



Manhattan Beach Unified School District

Superintendent's Newsletter
September 11, 2018

Dr. Michael D. Matthews, Superintendent



We have already had our Back to School Nights at our elementary schools and at MBMS. Our teachers were proud to share their plans for the year, and the energy on all campuses was palpable. Teachers focused on personalized learning, the use of technology, and helping students succeed. I am so inspired by our teachers, who love what they do, are committed to helping students succeed, and are totally ready for and excited about the year ahead. Overheard in many classrooms: "This is my dream job." Next up: Mira Costa Back to School Night this Thursday, September 13.

SAFETY

One of our major focus areas this year is on safety. I mentioned in my last newsletter that our August 20 staff development day was themed on many aspects of safety. In this newsletter, I want to focus on the session that MBPD and MBFD led, examining what to do in the worst case situation - an active shooter on campus.

Let's start by understanding two important terms that you may hear in our drills and in my emails:

- **SHELTER IN PLACE**: A "Shelter in Place" occurs out of a whole lot of caution. There may be a situation with the police five blocks from campus. There may be a situation we are investigating. There may be a police pursuit somewhere in our city, or even in a neighboring jurisdiction. These are situations where we limit access to the campus, and we ask teachers to lock their doors. That's it. Everything else continues as normal. Teaching and learning should look exactly the same in the classroom. We are just being careful.
- **LOCKDOWN**: A lockdown occurs when we believe that there is a clear safety threat on the campus. In a lockdown, things do not continue as normal. We lock and barricade the doors, turn off the lights, silence phones, and do everything we can to prepare for the worst case. Here's the thing - If we can do this well, we will be as safe as possible when our first responders rush on campus within one or two minutes of any reported problem.

We used to have several different levels of lockdowns. Now, we only have lockdown and shelter in place. I hope we never have to declare a lockdown in one of our schools, but if we do ... we will be ready. In my next newsletter, I will focus on the details of a lockdown.

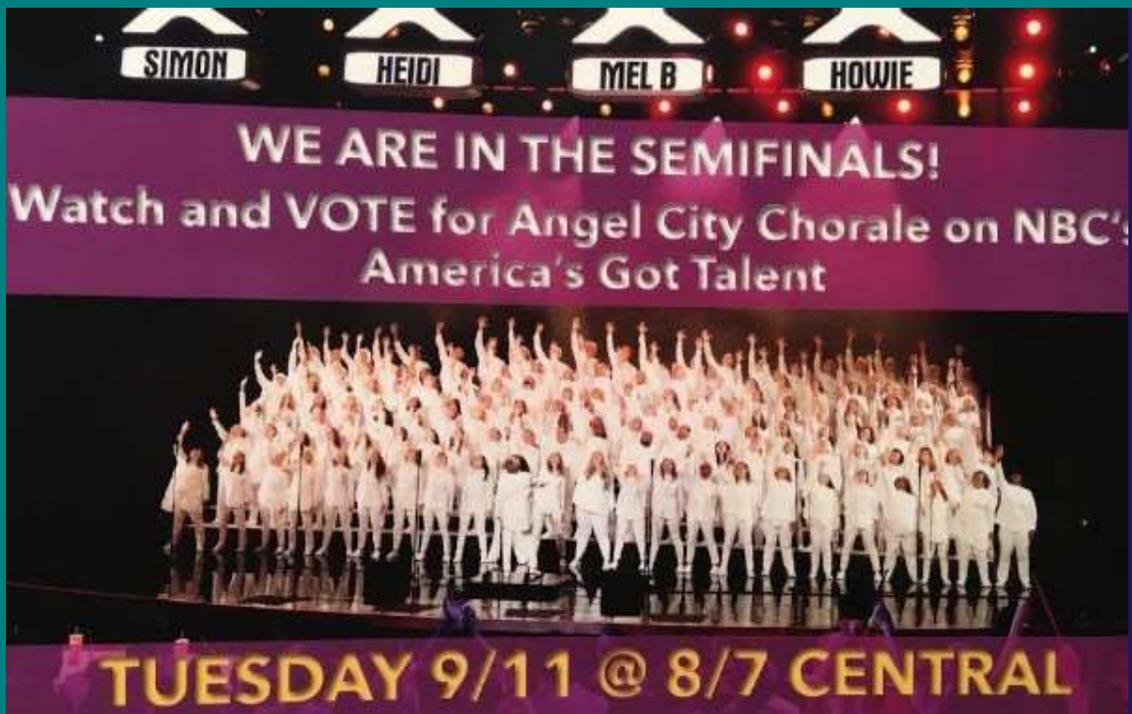


Over the last three weeks, I have been communicating with our Mira Costa community about a difficult situation in our library. We hired a company to lay carpet over some tile in the back workroom of our Mira Costa library, tile which contains asbestos, and instead of laying the carpet over the tile to encapsulate it and provide a safer environment, the company sanded the tile and created a worrisome problem.

Asbestos was used in construction projects around the country for many years before its dangers were realized. When asbestos is encapsulated and undisturbed, it does not create health risks. But it becomes a problem when it is disturbed and fibers get into the air. That is why each school is required to have an AHERA report, which describes where any asbestos is located in the school. Any time we plan to do construction work where we are going to remove asbestos material, we are required to take steps to ensure safety.

For example, we are getting ready to tear down our old gymnasium at Mira Costa, hopefully in November or December of this year. Before we start tearing down the gym, an abatement company will be hired to safely remove any potentially dangerous materials. We will notify AQMD regarding our abatement plans well in advance of any activity, inspectors will observe the abatement process, and regulatory agencies, contractors, and licensed consultants will work together to ensure that the process is carried out safely and in compliance with all safety protocols and procedures.

We will not reopen the library until our experts determine that it is safe. To see my communications with the Mira Costa community, please click [here](#).



As many of you know, three of our MBUSD educators - Mark McCormick (MCHS), Gordon Glor (MBMS), and Emily Sanders (Pacific) sing for a community choir called "Angel City Chorale," which has been moving through the ranks on "America's Got Talent" this summer. Please support the choir if you are able, by **watching and voting with as many votes as you can cast TONIGHT, September 11**. Check out the AGT ["golden buzzer"-winning performance](#) as well as the choir singing ["Happy Birthday" to the City of Los Angeles](#) with Mayor Eric Garcetti this week. Vote at www.nbc.com/americas-got-talent or call the 1-800 number on the screen tonight. Vote any time from 5 pm - 4 am PDT. Let's help them bring the Trophy home!! #mbusdohana

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I hope the start of the school year has been a fantastic one for your family.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Matthews".

Mike Matthews

MBUSD Superintendent



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