



NEWS FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND DISTRICT PERSONNEL



Dear Team Monroe,

I have a very strong belief that creating a culture where success is possible for all students is a predictor of great accomplishments for school districts. With that in mind, I would like you as teachers, administrators and support staff to give some extra consideration to the students who haven't been successful during the first nine weeks. Sometimes it takes a little extra time but it is well worth the effort to get to the root cause of why a student is not being successful. Building a relationship with the student may yield the answers to why success has been difficult for him or her. Problem solving with the student may yield a great solution that is acceptable across the board. One that will push the student away from failure and toward success. Remember: "Relationships are the key."

Most importantly as I end these remarks, I want you to remember to VOTE. This is an important election for educators and support personnel: the 1/2 mill supports teacher and staff salary increases and school resource officers and the 1/2 cent pays for building projects, athletic fields and computers. Both the referendums represent no new taxes. Tell everyone you know the facts.

Yours in education,  
Terri Axford

**ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY**

We are excited to share that the first testing window for both Progress Monitoring 1 (PM1) and EOC/FAST Retakes has successfully concluded. Our dedicated teams are eagerly analyzing the data to further support and enhance our students' learning experiences.

Upcoming Assessments:

- PSAT/NMSQT for 10th and 11th Grade Students: This month, all our 10th and 11th graders will take the PSAT/NMSQT. This assessment not only provides a pathway to earn concordant scores for graduation in math but also offers our 11th graders the chance to qualify for the prestigious National Merit Scholarship.
- Fall School Day SAT for 12th Grade Students: Our 12th graders will have the opportunity to take the School Day SAT this fall. This test enables them to earn concordant scores for graduation in both math and ELA.

This year, both the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT will be administered online, streamlining the process for our students.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

October is a month that focuses on being kind and stopping bullying through activities on Unity Day and through Red Ribbon Week. Save Promise Clubs across school campuses have planned special days to show they are “Red”y to live a healthy life (wearing red) and making pledges to stay drug and alcohol free.



This is National Principals’ Month and we recognize and celebrate the vital role that school principals play in education. This is a special time to recognize their leadership, dedication and impact on students and staff.

NATIONAL  
PRINCIPALS  
MONTH





## CONTINUED COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Red Carpet was rolled out for Board Member Andy Griffiths at the October 8th Board meeting. A reception and accolades for his 32 years of service to the Monroe County School District was featured prior to the School Board Meeting.

— HAPPY —  
*Retirement*



## EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

Under the guidance of Dr. Jennie Gans, both the TIES and Vocational Rehab programs have been revamped district wide! The mission of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is to help people with disabilities find and maintain employment and enhance their independence. Beginning at age 14, students with disabilities can connect with VR for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). These services contribute to career exploration and preparation for adult life. The Monroe County School District partners with VR to provide work-based learning experiences for our students with disabilities. The Exceptional Student Education department employs one graduation coach and three job coaches who specifically work with our VR students out in the community. Currently, our school district has a dozen students from across our three high schools participating in the work-based learning experiences through VR. We look forward to adding more students to this wonderful program and continuing our partnership with VR.

## FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE

The Finance team has successfully completed the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and submitted it to the auditors. This report has earned us the Excellence in Financial Reporting award for the past ten years, but we're not stopping there. We're aiming for yet another year of excellence! We're also excited to announce that the annual internal audit of our school accounts is complete, with positive results across the board. While there are always opportunities for growth, and room for improvements, this year's audit reflects strong performance from our schools. Congratulations to all our schools for their efforts and continued commitment to financial integrity!



The payroll team is working hard, as always, to ensure everyone gets paid accurately and on time. Meanwhile, the Benefits team is putting in tremendous effort with Open Enrollment—make sure to enroll! A big shout-out to Elena and Cheryl for their outstanding contributions to making Open Enrollment a smooth process. Thank you for all your hard work!

After a long period of training and implementation, Internal Services is pleased to announce the rollout of the new OpenGov e-Procurement Portal. OpenGov will serve MCSD's official platform for competitive solicitations and contracts and Internal Services has made exhaustive efforts towards a successful launch. With a goal of streamlining and improving the District's bidding process, Internal Services has made great progress towards removing barriers that often dissuaded local vendors from participating. The first bids will be launched on OpenGov in the coming weeks.

You're invited to see the new Procurement Portal for yourself at:

 <https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/keyschools-mcsd>

## HUMAN RESOURCES AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The 2024-2025 Annual Acknowledgement forms are mandatory for all employees. Along with email reminders, an indication "There are forms awaiting your signature" was provided in the Employee Self-Service section of Focus to review and acknowledge the forms pending. All employees are to acknowledge all documents by Friday, November 1, 2024. For Human Resources, Survey 2 State Processing, includes Out of Field Teacher Recommendations reported to the Board and approved on October 8th, which is required prior to FL Department of Education reporting by the District. Parent Notification letters were prepared in three languages for schools to indicate teachers approved and reported as out of field for the subject they are teaching. Notices were provided to parents the day after Board approval.





## CONTINUED HUMAN RESOURCES AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Human Resources remains committed in our search for an Athletic Trainer at Key West High School. HR applied for and received a grant award from NATA to submit the Key West High School Athletic Trainer job posting on the National Athletic Trainers' Association Career Center.

## OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

Facilities Construction collaborates with various departments to ensure projects are completed within the boundaries of cost, schedule, and scope as authorized by the School Board of Monroe County. The Building Official is responsible for supervising, directing, or performing the permitting and inspection of construction, alteration, repair, remodeling, or demolition of structures to ensure compliance with the Florida Building Code.

School District Building Official, Tucker Phinney, reviews building plans and oversees the district's permit issuance process, performing prompt and thorough inspections at various stages of construction. Tucker also completes the annual Comprehensive Fire Safety, Casualty Safety, and Sanitation Inspection Report for all district-owned facilities.

Director of Construction and Distribution Services, Doug Pryor, says, "A key component of building standards to safeguard property and public welfare relies on the expertise of the Building Official. Tucker plays an integral role within the Construction and Planning department."



## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Monroe County School District's 16 social workers received Oculus VR headsets. A special thank you to the Knight Foundation grant that funded the devices. The headsets will be used with students to improve direct teaching and the practice of mindfulness skills to reduce anxiety and promote emotional regulation. The devices will promote activities that support conflict resolution, focus and attention, and education about how the brain responds while under stress. Students will also be able to use the devices as incentives for positive behaviors. In addition, it will provide immersive language learning to facilitate the goal of having a 100% bi-lingual social work department.



A big thank you to the Knight Foundation for funding this grant. I only listed a few of the many uses for this technology and am excited to see that list grow over time. More importantly, we are excited to see students apply what they practice in the virtual setting to their in real world environment.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Students from Key Largo School were able to participate in "Reading to Renee"! Renee is a certified service dog who visited Mrs. Maresma's fourth grade class. Students were able to practice their reading and build fluency while fostering their love for books.



Throughout September and into October, MCSD students celebrated and recognized Founders Month, Hero's Day, Hispanic Heritage Month, Constitution Day and Celebrate Freedom Week. Some of the activities included 9/11 ceremonies that recognized our heroes; daily school-wide announcements recognizing our Founding Fathers; reciting the preamble of the Declaration of Independence; bulletin board decorations; dressing up in red, white and blue and Hispanic Heritage celebrations.





## CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING



Gerald Adams' 21st Century students are showcasing their creativity through an ongoing partnership with the Key West Art and Historical Society. In this month's session, third-grade students used their imaginations to craft unique watercolor and crayon resist masterpieces, highlighting their artistic skills.



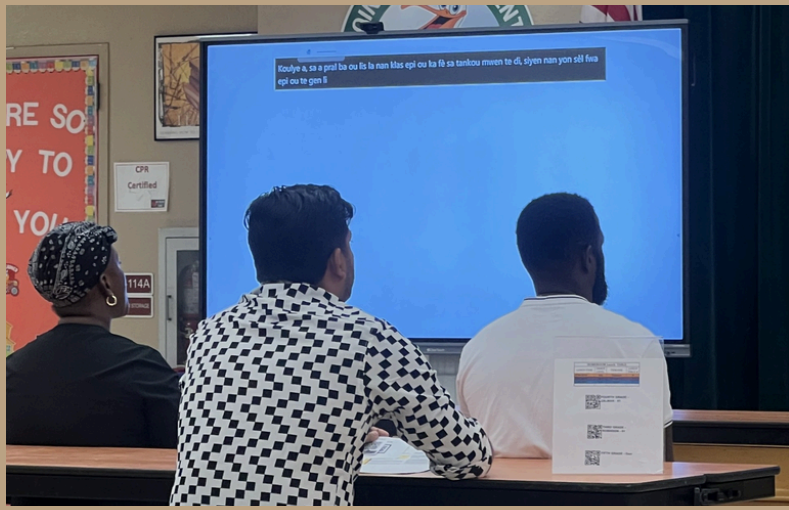
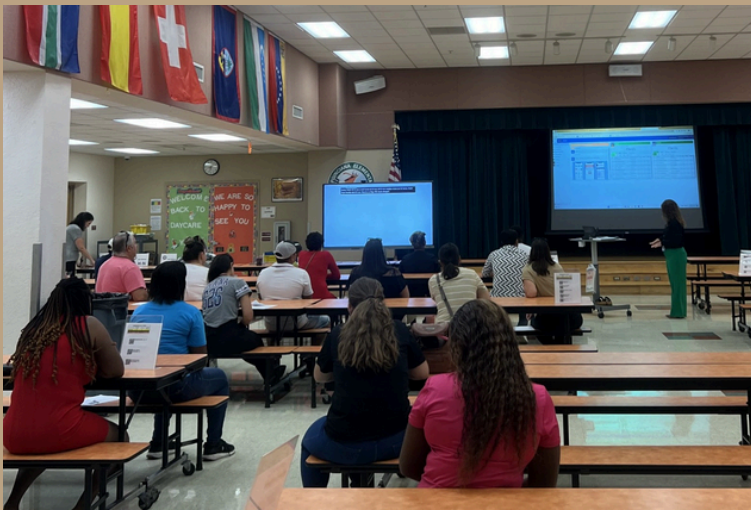
Captain Tim Anson from the Key West Fire Department coordinates Fire Academy students at Key West High School, teaching them vital CPR skills and preparing the next generation of first responders! CPR empowers students with a critical, hands-on skill that enhances their ability to make a real impact in their communities. In addition to learning CPR, Fire Academy students receive comprehensive training in Emergency Medical Response (EMR) and work toward earning their Firefighter 1 certifications. This dual training equips them with the critical skills needed to handle medical emergencies, as well as the foundational knowledge required for firefighting, making them highly prepared for careers in emergency services.



Poinciana Elementary recently held grade-level parent workshops, led by Principal Tara Whitehead. She covered FAST information, sample tests, testing resources, and Progress Monitoring 1 results, guiding parents on how to analyze reports in Focus to identify student improvement areas. She also demonstrated how to use IXL for targeted learning gains. At the end of each session, parents could sign up for a Focus Parent Portal account. To support EL parents, Principal Whitehead used the ClearTouch screen for real-time translation into Haitian Creole, which was well received.



# CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING



At Key West High School, Keri Fink’s Anatomy and Physiology Honors class is learning every muscle and organ system by building them out of clay. Keri constructed a class set of life-size “skeletons” out of PVC. Each year the students construct the organ systems, build each organ from clay, and attach them to the skeletons. The students just finished building the brains. This year, the students will take the model building to the next level by showing the physiology, or functions, of the body systems as well. For example, the students will make a 3D model of the heart while learning about the circulatory system. The heart will include tubing with fluid to trace the flow of blood through the heart and simulate the correct blood flow direction! A big thank you to Haskins Plumbing for providing al the PVC fittings for this project.

