El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

Arroyo | El Monte | Mountain View | Rosemead | South El Monte
Fernando R. Ledesma | El Monte-Rosemead Adult School

REPORT to the COMMUNITY

2020
Superintendent’s Message

Dear El Monte Union Community,

For over a century, El Monte Union High School District has worked to support the dreams of our students, helping them to achieve personal and academic excellence and realize their fullest potential – even in the face of unforeseen challenges, including the COVID-19 health crisis that has shaped 2020.

Every day, our team of educators prepare students for the rigor and demands of the real world, provide a pathway to college and career and emphasize collaboration and critical thinking so that all students leave school with the confidence and conviction to pursue their dreams.

Nothing, not even a global pandemic, has deterred us from fulfilling this mission.

In our 2020 Report to the Community, we demonstrate the achievements of our resilient students who participate in rigorous academics, innovative career technical education pathways and award-winning athletics and arts programs.

Our collective achievements continue to be at the forefront, with our five comprehensive high schools being named to the 2020 Best High Schools list and our scholars earning thousands of dollars in scholarships to some of the best universities in the world, including MIT and Stanford.

Despite having to physically close our schools and transition to a distance learning model, our school community continues to persevere.

Our students receive virtual instruction, our educators and support staff connect with students daily and we have infused educational technology resources into our robust and relevant curriculum, while also providing our students with critical nutrition and mental health services.

We know the 2020-21 school year will look different, but the challenges ahead are monumental opportunities to rebuild the future our students deserve.

With the support of our parents, community partners, certificated and classified staff and a visionary Board of Trustees, I am confident that by working together, we will continue to deliver a world-class high-quality educational program – whether online or in-person – to support the success of ALL students for years to come.

Dr. Edward Zuniga
Superintendent

Vision

The vision of the El Monte Union High School District is to empower and motivate our students to be resilient, college and career ready, lifelong learners and contributing members of our global society.

Mission

The El Monte Union High School District will:

- Advocate, nurture and sustain a positive school culture through a challenging and rigorous, standards-based curriculum that promotes achievement for all students;
- Ensure management of the organization, operations and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment that is conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Collaborate with families and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilize community resources;
- Model a personal and institutional code of ethics and develop professional leadership capacity;
- Promote college and career readiness skills for all students.
Access for All: Ensuring Student Success

El Monte Union fosters a legacy of academic excellence, continually fulfilling its promise of improving student achievement, transforming the learning experience for every scholar, increasing family engagement and fostering a Community Committed to College and Career.

El Monte Union provides over 8,000 students a challenging and relevant education program consisting of rigorous academics, STEM, career technical education pathways, performing arts, standout athletics, and student support and intervention services. These programs are delivered by a talented team of educators, who are constantly evolving to an ever-changing climate to serve the diverse needs of students and ensure they reach their college and career goals.

EMUHSD has been lauded for helping to close the opportunity gap for low-income students of color, increasing female representation in its STEM courses and expanding access to community colleges and universities to students starting in eighth grade. Graduates, for instance, may gain automatic admission to Cal State L.A. and UC Irvine and earn priority registration and free tuition for two years at Rio Hondo College.

Today, over 90% of seniors are graduating from the District’s five comprehensive high schools, topping county and state averages. State data also shows that El Monte Union is one of the top-performing school districts in the San Gabriel Valley, outperforming neighboring districts on standardized tests in English language arts.

In fall 2019, the District launched its Access for All learning initiative, eliminating the digital divide so that every student has the same opportunities to learn in a 21st Century environment. As part of the 1:1 program, all students have Chromebooks and many have been given wireless hotspot devices, ensuring academic success at school and at home. The initiative has proven critical as the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered schools and distance learning becomes the new normal for the time being.

The District’s success is directly related to the collaborative efforts of its exemplary Board of Trustees and the El Monte Union community – parents, teachers, staff, community partners and students – who work to ensure access, equity and excellence for all students.

Noteworthy Achievements

1,902 AP Tests Taken in 2019
96.7% Attendance Rate, 2018-19
40.2% A-G Completion Rate, 2018-19
92% Comprehensive High School Graduation Rate, 2018-19

Highlighting Our Award-winning Schools

5 2020 Best High Schools, U.S. News and World Report
2020 Top Los Angeles County Public School - South El Monte
2019 Clean Mobility in Schools Pilot Project Grant Recipient ($9.8 million)
2019 Green California Leadership Award
2019 AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award - Arroyo
2018 Model Continuation School - Fernando R. Ledesma
13 CSBA Golden Bell Awards, including Teacher Prep Academy – Mountain View
2 California Honor Roll Schools, 2017-18
2 California Gold Ribbon Schools
Title 1 Academic Achievement School – Rosemead
2017 Exemplary Arts Education School
2019 CIF State Division 5-AA Football Champions - El Monte
2015 California Green Ribbon Award-Winner (Green Achiever)
2014-15 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Sustainability Award
2014 AP District of the Year
2019 ACSA Region 15 Golden Apple Award

2019 Graduation Rates

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<th>2019 Graduation Rates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMUHSD</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA COUNTY</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
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El Monte Union fosters a college-going culture filled with academic rigor, providing ongoing support, resources and guidance to students, whether they’re starting their freshman year or entering their final year of high school.

Schools host summer bridge programs to provide incoming freshmen with instructional support and guidance to ensure a successful transition from middle to high school. They visit local colleges, universities and museums, meet high school faculty and staff, and learn about graduation requirements and how to prepare for college.

Most campuses also host Link Crew orientation programs, teaming incoming freshmen with upperclassmen who serve as mentors for the school year and facilitate their success.

Students participate in rigorous Advanced Placement and honors courses, English learner support programs, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and academic competitions, including the Los Angeles County Academic Decathlon, Southern California State Science Olympiad Tournament, Los Angeles Regional SeaPerch challenge and the Metropolitan Water District’s annual Solar Cup.

El Monte Union hosts a District College Night, Cash for College workshops and College Signing Day ceremonies, in which seniors are celebrated for their commitment to four-year universities, community colleges, the military or vocational schools. The District – which waives all fees for AP, PSAT and SAT exams – also hosts an annual College and Career Family Conference and Parent Involvement Academy to ensure parents remain engaged and informed.

Over the last two years, seniors have won thousands of dollars in scholarships – including Edison, Dell, Gates, Posse and QuestBridge scholarships – to attend such universities as MIT, UC Berkeley, UCLA, USC and Stanford.

Mountain View Class of 2020 grad Cindy Lee earned a full-tuition Gates Foundation Scholarship to attend UC Irvine.

El Monte High Class of 2020 graduates Juan Saucedo and Kermina Samaan, both English learners, were accepted to UC Riverside and Cal State Los Angeles, respectively.

In partnership with Rio Hondo College, El Monte Union launched the Early College Academy at South El Monte High School in fall 2018, offering students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and college credit toward a two-year associate degree or a bachelor’s degree simultaneously – saving students time and money.

Over four years, students concurrently take high school classes and college courses taught by Rio Hondo professors, including American Sign Language, Spanish, Speech and Counseling. Students may complete between 24 and 40 college credits, which are transferable to UC or CSU colleges.

Students take a summer school class for college credit and take two Rio Hondo classes per semester beginning their junior year. Rio Hondo provides counseling, advisement and matriculation, while El Monte Union covers the cost of textbooks and materials. Upon high school graduation, students may continue their education at Rio Hondo.
CTE Programs Help Students Gain Advantage

El Monte Union’s career and technical education (CTE) program integrates relevant, rigorous academics with hands-on skills training in high-wage, in-demand careers to ensure prosperous economic futures.

The District offers 27 CTE pathways in 11 industry sectors, including: business and finance; computer science; graphic design; woodworking; culinary arts and food science; engineering design; health and patient care; stage technology and professional theater; manufacturing; automotive repair; and public safety.

Each year, the District hosts a CTE Fair to give middle school students a glimpse into the career opportunities and hands-on vocational courses they can explore as soon as they begin freshman year.

Such programs include the Teacher Preparation Academy, a California Partnership Academy that prepares students to pursue a career in education; VISTA Academy, which provides film and video production opportunities; the Zoo Crew Engineering program, which enables students to explore engineering, architecture and wildlife conservation; and the culinary arts program, which provides students the chance to compete in the annual Culinary Showdown, filmed by video production students.

Each pathway – some of which include dual enrollment/college credit opportunities – includes a rigorous core academic curriculum that prepares students for college and careers.

Youth and Arts Education: A Formula for Success

El Monte Union is home to an award-winning visual and performing arts program that includes band, choir, graphic design, theater arts, winter guard, drill and media arts, providing students an outlet to grow and expand their skills and talents.

Students have performed in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade and at such prestigious competitions as the New York Sounds of Spring International Music Festival in Carnegie Hall and the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association Field Show.

Student art work has also been displayed in Congressional lawmakers’ offices and won accolades at the Los Angeles County Fair. Students are able to showcase their award-winning creations – including drawings, paintings, ceramics and creative writing – during the District’s annual art show, where they receive certificates of recognition for their outstanding work.

Throughout the year, students perform in school theatrical productions and choral, concert and band festivals.

Arroyo High School has been recognized with a California Exemplary Arts Education Award for meeting arts standards, offering at least three of the five arts disciplines and demonstrating increased academic achievement and engagement.

Preparation Scholar-Athletes for Peak Performance

El Monte Union cultivates a robust award-winning athletic program that shapes the culture of its schools, builds camaraderie among students and fosters pride in the community. It is coupled with a strong academic environment to ensure student-athletes are challenged in the classroom and remain competitive on the field.

Offerings include football, baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, tennis, track and field, cross country, volleyball and wrestling, providing students the opportunity to develop leadership and teamwork skills.

EMUHSD students – many of whom have garnered athletic scholarships and attend some of the best universities in the nation – are mentored by a dedicated team of coaches who have been recognized by the San Gabriel Valley Tribune for leading their respective teams to victory.

In recent years, two comprehensive schools have celebrated historic CIF State Championships in football and girls soccer, while a third won the Mission Valley League Championship in boys and girls cross country.

In response to COVID-19, the District established Return to Play safety and health protocols to provide a pathway for students-athletes and coaches to safely return to a structured training program, preparing students to participate in an exciting, albeit unorthodox, sports season.
The COVID-19 pandemic has had deep financial impacts on California’s state budget, which is expected to affect schools for years to come. While most employees are protected from layoffs, certain cuts to K-12 funding and substantial deferrals to school districts are expected in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

In June, the El Monte Union Board of Trustees adopted a $130 million 2020-21 budget that includes deferred payments from the state and one-time learning loss mitigation funding.

The budget projects revenue shortfalls in the coming years due to a pandemic-driven recession and cuts to local education agencies. As such, the District is working in collaboration with administrators, staff and union leaders to maintain a high-quality education program and support services for students and ensure seamless operations through fiscally responsible decision-making.

In lieu of a Local Control and Accountability Plan, El Monte Union is developing a Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan describing how it will continue to respond to the impacts COVID-19 will have on in-school and virtual learning, learning loss and mental health of students and staff. The report will be completed in September 2020.

In the meantime, the District outlined the changes made to meet the needs of students when school closures began in March 2020, which included developing a phased Distance Learning Plan and converting all services, instructional programs and access to staff to online.

Because the District had already implemented a 1:1 digital initiative in fall, all students at the comprehensive high schools had a Chromebook and access to MiFi devices. The District purchased additional devices for students at the alternative high school and Community Day School and for instructional staff. Paper packets were made available to students.

Teachers and staff – who received ongoing professional development to support distance learning – communicated with students via Google Classroom, Blackboard, Google Meet and/or Zoom, held virtual office hours and checked in with students, including those who were not engaged in distance learning, via phone calls and online surveys to assess social-emotional and technology needs.

Staff also collaborated to create materials and activities for English learners, foster youth and low-income students, while paraeducators and college tutors continued to provide instructional support to students.

The District provided information on counseling services, academic resources and a list of community agencies to support food, housing and child care needs. In collaboration with partner school districts, the District launched a free breakfast and lunch meal distribution program for youth 18 years and younger through summer at three sites.
Measure HS Fuels New Construction

Construction of a new multipurpose building and gymnasium at Fernando R. Ledesma High School is moving forward as El Monte Union plans a host of new Measure HS-funded projects and takes feedback from stakeholders on projects they'd like to see prioritized at each site.

Measure HS is a $190 million facilities bond approved by voters in November 2018 to enhance learning facilities at each high school. The first series of the bond was sold in June 2019 for $56.7 million. It is anticipated that the next series will be sold in 2021 or 2022.

Planned projects include repairs to leaky roofs, aging walls, plumbing and bathrooms; security, emergency communication and fire safety upgrades; safe drinking water; expansion of science, engineering and computer labs; and more. An independent Citizens’ Oversight Committee oversees and monitors project expenditures.

Board-Approved Projects (Series A):

- Community Education Center at District Office (completion date: fall 2020)
- Over 250 HVAC Replacement at all sites (completion date: fall 2020)
- Roof Replacement at various sites (completion date: fall 2020)
- Multipurpose building and gymnasium at Fernando R. Ledesma High School (completion date: summer 2021)
- New synthetic track and field and snack bar at Rosemead High School (completion date: summer 2021)
- South El Monte High School quad upgrade (completion date: summer 2021)
- New artificial track and field and snack bar at Arroyo High School (planning & design phase)
- New snack bar, restrooms and bleachers Mountain View High School (planning & design phase)
- Full modernization at Mountain View and South El Monte high schools (planning & design phase)
- New campus at Granada Transition Center (Sites assessment phase)
- Artificial track and field replacement at El Monte and South El Monte high schools (planning phase)
- Solar-equipped parking covers at El Monte High, Ledesma and other campuses (planning phase)