

SUPERINTENDENT'S BULLETIN

**DECEMBER 12, 2023
ISSUE 40**

News for School Board Members and District Personnel



Dear School Board Members and District Personnel,

Happy Holidays to everyone!

This is a season to be jolly and I feel that way because of all the great things that are happening in our schools: the holiday productions and concerts and STEM fairs and Special Olympics Tournaments and spirit weeks with elves and candy canes and decorations throughout the schools are all so wonderful. The sense of giving to others is also very much a part of the celebrations. This festive atmosphere is heightened by the happiness of our students and the excitement that they feel as we approach our winter break. Teachers and staff are also happy and excited to be having a well-deserved break too.

Congratulations on getting a “B” grade as a district. I am proud of our work last year. I think we had an opportunity to learn what the new testing program is all about and are better equipped going forward to manage our instruction and enhance our students’ performance. As a district we are striving to get that “A” once again as we have done so many years in the past. Just as every teacher in the district aims to be highly effective and we have 91% of our teachers who receive that rating, our performance in state testing should match that percentage. Then all systems will be aligned as they should be. I am excited about our opportunities to show what we can do in the next round.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Yours in education,
Terri Axford

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

We are currently in our PM 2 Window for FAST testing. Schools are working hard to prepare students for the second round of testing in the new adaptive testing environment. Teacher and Administrators were presented with information regarding test taking strategies to optimize performance on the new test format and we are looking forward to seeing the results! The state reporting portal also just underwent a refresh and PM 1 scores were replaced with those that align to the new cut scores giving teachers a more accurate picture of growth for their students between the fall PM and the winter PM. The PM 2 window lasts through the end of January, then we will be able to better dig into our results as we prepare for the spring assessments.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Students are taking progress monitoring two throughout December and January. It is important that students try their very best to show what they have learned in the first semester. Teachers are utilizing AVID strategies, differentiated instruction, tutorial supports and in the elementary grades, a new program called Keyboarding Without Tears to help kindergarten through fifth grade learn valuable keyboarding skills. Parents can support by ensuring students are at school on time, have breakfast and have a good night sleep. Positive encouragement as students leave for the day will help them be in a good frame of mind to do their best throughout the day. Click here for more parent resources available on our MCSD website <https://www.keysschools.com/Domain/2726> .

It is always exciting to have graduates share how their post high school plans are going. High school principals frequently get visited by students who return over the holiday breaks and it provides an opportunity to discuss what fun they are having, what are their challenges and what strengths did they take with them from the Monroe County School District. A common reply is students appreciate the ability to have had support in so many ways to help them be successful. Recently, at the distinguished Army-Navy game, two Key West High School graduates found a way to connect among the thousands of young men and women representing the distinguished Naval Academy and West Point. Jaiden Troillo-US Naval Academy, and Adrian Horner-West Point cadet, had a few minutes to reconnect during the game. We look forward to hearing about other graduates and their successes. You can email webmaster@keyssschools.com to share your photo and story.



Pictured left:
Jaiden Troilo (Black) and Adrian Horner (Grey) pose together to take a picture.
Former Key West High School Graduates.



Holiday shows, concerts and activities are taking place throughout the district schools. The talented students who are participating have much to be proud of as they explore the arts and culture through these extra-curricular activities. Thank you to the teachers, sponsors and parents for supporting these opportunities for students to collaborate and grow.



CONTINUED COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Parents are urged to stay connected with our MyMCSD App that provides instant access to Focus, school and district websites, Facebook pages, lunch menus and more. If you don't have a Focus Parent Portal, click on this link to see a video on how to create one:

<https://www.keysschools.com/Page/7201>



STAY
CONNECTED

DOWNLOAD
NOW

Download the
**NEW
MYMCSD
APP**

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!



Focus & student information, news & social media, school events...
at your fingertips.

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google play

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

The Exceptional Student Education Department celebrated with our more than 50 ESE staff members at our regional holiday afterschool gatherings. The team was also been busy creating a winter wonderland for the Lower Keys PK students "North Pole" event. Even with the road closure, we still had over 200 PK students enjoy the event!



FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE

Thank you, and congratulations to the Finance team for achieving another year of perfect audits! We are blessed to have such a strong Finance Department. We did submit our Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) to the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) for the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting. It would be our tenth year in a row receiving this award!

Our Benefits Department is still working very hard with the implementation of the new Benefits Administration system. We are eager and excited to show all employees the new and improved system when we return from the Holiday Break.

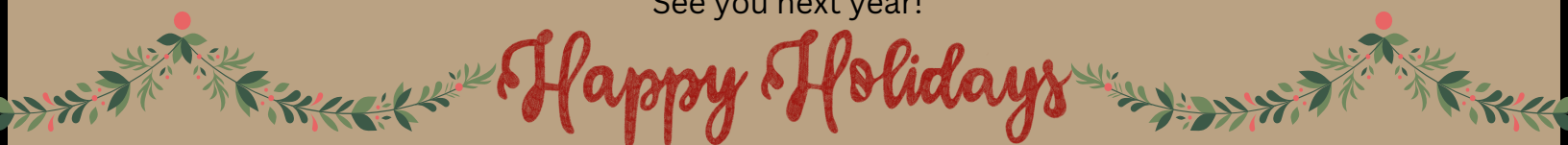
The MIS Department has just completed Survey 2 and is working with the FLDOE to finalize any outstanding issues.

Payroll is ahead of the game, as always. The December 15th paycheck is already in the system, waiting for disbursement. The Payroll team is working on the December 30th paycheck now.

The Internal Service Department is as busy as ever with all the contract renewals to start the new calendar year.

We hope everyone has an extraordinary Winter Break; enjoy your time with family and loved ones.

See you next year!



HUMAN RESOURCES AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The 2023-2024 Instructional and Administrative Contracts were created in the Employee Self-Service (ESS) section of Focus to review and sign as a pending Employee Agreement. Acknowledgements are also in ESS for educators to sign and confirm they have reviewed their 2022-2023 Instructional Evaluations. There is a separate appeals process available with the steps to follow should an educator choose to appeal where it may change the overall summative rating. Comprised of both UTM and District EPIC membership, the EPIC committee will meet on December 14, 2023 to review and make final determinations to either support a modification or sustain the evaluation rating as originally received. Efforts continue toward making sure schools and departments obtain staffing required for the start of 2024-2025 school year. The Human Resources Team has been visiting and building partnerships with FSU, FAMU, UF and UCF. MCSD is recruiting the graduates from these colleges of education. Also we want to partner with these universities to recruit MCSD staff and students to work on both undergraduate and advanced degrees. Of the staff that met with the HR Team during recently completed HR School Site Visits, 18 staff and paraprofessionals have been identified as currently working toward becoming educators. In Frontline Recruiting & Hiring, a 2024-2025 Instructional job posting is open to enable a pool of applicants so that schools can begin their efforts to fill teaching positions that will be available for next school year. HR Staff have begun inviting and meeting with applicants in “Get To Know MCSD” online gatherings to support and assist them with decisions to apply and work in the FL Keys!

OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

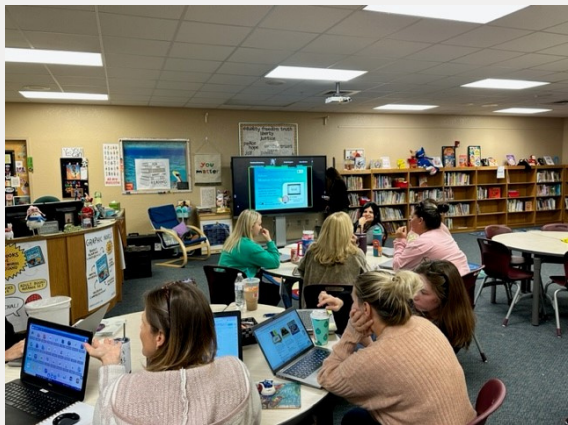
Team Transportation is closing out one year and rolling into another year. “It is hard to believe this year is almost over.” said Pavel Pinc, Key West Mechanic. This is the time of year when the Team can get caught up on fleet maintenance. Changing oil and tires, along with other routine maintenance, is what keeps the fleet running smoothly and reliably. It also significantly extends the service life of the vehicles. “Maintaining our fleet in top-notch condition is a priority, and the safety of our students and staff is always our number one priority.” said Jason Thomason, Transportation Director.



 *Happy Holidays!* 
Happy Holidays from Team Transportation!

TEACHING AND LEARNING

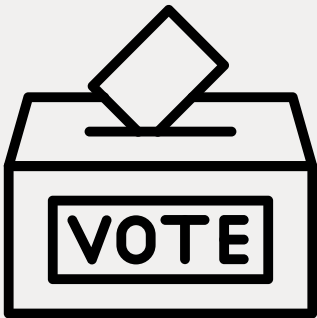
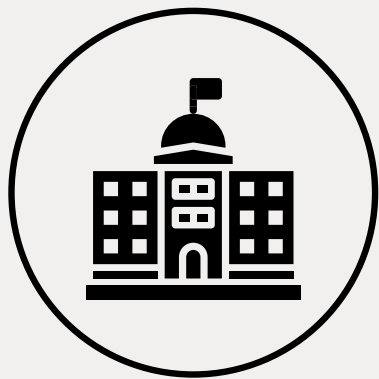
Professional Learning has been going on up and down the Keys!



IXL provided professional learning to teachers and coaches with a personalized learning experience in many schools this week. IXL's adaptive learning technology tailors lessons to individual student needs. This personalized approach ensures that each student progresses at their own pace, reinforcing mastery of essential ELA and Math skills.

CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING

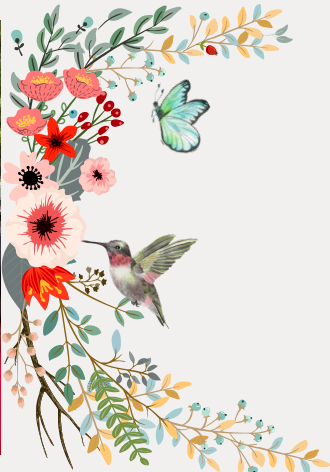
Our State Civics Literacy Coach, Travis McKellar, visited Civics teachers throughout the district. He coached, planned and provided feedback on how to increase engagement and achievement. Mr. McKellar was also able to review strategies to best utilize the NEW Civics Instructional Guide that was just released in November.



Pictured above:

On the left is Mr. Hartnett, Social Studies Teacher at PKS, with students from his class, joined by Mr. Travis McKellar on the right

KWHS Ocean Guardian School District PLC enjoyed an informational afternoon at the Key West Botanical Gardens while learning how to establish a native species butterfly research and educational garden at KWHS for outdoor classroom instruction. The informational tour with instructional aspects of native species as well as associations with butterflies and hummingbirds was provided by the Botanical Garden specialists.

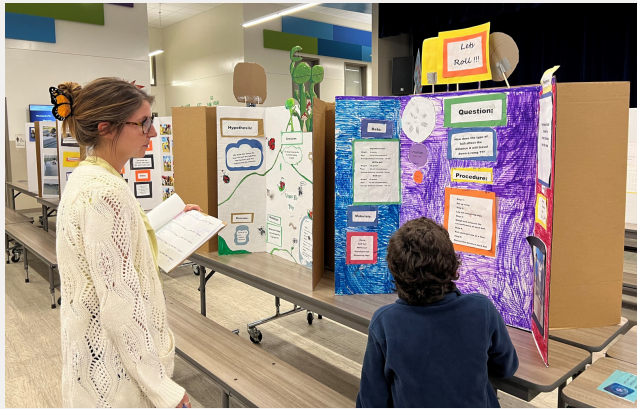


CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING

Federal Programs and Curriculum join forces to strengthen Parent and Family Engagement within our Title I schools. At Gerald Adams last week, students showcased their STEM and Literacy Skills in an interactive, glow-in-the-dark experience plus other holiday-themed reading activities.



Pictured left:
Donna Tedesco,
Coordinator of STEM
alongside
Natalie Liz,
District ESOL
Coordinator,
and
Melissa Alsobrooks,
Principal of
Gerald Adams
Elementary School



The Curriculum Team and Federal Programs wishes everyone the happiest of holidays!

