

SUPERINTENDENT'S BULLETIN

JANUARY 28, 2025

ISSUE 52

News for School Board Members and District Personnel



Dear Team Monroe,

At this point in the year, it's critical that we take time to thoroughly review the PM 2 data to better understand and support the needs of our students. A detailed analysis of this data allows us to assess each student's progress, identify areas where additional support is needed, and celebrate growth where it is occurring. This is one of the key advantages of progress monitoring at this point in the year.

In cases where a student is not demonstrating growth, it's essential for the school team to come together to analyze the situation and determine the most effective ways to support that student moving forward. Collaboration within grade-level teams is a powerful strategy to help us tackle these challenges. By working together, we can share insights, techniques, and strategies that may lead to better outcomes for all students.

If a teacher is experiencing success with a particular benchmark or intervention strategy, sharing those methods with others could be the key to greater success across the team. Let's leverage the collective expertise and creativity of our staff to ensure we are doing everything possible to help our students succeed.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to supporting our students. I look forward to seeing the positive impact of this collaborative effort!

Yours in education,
Terri Axford

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

The window for Progress Monitoring 2 (PM2) has been extended to January 31st. However, most of our schools completed testing by the original deadline of January 24th and have begun their data analysis.

Utilizing the performance data from PM2 provides our schools with the opportunity for informed decision-making and targeted instruction. By carefully reviewing the PM2 data, our schools can identify strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring that every student's needs are met.

We have also concluded our High School retake window for ELA and EOC assessments. The next opportunity for retakes will be during the Spring testing window, which opens on May 1st.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Monroe County School District and Coral Shores High School is proud to announce that student Nathaniel Shugarman will represent the county as a Sunshine State Scholar.

During his years attending school in Monroe County, Shugarman has excelled in many areas of study, completing numerous advanced math and science courses; he consistently earns a perfect score of 5 on AP exams in all subjects and scored a perfect score of 1520 on his PSAT test. During summer months he has advanced his education in various fields of physics at such prestigious schools as Duke University, Brown University as well as taking a Physics course from the U.S. Department of Energy.

He is not just an excellent student, however. He is the President of Mu Alpha Theta, the school's math honor society; a member of the school's Student Council and the Academic Challenge Team; a member of Interact, a Rotary-sponsored club focusing on leadership and community involvement; and the a member of the Village Youth Council. To round out his high school career, he participates in Cross Country and Lacrosse and has earned over 200 hours of community service.

SUNSHINE STATE SCHOLAR



2024-25 MCSD District Teacher of the Year is Katharine Yarbrough from Plantation Key School.

Congratulations!



Ms. Yarbrough has significantly strengthened the music program, fostering a culture of excellence and passion for the arts. She oversees both the regular and advanced bands, consistently leading them to success. She also works with the elementary students bringing music to life. Her contributions are numerous including organizing "A Special Night" showcase. Her dedication, creativity, and ability to inspire students make her an invaluable part of the school community. Congratulation to Ms. Yarbrough and the school Teachers of the Year including Holli Averette (HOB), Michael Roy (SLS), Kristin Leptin (GAE), Ryan Stamey (POI), Joanna Gray (KWHS), Kaia Miller (SSE), Kelley Cruz (MHS), Yani Gilmore (CSHS), Angelina Maresma (KLS).

CONTINUED COMMUNITY RELATIONS



Students who attend a symphony concert gain a unique auditory experience that enhances their understanding of music and its components, such as rhythm and harmony. Elementary students in the Upper Keys were able to have an entertaining experience by attending the South Florida Symphony Orchestra's "Peter and the Wolf" concert. Students participated in a session beforehand to talk about the instruments of the symphony, and to preview the story line of the upcoming concert.



Lower Keys elementary students were able to attend Puppy Pals, an action-packed show where adopted and rescue dogs perform spectacular feats. The students enjoyed it as evidenced by the loud cheers of joy!



EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

The Monroe County Special Olympics National School Recognition Program for 2024 has released names of winning students. A Special Olympics Unified Champion School has an inclusive school climate and exudes a sense of collaboration, engagement and respect for all members of the student body and staff. A Unified Champion School receiving national banner recognition is one that has demonstrated commitment to inclusion by meeting ten national standards of excellence. The primary activities within these standards include: Special Olympics Unified Sports® (where students with and without disabilities train and compete as teammates), Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole-School Engagement. Banner Unified Champion Schools should also be able to demonstrate they are self-sustainable or have a plan in place to sustain these activities into the future.

In Florida, there were just 10 schools in total that received this recognition. Monroe schools that earned this prestigious recognition are Key Largo School and Coral Shores High School.

Congratulations to all who support the Special Olympics in Monroe County!



FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE

Thank you, and congratulations to the Finance team on another year of flawless audits!



Before the winter break, we successfully completed the 2023-2024 financial audit. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and skilled Finance Department. Also, we submitted our Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) to the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) for the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting. If awarded, this will be our eleventh consecutive year receiving this prestigious honor—a true testament to the team's excellence.

MIS (Management Information Systems) is coordinating with schools and departments to prepare for the upcoming FTE window for state reporting (Survey 3), during the week of February 3rd–7th. Please continue to ensure that enrollment, attendance, schedule, and staff data is complete and accurate. We commend and appreciate everyone's efforts in working together to inspire and bring excellence.

Risk Management has been hard at work finalizing the property and casualty program for the upcoming school year (2025-2026). This program is crucial for protecting and maintaining District assets both human and capital.

The Payroll team has successfully processed all W-2 forms, which are now available on your Focus portal. Additionally, Payroll is working on the Perfect Attendance Bonus, which will be paid out January 30th. A big thank you to the Payroll team for their hard work and dedication!

The Benefits team has been equally diligent, ensuring that all new benefits for the 2025 year have been added to employees' accounts. This year, they also implemented Teledoc services for Dermatology and Mental Health. The team continues to explore new benefits that provide financial and personal value to MCSD employees. Kudos to the Benefits team for their efforts and commitment!

As you can tell the entire finance and performance team have been hard at work...as always! We are here to be a resource for you, so reach out to us any time!

HUMAN RESOURCES AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

To coordinate Monroe County School District employment plans for the upcoming school year and future years, the Department of Human Resources annually conducts districtwide reviews of staffing configurations. It's mandatory for all staff to complete an Intent to Remain form in Focus by January 31, 2025, with their intentions to return to employment at the Monroe County School District for the 2025-2026 school year. The Department of Human Resources Team continues to visit and build partnerships with FSU, FAMU, UF and UCF. This creates an opportunity to speak with education classes to promote MCSD and share what Monroe County has to offer future teachers. The HR Team plans for recruitment include striving to increase student teaching, field experience and practicums to recruit education graduates from various colleges and universities. These partnerships include providing information for MCSD staff and students to obtain both undergraduate and advanced degrees. Survey 3 educators Out of Field will be reported to the MCSD Board for approval on January 28th. Schools are to provide parent notices on January 29th. Office Managers will ensure Out of Field Status forms are signed by educators and Principals with return to HR Specialists.

OPERATIONS AND PLANNING

The Transportation department has remained busy not only operating routes on time but also providing transportation services for athletics and other extra-curricular activities, many of which occur outside of Monroe County. This support has been aided by the arrival of some new school buses with additional safety and comfort features. “The new buses are amazing!” said Kathy Johnson, Marathon Transportation Coordinator.

Meanwhile, Cassie White, SLS Coordinator & CDL Trainer, is in her final training and certification for her role as a Florida CDL Tester. “Our operations will be greatly positively impacted when we can train and test new school bus drivers all in house.” said Cassie.

“We have an absolutely amazing and dedicated Team of professionals. They are up and rolling hours before school opens and still rolling long after school is over.” said Jason Thomason, Transportation Director.



STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

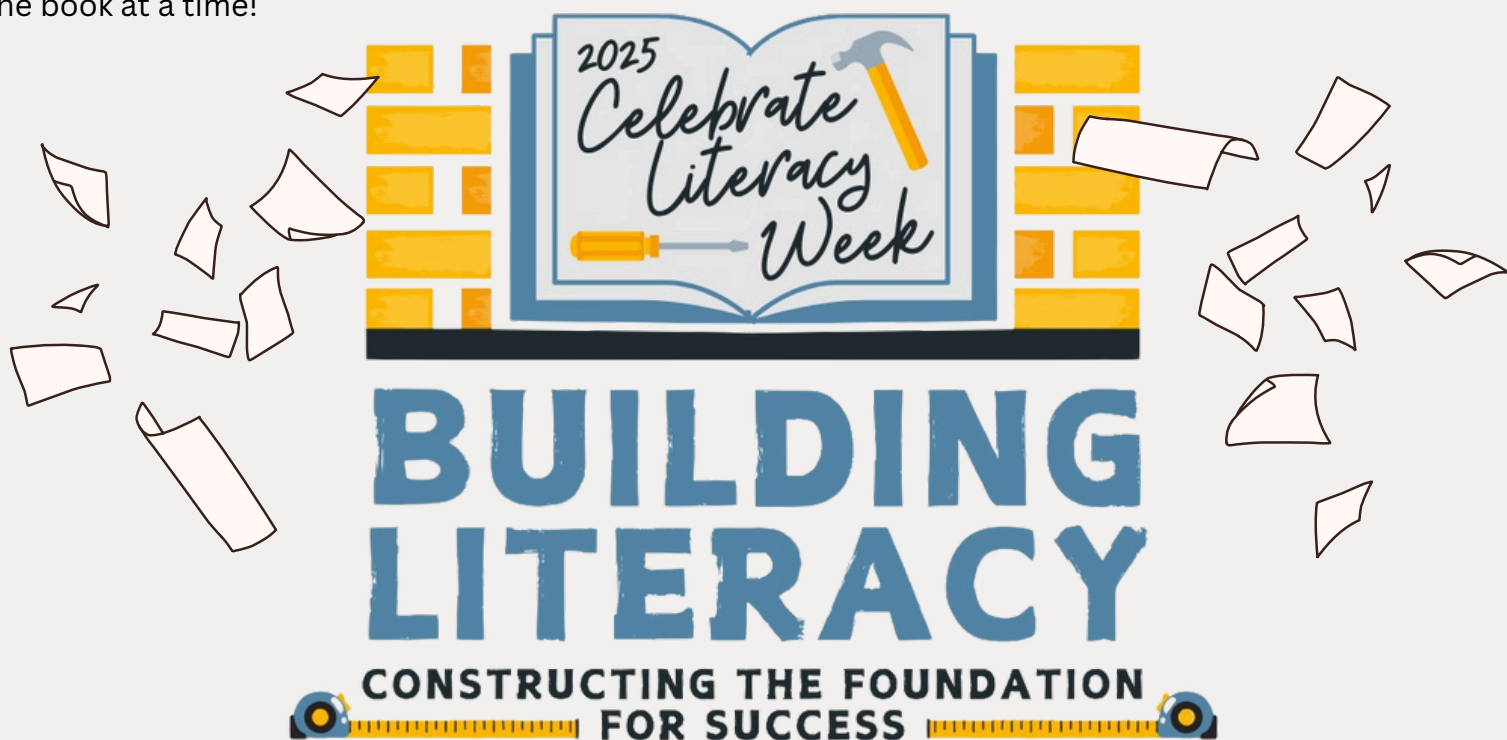
Ivona Coleman presented Rodziah Josephson with a Certificate of Appreciation in her efforts to support the Monroe County Health Department’s quest for completed surveys. The surveys collect data from our community on the needs such as Health Care, Housing, Transportation, Food and Nutrition, and Social Opportunities.

Congratulations!

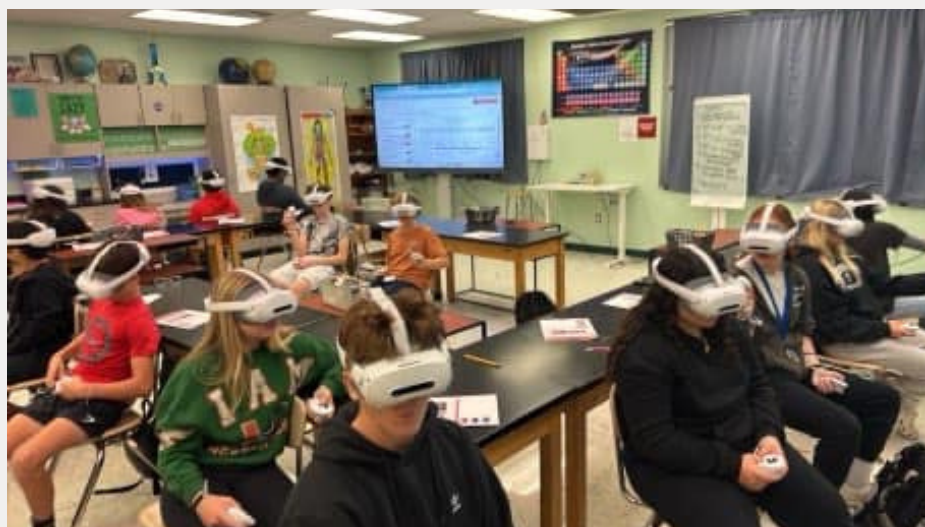


TEACHING AND LEARNING

Monroe County School District is participating in for Celebrate Literacy Week: Constructing the Foundation for Success with a variety of exciting events to foster a love for reading and learning. The week's activities will celebrate literacy, encourage community engagement, and inspire students to build strong foundations for future success. All third-grade students will welcome a guest reader from United Way, who will read a captivating book about coral reefs and donate a copy to each student. Schools will host thrilling events such as spelling bees, vocabulary parades, reading sessions with service dogs, and creative dress-up theme days. It's a week where students can lay the groundwork for their future success, one book at a time!



Prisms VR has introduced its innovative virtual reality education product at Sugarloaf School, offering a new way for students to engage with Math and Science. This immersive experience allows 7th and 8th graders to explore key concepts by interacting with virtual data points in the X-Y coordinate space. As they move within the VR environment, they generate real-time scatter plots, enhancing their understanding of graphing, spatial reasoning, and data analysis in a dynamic and tangible way.



CONTINUED TEACHING AND LEARNING

MCSD Upper Keys students had a fun day at the College of the Florida Keys' Community Day in Key Largo! At our Title I booth, older students crafted STEM-inspired snowflakes using marshmallows and toothpicks, while little ones enjoyed exploring themed sensory bins. Events like this strengthen community ties and bring parents closer to their child's educational journey!

