

# PRESS RELEASE

**Manhattan Beach Unified School District**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Manhattan Beach Unified School District Loses Teacher in Las Vegas Shooting**

**Manhattan Beach, CA, October 2, 2017**

The Manhattan Beach Unified School District wishes to express its deep sorrow over the tragic loss of one of our staff members, Ms. Sandra Casey. Ms. Casey was attending the Route 91 Harvest Country Music Festival and was fatally wounded during the unprecedented mass shooting.

Ms. Casey has been a special education teacher at Manhattan Beach Middle School for the past nine years. She is loved by students and colleagues alike and will be remembered for her sense of humor, her passion for her work, her devotion to her students, and her commitment to continuing her own learning and to taking on whatever new projects came her way. She has made a tremendous difference in the lives of her students and their families, many of whom worked with her over multiple years.

Her loss will be deeply felt at MBMS and throughout the MBUSD community.

Students, staff, and parents have been informed, and the District is providing counseling resources to support students and staff as needed.

MBUSD Superintendent Dr. Michael Matthews said, "Last night's shooting has had tragic consequences all over the nation, and it has hit our community hard. Our students, employees, and parents are devastated by Sandy Casey's death. We lost a spectacular teacher who devoted her life to helping some of our most needy students." MBUSD School Board President Jennifer Cochran added, "This kind of senseless violence is so difficult to explain. We are so appreciative of our staff as they try to help our students and the community process what has happened. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of those affected."

Our thoughts are with Sandra Casey's family, and her friends and loved ones, as well as with the family, friends and loved ones of all of the victims of this terrible event.

The following email was sent to all MBUSD families earlier today:

Dear MBUSD Families,

This morning we are reaching out to you in shock and grief. As you may have read in the news, last night there was an unprecedented mass shooting near Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas during a concert that was part of the Route 91 Harvest Country Music Festival. There have been multiple fatalities and even more injuries. Several members of our MBUSD community were at the concert and in the vicinity of the attack. We have been in contact with MBMS Principal Kim Linz, who was in attendance. She is unharmed, as are MBMS teacher Ms. Debbie Dreiling; school psychologists Ms. Marjorie Questin and Ms. Emily Allen; MCHS and Meadows instructional assistant Mr. Chris Willemse; and Pennekamp Principal Dr. Karina Gerger; who were there as well. However, we have received information that one of our MBMS Special Education teachers, Sandy Casey (formerly Sandy McDermott), was fatally wounded. This is unbelievably sad and tragic.

We wanted to let you know so that you can be prepared to support your children and to help them process this information. As you can imagine, this loss is impacting many of our staff members deeply, and while we collectively grieve, we will be working to provide support to everyone affected.

Teachers at MBMS will be sharing the news with their classes today so that we can be sure that all students hear accurate information from an adult rather than through the rumor mill. All staff at all of our school sites have been informed as well, and they are working to keep things calm and the day as typical as possible in order to support our students. We have mobilized counselors who will be on campus at MBMS and other schools as needed, throughout the day today and over the coming days to provide support for students, teachers, and parents. Teachers will monitor and work with students to ensure they are connected with those resources as needed.

We thank you for your support of your children and our staff.

Sincerely,

Mike Matthews, Superintendent

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## **ABOUT THE MANHATTAN BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

MBUSD serves approximately 6,800 students from preschool to twelfth grade at eight school campuses—one preschool, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Robinson Elementary School and Grand View Elementary School were recently recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School in 2013. Six MBUSD schools have been honored as California Gold Ribbon Schools since 2015. In 2012, Grand View Elementary was named a National Green Ribbon School, joining just 77 other schools in the United States so honored that year. In 2016, MBUSD was named as a National Green Ribbon District. MBUSD's Michael Hayden and Maggie Mabery were the *California* Teachers of the Year in 2015 and 2016. In addition to outstanding students and excellent teachers, MBUSD is extremely fortunate to have a high level of parental involvement in the schools and very strong partnerships with community partners such as the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation, PTAs/PTSAs, MBX—Beyond the Classroom, the City of Manhattan Beach, Chevron, Continental Development, the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce, and other local organizations and businesses. More information about MBUSD is available at [www.mbusd.org](http://www.mbusd.org).