

SUPERINTENDENT'S BULLETIN

APRIL 11, 2024
ISSUE 44

News for School Board Members and District Personnel



Dear School Board Members and District Personnel,

As I was reading the write-ups of our Employees who are being recognized this year at the Annual Recognition Banquet tomorrow night at Hawk's Cay, I was humbled and gratified by the outstanding talent of our folks. It is so important to take time to recognize accomplishments and to thank our staff for their work. In each write-up, the theme that runs through is dedication to making education special for our students, that dedication can be seen by providing students with the best and most appropriate instruction possible or by providing support through driving buses, fixing air conditioners or addressing their food and health needs. Employees in this district care for their students and each other. I am so happy to be a part of this wonderful MCSD family and enjoy this time of year when we can celebrate accomplishments.

Thanks to all of those being recognized and to everyone who plays a part in the District. We can proudly call ourselves TEAM Monroe and it's good to take a moment to be appreciative of everyone's efforts.

Yours in education,
Terri

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

The start of April began the BEST Writing window. All students grades 4-10 have been working hard on their writing assessment. This assessment is not part of the students ELA score and will be scored separately- scores will be released prior to the end of June. April 15th is the opening of the FAST K-2 testing window. Schools are currently working on finalizing details for the spring assessment windows including dates and student rosters. Students in K-2 will participate in STAR Early Literacy or STAR Reading and STAR Math. Beginning May 1st grades 3-10 begin their FAST testing window for FAST ELA and FAST Math (grades 3-8).

CONTINUED ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Students in EOC courses will begin testing in May for Algebra, Geometry, Civics, Biology and US History. These tests are online just like the FAST assessments and scores will be released most often the same day through the Florida Reporting Portal (FRP). Parents can log in using their students unique identifier or through the FOCUS parent portal link which will automatically sign you in. Students in 5th and 8th grade science will take their test in May for the first time ever online. These scores will also be reported through the FRP on a similar time frame as FAST and EOC courses.

We are currently on the tail end of our WIDA Field Test window along with our Florida Alternate Assessment testing window. All materials are expected to be returned to the state this month.

We look forward to a very successful testing season this spring thanks to the dedication of our amazing school Testing Coordinators. They have spent countless hours preparing for the assessment windows and we could not have a successful testing season without them.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Last week we celebrated our Assistant Principals, Paraprofessionals and Media Specialists as the week held National Recognition Days. Special treats, banners and marquee messages let these special groups of people know how grateful their schools are to have them and that their work every day is appreciated.

thank you



Steve Vinson has been selected as the MCSD Assistant Principal of the Year for his positive presence throughout the building as well as his depth of knowledge of behavior management and building relations with students and parents.

According to Theresa Axford, Superintendent, "Steve Vinson, our Assistant Principal of the Year, has a special gift which is students absolutely love him. Mr. Vinson always finds time to talk to students and makes them feel special. Over the years, I have spoken with numerous students who tell me that Mr. Vinson likes to talk to them, make time for them and listens to their needs. Teachers feel the same level of support from Steve." Congratulations, Mr. Vinson, on receiving this honor!

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Laura Lietaert has been selected as the MCSD Principal of the Year for her leadership and ability to connect the school and community. Her experience at Key Largo School gives her the full perspective of a students' school years and she utilizes that in creating a culture that focuses on providing opportunities both in the classroom and beyond. Superintendent Axford says, "Laura Lietaert is a rock star principal. She is truly an instructional leader who helps her staff achieve at high levels. Their classes are filled with students doing group work focused on high level thinking and problem-solving. Laura praises and encourages teachers to try new things and share instructional strategies with one another. The results are very good. Mrs. Lietaert is in teachers' classrooms all the time working with them and coaching them to new heights. Coral Shores High School has an atmosphere of success and well-being under her leadership."



Monroe County School District Superintendent Theresa Axford is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Lori Reid as the new Director of Assessment and Accountability. "Dr. Reid is highly qualified for this position," stated Axford. "Her understanding of student achievement data will support efforts in our schools to provide correct instruction to each student based on his or her needs." Dr. Reid brings a wealth of experience to this role, having served MCSD as the Instructional Materials and Technology Coordinator for the past year following her service in the Palm Beach County School District where she was a Principal for 11 years. In addition, she has enriched the academic community as an Adjunct Professor at Florida Atlantic University and has a strong foundation in teaching and administration. Throughout her career, Dr. Reid has honed her skills in data analysis and strategic decision making, developing a comprehensive background that supports accountability and informed educational environments.



Heidi Roberts, current Assistant Principal at Poinciana Elementary, has been appointed as the new District Literacy Coordinator for the Monroe County School District. Heidi has demonstrated exceptional leadership, creativity, and innovation in her approach to education. Mrs. Roberts' experience also includes time spent on the Bargaining Committee, as a classroom teacher and a Literacy Coach, where she honed her skills in leadership, curriculum development, and instructional support. Heidi is known for her creativity and ability to think outside the box when it comes to finding solutions to support student learning. Her passion for literacy and her belief in the power of education to transform lives will undoubtedly drive positive change throughout the district.



EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

On April 5th the annual Special Olympics Torch Run was held. It is a collaborative effort to support the Monroe County Special Olympics. The Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Publix and Key West Police Department along with athletes, officers and the ESE Director- Dr. Thompson made the 9 mile journey. Many Key West schools are designated stops where parents, teacher and students come out to show support and greet the procession. It was a very uplifting event.



Special Olympics
Florida



FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE

The Finance Team is gearing up for a busy period ahead as we prepare for official budget meetings with our schools and departments in the coming weeks. Also, the State Auditors are coming for the 2023-24 Financial Audit, and we are always ready to work with them. We are poised for yet another successful fiscal year, demonstrating our commitment to excellence and fiscal responsibility.



HUMAN RESOURCES AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Mrs. Axford received written confirmation that our HR procedures are excellent for on-boarding new staff and volunteers. The FDLE Audit was completed January 22, 2024 regarding Human Resources operation procedures for the use of criminal history information as allowed by Florida Statute(s). We are very pleased the audit revealed the MCSD Department of Human Resources was found competent with valid trainings and certifications as required in the FDLE Non-Criminal Justice User Agreement. There are four agencies for our District organization that continue efforts to operate within agreement requirements. Findings of operation procedures for Teacher Certification, School Employment, Contractor/Vendor and VECHS (Volunteers) were qualified in the FDLE Audit and concluded as effectively in compliance.

On April 5th the annual Special Olympics Torch Run will be held. It is a collaborative effort to support

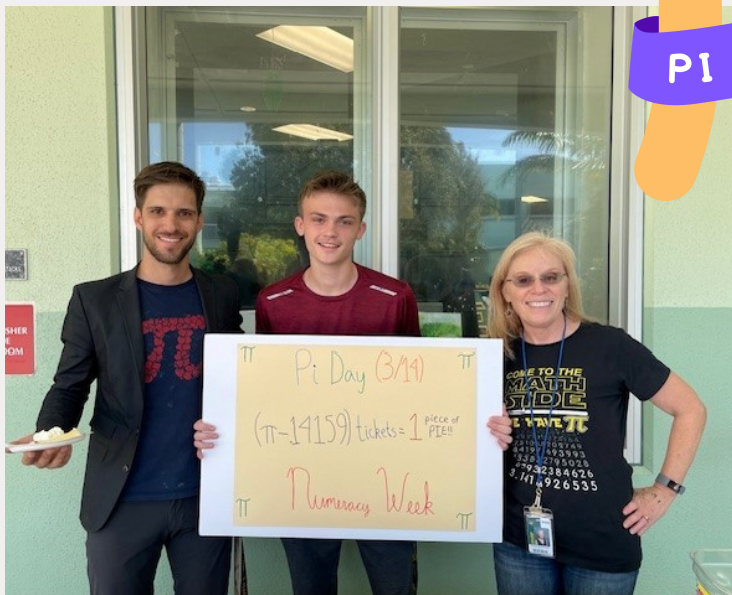
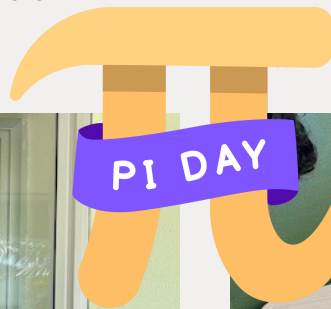
OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

The Maintenance Department is coordinating air conditioning repair and replacement projects totaling close to \$1,000,000 for this summer. This is part of an ongoing annual program, and almost every school site will be involved. Starting in the fall, the maintenance department begins assessing the condition of HVAC equipment. Maintenance technicians in each area inspect each unit to assess them. Considering age, usage, and condition, they list units needing major proactive repair or replacement the following summer. The goal is to schedule the corrective work before a catastrophic failure causes an outage. Director of Maintenance Jeff Barrow has indicated “that since this program was implemented, the department has dramatically reduced air conditioning outages impacting student learning.” Because of its positive impact on the educational process, this program continues to be a top priority for the Maintenance Department each year.

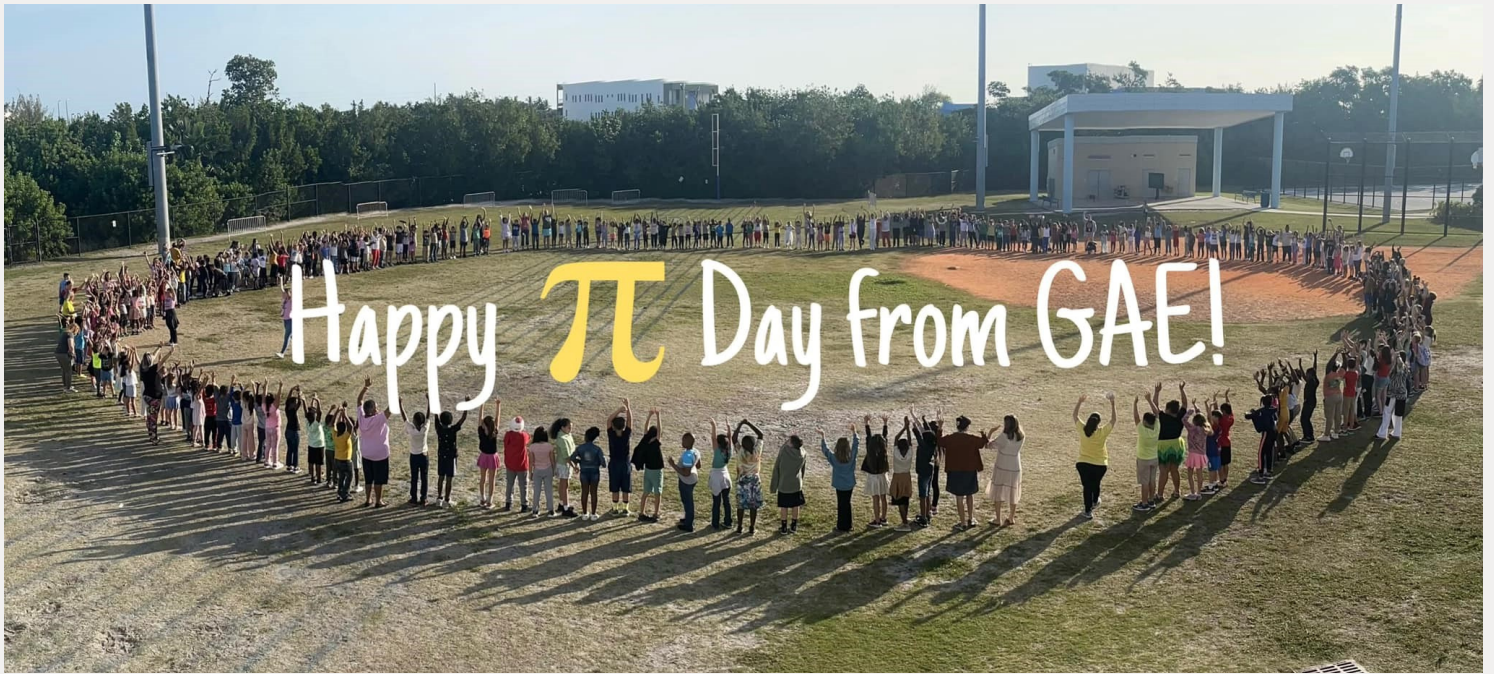


TEACHING AND LEARNING

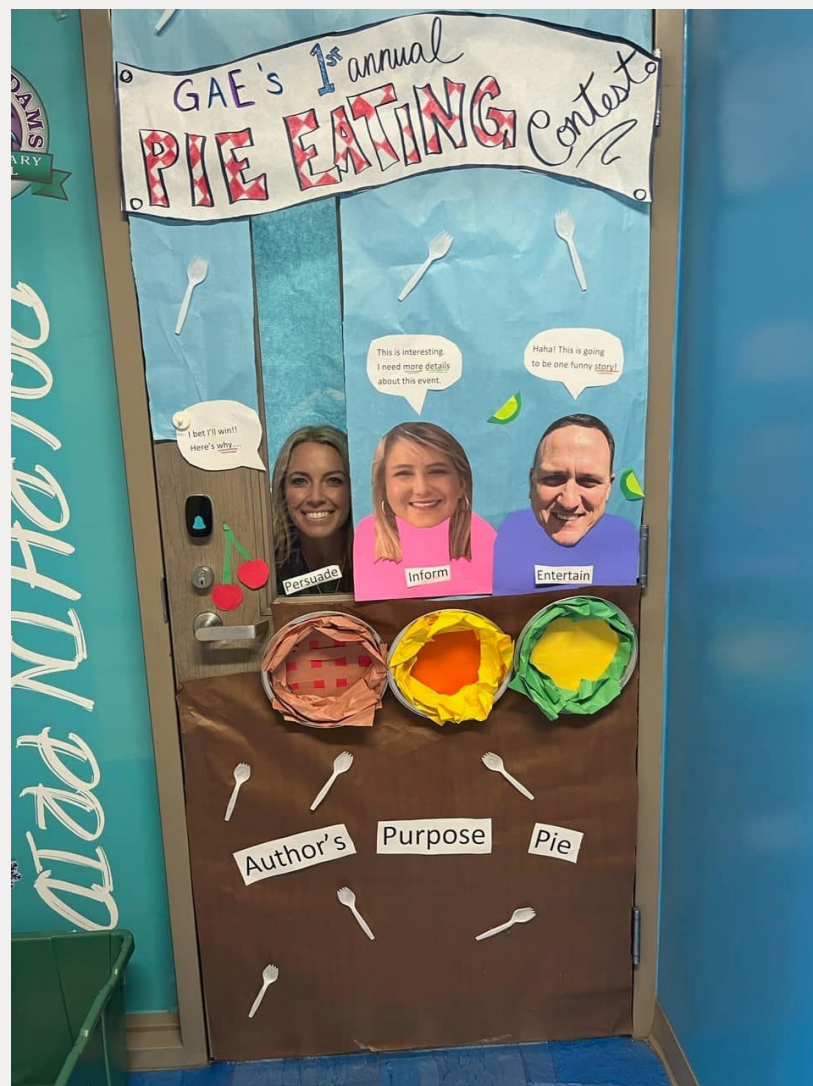
Pi Day was celebrated across the district! CSHS celebrated Numeracy Week with students participating in Sudoku, "24", Tangrams, Pi Trivia Kahoot, and daily math-themed riddles, leading to one of our favorite days of the year: Pi Day! Led by Dianne Wischmeier.



CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING



GAE celebrated with a door decorating contest, school-wide IXL Math Challenge, fun dress-up days, and pie eating contest. Thank you Ashley Mellies for organizing this event.



CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING

Monroe shines at the State STEM Fair! Parks Dunn (PKS) earned Special Recognition in Junior Engineering. Taylor Thomason (SLS) took home the Tomorrow Land Outstanding Science Award, the Thermo Fisher Junior Innovators Challenge Nomination, and second place in the Junior Earth and Environmental Science category. Collin Palomino (SLS) received the Florida Museum of Natural History Award for Outstanding Project in Junior Animal Sciences. Jacobo Gutierrez and Carlos Smith (TVM) won special recognition for their team project in the Junior Biomedical Sciences. Malia Alana (CSHS) earned Special Recognition, Outstanding Project, and the United States Metric Association Science Fair Award for Senior Division Plant Sciences. Congratulations Monroe County Future Scientists for all your scientific achievements.



Pictured Above: Parks Dunn

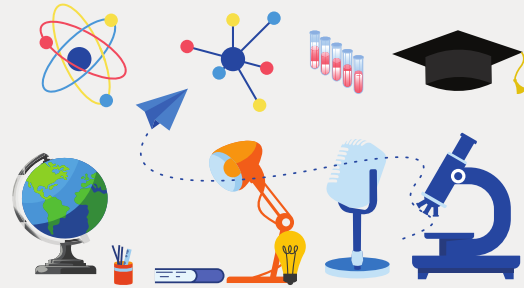
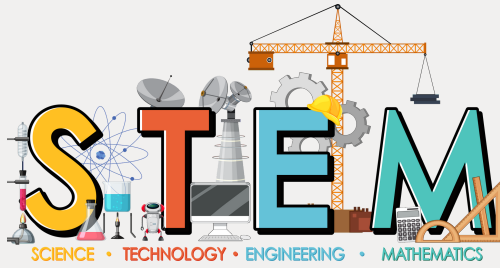


Pictured Above: Taylor Thomason



Pictured Above: STEM Fair Recipients

CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING



Pictured Above: Collin Palomino



Pictured Above: Jacob Gutierrez and Carlos Smith



Pictured Above: Malia Alana