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# Superintendent's Newsletter

February 2018

Dr. Michael D. Matthews, Superintendent

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## MVP Advice

Nick Foles was the unlikely Super Bowl MVP on Sunday. He has moved from team to team, sometimes starting, but mostly being a backup. He became a starter for the Eagles after their star QB was injured a few weeks ago, and he played spectacularly. I loved what he said after the game.



*I think the big thing is don't be afraid to fail. I think in our society today, Instagram, Twitter, it's a highlight reel. It's all the good things ... Failure is part of life. It's part of building character and growing. Without failure, who would you be? I wouldn't be here if I hadn't fallen thousands of times ... I think when you look at a struggle in your life, you know that's just an opportunity to your character to grow. And that's just been the message. Simple. If something's going on in your life and you're struggling? Embrace it. Because you're growing.*

I'll be sharing that message with my sons as it's a great reminder for all of us. It's what we are trying to teach in MBUSD. Persistence in addressing challenging problems is more important than memorization and initial success. We won't all be Super Bowl MVPs, but we all will fail, and the best of us will take that failure, learn from it, and use it as an opportunity to grow.

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## Planning the 2018-19 Budget

As we enter 2018, we are all striving to maintain and steadily improve the quality education our students deserve and our community has come to expect. We also have challenges to face.

Out of all 344 K-12 school districts in California, Manhattan Beach schools receive the second lowest amount of state funding. In fact, our schools receive nearly \$2,000 less per student annually than the California average. At the same time, we face the same growth in expenses that every district faces, with the result that our growth in expenses is projected to outpace our growth in revenues. As a result, our district is starting to examine reductions for the 2018-19 year. These are painful, but unfortunately something we have to consider seriously. We will begin these difficult discussions on **Wednesday from 5:30 to 6:30** at our Board Workshop.

To address our budget challenge, the MBUSD Board of Trustees is exploring the feasibility of locally-controlled funding that would enable us to keep MBUSD schools among California's best. Additional, stable funding is needed to avoid deep budget cuts and to:

- Attract and retain high-quality teachers and maintain manageable class sizes
- Protect quality math, science, reading, art/music
- Protect advanced programs in science, technology, engineering, and math
- Continue to prepare students for top colleges and careers
- Keep schools clean and well-maintained

The Board of Trustees will discuss a potential funding measure at its February 7 Board meeting. We encourage your attendance and your input. Click [HERE](#) for more information about the local funding measure.

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## MCHS Gym Plans Going to the State for Approval!

It seems like just yesterday that our voters approved Measure EE, the \$39 million bond to build a new athletic facility at Mira Costa. After months of planning and community and steering committee meetings, the architects at Gensler have joined forces with contractors at Balfour Beatty to prepare full architectural plans in a proposed construction document package that, pending board approval February 7, is ready to submit to the Division of the State Architect. We will then wait eagerly for state approval, after which time we'll be able to pin down a clear timeline for completion. I'd like to thank Deputy Superintendent Dawnalyn Murakawa-Leopard, the Measure EE Steering Committee, and every professional and volunteer who has worked tirelessly to bring this vision to this point. Onwards!



## Making Strides in MakerSpace



If you ask many of our elementary students to name their favorite things in school, one of the answers is likely to be "MAKERSPACE!" Thanks to seed money from Chevron and MB Rotary, then a generous donation from MBEF, we now have MakerSpace labs at all five elementary schools. MakerSpace is a place full of art supplies, tools, fasteners, dollar store goodies, and more. Inspired by their MakerSpace teachers, our students make things that roll, lift, drop, fly, or just do something cool. They don't follow directions - rather they create, collaborate, try, fail, and try again. Every day, students come up with creative and ingenious ways to solve a problem, and they love it. Inspired by Cathy Hobart, a volunteer at Pacific, and now led by Jason Marshall, our Teacher on Special Assignment, and five amazing MakerSpace teachers, this idea has spread from a small lunchtime activity at one school, to an every day experience in all of our elementary schools. On behalf of all the students who

love this - Thank You for making this space happen!

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## Keeping Our Students Safe

Last week I witnessed an amazing event that just may have saved a life. Our district has worked all year with our counselors, administrators, support staff, psychologists, and our Beach Cities Health District team on the Signs of Suicide (SOS) Prevention Program. Wednesday, they flawlessly executed an SOS day at Mira Costa. Parents were notified ahead of time and had the opportunity to watch a 25-minute video about suicide. At second period, every Costa student watched this powerful film, then filled out a form. Some students checked the box saying they wanted to talk to someone about themselves, or about a friend. The forms were collected, then the school went into action.



Over the course of the day, counselors saw every student who indicated that they wanted to talk to someone. It was over 60 students. Think about that. The whole school was focused on this effort Wednesday. On Thursday, counselors started seeing students who are worried about a friend. It's events like these that will help us be a better place for all students. It was a powerful and meaningful day, and I am grateful to all who made it a reality. Please feel free to reach out to our counseling team with questions, concerns, feedback, or if you need support in any way.

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## Families Connected

This Thursday, I encourage you to hear honest parenting stories from some of our own. Parenting should not be something we do in isolation. We're grateful to Eric Karros and his daughter Mika for sharing their story. Hope you can join them - click image for details.



# FAMILIES CONNECTED SPEAKER SERIES



## PURPOSE VS. PERFORMANCE:

**Feb. 8, Redondo Beach High School Auditorium**

Presented by former Dodger Eric Karros  
and daughter Mikah Maly-Karros.



Mike Matthews  
MBUSD Superintendent

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