

Mountain Lakes School District



Superintendent &
Assistant Superintendent
Update

Monday, May 11, 2026





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)
 - Teachers learned conferring models, build structures for independent reading, small group planning + strategy instruction to build comprehension
 - 3-5: Job-embedded PD with Staff Developer
 - Teachers learned how to gather data for on-the-spot 1:1 conferring, pace lessons, provide independent practice time, provide feedback in real time
 - Briarcliff ELA
 - Site visit June 1st (focus: instructional framework)
 - Expand job-embedded PD into BC
- Mathematics
 - Exploring 'Building Thinking Classrooms'
 - student-centered instruction
 - deep mathematical thinking



Goal 1: Active Learning in the Classroom

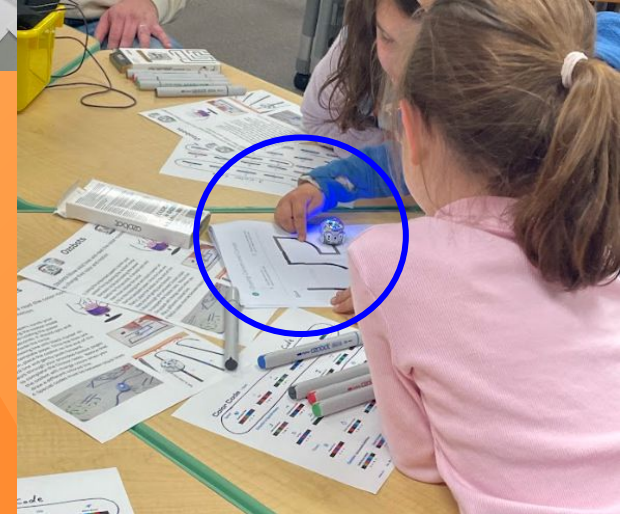
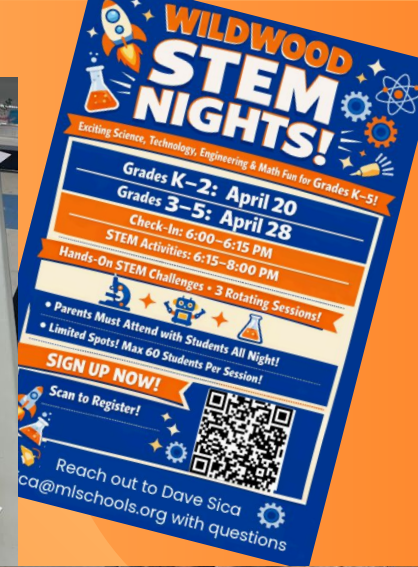
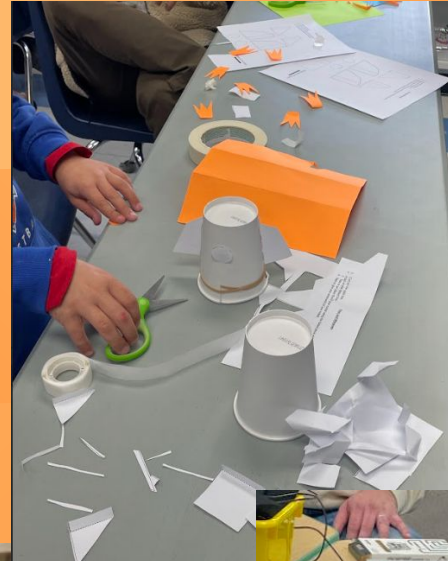
- Supervisors
 - Meet with teachers regularly
 - Facilitated articulation sessions
 - Use the Stronge Evaluation framework for case study discussions
- Continued walkthrough discussions as an Admin Team
 - What does active engagement look and sound like?
 - How can varied response methods increase student participation?
 - What does teacher clarity look and sound like?
 - Is learning environment conducive to Small group instruction - Collaboration - Critical thinking - Problem-solving?



Goal 2: STEM Learning

April 20th Wildwood K-2 STEM Night

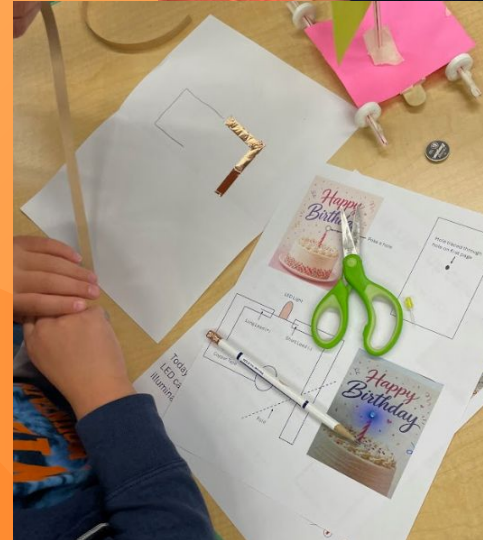
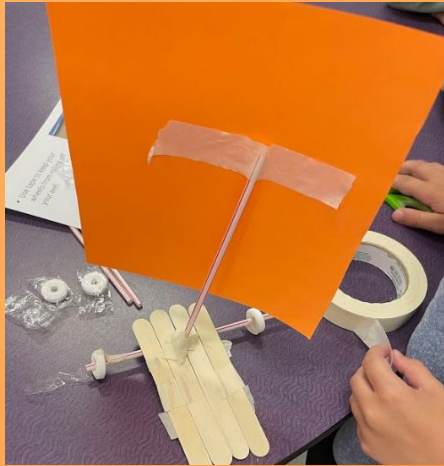
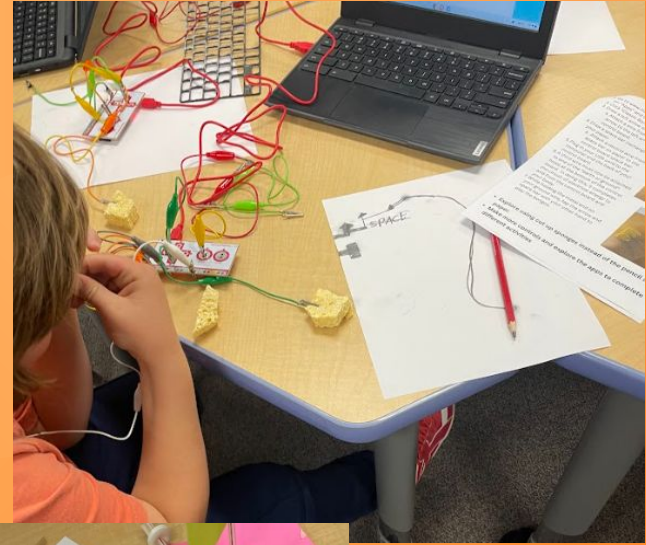
- Approximately 40 students with parents
- Facilitated by MLHS volunteer students
 - Hoop-Ring Gliders
 - Paper-Cup Rockets
 - Ozobots



Goal 2: STEM Learning

April 28th Wildwood 3-5 STEM Night

- Approximately 30 students with parents
- Facilitated by MLHS volunteer students
 - Puff Mobiles
 - LED Cards
 - Makey Makey Activities





Goal 2: STEM Learning

Beyond the classroom

Aviation Classes

- Guest speakers from the field
- Field Trips to
 - Morristown Airport
 - Roxbury's Aviation Career Day
- Aviation teacher awarded scholarship from Readiness 
Initiative for Safety & Education program to earn **FAA Remote Pilot Certification**

AP Computer Science

Upcoming Speaker Series

- Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering
- Software Engineer
- Cyber Security
- Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Aerospace & Mechanical Engineering
- Data Engineering & Analytics

Goal 2: STEM Learning

Science & STEM Newsletter

- Mr. Sica compiles photos from all schools
- Two editions in the 25-26 school year highlighting a space, teacher, or theme

MOUNTAIN LAKES

SCIENCE & STEM

JANUARY 2026



MESSAGE FROM MR. SICA – SCIENCE/STEM SUPERVISOR

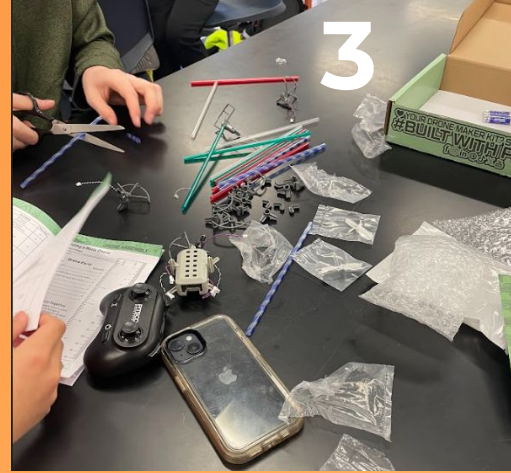
Welcome to the first edition of the Mountain Lakes Science & STEM Newsletter! This will be the first of two editions for the 2025–2026 school year. From the start of the school year, our teachers across the district have been intentionally weaving scientific inquiry and engineering design into their daily instruction. This newsletter offers our community a window into the engaging lessons, creative projects, and authentic problem-solving experiences happening in classrooms throughout the district. Our mission remains clear: to cultivate students who are curious questioners, skilled problem-solvers, and innovative designers prepared to shape the future. In alignment with our district goal of expanding STEM enrichment across all grade levels, this newsletter offers a window into the exciting science and technology initiatives taking place throughout our schools.



Goal 2: STEM Learning

Briarcliff + RVS Aviation Club

- Thank you to ML + BT MLEF



**15 Students
regularly
attend**

(27 sign up)

Goal 2: STEM Learning

- June 1st BOE Presentation
 - Solidify the vision statement
 - K-12 framework for design thinking processes
 - Redesigning spaces for STEM learning
 - Enhance and enrich curricula and resources



Goal 3: Articulation w. RVS

- Utilize in-service days for horizontal and vertical articulation
- Facilitate articulation through department and faculty meetings
- Engage in two structured and formal articulation meetings with RVS
- Explore articulation for staff that do not have large teams or departments to support their growth and development



Goal 3: Articulation

- Utilize in-service days for horizontal and vertical articulation
- Facilitate articulation through department and faculty meetings
- Engage in two structured and formal articulation meetings with RVS
- Explore articulation for staff that do not have large teams or departments to support their growth and development



Values	Define in your own words	Examples or Evidence
Responsiveness	Responsiveness means listening carefully, recognizing concerns or needs, and taking action to address them in a helpful and respectful way.	- Communicating clearly - Responding to team members promptly - Remaining open to feedback - Prioritizing team communication - Addressing concerns proactively - Open to adjusting plans as needed to meet the needs of students in different academic settings
Respect	Respect means treating others with kindness, listening to their ideas, and valuing their feelings and perspectives.	- We value and thoughtfully consider each other's perspectives - We treat each other with professionalism - We interact with each other as professionals
Healthy Collaboration	Working together in a way that is respectful, supportive, and focused on a shared goal; it means listening to each other's ideas, valuing different perspectives, communicating openly, and being willing to compromise or adjust when needed so the team can succeed together	- Sharing ideas openly - Supporting team decisions - Contributing positively to group goals - Staying engaged in discussions - Maintaining a solution-focused mindset when working with colleagues - Build on each other's ideas

	High School	Briardell	Wildwood	Lake Drive
JANUARY	1/5/2026 Wellness Summit Safety & Security Mt.-Year Wingman Exercise 1/26/2026	Breakout Sessions: Creation of a survey to help measure school climate/culture Security Scenario Updates	Vertical Articulation: Team Reports Goal setting for the 2nd half of the year	Wingman Staff Activity
FEBRUARY	2/2/2026 2/9/2026 2/23/2026	Security Scenario Updates Up from Dist. Tone Rich Presentation Content Area Breakout Sessions Security Scenario Updates	Learning Together: Technology Platforms to Support Student Learning Vertical Articulation: Team Reports Week 1 (Rel. EP Grants)	TBD: Arranged by Mental Health Team Department Articulation: Areas @ HS Content
MARCH	3/2/2026 NJCPSA, NJSLA Training 3/9/2026 District Professional Development (Delayed Opening for Students) 3/16/2026 3/23/2026	Period 8 Review for the Year and Potential Schedule for 2026-2027 Security Scenario Updates	Learning Together: Instructional Strategies to Support Small Group Instruction Vertical Articulation: Team Reports End of Year Preview	TBD: by Audiology Arranged

How can faculty meeting use shift toward learning opportunities?

PD Sessions

Teacher-Drive n Articulation

Supervisor-Drive n Articulation

Supporting New Teachers

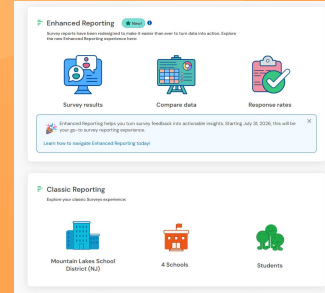
Building Priorities

What can be shifted?



Goal 4: Social Emotional Learning

- Develop a district K-12 mental health and social-emotional learning plan
- Analyze data and relevant educational scholarship on K-12 social-emotional learning
- Engage in internal and external professional development to increase understanding of SEL for our students
- Gather student data and information to inform decisions about SEL recommendations for the following school year



ROX RULING OUR EXPERIENCES

THE ROX INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH & TRAINING

PROFESSIONALLY DELIVERED SCHOOL-BASED EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMING FOR GIRLS IN GRADES 5-12

LARGE-SCALE, NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE RESEARCH CENTERED ON GIRLS

WORKSHOPS & TRAINING FOCUSED ON GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

DATA-DRIVEN RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS, PARENTS, COACHES AND MENTORS



OCTOBER MONTHLY WRAP-UP
School Mental Wellness Specialist

What a wonderful, HUGE cohort of learners! We appreciate your enthusiasm and participation in our program. Each month, you will receive a wrap-up email with resources to share from our live sessions. October focused on: *Mental Health Integration in the School Setting*. Please use the link below to sign up for the next session.

YOUR EMOTIONAL ADVENTURE: INCLUDING YOU, DON'T!

Our discussions included raising awareness of our students' Emotional Backpacks, as well as our own. This tip sheet serves as a review. Consider sharing the material with a friend or at your next building faculty meeting.

Click on the image to access.

Jennifer's Recommendations

- Emotions Wheel** - Support emotional literacy in older students when they cannot name their emotions.
- How to Work through Your Emotions** - Take a peek at these ideas from The Brain Coach
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation for Children** - Use this script to help students learn how to relax in an inconspicuous manner.

The coursework referenced Jean Twenge's research in her book *iGen*, correlating cell phone use with increased levels of anxiety & depression. (Correlation is not causation.)

Jonathan Haidt also shares research in his book *The Anxious Generation* and offers some solid recommendations for parents and schools.

November Sneak Peek: Intervention for School Refusal & Reintegration after...
Click on a date to sign up for a session. Live Coaching Session Nov. 12, 10:55 AM

Just for FUN! Click to access Halloween Tips

Meet Your Coaches on the next 2 pages



Thank You!

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