

Mountain Lakes School District

Superintendent &
Assistant Superintendent
Update

Monday, February 2, 2026



MLHS Program of Studies

- **New Electives**
 - **Business**
 - **Accounting**
 - **Technology**
 - **Advanced CAD & Design Studio (H)**
 - **Principles of Flight Planning + Drone Operations**
- **Updates**
 - **Courses no longer included**
 - **Journalism in the Digital Age**
 - **Online Economics**
 - **Math Course Level Waiver Process**
 - **Pass / Fail option for zero period courses**



District Goals: Update

1. Active learning in the classrooms (small group)
2. STEM learning
3. ML / RVS Articulation
4. Social Emotional Learning

Goal 1: Active Learning in the Classroom

- English Language Arts

- Wildwood

- K-2: Job-embedded PD (teacher training + labsite)

- 4 sessions with Staff Developer - dedicated grade level time to study and practice small group support and planning structures

- 3-5: Job-embedded PD with Staff Developer

- 5 sessions focused on implementation of Units of Study in Writing
 - Small group and 1:1 conferring with students

- K-5 Universal Design for Learning - Monthly Coaching

- Focus: Specially designed instruction

- Briarcliff ELA

- Needs Assessment, Curriculum Review, Site Visits

- Focus on small group instruction, 1:1, book clubs

- Mathematics

- Exploring '*Building Thinking Classrooms*' - student-centered instruction + deep mathematical thinking

- Classroom Environment: exploring student desks → foster collaborative work



Goal 1: Active Learning in the Classroom

- All principals conduct consistent, informal walkthroughs
 - Frequency + purpose of small group instruction
- Supervisors meet with teachers regularly
 - Observation feedback - use the Stronge Evaluation framework indicators
 - Supportive conversations focus on pedagogy including questioning techniques, student response methods, problem-solving
- Full Day PD on 11/4 offerings focused on active engagement

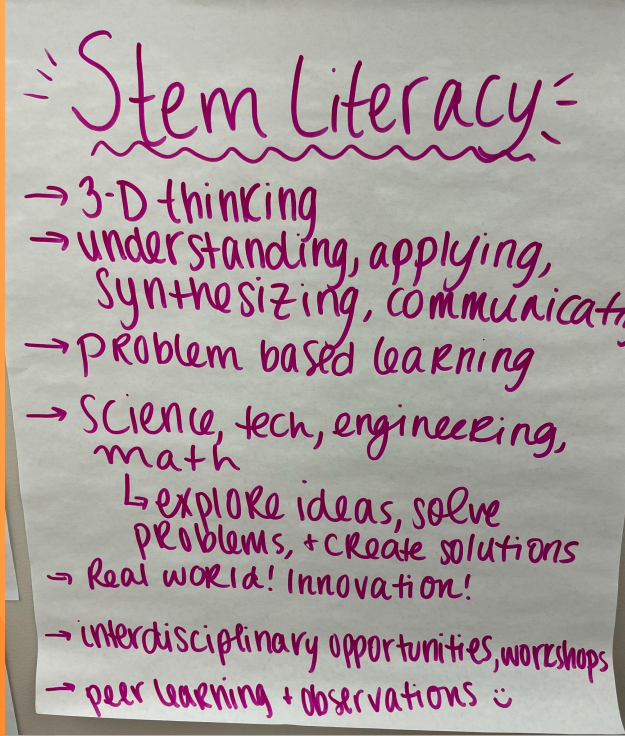
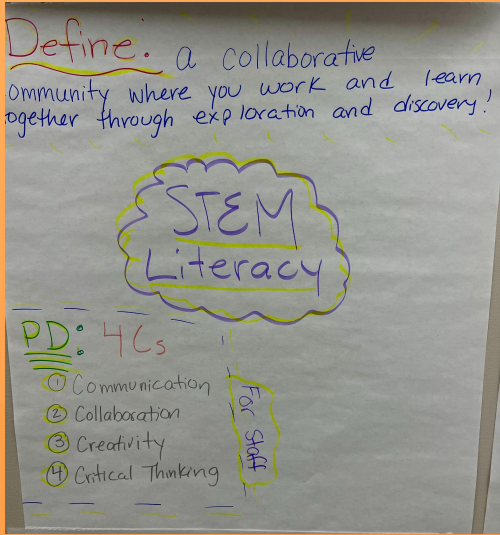
Looking ahead...

- 6-12 Professional Development
 - small group, 1:1 targeted instruction



Goal 2: STEM Learning

- Needs Assessment completed in all schools
 - Curriculum, resources, challenges, opportunities
- Evaluated learning spaces in all schools
 - Explore potential for new learning experiences
- Middle School Aviation Club - ML +RVS
- STEM Think Tank
 - STEM Literacy





Goal 2: STEM Learning

- Establish a STEM Vision
 - ML STEM-literate graduate
- Recognize strengths, gaps, priorities
 - Curriculum + Pathways
 - Outreach
- Develop a STEM Squad in each school

STEM VISION STATEMENT

- We envision a district where every student grows through failing forward
- Students will engage in iterative experiences that fosters inquiry and reflection
 - Graduates will be prepared to face challenges and persevere in the world.

Round 3 - STEM Squad

- Peer walk-throughs about how we can make progress to implement a STEM program
- 1st year- Planning year. Meet 1 time/quarter
- Have teachers "STEM Squad" visit other schools to help teachers hone in on their actual "STEM" skills.
- Emphasize interdisciplinary connections
- Connecting to existing knowledge

Stem Squad

- team leader / experts, activity design
- willingness to try
- motivational club
- 1st year
 - trial & error
 - asking opinions + ideas
 - think tanks

STEM Squad

- design-thinking oriented
 - tech savvy
 - divergent thinker
 - problem solver
 - resourceful
- 1st year
- * show your value
 - * availability
 - * resources
 - * needs assessment
 - * system of support

ML graduates will be empowered with the resilience, confidence, and critical thinking skills necessary to navigate challenges, adapt to change, and contribute positively to an evolving world, making a meaningful and lasting impact in their communities and beyond.

Goal 2: STEM Learning

- Looking ahead...
 - Solidify the vision statement
 - K-12 framework for design thinking processes
 - Redesigning spaces for STEM learning,
 - Identify a space in every building



Goal 3: ML / RVS Articulation

- **MLSD & RVS Articulation**
 - 30 instructional / curricular workshops full day of professional development (November, 2025)
 - Grade level review of scope and sequence (K-8) to begin shared curricular review (March, 2025)
 - Math & Science articulation meetings (K-8)
 - 4 music programs / performances (K-12)
- **Building / District Level Articulation**
 - MLHS & BC shared school and departmental meetings
 - WW elementary vertical articulation sessions led by K-12 supervisors (ELA/Math)



Goal 3: ML / RVS Articulation

- **Building/District Level Articulation (Cont'd)**
 - School counseling and CST role/responsibility development; weekly CST/counseling student articulation
 - Lake Drive vertical articulation led by supervisor
 - Vertical alignment of IEP goal development
 - Productive disagreement professional development
- **Anticipated/desired outcomes**
 - Cohesive curriculum, instruction, and alignment
 - Improved quality of best practices
 - Continued improved of student outcomes



Goal 4: Social Emotional Learning

- K-12 planning meetings involving administrators, counseling staff, and CST from all 4 schools
- CASEL Framework
- Program and systems review
 - Panorama
 - JED Foundation
 - NJ School Culture and Climate Initiative
 - RULER (Yale University)
- Student qualitative data collection on social-emotional competency (NJ School Climate Improvement Survey-March, 2026; grades 3-12)



Goal 4: Social Emotional Learning

- **Building level initiatives to support SEL**
 - MLHS Wellness Summit (April 2, 2026)
 - BC SEL program pilot (ROX & Building Champions)
 - WW buddy programs - e.g. HS/5th grade
 - “Always Connected” parent and student education program
 - Lifelines mental health training (60 staff)
- **Anticipated/desired outcomes**
 - Recommendations for the adoption of a K-12 framework and/or program to support SEL & wellness education



**Thank
You!**

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