



*We have 81 days to:
Develop competent readers, writers, and mathematicians
Cultivate scientists, explorers, innovators and communicators of learning
Foster compassion and empathy for others*



Mesa Union's computer lab received a new coat of paint. The custodial and maintenance staff continue to work alongside me to make continuous improvements to our learning environments and overall facilities.

Mesa Union's fifth grade basketball team, coached by superintendent Turner, kicked off this year's basketball season. My Tigers lost their opener by one basket. The team rebounded in game two by picking up their first win of the season!



Mesa Union Elementary and Middle School Student Councils' kicked off the Mesa Community Clean-up Week campaign with the goal of bring an understanding to all students of how our actions affect the cleanliness of the school, and for everyone's awareness and efforts to continue well beyond the week. Each day students focused their efforts on a particular area of the campus. Participating students received Mesa Pride tickets in recognition for making an extra effort to pick up trash, pick up after themselves, or by helping others clean up. I have included a [link](#) to a google presentation that Kim Kuklenski and the Elementary Student Council put together for teachers to share with their students as part of the campaign.

Mesa Union Parent Faculty Organization hosted our monthly Superintendent- Principal Breakfast. Participants and I dialogued about changes instituted in this year's school calendar. Parents resoundingly liked the week off at Thanksgiving. As I compared the attendance rates for November from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, our attendance rate **increased by nearly 1%** as a result of the change. Parents also communicated their support of minimum days once a month to provide teachers time for professional development and collaboration. I also had an opportunity gather feedback before rolling out out a New Year's resolution concept. Trustees can join Mesa Union School Community by posting their families' "school New Year's resolution" on the District website. Resolutions will be posted every Monday as they come in. In closing, I had an opportunity to encourage parents to complete the [Local Control Accountability Survey](#) that was sent home to families last week.



Students are engaged with the new 3D printer that arrived this week as a result of a Donor's Choose Grant. Financial contributors donated nearly \$4,000 to support this initiative. Mrs. Steele also received a \$5,000 grant from Lowe's to support the creation of a [Maker-space](#) in her classroom. And Mesa Union's recently announced VC Innovates grant has grown from \$10,000 to \$15,000. Mesa Union teachers will also be able to take advantage of \$250 STEAM mini-grants funded by the Mesa Union Education Foundation to support [Project Based Learning](#) classroom activities.

On Tuesday, students benefited from what has become an annual visit from the New West Symphony provided by the Mesa Union Education Foundation. Students were able to not only listen to professional musicians play, but also learned about a variety of instruments. I have included a

[video clip](#) of the day's activities.



Mesa Union teachers participated in English Language Development training on Wednesday of this week. Grade level teams are working with Ventura County Office of Education content specialist Anna Belitski on designing a model lesson that they will be co-teaching next month. Co-

planning, teaching, and debriefing about instructional delivery is a key component to changing educational practice in the classroom. This ongoing professional development introduced during the

2015-2016 school year has been instrumental in the increases in Mesa Union's English learner achievement.



Mesa Union School District hosted the Tri-County Gate Council Parent Workshop on Balancing Diversity within Gifted Families and Business meeting on Friday. The Tri-County GATE Council, a volunteer organization, is an affiliate of the California Association for the Gifted (CAG). The Council represents the Counties of Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. The Tri-County GATE Council meets monthly during the regular school year to provide opportunities for GATE teachers, coordinators, parents, and other interested people to share information



and to support gifted programs and students through special events and projects. Michelle Waggoner presented information on how Mesa Union currently supports gifted students.



Join the newly formed Mesa Zumba Class that is held every Thursday morning 8:30 a.m. in the school cafeteria. For more information contact our Parent Liaison, Leticia Cousino by calling the office at 805-485-1411 or by emailing her at lcousino@mesaschool.org. Join the fun!



Stephen Bluestein '88 (English, pictured below), M.A. '95 (Elementary Education), Ed.D. '11 (Educational Leadership) is the principal at Mesa Union School, a TK-8 school in Somis, Calif. Previously, he was a teacher and principal in the Los Angeles Unified School District for 26 years. He is married to **Stephanie Stassel Bluestein '88** (Journalism), M.A. '07 (Mass Communication), Ed.D. '12 (Educational Leadership), who is an assistant professor of journalism at CSUN.



In kindergarten this week, the classrooms were talking about recycling, and they made practical objects from recycled materials collected. This is a great pre-lesson for our school-wide lunch and breakfast recycling program that is going to kick off very soon.

Dr. Bluestein was showcased in the winter issue of the California

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State

University, Northridge (CSUN) alumni bulletin.