

SUPERINTENDENT'S BULLETIN

MARCH 13, 2024
ISSUE 43



News for School Board Members and District Personnel

Dear School Board Members and District Personnel,

I would like to thank the Principals in our ten district schools for the excellent data meetings that we had over the past week. I am grateful to them for sharing the data using specific examples of what each teacher has to do to support his or her students. Studying the FAST Progress monitoring data brings us to a new level of detail regarding benchmark achievement, couple that with IXL, and other data available, we get a complete picture of how to support students. It's a great thing for instructional planning.

It's hard to believe that Spring Break is here and we embark on the push towards the school year closing for 23-24 when we return. I hope everyone can recharge their battery during the break and have some fun.

Lastly, thanks to our district teams for their support of the Butler family after the tragic accident which took the life of our wonderful teacher and coach Dexter Butler earlier this month. It is remarkable how much we come together as a family to support each other during times of loss. The outpouring of love and support has been meaningful and the ways in which athletic teams, teachers and students throughout the district have shown support is commendable. Once again, we extend our love and our heartfelt condolences to the Butler Family for their loss. Services for Dexter are at St. Mary's Basilica at 11:00 AM on Saturday, March 16th.

Yours in education,
Terri

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

We are approaching the final days of the WIDA Access testing. Congratulations to our ESOL teams for completing this very important testing. We are currently in the window for our Alternate Assessment testing for K-8, with High Schools starting soon after spring break.

Our return from Spring Break signals one week until our BEST Writing window will open from April 1st to April 12th. Schools will be communicating testing dates and information to families to ensure they are aware of these very important dates for testing at each location. Many schools have completed their SAT/ PSAT testing for the spring, congratulations on this accomplishment!

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Coral Shores High School student Rachel Rusch has been selected as the Monroe County School District Sunshine State Scholar designee. This distinguished honor is given to a high school junior who has an interest in pursuing a postsecondary education in Florida in an area of interest in science, technology, engineering or math related field. Rachel has a weighted GPA of 4.537 and scored a 1320 on the SAT, which is in the 93rd percentile. She is an AP Scholar with Honors student and is taking four AP classes this year. In addition to her academic excellence, she is an involved leader in school serving as Secretary of Key Club and Interact Club, Co-Captain of the Weightlifting Team and a member of Mu Alpha Theta, National Honor Society and the Swim Team. She is passionate about improving people’s lives by working towards treatments or cures for Alzheimer’s and dementia and is interested in neurological brain and body connections in regards to cell signaling and immune responses and their role in those degenerative diseases. We have no doubt she will continue to excel and reach those goals and we are proud to award her with this GEM for being our district Sunshine State Scholar representative. She will now move on to the next level of competition. Others nominated included Eleanor Dunn of Marathon High School who has a passion for STEM subjects, leadership, drama and athletics in addition to her high academic excellence. Nicholas Burnett was Key West High School’s nominee, with an outstanding GPA with honors and AP classes and a resume that included athletics, honor clubs and volunteering as a math tutor.



Say Something Week was held last week with the goal of empowering students to help keep our schools safe through being observant, looking out for each other, and telling a trusted adult if they see or hear anything that makes them uncomfortable or frightened. There were daily school-wide activities sponsored by Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) Clubs. Those activities included taking the Say Something pledge, writing thank you notes to their trusted adult, and wearing green to raise awareness.



CONTINUED COMMUNITY RELATIONS

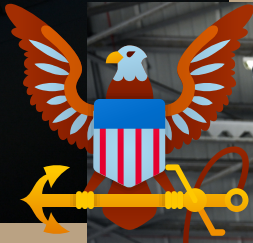
Congratulations to Gabby “Cruella” and Burke “Zoomer” who were chosen from Sigsbee Charter School in Key West to be a "Pilot for a Day."



The monthly program selects two middle school students who excel in Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) to be a “Pilot for a Day.” They spend time at NAS Key West’s Boca Chica Field at VFC-111 experiencing what it’s like to plan, brief, prepare for flight, see a jet up close, and fly the F-5N simulator.



Pictured above:
Gabriella Davila experiencing the flight simulator.



Pictured below:
Burke Morris alongside the jet.



The Pilot for a Day program is sponsored by the Navy to reward middle school STEM students for their achievements and interest in STEM education and career opportunities. The students are selected by each school to spend the day on the base. The students start the day with a pilot while experiencing the flight simulator and a personal tour of a fighter jet. The rest of the day is spent with various Navy departments: search and rescue, firefighting, military working dogs, radar room, and air traffic control.

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

The Exceptional Student Education Department is sad to announce the retirement of Program Specialist for Compliance – Catherine Kanagy.

— HAPPY — Retirement

She has faithfully served the Monroe County School District for the last 35 years! She has contributed to the districts success in achieving “Highly Effective” for the ESE department, which is the highest compliment a district can achieve from the Department of Education. Her last day is June 28th.

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE

I am pleased to provide an update on our payroll and benefits systems, which continue to operate smoothly and efficiently. Over the past month, our payroll processing has remained timely and accurate, ensuring that all employees receive their compensation promptly and without issue. Additionally, our benefits department remains robust, with comprehensive support available to all staff members regarding their healthcare and other benefits inquiries. We are committed to maintaining these ambitious standards to support the well-being and satisfaction of our valued team members.

It is that time of the year again – budget season is in full swing for the Finance Department. We are diligently crafting budget documents in anticipation of the upcoming school budget meetings in early April. As always, we are looking for the right size for all the school allocations and making sure our schools have everything they need to start the 2024-25 school year strong.



Risk Management has completed the MCSD Property and Casualty renewal for 24-25. This process takes months of collecting data. The renewal was approved at the February 27th Board Meeting. On the heels of a successful annual inventory, Internal Services has been collaborating with schools and the Operations Department to auction and donate surplus property. If you have assets at your site that need removing from inventory, reach out to Gaelan and Maria for assistance!

MIS continues final review and submission of Survey 3 student and staff data. We are beginning to coordinate with schools to assist with their scheduling efforts for next year.

We would all like to send our thoughts and prayers to Dexter’s family and friends through this exceedingly difficult time.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Employee requests for voluntary transfer will be considered through August 10th of each year. Instructional Transfer Requests are due April 1st. The 2024-2025 Instructional Transfer Request List will be provided to Principals and Office Managers to ensure educators desiring a transfer will be interviewed and considered at school sites they requested when a vacancy opens for which they are qualified.

Human Resources is working with Duval Street Media to continue inviting applicants to meet with our HR Team to Get-To-Know Monroe County School District. These Microsoft Teams meetings are held on Wednesdays from 4-5pm to assist applicants with inquiries regarding “Work Where The World Vacations.”

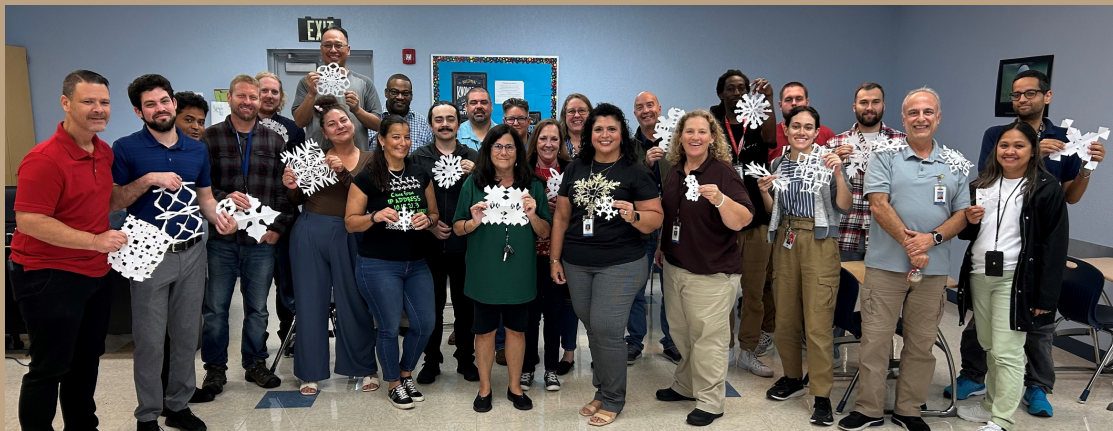
Monroe County School District has been recently represented at Florida A&M University and The University of Florida to speak to education students and share our interest in hiring them at graduation as well as assisting with student teaching, field experience or internship requirements.



OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

Cybersecurity is a top priority for MCSD IT as K12 data remains a target for cyber criminals. We practice security awareness by deploying controlled Phish Campaigns. We've improved by 5.4% on the latest Phish Campaign. 175 users reported the suspicious emails. You are Super Hero's!

Quality customer service is also a priority for MCSD IT. We know you count on technology to work. “The best day is when it all works, but when something breaks you can count on the IT team to respond with a smile. We operate a 3-tier support system to resolve your tech request promptly so you can get back to work”, says Operations Manager Tony Garcia. In 2024 we have successfully closed 3297 requests.



Pictured: MCSD IT during a Wellness Check hosted by Mental Health Coordinator Daliana Goins

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Last month, Key West High School students had the incredible opportunity to engage in biomedical simulations brought directly to their campus by the US Army's Training Trailer. This unique experience, coordinated by Mr. Flanagan, provided an immersive and hands-on exploration of biomedical sciences. Ms. Jackson's biomedical students were particularly enthusiastic participants, diving into the simulations with curiosity and excitement.

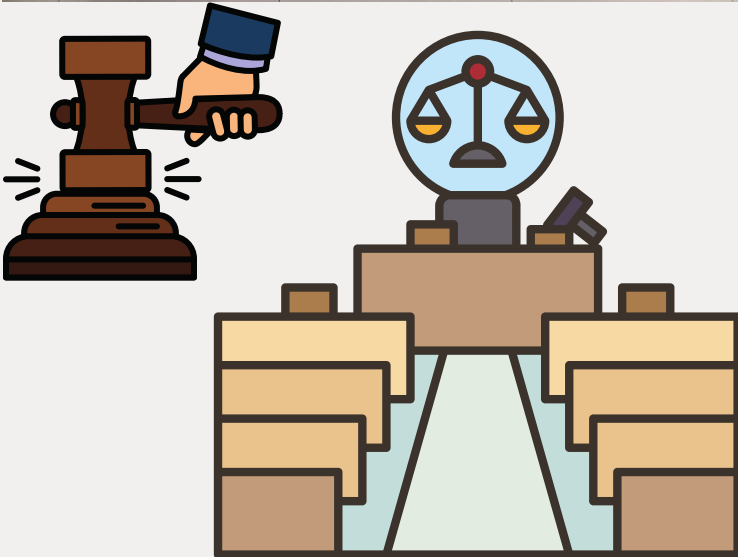


Title I and Head Start joined forces at the Marathon Seafood Festival last weekend to fortify MCSD's efforts in Parent and Family Engagement. Middle Keys kids enjoyed participating in interactive sensory experiences at our "Spring" and "Dr. Seuss" themed stations. Creating these community connections plays a vital role in fostering strong Parent and Family Engagement, promoting collaboration and overall student success.



TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTINUED

This past weekend, Key West High School's Mock Trial Team represented MCSD at the Florida High School Mock Trial Competition sponsored by the Justice Teaching Center at Florida Southern College. Congratulations to Parker Curry (Co-Captain), Neslo Atilla (Co-Captain), Lindsey Smith, Kaylee Matas Cabezuelo, River Hughes, Josephine Clapp, Demetri Rivas, Matteui Bastillada, Najae Gillette, Jessica Reyes Tito, Ameilia Morffi-Gonzalez and Lysander Deem, the team received the Legal Professionalism Award for their outstanding professionalism and ethics in legal advocacy.



Gerald Adams 21st Century parents attended an informative presentation on our upcoming testing season last week. Principal Melissa Alsobrooks discussed valuable student and parent tips for success and the Computer Adaptive Testing format, followed by a Q&A. 21st Century students also kicked off March with a donut party – receiving donated donuts from Dunkin Donuts!

TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTINUED

Coral Shores High School, Marathon High School, and Key West High School each hosted a career fair at the end of February, featuring a diverse range of over 40 local employers. Military recruiters, utility companies, banks, grocery stores, and construction companies were among the varied participants. Students eagerly engaged with representatives from these sectors, exploring a wide spectrum of career opportunities and gaining valuable insights into potential career paths. CTE Coordinator, Caroline Bleske, organized the event with the help of the staff at each high school and community businesses.

