

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation



Covering the San Marino Unified School District

Volume 4, Issue 7

November 2022



Resiliency, Innovation and Hard Work Pave the Way to Student Success



Dr. Linda de la Torre
Superintendent

The past few years have been a whirlwind of changes; however, the one thing that remains the same is San Marino Unified School District's unwavering commitment to excellence in what we refer to as the Four A's: Academics, Arts, Athletics and Activities. Every one of our schools has received the California Distinguished School Award and the National Blue Ribbon Award. According to Niche, SMUSD remains in the top 1% of all public-school districts in the US. This is possible because we work hard to provide

every student with a deep connection to their school through any one of, if not all four of, the Four A's.

I am incredibly proud that in 2021, Henry E. Huntington Middle School was the only middle school in California to receive the National Blue-Ribbon Award. This was no small feat given school districts everywhere were all struggling to get through the pandemic. Last year despite the numerous challenges of the pandemic, 33 of our graduating seniors received acceptance letters to UC Berkeley. This year, on December 1, 2022, we will receive the California School Boards Association Golden Bell Award for Innovation in how our school district managed its Covid-19 Compliance program. This doesn't happen without having incredibly dedicated and hardworking

board members, PTA and Foundation leadership, district office administrators, principals, assistant principals, directors and our amazing and highly qualified teachers and classified staff who are on the frontlines of providing outstanding instruction and support to our incredible students each and every day.

State assessments reveal that students across the Nation have experienced learning gaps in their education caused by the pandemic and while we continue to see positive results, every member of our School District team is working tirelessly to make up for lost time through providing our students with diagnostic assessments, academic interventions and support, and mental health services. Our community invests heavily in our student's success and well-being through their time and financial resources. We are grateful for their continued support.

In addition to the Four A's, those of us in education today have a duty to model and teach resilience, innovation, and hard work in the hopes that our students will learn to overcome obstacles and to follow their dreams with passion and vigor as we prepare them for their futures. There are valuable lessons that we have learned throughout the past several years that we can use to our advantage in the future – as it is only through resiliency, innovation and hard work that every student will succeed in the years ahead.

San Marino Schools Foundation

1665 West Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7014 • www.smsf.org

**SAN
MARINO
SCHOOLS
FOUNDATION**
Empowering Excellence.

The 2022-2023 School Year Is Off To A Strong Start

Alison Moller, 2022-2023 President

The San Marino Schools Foundation is proud to contribute to the excellence of SMUSD schools with its \$2 million yearly grant to the District. This grant supports Academics, Athletics, Arts and Activities by funding 20 teachers across all four school sites. Additional teachers allow for more AP classes; greater and more diverse academic, athletic, arts and activity offerings; and smaller class sizes.

The Foundation thanks the generosity of the parents who donated or pledged to donate to the Foundation at the beginning of the school year. This initial giving is our strongest showing in over three years. And in October, the Foundation was happy to welcome many new families to the District with a new family mixer attended by nearly 200 people. We hope those new to the District experience for themselves the excellence of our schools.



New families, School board member Jane Chon, and Foundation trustees at the new family mixer.

Board of Education



Jeanie Caldwell
President



Jane Chon
Vice President



C. Joseph Chang
Clerk



Michael Killackey
Member



Shelley Ryan
Member

San Marino's 4 A's: Academics, Athletics, Arts and Activities

By Jeanie Caldwell, President

San Marino Unified School District "SMUSD" has long been recognized as providing an extraordinary education to our children. Delivering this education requires significant support from our community. Annually, SMUSD faces significant funding challenges, receiving substantially less per student funding than other California school districts. In 1978, California voters passed Proposition 13, which limited the taxing of property. This limit affected the funds available to school districts and began a long journey by the San Marino community to make up that difference. Today, the difference is filled by the community's support of 2 parcel taxes, generous donations to the San Marino Schools Foundation, and significant support of school site PTAs. The community also supported 2 capital bonds, the last of which matures in 2025. While the funding formula is working well today, continuous focus is required to ensure that the quality education expected in San Marino continues.

But, the many decades of focus on just getting the funds in the door took a toll on some of our non-academic programs. While the district has had recognized success in athletics (66+ CIF titles,) the arts (Bravo award winner in 2011, recognized for having a top high school arts program), and activities (Robotics, Band, Debate, ASB, and the list of successful programs is significant), the reality is that the infrastructure required to support the ongoing success in each of these areas was not in place. With limited resources, the district had to focus on academics, especially during the early Prop 13 years.

A "world class school district," should be world class in all areas, not just academics. And, in the early 2000's, the Board established a co-curricular mandate, noting the importance of a "whole" education and establishing Academics, Athletics and the Arts equally important in the development of world class graduates. While strong Academics will always be a hallmark of a SMUSD education, similarly strong Athletics and Arts programs will as well. Several years later, Activities was added as a co-curricular focus.

Significant research exists to support this co-curricular focus in the SMUSD educational model. Participation in co-curricular programs both teaches and re-enforces. Students learn to:

- Develop a success mindset
- Persist
- Be an effective team player;
- Manage their time;
- Take responsibility for their performance;
- Improve their skills through self-evaluation and listening to their coach;
- Strengthen focus and concentration;
- Learn when to take a risk;
- Develop close relationships with teammates, cast members, etc. which are essential for mental, emotional and physical health and often last well beyond high school;
- Stretch their comfort zones

In August of 2022, the Governing Board of SMUSD, re-affirmed the SMUSD vision, "Delivering a world-class education with recognized excellence in Academics, Arts, Athletics and Activities."

Why do we believe this is so important? Participation in high school activities is often a predictor of later success—in college, a career and becoming a contributing, health member of society.

Plain and simple, the additional areas of student focus support the student's search for their passion(s.) If you have ever met someone who could not wait to share their passion, you have witnessed the excitement we love to see in our graduates. In a recent Washington Post article, an employer was asked what she looks for in college graduates. The response, "ENTHUSIASM." While some may believe enthusiasm is an intangible quality, we do not. Witness the excitement of the cast as they take their final bows on the last night of a performance, or the elation of the robotics team as their robot comes alive in competition, or the emotion of our football team as it brings the Crowley Cup home. This is what enthusiasm looks like; and we believe it is also a component of what "world class" looks like.

Great graduates are more than their academic performance; so too, should be the schools they attend.



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



School News

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www.schoolnewsrollcall.com
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As I reflect on Thanksgiving, I am thankful for dedicated educators, caring parents and a supportive community. Our motto is Education + Communication = A Better Nation. This is our 4th year collaborating with the San Marino Unified School District to publish their *School News*. Thank you for including *School News* among your reading choices.

We've included our student book reviews on pages 10 - 12. If your child would like to be a student columnist reviewing favorite books, please email for specifics.

Be sure to enter our word search contest on page 12 (all ages may enter).

Have a fun, safe winter break and we'll be back with our next issue March 1, 2023.

Happy Thanksgiving
from the
School News Staff





SUBSTITUTE TEACHER JOB FAIR

DECEMBER 3, 2022
FROM 9 AM TO 12 PM

Earn up to \$200 a day!!!

Now hiring for daily and long-term assignments
TK/Kindergarten through 12th grade
Minimum Qualifications:
Bachelor's Degree and CBEST passing score

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In the Boardroom

JOIN THE
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PTA Council

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Parent Engagement

By Jacqueline Tran Chuang, President 2022-23

PTA is honored to support our school community as we kick off a busy year! There is already so much excitement going on — Carver Parent Party, Valentine Fall Fair, Hauntington Breakfast, SMHS Showcase — and then there are book fairs, holiday performances, Reflections and more in the coming weeks!

Even as we bring back old and new traditions, the well-being of our families remains key to long-term success. Parent engagement makes our schools

exceptional and involved parents help students thrive at home and in the classroom. With inclusivity as the focus, we are increasing our online engagement in addition to traditional outreach. However, nothing will replace a good old-fashioned “Hello!”, so please participate in your site PTAs. Our Presidents - Mikah O'Mara (Carver), Erin Clougherty (Valentine), Jennifer Kang (HMS) and Nicolette Fuerst (SMHS) - are dedicated and kind volunteers. We look forward to welcoming you into our PTA community so our children succeed together.



Carver Elementary School

3100 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 626/299-7080 • www.carverschool.us



Stuart Caldwell
Principal

Celebrating the Four A's

There is so much that I could write about here at Carver Elementary! Our school is so very special in so many ways. Carver has spent many years building and reinforcing important productive systems. Our leaders have been instrumental in that—thank you to Mrs. Hollingsworth and Dr. Lin! Our teachers and staff have been instrumental in that—thank you to all our wonderful and amazing teachers and staff! Our families have been instrumental in that—thank you to everyone who consistently has given and who continues to give of their energy, time and resources to keep our school the absolute best! Our students are simply amazing!

I could write about the wonderful opportunities that our students have to engage in literacy in so many creative and meaningful ways. For example, our teachers plan and organize entire literacy units around things such as building cardboard haunted houses. The students have to plan their houses out, build them, and write about them. No—wait a minute. They get to write about them, as by the time that they are putting their thoughts on paper, they

are absolutely eager to engage in sharing their stories in writing—who would have thought that children would be excited to write!

I could write about our fifth-graders proudly giving individual speeches in their classes. Their level of poise, the vocabulary that they use, and their ability to articulate their thoughts to their audience are simply amazing!

I could write about our first-graders learning about prediction, estimation and hypothesis coupled with counting by tens through a pumpkin activity. Yes, our teachers willingly carved into over 100 messy, sticky, gooey pumpkins so that our first-graders could learn these things in context. And yes, our first-graders are able to use the words *prediction*, *estimation* and *hypothesis*.

I could write about all those things and many more. Instead, I want to write about two of our students who on the first rainy day—only slightly rainy—put their umbrellas up and gleefully ran around at recess holding them over many folks' heads, saying, "We are sharing our umbrellas!" Our students are compassionate, caring and sweet. This is no accident. Carver's history of top-notch leadership, its wonderful teachers and staff, and its supportive families all make for an incredible school. It's amazing to be a Pioneer!



Elena Pan & Anne-Vy Maestrini

Huntington *Middle School*

1700 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7060 • www.hehms.us



**Daryl
Topalian**
Principal

Outdoor Education Returns to Huntington Middle School

After two long years of waiting, outdoor education finally returns to the students of Henry E. Huntington Middle school. This year HMS students by grade level have been able to experience amazing opportunities and adventures with their classmates. These week-long experiences provide students with new skill sets and hands-on activities, such as snorkeling, kayaking, zip lining, and hiking. Students also learn about leadership, community service, team building skills, and being a responsible citizen to our environment. Lastly, students gain rewarding experiences and lifelong memories with their peers and teachers.

Our 6th grade students went to Cuyamaca Outdoor School from September 12 -16, the 7th grade students to Emerald Bay on Catalina Island from October 31- November 4, and the 8th grade students to Pali Institute in Running Springs from September 26-30, 2022.



San Marino High School

2701 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 • 626/299-7020 • www.sanmarinohs.org



Jason Kurtenbach
Principal

No Place Like It!

There is no place like San Marino High School! As the premier high school in the San Gabriel Valley, SMHS offers more advanced-placement and honors courses than any other school in the area.

SMHS benefits from partnerships with CalTech and the Huntington Library through unique courses at both institutions. Our nationally recognized our Speech and Debate and Robotics teams consistently win awards at the state level. This year alone, SMHS recognized seven students as National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists. Students also have the opportunity to participate in a wide array of performing-arts programs such as theater, dance, choir, band and visual arts. Additionally, we offer three thriving career and technical-education programs in the areas of graphic design/publications, business and finance, and media arts/filmmaking. We offer 22 sports with multiple levels that provide all students an opportunity to participate.

What is perhaps most impressive are our outcomes, with a 98% graduation rate along with nearly 100% of students attending a four-year university of their choice. Come find out more about these and other great programs such as our more than 30 school clubs and our dual-enrollment courses through PCC. Come see what it means to be a Titan!



Valentine *Elementary School*

1650 Huntington Dr., San Marino, CA 91108 626/299-7090 • www.valentineschool.org



**Whitney
McAlpine**
Principal

Community Partnerships

Valentine Elementary School, a California Distinguished School and a National Blue Ribbon School, develops young scholars with a focus on the four A's: academics, athletics, the arts and activities. Valentine Elementary is truly a special place, a family built upon a healthy pursuit of excellence in all regards.

We have a deep-seated culture of collaboration, joy and commitment among our staff, students and families. All members of our Viking community support our students in becoming lifelong learners who are inspired to reach

their highest potential. The educational program at Valentine Elementary is built on high expectations, with an academically focused curriculum that values and grows the whole child in a positive and caring learning environment. Our amazing PTA mirrors this belief and partners with Encore Music and Armory Center for the Arts to provide art and music lessons to students and also provide a balanced educational experience with the various activities planned throughout the year. Memorable activities include our Bike Safety Rodeo, Fall Fair, Red Ribbon Week, Lunar New Year celebrations and May Day celebrations.

Thanks to our community partnerships, we are able to work together for the benefit of our students.





Daniel's Review



Daniel H.

Who Wants Freckles?

Freckle Juice is about a boy named Andrew who really wants freckles on his face. A girl in his class named Sharon says that she'll sell him a secret recipe for freckle juice that will give him freckles.



Will he buy the recipe and use it? Read to find out!

This book is very silly and easy to read. I liked this book and I think you will too.

Daniel is in third grade and he likes to spend time with his family playing board games, reading, and playing sports like tennis, basketball, and bowling.

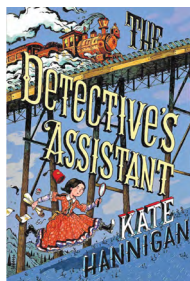
David's Review



David H.

Thrills and Surprises

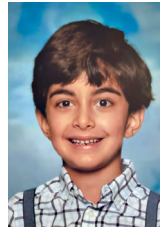
The Detective's Assistant is a mystery book about Nell Warne, who is adopted by her Aunt Kitty, a detective that works for detective agency, and the mysteries that



they solve. One of the mysteries they solve is a murder. This book shows how detectives solve crimes and the thinking behind it. It also contains a lot of historical facts so you are learning while you are entertained. If you want to read a good mystery novel, you are sure to love this book!

David is in fifth grade and he loves to read and play piano. He likes math and activities such as tennis, basketball, and bowling.

Aubtin's Review



Aubtin M.

Teamwork

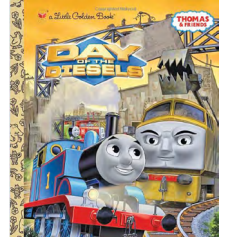
Title: *Thomas & Friends – Day of the Diesels*

Author: Christopher Awdry

On the Island of Sodor, Thomas the tank engine and Percy the small engine are best friends. When Belle; the fire engine comes, she becomes Thomas's new friend.

Percy feels very left out. Percy goes to the Diesel Works to see if the Diesels want to make friends with him. Percy leads the Diesels to the Steam Works, when he discovers that Thomas is held prisoner in the Diesel Works. What will happen to Thomas? Will Percy save him? I recommend you read this book to see what happens.

I learned about friendship, teamwork and cooperation from this book. I hope you will too. You will find great pictures in this book.



Aubtin is a 1st Grader. When not playing, Aubtin does writing, reading and drawing. He also likes sports, swimming, and music. He cares a lot about his family and friends.

Kailani's Review



Kailani T.

Speak Up for Yourself

Left Behind by Laurie

Halse Anderson is book 17 (of 17) in the Vet Volunteers series. The story is mainly about Sylvester and Sunita. One day while Sunita follows Dr. Gabe and another Vet

Volunteer to a horse farm on a house call, she finds Sylvester in 1 of the stalls in the barn. Sylvester is a sheep who was just left behind. Sheep usually thrive when they live in a group or a flock. Why is Sylvester left alone? Does Sylvester need a new home? Can Sunita and her Vet Volunteer friends help this lonely little lamb?

I like all the books in the Vet Volunteers series, especially this one since I can relate to the main character. Just like Sunita, I am very reserved and shy. I often let my friends decide the games we play and the TV programs we watch to avoid conflicts. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves animals and anyone who may have a hard time speaking up for themselves.



Kailani is a 5th grader who loves to read. When not reading, Kailani likes to play with her brother, jump on the trampoline, listen to music, and ride horses.

Penny's Review



Penny

A Wish Gone Awry

Book Title: Best Wishes
Author: Sarah Mlynowski

Becca is having a terrible day. Her best friend Harper decided that she didn't want to be friends with her. But after her terrible day, a mysterious package arrives for Becca in the mail. It turns out to be a bracelet with magic powers. Becca wishes that she could have a lot of friends, and the bracelet makes her wish come true. But then everybody wants to be her friend. The kids in her class, the teacher, even her mom! Everyone who reads this book will laugh at all the funny adventures and twists that this book has.

I give it a ten out of ten hearts.



Penny is a 5th grader who loves to read. She enjoys eating ice cream and petting her dog. She wants to be a librarian when she grows up.

Jenna's Review



Jenna C.

Have it all!

Title: Almanac 2021

Which language has the most first language speakers? You might want to hit up for an almanac. What's an almanac? It's basically a book that speaks facts. Maybe you don't like that type of person, but you might like that type of book. Maybe you can also learn more things like, do you want to know where Alexander the Great was buried? How future homes may be built? Studying rocks? It has it all. From wanting to study stars to knowing about the coolest cats, you can imagine. It's as real as red being red and green being green but, as versatile as the library books.



Jenna is a 6th grader. She enjoys playing soccer and drawing. She likes to read fiction novels. Someday she wants to publish a book.

Sourish's Review



Sourish M.

A Second Chance, Something Everyone Deserves...

"I remember falling" says the first line of the book *Restart* by Gordon Korman. It describes the reminiscence of the main character Chase Ambrose who has an accident that changes

his life forever. The way the author has displayed this character is incredible. He writes the story from each character's own point of view which projects a movie inside the reader's head as if they are experiencing it live. Every character plays a role in the main character's life, Shoshana Weber, Bear Bratsky, Aaron Hakimian, Brendan Espinoza, Kimberly Tooley, and Joel Weber. Chase was a bully who would torment others, but when he got amnesia, he changed for the better. The readers may be entertained by the amusing moments in the story such as the time when Brendan drove a tricycle through a carwash! Chase received something rare to everyone, a second chance and that should be deserved by everyone!



Sourish M. is a seventh grader who is enthusiastic to learn more and experience new things. He likes Science and Reading, plays soccer, basketball, guitar, and has fun with friends and family. Sourish loves to spend long hours coding and expanding his experiences by traveling with his family.

Yoona's Review



Yoona C.

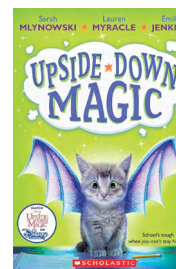
Magic goes...

Title: *Upside Down Magic*

Author: Sarah Mlynowski, Lauren Myracle, and Emily Jenkins

This book is a book where magic is real. A girl named Nory Horace lived with her father, sister, and brother.

Nory was a fluxer. Fluxers turn into animals. Every single time she wanted to become an animal she would have turned into that animal, but the other half would be another animal. When she turned into those things she would cause a lot of problems. Nory wanted to get to Sage Academy but she failed. After that her Aunt comes and takes Nory to Upside-Down School. Upside-Down School is a school where people go if they have Upside-Down magic. She enjoys Upside-Down school but she wants to be normal still. She then uses a box to help her and Elliot get out of Upside-Down School. She succeeds but she starts thinking how she is going to miss Upside-Down magic and her friends. Will Nory leave the school or not?



Yoona is a 4th grader. She likes to read books and create stories. She also enjoys playing soccer.

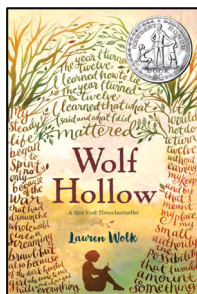
Tegan's Book Review



Tegan

Redemptive Friendships

Wolf Hollow, a beautifully written novel by Lauren Wolk, revolves around the complicated life of Annabelle, a twelve-year-old girl living in a barn, surrounded



by forests. As Annabelle attempts to deal with an evil bully named Betty, she wants to defend a strange World War I veteran named Toby against lies and accusations of a violent crime he did not commit.

While Annabelle struggles to stand up for herself, she courageously learns to speak up for others. Defying her parents' wishes, she faces sadness, fear, and hope as she fights for Toby. *Wolf Hollow* is a wonderful story of unexpected friendship, prolonged injustice and bittersweet redemption. Readers are taught how one person's evil actions as we as another's determination can impact a whole community. All in all, I award this work a deserving ranking of 4.8 stars.

Tegan Y. is a fifth grader who enjoys art, biking, writing, and reading.

Taegyong's Book Review



Taegyong K.

Absolutely Nothing

Title: *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*

Author: Judy Blume

Fourth grade. The

days of kickball at recess. The grade of joy. But Peter Hatcher doesn't think so. But that isn't even the problem.



His problem lies with Farley Drexel. Or Fudge as everyone calls him. Fudge is all the world's irritating toddler brothers merged into one. A three-year old terror straight out of the cinema's next horror movie who gets away with all he does. Even if it's smearing some mashed potatoes on the wall of the restaurant or putting stamps all over a bag, he's never punished. Of course, by this point Peter has had enough of his chaotic brother and no-nonsense parents. But his parents are busy with Fudge rather than paying any attention to Peter. After they leave Fudge alone with Dribble, Peter's pet turtle that he cares so much about out, things get ugly. Will Peter solve his problems, or is he truly nothing

Taegyong K. is a 7th grader. She loves reading books and writing her own stories. Also, she likes to draw and play video games.



Football Word Search Contest

Rules! One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com (Please put San Marino in the subject line)

Clipping

Coach

Conversion

Cornerback

Defense

Field Goal

Flanker

Goal Post

Interference

Kicker

Linebacker

Loss of Down

Offsides

Personal Foul

Possession

Quarterback

Roughing

Safety

Scrimmage

Special Teams

Super Bowl

Tackle

Tailback

Touchdown

Yardage

Entries must be received by December 15, 2022

From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

Y	N	F	L	N	O	I	S	S	E	S	S	O	P	E
P	W	Q	I	R	W	B	G	R	P	P	Z	S	K	Y
L	O	U	N	E	C	O	R	N	E	R	B	A	C	K
E	D	A	E	K	L	D	D	C	R	E	D	F	A	S
G	H	R	B	C	G	D	I	F	S	Y	O	E	B	E
A	C	T	A	I	N	A	G	N	O	Y	W	T	L	D
M	U	E	C	K	L	E	E	O	N	S	N	Y	I	I
M	O	R	K	T	V	F	R	F	A	M	S	W	A	S
I	T	B	E	X	E	A	H	E	L	L	R	O	T	F
R	Y	A	R	D	A	G	E	H	F	A	P	Z	L	F
C	M	C	G	N	I	H	G	U	O	R	N	O	B	O
S	G	K	T	A	C	K	L	E	U	M	E	K	S	R
F	S	U	P	E	R	B	O	W	L	J	E	T	E	T
I	J	E	V	C	O	N	V	E	R	S	I	O	N	R
C	L	I	P	P	I	N	G	E	F	J	P	T	R	I

Congratulations to our May contest winners

Konner Reich and Aubtin Mehraie