

Superintendent's Newsletter

November 2016

Dr. Michael D. Matthews, Superintendent

Grateful for So Much in MBUSD!

One of the many great parts of my job is getting to talk about all of the wonderful things going on in MBUSD. From our students' academic achievement, to our arts programs, to our athletics programs, to the employees who make our district what it is, to the parent support, and of course, to our students, we are quite a spectacular place! Want to see some of our latest achievements in MBUSD? Click [here](#)!



Bonds

Thanks again for all of you who voted for, campaigned for, or in any way supported Measure C and Measure EE, which both passed on October 8. At our board meeting this week, we began mapping out our next steps. If you want to keep updated, there is a "[Measures C and EE](#)" button on the front page of our website. Please go to that any time for the latest on what we are doing. We are excited to begin the work. Thank you again, and here we go!



Bond Oversight Committee

Now that the community has passed our bonds, the shirt sleeves are rolled up and the work begins! Among the first steps is to form a citizens' Bond Oversight Committee. Its charge is to monitor the expenditures of bond funds for both Measure C and Measure EE to ensure they meet the criteria set forth in the original ballot language. The committee meets regularly to review the progress on the projects and is comprised of citizens throughout the community. If you are interested in applying, please click [here](#).



Attendance Matters!

Manhattan Beach is fortunate to have students who attend school nearly every day. But I do want to remind you that attendance matters. Woody Allen was not totally wrong when he said, “80% of success is showing up.” While I think there's far more to it, it's obvious that if you don't show up, your chances for success are dramatically diminished. But it also matters because we only get education funds from the state for the students who actually show up to school each day. No matter what the excuse, if a student is not here, we lose about \$45 per day. That adds up, and it matters even more when you are the fourth-lowest funded school district in the state. Today, absences are up dramatically, and those absences will cost the

District about \$30,000. Thank you for making the effort to send your children to us every day. It matters on many levels.



Elementary Reading Assessments

One of the biggest changes to our elementary reading program is that it is now more individualized and personalized than ever. We now know the exact reading level of every student. And instead of all students reading the same books in class, we have each student reading a wide variety of books at his/her own reading level, or often just above that level. I have said many times that the primary work our students can do at home in elementary school is reading, reading, and more reading. We have reduced homework so that students can read more. We have invested nearly \$300,000 in the purchase of high interest “just right books” for every K-8 classroom for all of our students. We learn about the reading level of our students through the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments that we perform twice a year. We provide extra time for our teachers to give the assessments and analyze them so that we can provide this individualization. We are in year three of this implementation, and our teachers are making a big difference!



Inclusion

I wrote to you earlier about inclusion being one of the board's new goals for 2016-17. We want all students and all families to be successful in our schools, and we want everyone to feel included in our schools and in our community. On October 24, we held a meeting at the home of Melissa and Ron Clinton, the family in

Manhattan Beach whose home was firebombed in 2014. A broad spectrum of people were in attendance, and it was a great meeting. I look forward to sharing the Not In Our Town video on Manhattan Beach, as well as the TEDx speech from Melissa Clinton, in the near future.

Click [here](#) to see La Vista's article on the Clintons' social inclusion grant.



Focus on Model UN

Mira Costa's Model UN is two-thirds done with a busy November. First up was a competition at Brown University. While back east, the 25-member squad met up with MUN alumni in the area who gave personalized college tours at their respective schools. Meanwhile, back in L.A., 104 Mustangs participated in the UCLA MUN conference for a practice debate against many of our local rivals. And currently, 15 top-level MUN'ers are competing at UNESCO in Paris. Mr. Timberlake is confident that Costa has an excellent chance to win the coveted Award of Special Team Recognition. We await the news when they return Tuesday! Special thanks to Mr. Timberlake and Mr.

Knudson for leading this outstanding, consistently award-winning student program. For the full story, click [here](#).

Congrats to our MBMS Mock Trial Team!

The debate bug has trickled over to our middle schoolers -- led by Social Studies/Humanities teacher Elizabeth Ross and two attorney parent coaches (Geoff and Jeanie Lewin), the MBMS Mock Trial team is taking southern California by storm! A national competition, each school's team consists of a defense side and a prosecution side, with 6 attorneys, 8 witnesses, a courtroom clerk, a bailiff, and alternates. During the trial, student attorneys make opening and closing statements, make objections, and direct- and cross- examine student witnesses, both from their own team and the opposing school's team. So far in this year's competition, MBMS's team is undefeated against three different schools in competitions judged by actual California judges. Currently they are one of 4 teams remaining from an original field of 56. Semi-finals are scheduled for November 28. Good luck, Waves!



Happy Thanksgiving

I am grateful for every single student, teacher, parent, employee, and caregiver whose support of each other and the community helps create the outstanding, compassionate, young people who matriculate at our schools every day. Thank you, one and all, and I hope you and your families have a very Happy Thanksgiving!



Mike Matthews
MBUSD Superintendent



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