

CUSD Newsletter

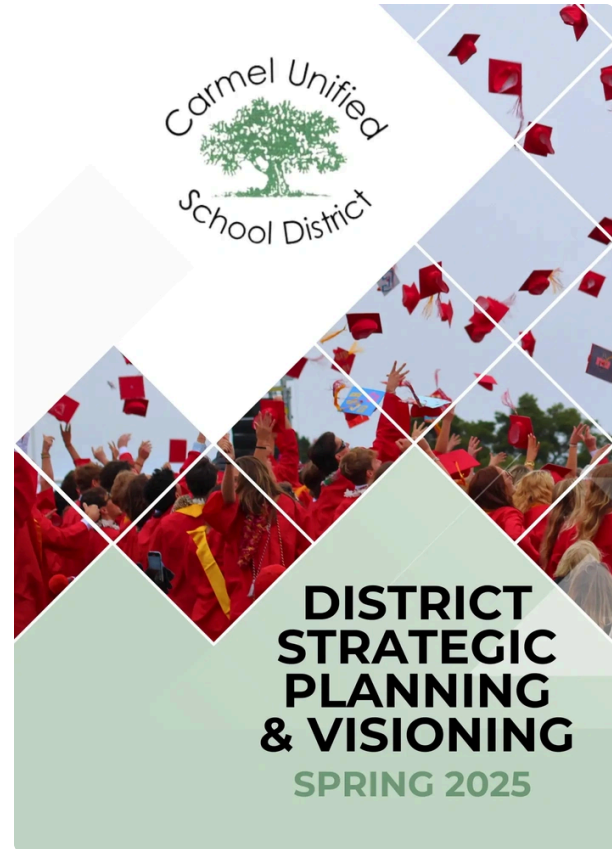
Monthly news and updates - Volume 1, Issue

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Photo Credit: Stefan Mayer

Dear CUSD Families:



It is with great enthusiasm that I share with you the successful completion of the CUSD strategic planning and visioning session, marking a significant milestone in shaping the future of our district. This session, the first of its kind in nearly a decade, brought together a broad cross-section of members of our community to create a comprehensive plan that will provide clear direction and focus for the years ahead. Through the invaluable input of students, staff, parents, and community partners, we have laid the groundwork for a student-centered plan that addresses the evolving needs of our students while honoring the traditions and values that make CUSD a special place to learn, work, and live. Together, with a unified vision that supports their success and wellbeing

The draft of the strategic plan is currently in a feedback loop with both the stakeholder group and the Board of Education to ensure it reflects the diverse perspectives and needs of our District. This collaborative process allows for ongoing refinement and ensures that the final plan is well-rounded, actionable, and truly representative of our shared vision for CUSD. The draft framework and content of the plan is available **online for your review in the March 3, 2025, Board of Education Special Meeting Agenda**. We are committed to meaningful stakeholder input, transparency and engagement throughout this process, with the aim of finalizing a strategic plan that will guide us forward with clarity and purpose.

in an ever-changing educational landscape, we are building a strong future for our students!

Sincerely,

Sharon Ofek
Superintendent

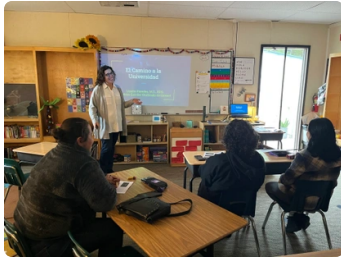
In this issue:

Recognizing CTE Month

February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, a time to recognize the hard work of our teachers and the bright futures of our students. CTE programs help students gain both academic and technical knowledge, giving them a clear path to further education and careers. We are proud to offer a variety of CTE pathways, industry certifications, and opportunities like guest speakers, field trips, job shadowing, and internships.

Our CTE pathways provide hands-on learning with real-world applications and are aligned with **state standards** to help students develop technical skills that prepare them for future careers. We encourage families to explore our **CTE Handbook** to find the best fit for their child's interests.





Recap: Navigating College Workshop

On February 11th, Captain Cooper Elementary School in Big Sur hosted an informative parent workshop led by Lizette Paredes, the district's School & First-Generation College Counselor and Community Outreach Liaison. The workshop provided valuable information to help parents better understand the higher education system in the United States, college admission requirements, financial aid opportunities, and strategies to make college more affordable.

Keep an eye out for future workshop opportunities designed to support your student's success!

CUSD Celebrations

We are excited to share that two of our administrators have been recognized as 2024-2025 Award Winners by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Region 10! Congratulations to **CHS Principal Libby Duethman**, who has been named Secondary Principal of the Year, and **Director of Student Services Dr. Cassandra Ziskind**, who has been honored as Student Services Administrator of the Year.



Both of these exceptional leaders have shown remarkable dedication, innovation, and commitment to student success. Their passion for education continues to inspire and strengthen our schools and community.



Spring Celebrations in Our Community

Our school district community is committed to fostering understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultural traditions within our community. As spring arrives, we would like to share some of the holidays celebrated by our students and families with you:

- Ramadan, observed from the evening of February 28 through March 29, is a holy month of fasting, prayer, and reflection for Muslims worldwide. Eid al-Fitr, celebrated on or near March 30, marks the end of Ramadan with joyous feasting, prayers, and charitable giving.
- Nowruz, the Persian New Year celebrated on March 20, symbolizes renewal and the arrival of spring, observed with family gatherings, festive meals, and traditional rituals.
- Vesak, celebrated on May 12, commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha. It is observed with acts of generosity, meditation, and reflection as well as colorful decorations and processions in Buddhist communities worldwide.
- Holi, celebrated on March 14, is a Hindu festival known as the "Festival of Colors," that marks the onset of spring and represents renewal, good luck, and positivity. It also signifies the triumph of good over evil and is marked by vibrant celebrations and joyous gatherings.
- Easter, celebrated on April 20, is a Christian holiday commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, observed with church services, egg hunts, and festive meals with family and friends.
- Passover, observed from the evening of April 12 through April 20, is a Jewish holiday commemorating the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt, observed with ceremonial meals called seders, retelling the story of Exodus, and refraining from leavened foods.



Interested? Application Available Now

Parent Application

Student Application (must be incoming 9th, 10th, or 11th grader)

Application Deadline is March 17th at 5p.m.

CUSD is establishing a Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), comprised of stakeholders, which will place a crucial role in advising the District on strategies to achieve a balanced budget and ensure the long-term financial stability of our schools. With a commitment to maintaining the quality of education and services provided to our students, the BAC will be tasked with:

- Developing a formulaic approach to the allocation of district dollars to sites;
 - Exploring revenue opportunities to support the District's financial stability;
 - Evaluating current expenditures and identifying potential cost-saving opportunities;
 - Engaging with the community to enhance their understanding of the District's budget.
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Robinson Canyon Barn

It is with great sadness that I share the news that the Robinson Canyon Barn was destroyed in a fire that occurred around midnight on Sunday, February 23, 2025.



The District is working closely with local fire officials who are actively investigating the cause of the fire. Although I am deeply saddened by the loss of the Robinson Canyon Barn, I am thankful that there were no injuries, or loss of life, as a result of this tragedy.

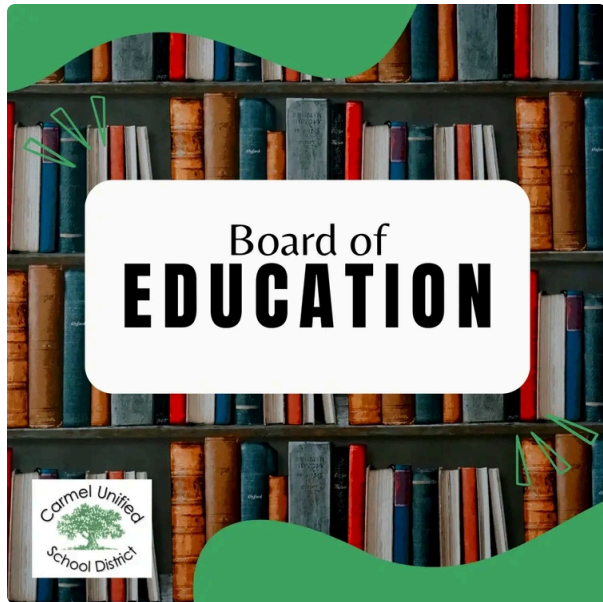
As fire officials continue their investigation, I am committed to providing updates as new information becomes available, or is released, to the District.



Scholarship Opportunities:

Central Coast Young Farmers & Ranchers, Monterey County Farm Bureau, and American AgCredit are pleased to award scholarships each year to deserving students who desire a career in food production or ranching. Central Coast Young Farmers & Ranchers works hard to give back to the agricultural community through fundraiser events, bar-b-que services and support of other agricultural non-profit organizations.

Application submission deadline is Friday, March 28, 2025. You can find more information and the application form montereycfb.com/scholarships.



2/26/25 Board of Education Mtg. Highlights

Reports/Presentations

- District staff presented an **Ethnic Studies update**, including the progress with the proposed **outline of the Course Content**. To learn more about the Ethnic Studies, come to the Community Meeting to provide feedback on Wednesday, March 5th @ 5:30PM at the CUSD Professional Learning Center located adjacent to the District Office.
- District staff provided the **Mid-Year Update to the 2024–25 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)**, highlighting all available mid-year outcome data, including the progress of identified metrics, expenditure, and implementation data.



3/3/25 Board Workshop Highlights

Discussion

- The Board of Education, Superintendent Ofek, and staff members reviewed and discussed the first draft of the **Strategic Plan**. The Board shared initial feedback, and the final version of the plan will be presented for approval at a Board meeting this spring.
- The Board also participated in a **Budget Study Session for the planning of the 2025-26 Fiscal Year Budget**. This study session reinforced the district's commitment to financial accountability and strategic resource planning while equipping the Board with the information needed to make informed decisions about the district's future.