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement collaborative, active learning, and multimodal systems in their classrooms. The workshops covered a range of topics, including the latest educational technologies, effective strategies for fostering teamwork and active engagement, and methods for integrating various forms of media to enhance learning.

Cal MCSCS is an innovative approach that enhances teaching and learning experiences in computer science. It presents information through various forms of media and technology, such as videos, interactive software, simulations, and virtual labs, and integrates these strategies to teach programming, algorithms, data structures, software engineering, and other core topics. By providing ongoing support and resources, MCOE strives to ensure that educators are well-prepared to create dynamic, student-centered learning environments. This continuous professional growth not only enhances teachers' instructional practices but also significantly improves student outcomes in computer science education.

CENTRAL COAST MOBILE FAB LAB

Sparking Creativity and STEAM Skills

The Central Coast Mobile Fab Lab in Monterey County is an innovative initiative that brings hands-on learning experiences directly to students and communities. This mobile fabrication laboratory, or Fab Lab, serves as a cutting-edge educational resource, equipped with advanced tools and technologies such as 3D printers, laser cutters, and computer-aided design software. By bringing these resources to schools and neighborhoods, the Fab Lab fosters creativity, innovation, and Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) skills among students of all ages. It provides opportunities for experiential learning, problem-solving, and collaboration, preparing students for success in the modern workforce. Additionally, the Fab Lab promotes equity by ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds have access to high-quality STEAM education and enrichment experiences. Overall, the Central Coast Mobile Fab Lab in Monterey County is a dynamic platform for inspiring the next generation of innovators and empowering communities through education and technology.

Monterey County Office of Education sends a special thank you to Chevron for supporting this interactive space for kids and parents to learn how STEAM are connected to everyday life.

To learn more about the Mobile Fab Lab, visit www.centralcoastmobilefablab.org



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Empowering Students in MCOE's Special Education Division

The Monterey County Office of Education's (MCOE) Special Education Division celebrates their students daily by providing them with various learning opportunities aimed at enhancing real-world life skills. From vocational training to engaging in activities like lacrosse practice during Fitness Day, students benefit from high-quality instruction tailored to their individual needs. In addition to academic learning, teachers and specialists offer a range of support services, including speech therapy, adapted physical education, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, ensuring that every student receives the assistance they require to thrive both academically and personally. Through this comprehensive approach, MCOE's Special Education Division empowers students to reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives beyond the classroom.



Special Education Teachers Received Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment Training to Support Students

A professional development workshop was conducted for special education teachers on enhancing literacy activities for students with Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI). The training provided an in-depth exploration of CVI, currently the leading cause of childhood blindness and low vision, and focused on equipping teachers with strategies to foster accessible and meaningful learning experiences for these students.

Participants engaged in hands-on projects designed to integrate the development of visual skills into functional, everyday contexts, creating opportunities for practical skill application. With CVI, the brain struggles to interpret visual information from the eyes, and teachers play a crucial role in helping bridge this gap. By understanding the unique needs of students with CVI, educators can empower these students to achieve greater academic success and support their journey toward an enriched learning experience.



HONORING CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Monterey County Celebrates School Staff Excellence Across Nine Essential Service Categories



The Classified School Employees of the Year (CSEY) Program honors exemplary staff across nine essential categories that support Monterey County's educational system: Clerical and Administrative Services, Custodial and Maintenance Services, Food and Nutrition Services, Health and Student Services, Paraprofessional Services, Security Services, Skilled Trades Services, and Transportation Services. This prestigious recognition celebrates employees who make outstanding contributions in their fields, enhancing the overall educational environment.

Employees are selected for their excellence in work performance, school and community engagement, leadership and dedication, community support, positive impact on school image, and commitment to going above and beyond in their roles.

MCOE extends its sincere gratitude to Chevron for their generous donation, which allowed for a \$500 cash prize to each awardee and a \$1,000 cash award to the overall Teacher of the Year (TOY). MCOE also thanks the various businesses that sponsored the CSEY and TOY Awards Ceremony. These businesses can be found on page 43 of this report.



2024 Classified School Employees of the Years



CLERICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

ERICA HEREDIA

Soledad Unified School District



HEALTH AND STUDENT SERVICES

CARLOS DIAZ

Monterey Peninsula Unified School District



SKILLED TRADE SERVICES

ALFREDO VALDEZ

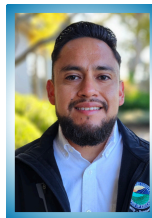
Soledad Unified School District



CUSTODIAL AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES

JOSE ESPINOZA

Santa Rita Union School District



PARAPROFSSIONAL SERVICES

DANIEL CEJA

Monterey County Office of Education



TECHNICAL SERVICES

MICHAEL SILVA

Greenfield Union School District



FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

ALMA CARDENAS

Greenfield Union School District



SECURITY SERVICES

ANGELA BOLANOS

Monterey Peninsula Unified School District



TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

MARIA LUNA

Monterey County Office of Education

HONORING TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Bridgette Berti Named Monterey County's Overall Teacher of the Year

The Teacher of the Year Program celebrates exceptional educators who champion innovation, student achievement, and the transformative rewards of teaching. It honors outstanding educators while inspiring a passion for teaching as a career. Through this program, teachers who effectively implement strategies to boost academic success and reduce achievement gaps across diverse student populations are recognized. Selection criteria include professional experience, commitment to ongoing development, contributions to school and community, philosophy of teaching, and measurable student success.

This year, Bridgette Berti, a dedicated fourth-grade teacher at King City Arts Magnet School in the King City Union School District, was named Elementary School Teacher of the Year, as well as Monterey County's Overall Teacher of the Year. Ms. Berti proudly represented Monterey County as she advanced to the statewide competition for California Teacher of the Year.

With 24 years of teaching experience, Ms. Berti exemplifies a commitment to high-quality education, believing every child deserves access to rigorous, inspiring instruction. Her data-driven approach includes using formative and summative assessments to continually adapt and refine her teaching strategies to meet the unique needs of her students. Known for setting high academic standards, Ms. Berti motivates students to challenge themselves and grow as learners. Beyond the classroom, she is a leader and advocate, founding her school's Parent Teacher Organization, serving as the Student Council Advisor, and overseeing the Student Study Team. Ms. Berti finds her greatest fulfillment in the classroom, where she is deeply dedicated to making a difference in her students' lives every day.



BRIDGETTE BERTI

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER
King City Union School District



Monterey County Teachers of the Year by Category

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER



BRIDGETTE BERTI
King City
Union School District

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER



CHRISTOPHER ANDREW
King City
Union School District

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER



MINAKO KAMIMURA
Salinas Union
High School District

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER



GREG ALLEN
North Monterey County
Unified School District

HUMAN RESOURCES



MCOE Years of Service Awards

The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) honors its employees annually for their years of service. Employees are honored beginning at five years of service and every five years following. This year, MCOE introduced a beautiful new service pin for employees to proudly wear as a symbol of their dedication and achievement. These new service pins highlight MCOE's appreciation to its employees for their loyalty, dedication, and hard work, which in turn promotes a culture of respect and value. With over 600 employees, MCOE looks forward to recognizing numerous employees each year.



Years of Service Pins



40 Years



35 Years



30 Years



25 Years



20 Years



15 Years



10 Years



5 Years



Explore the best employment opportunities in education on www.edjoin.org

MCOE Recruitment Fairs

MCOE Recruitment Fairs, led each year by the Human Resources Division, help provide a space for MCOE divisions and school district leaders to meet with potential applicants. Job seekers are able to explore careers of interest based on their education or work experiences and interview on the spot. This collaborative opportunity gives applicants a chance to meet and speak with a variety of potential school district employers, making it convenient to ask questions about positions of interest and the experience needed for career placement. To learn about career opportunities in education, visit edjoin.org.



GOLDEN BELL AND APPLE FOR EXCELLENCE

Awards Honoring Innovation and Excellence

Bob Hoover Academy at MCOE Receives Prestigious Golden Bell Award, while MCOE Receives Apple for Excellence Award

The California School Boards Association (CSBA) honored the Bob Hoover Academy at the Monterey County Office of Education (BHA at MCOE) program with a prestigious Golden Bell Award. As a model of a public-private partnership, BHA at MCOE is a unique educational initiative that helps high school students who have faced academic challenges and obstacles meet graduation requirements and gain Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math-based (STEM) knowledge and hands-on experience in aeronautics. The program not only provides an opportunity for students to learn to fly, but it inspires, motivates, and builds a sense of purpose for students who have been unsuccessful in a traditional classroom setting. Through community support and a solid structure, this program is expanding and filled with success stories.

Additionally, MCOE was presented with the Apple for Excellence Award, which recognizes outstanding programs administered by county offices of education and underscores the depth of county education programs that support and address students' changing needs. Monterey County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Deneen Guss accepted the Apple for Excellence Award on behalf of MCOE's 600+ exceptional employees working to provide leadership, support, and service to our educational communities and our committed County Board of Education.



DISTRICTS' HIGHLIGHTS AND GOALS



Alisal Union School District



Many of Alisal Union School District's (AUSD) initiatives, aimed at transforming educational systems, bore fruit this past year and gave teachers, parents and administrators reasons to celebrate. AUSD received a CSBA Golden Bell Award for Professional Development; two schools were recognized by the California Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for their excellence in implementing PBIS principles; and the district broke ground for an Early Learning Center and the second phase of the reconstruction of Alisal Community School.

AUSD is overcoming challenges in student attendance and improving chronic absenteeism. The district is laser-focused on making sure English-language learners continue with their academic progress. Expanding the electric fleet, AUSD acquired its seventh electric bus. The district is also working to increase the number of freshly prepared meals and enhancing its waste recycling and surplus food recovery program. Lastly, AUSD is expanding its award-winning after-school program.

Big Sur Unified School District



Big Sur Unified School District (BSUSD) is proud of the goals accomplished this past year including professional development for teachers and an array of opportunities for students. After three years of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) implementation, BSUSD is a fully implemented STEAM school, with a daily STEAM class for students and many STEAM-based field trips, including one to New York City. The entire school spent two nights in the Montara Lighthouse and often visits Sand Dollar Beach. The district holds an annual STEAM Festival, open to the community, where students' display and present on their highlighted project.

The district persevered through many road closures including major rock slides where students could not get to the school site. The students and families are strong and are looking forward to an exciting 2024-25 school year at BSUSD and Pacific Valley School.

Bradley Union School District

This past year, census data enrollment at Bradley Union School District (BUSD) increased for the first time in six years. The district has been accepted into the League of Innovative Schools, a prestigious network of the most innovative school districts in the country. Notably, BUSD is one of only eight school districts accepted this past year and the only one from California.



Being new to BUSD, Superintendent Josh Van Norman is getting to know the staff, students, families, and the community. His objective is to listen to the needs of the school community and to provide opportunities for students to explore their strengths, interests, and passions. Continuing to increase enrollment is also a key goal.

At BUSD, students have the opportunity to explore their strengths, interests, and passions through various enrichment opportunities such as field trips, guest speakers, sports, Associated Student Body, gardening, public speaking, art, music, and an After School Education and Safety program.

Carmel Unified School District

Carmel Unified School District (CUSD) focused on four key areas that provided support to enhance student, educator, and community experiences. These CUSD ABCs + D, were: Acknowledgments-Recognizing and celebrating achievements and accomplishments across CUSD. Building Community-Establishing, maintaining, and repairing relationships with district stakeholders. Consistency-Committing to consistency in practices, protocols, and procedures. Data-Informed Decision-Making-Placing strong emphasis on utilizing data to empower administrators in making informed decisions.



CUSD is proud to maintain its history of excellence and commitment to cultivating learning such that every student positively impacts their society. Students continue to be taught by highly qualified teachers and provided standards aligned instruction. CUSD's California Dashboard data indicates progress, with performance at "high" or "very high" levels in English Language Arts, math, graduation rate, and college/career readiness. As CUSD looks to 2024-25, we will engage in the development of a strategic plan.

Chualar Union School District

Chualar Union School District (CUSD), a one-school district, strives to provide a safe, orderly and nurturing learning environment that promotes commitment to work in partnership with students, parents, and the community. Chualar Elementary School serves TK-8th grade students, and over the next four years, will expand its TK program to include all students who are four years old. CUSD draws its state-adopted core curriculum programs from a varied range of educational research, guidance from the Monterey County Office of Education, and the active participation from teachers to ensure that the academic curriculum accommodates and meets the instructional, rigor, and multicultural educational needs of our student population.



Chualar Union School District continues to focus on its English Language program and the Common Core State Standards by providing teachers with professional development and appropriate resources to continue quality instruction. Students are also provided additional support including Social Emotional Learning and intervention as needed, such as tutoring, counseling, and specialized programs.

Gonzales Unified School District



Gonzales Unified School District (GUSD) is committed to providing safe, clean school facilities with a welcoming environment that promotes participation from all students, staff, family, and community members. For the 2023-24 school year, GUSD qualified for Technical Assistance due to the identification of homeless students performing at the lowest performance indicator (red) in English language arts, math, and suspension rates, and pinpointed mathematics as the primary area for improvement. A specialized team, comprising district and site administration alongside educators, has been formed to join the Monterey County Office of Education’s (MCOE) Mathematics Community of Practice (Math COP). GUSD will maintain its engagement with Math COP in the 2024-25 academic year, participating in Plan-Do-Study-Act professional learning cycles. This process will be supported by personalized coaching from MCOE, aimed at implementing necessary changes to achieve GUSD goal of providing equitable and rigorous mathematics learning opportunities for all students.

GUSD encourages parents and community members to become engaged in the district’s decision-making process by attending school events, including virtual ones.

Graves School District



Graves School District is focused on improving safety. We have collaborated with Harmony at Home to provide a bullying prevention class and support with a coach, enhancing the school's capacity to create a safe and inclusive environment. The district is also collaborating with Monterey County Cares for Kids to offer the FEMA Ready Kids emergency preparedness program. This program is strengthening students' awareness and ability to respond safely in various situations. These initiatives collectively underscore the district's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of its students and staff.

Graves School District is committed to the implementation of safety programs, with staff maintaining a focus on districtwide expectations to further enhance safety. An additional initiative being introduced is the "We've Got Your Back" curriculum. This series is designed to not only increase physical safety for students and staff but also to foster psychological safety, creating an environment of well-being and belonging where students are eager to learn. This holistic approach aims to create a safer and more supportive learning environment for all.

Greenfield Union School District



Greenfield Union School District (GUSD) is excited to unveil its new “Framework for the Future,” guided by the “Portrait of a Greenfield Learner.” This initiative aims to cultivate exceptional scholars through five key outcomes: Insightful Learner: Promoting critical analysis and innovative thinking; Collaborative Communicator: Enhancing effective and inclusive communication; Progressive Global Leader: Fostering leaders who embrace diversity and technology; Socially Aware Decision-Maker: Encouraging empathy and wise decision-making; and Empowered Learner: Supporting students in taking charge of their own education.

During the 2024-25 school year, GUSD’s focus remains on student voice, academic excellence, community empowerment, positive school culture, advanced technology, and social-emotional support, ensuring every student thrives. GUSD looks forward to a year of inspiring growth goals and achievements for all students.

King City Union School District

King City Union School District (KCUSD) strives to Ignite the Potential in all students everyday. KCUSD is proud of the hard work of both staff and students, which led to a 12% increase in the English Learner Proficiency Indicator since our return from COVID. After many years of requests, KCUSD was able to add a full-time Family Liaison to its team at each site. KCUSD has increased opportunities in its Expanded Learning Opportunities Program, with students strengthening their art, music, theater, sports, and creative thinking skills daily. KCUSD's middle school historical reenactments continue to be a highlight of every year.



KCUSD will expand its opportunities to support multilingual education in 2024-25 with the addition of Dual Language Immersion beginning with Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Kindergarten. The program will expand annually as students progress from grade to grade. To meet the needs of TK students, construction will begin on new TK/K classrooms at the King City Arts Magnet campus, followed by Santa Lucia and Del Rey in subsequent years. In partnership with SMCJUHSD, KCUSD is excited to bring electives in music back to Chalone Peaks Middle School and bridge the gap between the elementary and neighboring high school programs.

Lagunita School District

Lagunita School District is currently working hard to modernize its campus by restructuring the school from a K-8 to a TK-6 Elementary School. This transition is in progress as the district is working hard on construction plans for building a new Early Childhood facility, with classrooms for Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK). In recent years, Lagunita improved its social-emotional support for students, utilizing the Social and Emotional Learning curriculum and partnering with Behavioral Health to have a counselor and an anti-bullying coach on campus. Their award-winning Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics program is another highlight.



Lagunita's current goal is to add TK & FDK programs in order to attract new families to join the district, while increasing retention through grades five and six in order to build up and maintain their student population. After experiencing declining enrollment for several years returning from the challenges of COVID-19, Lagunita is working to improve attendance by retaining high-quality teachers, creative offerings, and innovative programs that serve all students. Maintaining support for high-quality instruction, responsive support for students, enrichment activities, and a positive school environment are primary goals.

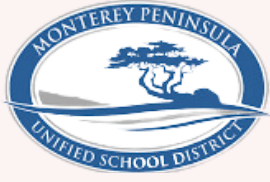
Mission Union School District

Mission Union Elementary School District provides every student access to a challenging and comprehensive curriculum presented by a passionate and dynamic staff in a learning environment that emphasizes enthusiasm, responsibility, and respect. Mission Union Elementary School is a small rural TK through 8th-grade school with an enrollment of approximately 125 students. A primary strength of the school is the harmonious relationship between community and school.



Recent updates to the district include a parking lot built adjacent to the school, which allows for student, community, and staff safety and has resulted in safer ingress and egress of students and parents, along with increased participation in events and meetings. The school has a dynamic music and art program, with art in the school garden and many projects displayed throughout the campus. Supporting students and staff includes a library clerk, instructional aides, and a fully credentialed After School Reading Intervention Teacher to continue supporting academic success and provide an increased focus on reading support and intervention.

Monterey Peninsula Unified School District



Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD) is emerging as one of the top public school systems in the nation, thanks to its foundation of effective instruction, positive school culture, support systems, and collaborative leadership. The district offers innovative schools with dynamic learning opportunities, focusing on increasing student achievement and eliminating performance gaps. Recognized locally, statewide, and nationally, MPUSD excels in fostering student engagement, preparing students for long-term success, and supporting families with vital programs and services.

Academics emphasize early childhood education, literacy, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, and career technical education, providing students with real-life learning experiences. Art, music, and theater are integral at all levels. The district prioritizes social-emotional support, employing full-time mental health professionals. Investments in athletics, field trips, and clubs enhance student experiences, and facilities upgrades are ongoing. MPUSD also prioritizes recruitment and retention, offering a historic 10% raise for employees in 2024.

North Monterey County Unified School District



North Monterey County Unified School District (NMCUSD) prioritizes student achievement, innovation, and community engagement. This year, students like Ulises Hernandez, Emily Machuca, and Jocelyn Rocha Ruiz earned national recognition for their Preliminary SAT performances, highlighting the district's academic excellence. NMCUSD's programs, including Advancement Via Individual Determination and expanded Career and Technical Education pathways, equip students with real-world skills in fields like culinary arts and automotive technology, preparing them for higher education and the workforce. The district's Blue Zones wellness initiative promotes sustainable, healthy lifestyles, with school garden programs serving as hands-on learning tools.

Community involvement remains a focus through the North Monterey County Community Alliance, offering resources from early childhood to career development. Recent facility upgrades and programs like the Wellness Center at North Monterey County Middle School support student well-being, while the Aguilas mentorship program fosters inclusion for English learners. NMCUSD is committed to empowering every student to succeed.

Pacific Grove Unified School District

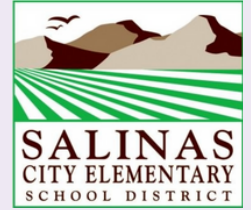


Pacific Grove Unified School District (PGUSD) made significant strides in furthering its commitment to the practice of cultural proficiency with the implementation of a cultural proficiency plan focused on nurturing the district's three core pillars of Belonging, Safety, and Prosperity. The plan highlights a shared commitment to establishing policies and practices that are equitable and inclusive for all students and families, while also creating a culture of

belonging where students of every economic circumstance, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, learning ability, or spoken language feel welcomed with a sense of connection.

PGUSD will focus on the creation of a district-wide "Culture of We" as a means of fostering a sense of belonging, unity, collaboration, and collective responsibility among all members of its school community. The collective commitment will focus on strategies that ensure every individual - students, teachers, staff, and parents - feels part of a larger team working towards common goals. The district will commit to these practices by taking time to celebrate the individuals and many cultures, abilities, and beliefs that make PGUSD such a diverse and beautiful community in which all are welcomed.

Salinas City Elementary School District



In 2023-2024, Salinas City Elementary School District (SCESD) made remarkable progress in addressing chronic absenteeism through collaborative efforts, seeing a 16% reduction from 2022. For the first time, all 15 schools earned Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports honors. The afterschool program provided academic and enrichment at all schools until 6 pm, as well as spring intersession, summer and all-day Saturdays. SCESD’s Spring Parent Leadership Conference featured two keynote speakers, with hundreds of parents attending. As a commitment to the SCESD Board priority of fiscal solvency, the district initiated a fiscal health committee that meets monthly.

Looking ahead to 2024-2025, SCESD remains committed to ensuring its schools are places where students feel welcomed, supported and engaged in learning, and aims to hire a Community Schools Coordinator to further its community schools initiative. Additionally, facility projects worth a combined \$175 million, funded by the two bond measures that voters passed in 2022 are now underway.

Salinas Union High School District

In 2023-24, Salinas Union High School District (SUHSD) began the year with robust professional development focused on data use, developing professional communities, and restorative justice. The district enhanced college and career readiness through expanding dual enrollment offerings and AP courses. In addition, SUHSD adopted new textbooks in math and Spanish. Supports for diverse student populations were increased alongside expanded wellness initiatives. SUHSD also fully opened the Workforce Housing for staff impacting the ability of educators to afford to live close to where they work.



SUHSD’s overall goal is, and will remain, centralized around preparing students for college and career opportunities. The district is launching three community schools to enhance whole-child wellness with mental, academic, and emotional support while boosting family engagement. SUHSD will also continue to prioritize high-quality instruction through its Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional model.

San Antonio Union School District

San Antonio Union School District had an incredible 2023-24 school year. Amy Sweet, an alumni with deep roots in the community, was hired as the Superintendent. Wildcat pride flourished when the sports program was revitalized. Amazing community volunteers assisted the school to host Read Across America. The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) delved into agriculture, expanding the school garden, and school technology was upgraded. San Antonio School is not just focused on academic success but also on nurturing well-rounded individuals who are engaged with their community and equipped with the skills to thrive in the future.



San Antonio School is committed to hands-on learning, fostering creativity, innovation, and leadership, while encouraging students to discover their own pioneering spirit. The district strives to provide high quality teaching and learning opportunities. Prioritizing school safety as a district goal, San Antonio School demonstrates a commitment to providing a secure learning environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

San Ardo Union School District



San Ardo Union School District (SAUSD) accomplished many great things in the 2023-2024 school year, including hiring a literacy coach and reading specialist full-time, and a Literacy Intervention Teacher for grades 1-5 half-time. SAUSD utilized iReady diagnostic assessments in English-Language Arts and math and performed two Interim Comprehensive Assessments. Professional development for educators included the Science of Reading, Guided Language Acquisition and Design, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Restorative Justice Practices, and ELA and math.

SAUSD offers small class sizes, paraprofessionals in all classes, extended learning time at After School Education and Safety, a new math program, physical and health education, sports, art and music instruction, and after-school tutoring by teachers. Additionally, SAUSD provides numerous educational field trips for students including to Cal Poly, the Technology Museum, and Hearst Castle. A Monterey County Behavioral Health Associate Marriage and Family Therapist provides counseling and district-wide events promote parent participation.

San Lucas Union School District



San Lucas Union School District (SLUSD) provides multiple layers of academic, social, and emotional supports for all students. The district passed a \$3.5 million school bond for the construction of a new track and site improvement project. Additionally, SLUSD has a new Maker Space program that ensures that every student has access to this hands-on, science-focused program.

SLUSD strives to provide a safe and well-maintained school environment for students with highly-qualified certificated staff who have sufficient instructional materials.

SLUSD, soliciting involvement from families, provides a welcoming school environment, with enrichment activities for students. The school and all programs are continuously administered, monitored, and reviewed by administration to maintain a smooth operating school.

Santa Rita Union School District



Santa Rita Union School District (SRUSD) has focused on the holistic development of students, with a steadfast commitment to fostering academic excellence, promoting cultural diversity, and ensuring the well-being of every child. A pivotal initiative is their collaboration with Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño. Together, they have established the first after-school program at Santa Rita Elementary, aimed at providing comprehensive academic support and cultural enrichment to students in English, Spanish, and Mixteco.

In 2024-2025, SRUSD remains steadfast in their commitment to enhancing the learning environment for students and supporting the holistic well-being of their entire school community. SRUSD objectives include the replacement of aging portables, transforming them into modern learning spaces. This endeavor aligns with their vision of providing students with the best possible facilities to support their educational journey. SRUSD's modernized learning spaces will feature state-of-the-art classrooms and a flexible lab space, fostering innovation and collaboration among students and educators alike.

Soledad Unified School District

In 2023-24, Soledad Unified School District (SUSD) focused on Foundational Literacy, Essential Standards, and Response to Intervention. The district completed a Student Success Team plan to strengthen Tier 1 and 2 interventions and adopted new World Language and Science textbooks. SUSD opened a Family Resource Center offering parent education, access to services, and a food and clothing pantry. Two schools received Community Schools Grants, which allowed social workers to be placed at several school sites. SUSD served 600+ students in summer session programs. The district also adopted a Districtwide Safety Plan combining the Big Five emergency response plan with best practices in safety.



For 2024-25, SUSD will implement a comprehensive academic and social-emotional Assessment Plan and expand Community Schools to four more sites. The district will continue the Leader in Me curriculum and introduce a Patient Care pathway at Soledad High School. SUSD's Facilities Bond Measure will provide for the installation of a new rubberized running track and turf field at Soledad High School, as well as the beautification and painting of all school sites throughout the district.

South Monterey County Joint Union High School District

South Monterey County Joint Union High School District (SMCJUHS) developed a new purpose statement summarized in their motto: Students, Service, Success. The district made significant increases in the implementation of Dual Enrollment and Career Technical Education courses. A strong collaboration was developed with the local community college to launch a medical pathway. Additionally, the district expanded its alternative education programs to assist more students in earning their high school diploma.



For the 2024-2025 school year, SMCJUHS looks forward to building on the new purpose statement that was established. The goal will be to continue to develop a student-centered culture at all school sites. By focusing on student needs, elevating student and community voices, and empowering their dedicated staff to use their talent and skills, SMCJUHS aims to build pathways to success for students' diverse and individualized goals.

Spreckels Union School District

This past year, Spreckels Union School District (SUSD) made strides that included: A new partnership with California State University Monterey Bay's Reading Center to provide 1:1 reading support for struggling readers in grades K-5; Many safety upgrades, including situational and behavioral threat analysis training; Implementation of real-life Spanish-speaking interpretation services for English-language learner families who have expressed a desire to be more connected; Third year of the district's bridging program that provides after-school tutoring with students' own teachers.



Spreckels Union School District's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) goals focus on continuing to address the needs of struggling students by providing academic and social-emotional supports. They also aim to offer students diverse, equitable, and innovative opportunities in both academic and enrichment programs. Additionally, the district plans to survey the community to gauge interest in a potential school bond for repairing and replacing aging facilities.

Washington Union School District



Washington Union School District, established in 1868, has a long history of academic excellence, supported by dedicated staff, a strong parent community, and high-achieving students. Serving 756 students from TK through 8th grade, the district focuses on providing engaging and challenging instruction that prepares students for high school and future success.

In the 2023-24 school year, the district is engaging in strategies aligned with the Science of Reading by training TK-5 teachers in the Orton-Gillingham approach and adopting Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts and Amplify English Language Arts for grades K-8.

The district prioritized student safety and well-being, implementing the 'We've Got Your Back' program and securing Blue Zones certifications for two campuses, with a third in progress. The district expanded its mental health services and social-emotional learning initiatives, using CalHope grant funds. San Benancio Middle School opened a Wellness Center and provided Narcan training to staff. Toro Park Elementary School acquired the Kimochi curriculum, and Washington Union Elementary School implemented Big Life Journals in coordination with a counseling program, and created sensory hallways on campus.

Bay View Academy Charter School



Bay View Academy made strides in enhancing literacy and academic performance over the past year. We introduced a half-time literacy intervention teacher for grades 1-5, and hired a full-time literacy coach and reading specialist. We implemented iReady diagnostic assessments for ELA and math, and conducted regular assessments. Professional development for staff included the Science of Reading, Guided Language Acquisition and Design, and more. We ensured paraprofessionals were present in all classes and our teachers provided after-school tutoring. Students participated in numerous educational field trips and we expanded extracurricular opportunities.

In 2024-2025, we look forward to building on past successes by further enhancing our comprehensive educational programs and support services. Our goals include enhancing the effectiveness of our behavioral health services and expanding mental health resources. We are also committed to fostering stronger community engagement by promoting parent participation in their children's education.

Big Sur Charter School



This past year, Big Sur Charter School focused on math, successfully implementing the second year of its new curriculum, which was well-received by staff and students. To support academic growth, we partnered with EDUK8 Tutoring to offer services to 3rd-8th graders. The art program is thriving, with students enjoying weekly sessions and their work showcased at the Pacific Grove Art Center. In Coastal Stewardship, 7th and 8th grade students engaged in citizen science with LIMPETS, monitoring coastal ecosystems. They also enjoyed boat trips up the Elkhorn Slough with Monterey Bay Eco Tours.

Big Sur Charter School believes in a holistic approach to learning and offers a hybrid learning experience that is created by combining education at their Monterey Learning Center, the home environment, our community and in nature. Big Sur Charter School's goal for this next year is to continue focusing on student mental health and math.

International School of Monterey

For 2023-2024, the International School of Monterey (ISM) is enthusiastically celebrating the following achievements: ongoing authorization from Western Association of Schools and Colleges and International Baccalaureate organizations with more than 15 commendations, specifically recognizing our community and consistent use of school values (IB Learner Profiles); by February, an average of 78% of students already met their annual reading goal, and 47% of students already met their annual math goal; increasing our differentiated support for small groups of students through our FLEX time program; and increasing students' personal connection to our school through our "House Teams."



For 2024-2025, ISM is focusing on the following goals: Complete the training of the staff on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support approaches through our grant award; increasing our whole child support through anti-bias and inclusion practices utilizing our grant award; providing systematic and differentiated support for our Multiple Language Learners; and celebrating and building our unique community of families in multiple ways.

Learning for Life Charter School

In 2023-24, Learning for Life Charter School (LFLCS) continued to have strong rates of attendance, quarterly credit accrual and graduation. We increased staffing over the course of the year to keep pace with increased demand for enrollment. We expanded the total number of students coming to campus biweekly, opportunities for in-person engagement, college field trips, engagement with Spanish speaking families, made more home visits, hosted educational events in South County to connect families and have improved relationships with key community partners.



At LFLCS, we have begun our next cycle of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges/California Department of Education self-study. We have been focusing on high school graduation and student wellness for many years and see success in both areas. We are now exploring the addition of work experience as a schoolwide learner outcome. We also plan to focus more on writing during bi-weekly in-person student sessions to address writing avoidance, compositional skill deficits and to develop self-reflection skills. During bi-weekly virtual student sessions, we plan to focus on practicing math skills connected to the workplace.

Monterey Bay Charter School

Monterey Bay Charter School's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) continues to be a focus for academic and social emotional support at the school. The school has consistently refined and calibrated our practices in the classroom and through the intervention services to provide a robust program aimed at helping each student reach their potential and promote inclusive practices in the classroom.



Monterey Bay Charter School will continue to define the (MTSS) for the school to ensure a safe and positive school climate that supports the whole child physically, socially-emotionally and culturally through consistent procedures, and measure success by monitoring student survey data, suspension rate, chronic absenteeism, and truancy rates.

Monterey County Home Charter School



Monterey County Home Charter School (MCHCS) continued to provide an alternative public educational choice for families of students in grades TK- 12 grade who choose to educate their children in a non-traditional, non-classroom-based, home learning environment. MCHCS offers two programs to students and families: a homeschool program for students TK-12 and an independent study program available for high school students grades 9-12. Within both programs, MCHCS continues to provide guidance, support, assistance, and selected resource materials to enable students to succeed in meeting their individual academic needs.

In 2024-25, MCHCS plans to build upon its successes by continuing to offer integrated and designated ELD and math instruction; extended learning opportunities; family engagement meetings; and enhanced means for delivering a challenging and comprehensive educational program to students whose learning styles of family choices make a non-traditional school environment preferable

Oasis Charter Public School



This past year, Oasis Charter Public School returned to its school-wide initiative, Love and Logic with a Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior. This initiative aims to support student needs. With Love and Logic, when we allow children to make decisions, afford mistakes, and experience the natural or logical consequences, balanced with sincere empathy, they develop the following logic: Our children learn that the quality of their lives depends on the quality of their choices.

A key objective for the 2024-2025 school year is to continue training the staff in Love and Logic methods. This training equips staff with strategies to help children learn responsibility, understand logical consequences, and develop problem-solving skills. By implementing Love and Logic methods, staff can effectively support students in developing important life skills while promoting a positive and respectful learning environment.

Open Door Charter School



Open Door Charter School, an adult high school program, offers flexibility and personalized learning plans to ensure students received the support they need through tailored resources. In its second year of operation, Open Door Charter School celebrated another 36 graduates in the class of 2024. Through counseling, mentoring and comprehensive support services, students not only completed their diploma but also gained essential skills. Students had access to Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, dual enrollment, career exploration, and college transition planning.

For the 2024-25 school year, Open Door Charter will continue to build upon successes through dedicated teachers working with students to identify, coordinate, and monitor progress and readiness for post-secondary education and employment. Open Door Charter will work to enhance ways to accommodate students who need to balance school, work, and home responsibilities.

ANNUAL EVENTS

Providing Enriched Educational Experiences to Support Student Success

Special Kids Carnival and Special Buckaroos Rodeo Enhance Student Experiences



In July, 38 families and nearly 150 attendees from the Monterey County Office of Education's (MCOE) Special Education programs participated in the 27th annual Special Kids Carnival at the Salinas Expo Grounds. Hosted by California Rodeo Salinas, this admired event provided children with special needs a safe and sensory-friendly environment to enjoy a variety of carnival activities.

Additionally, special education students took part in the Special Buckaroos Rodeo, an inclusive event where students engaged in activities such as horseback riding and calf roping. Each participant was recognized with a goody bag and a trophy, commemorating their participation.

MCOE expresses its deep appreciation to the California Rodeo Salinas for their continued partnership and support in offering these enriching and memorable experiences. These events, alongside other special programs, reflect MCOE's dedication to providing inclusive, meaningful opportunities for all students.

Field Day Provides Empowering Experiences

MCOE's Annual Field Day continues to provide a unique opportunity for special education students to engage in physical activities, fostering self-confidence and a sense of pride. This year's event, themed "If I Had Fun, I Won," embraced a Hawaiian atmosphere, creating a joyful and supportive environment.



The day began with a spirited parade, showcasing team pride, followed by a variety of activities including a ball throw, standing long jump, and running events. Student volunteers from Carmel High School played a key role, assisting teachers and staff in facilitating the event and ensuring its success. The day concluded with an awards ceremony where each classroom was recognized, and every student participant received a medal. Field Day continues to exemplify MCOE's commitment to creating inclusive and empowering experiences for all students.

Graduations Ceremonies



MCOE celebrated significant milestones with several graduation ceremonies, recognizing the achievements of high school graduates from Monterey County Home Charter School, Special Education and Alternative Education Programs, and Open Door Charter School.

Each ceremony honored students' hard-earned accomplishments, showcasing their perseverance and resilience throughout their educational journeys. As these graduates embark on new paths, MCOE extends heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2024 and best wishes for success in their future endeavors.

ANNUAL EVENTS

Uniting School Communities Across Monterey County for Learning and Growth

Health and Wellness Fair



The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) is committed to supporting employee health, and the annual Health and Wellness Fair is a key initiative in providing staff with essential healthcare resources and

preventative education. Held at MCOE Main Campus, the event transformed the parking lot into a vibrant space filled with health-related resource booths and activities. Employees had access to services such as blood pressure and glucose level checks, as well as Flu and COVID-19 vaccines. Additional information on nutrition, fitness, and vision care was also available. The fair featured fresh vegetables, fun giveaways, and raffle prizes, creating an engaging and informative experience aimed at promoting overall wellness.

ALL IN For Equity Conference



MCOE hosted its fifth annual ALL IN for Equity conference at the Monterey Conference Center, under the theme “Together Growing Inclusive Schools and Communities.” The event advanced its goal of promoting collaboration and action toward educational equity. Participants engaged in inspiring speeches, breakout sessions, and discussions focused on fostering inclusivity in schools. Keynote speakers Luis Valdez, Michael Ndubisi, and Michelle MiJung Kim shared personal perspectives on advancing inclusivity in education. Breakout sessions featured notable speakers like Mickey Rowe, who discussed the benefits of accessibility, alongside sessions covering restorative practices, belonging, and creating equitable learning environments.



Gladeo Monterey County Career Exploration Tool



The Gladeo Monterey County Career Navigation Tool is a new innovative online platform designed to help students explore and prepare for career opportunities. This interactive site allows students to dive into career options independently and discover a variety of industries and professions in an engaging and hands-on way.



GLADEO



County Board Supports Homeless

Recognizing the pressing issue of homelessness in Monterey County, MCOE remains dedicated to supporting families experiencing extreme hardship. To shed light on the challenges faced by homeless children and youth, the Monterey County Board of Education adopted a Resolution recognizing November as National Homeless Youth Awareness Month. This resolution highlights the more than 12,000 homeless children and youth in Monterey County who lack a stable nighttime residence. Presenting the resolution to United Way Monterey County, it underscored the ongoing need for community action. MCOE’s Homeless Children and Youth Services Program partners with organizations like United Way to provide students with essentials, referrals, and housing assistance, ensuring they receive critical support during times of need.



COUNTYWIDE EVENTS

Uniting Communities Across Monterey County for Learning and Growth

Countywide Spelling Bee



The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) held its annual Countywide Spelling Bee, bringing together 27 top middle school spellers from across Monterey County to compete for prestigious recognition. This event serves as a platform for students to develop their vocabulary, sharpen concentration, and gain confidence in public speaking. After an intense competition spanning 18 rounds, Ryan Ferguson, an 8th-grade student from San Carlos School in Monterey, emerged as the 2024 champion with the winning word "sciatica." Ryan showcased remarkable skill and represented Monterey County at the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

Countywide Science and Engineering Fair



MCOE's annual Countywide Science and Engineering Fair brought together over 100 middle and high school students, encouraging them to extend their learning beyond the classroom through independent, project-based research. Participants explored a wide range of scientific fields, including Computer Science, Environmental Science, Medicine and Health, Chemistry, and Plant Science. Students presented their research findings to a panel of volunteer scientists, both orally and through data journals. Angelina Tseng, a junior from Santa Catalina School, won the top honor and advanced to the Regeneron International Science & Engineering Fair in Los Angeles, where she secured second place in Engineering Technology: Statics & Dynamics for her project, "AI-Powered Magnetic Inspection Robot for Advanced Structural Health Monitoring of Ferromagnetic Structures."

Monterey County Math Festival



The Monterey County Office of Education held its annual Math Festival, welcoming over 150 middle and high school students from across Monterey County for a dynamic day of mathematical exploration. The festival featured math games, interactive activities, collaborative problem-solving, and a creative math art poster contest, giving students the opportunity to engage with math in fun, hands-on ways.

The event emphasized the importance of a strong mathematical foundation for problem-solving and real-world applications. Through the Math Festival, MCOE encourages students to see math as an exciting, relevant subject that builds skills essential for success. Winners were recognized based on creativity, accuracy, and teamwork, celebrating a shared commitment to learning and discovery.



COUNTYWIDE EVENTS

Uniting Communities Across Monterey County for Learning and Growth

Coaches & TOSAs Day



Monterey County Office of Education's (MCOE) Educational Services Teaching and Learning Team hosted the annual Coaches & TOSAs (Teachers on Special Assignment) Day, bringing together educators from across Monterey County for a day of professional learning and networking. Co-facilitated by MCOE Educational Services staff, the event focused on enhancing instructional strategies, fostering collaboration, and supporting educators in their roles. Special guest speakers A. Keith Young, Ed.D., and Tamarra Osborne, authors of *The Instructional Coaching Handbook*, shared valuable insights to help attendees improve their teaching practices and effectiveness in the classroom.

Stuff the Bus

The Stuff the Bus event, a collaborative effort led by United Way of Monterey County, in partnership with the MCOE, distributed thousands of backpacks to students in need. This year's campaign kicked off at the MCOE Early Learning Program Hartnell STEAM Discovery Academy in Salinas, where volunteers packed backpacks with essential school supplies, including notebooks, crayons, pencil boxes, and dry-erase boards. The initiative addresses a critical need in the community, helping students feel confident and prepared for the school year. With the support of hundreds of volunteers, approximately 6,500 backpacks were filled and distributed through school district liaisons, highlighting the power of collective action in positively impacting the lives of children and families across Monterey County.



Monterey County Farm Days

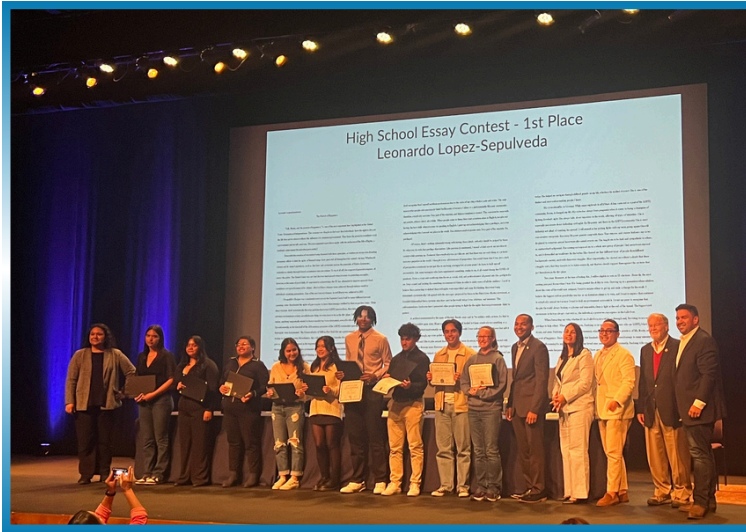
Farm Day, an annual educational enrichment program organized by Monterey County Agricultural Education, provides third-grade students with hands-on learning opportunities about food safety, processing, and farm animals. Held at three locations—Salinas, Monterey, and King City. The event brings together local agriculture businesses to promote agricultural literacy among students. Since the mid-1980s, Monterey County Agricultural Education has been a leading advocate for agriculture, gaining recognition for its impactful programs. Farm Day exemplifies the strong partnership between businesses, industry, community volunteers, and educators, offering students unique and engaging experiences that deepen their understanding of agriculture.



COUNTYWIDE EVENTS

Uniting Communities Across Monterey County for Learning and Growth

Law Day



Thanks to Judge Lavorato, many students, educators, elected officials, and members of the law community were able to gather at California State University Monterey Bay for this year's Law Day event. The event brought together individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage students in learning and reflection on the principles of democracy and civic law. This year's theme, "Voices of Democracy," highlighted the shared responsibility to uphold justice, equality, and liberty for all.

Inside Education Monterey County



MCOE offered its enlightening Inside Education Monterey County program for the third year. The unique opportunity provides participants with a first-hand, interactive look at local educational programs and services. Through a series of informative workshops and field trips, community members gain valuable insights into the fundamentals of public education. Participants are able to speak directly with education leaders and visit school sites to learn more about what is happening day-to-day in our schools, as well as the most pressing challenges facing educators. The free program consists of six, half-day, morning sessions once a month from September through March. For information about the program or to join the 2024-2025 Inside Education cohort, call 831-755-0301.

Student Ideas Festival



Thanks to the Carmel Ideas Foundation, Monterey County students had the unique opportunity to engage with global authors and innovative thinkers at the Student Ideas Festival, an extension of the Pebble Beach Authors and Ideas Festival. Over 1,200 middle and high school students attended thought-provoking presentations at the Monterey Conference Center, gaining insights into cutting-edge research and emerging career paths. MCOE's Migrant Education Program students introduced each presenter, highlighting their expertise and topics. The festival inspires students to connect with transformative ideas, sparking creativity and envisioning a brighter future. MCOE extends its gratitude to Jim and Cindy McGillen for organizing this impactful event each year.



SPECIAL EVENTS

Celebrating Milestones with Meaningful Connections and Lasting Impact

Historical Society Display

The Soledad Historical Society, committed to preserving the rich history of Soledad and Monterey County, collaborates with the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) to showcase educational artifacts through a regularly updated display. The exhibit features historical items such as school books, lesson plans, spelling tests, photos, and diplomas, some dating back to the 1800s. MCOE is proud to play a role in preserving the history of local schools by ensuring that these invaluable artifacts and photographs are maintained for future generations, offering them a glimpse into the educational past and the opportunity to learn from it.



Farewell to Friends Retiree Reception

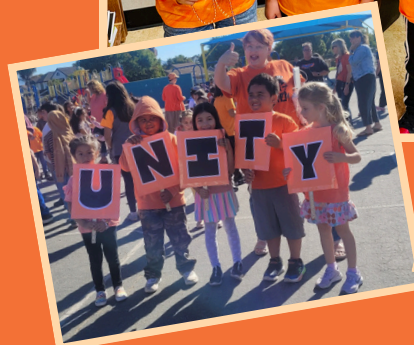


MCOE hosted its annual Farewell to Friends Retiree Reception, celebrating 20 dedicated employees retiring at the end of the 2023-24 school year. Each retiree was honored with a

personalized resolution from the Monterey County Board of Education, recognizing their invaluable contributions to the educational community. Many of these retirees had served MCOE for over 25 years, leaving a lasting legacy on students, families, and colleagues. The ceremony was a heartfelt occasion, filled with gratitude and well-wishes as MCOE bid farewell to these esteemed individuals. Their years of service will be cherished and remembered as they embark on the next chapter of their lives.

Unity Day

Unity Day, observed on October 18, 2023 focused on promoting unity, inclusivity, and preventing bullying and violence. MCOE employees showed their support by wearing orange and gathered to spell out "MCOE," raising awareness about the harmful effects of bullying and promoting kindness, acceptance, and inclusion.



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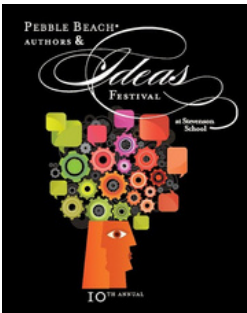
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