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El Monte Union Celebrates Completion of South El Monte High's Modernization Project

EL MONTE – El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD) and the South El Monte High School (SEMHS) community celebrated the school's revamped landscaping, outdoor seating areas, upgraded classrooms, a new library, and a state-of-the-art administration building during a ribbon cutting ceremony, which marked a major milestone in the SEMHS Modernization Project, on Sept. 26.

The event featured heartfelt speeches from EMUHSD Board of Trustees President Ricardo Padilla, Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga, SEMHS Principal Dr. Jorge Morales, and Associated Student Body President Gabriela Garcia.

"As a senior, I have watched our campus transition into what it is now, and it looks amazing," Garcia said. "From the new quad to the modernized classrooms, our school has changed for the better. None of this would've been possible without the support of our District, Board of Trustees, and our South El Monte community."

During the ceremony, attendees were treated to student performances from the school's mighty eagles marching band, cheer, color guard, and drill team; a video slideshow highlighting the project's progress from when it initially began on April 2023; special recognitions and awards from neighboring school districts and elected officials; and a festive taco reception.

"By investing in our schools, we are investing in our students' futures. The completion of this modernization ensures that South El Monte High School students have access to state-of-the-art resources, empowering them to reach their academic and career goals," Padilla said. "Together, we're creating learning environments that are not only safe and supportive but also innovative and forward-thinking."

Funded through Measure D and HS bonds, alongside District Deferred Maintenance Funds, the SEMHS Modernization Project is part of El Monte Union's Districtwide initiative to enhance school facilities. The project, approved by the EMUHSD Board of Trustees, aims to create innovative spaces that promote collaboration and inspire student success.

The updated SEMHS library now features advanced technology, including wall-mounted touchscreen monitors and enclosed breakout spaces with glass walls for student and faculty collaboration. The library's dedicated reading areas have been enhanced with improved lighting and acoustic treatments, while full-height glass walls on the second floor reduce noise transmission.

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The school's classrooms have been updated with modern finishes and include touchscreen monitors and sliding marker boards with integrated storage. Career technical education classrooms have also been upgraded with similar technology, offering students access to cutting-edge tools for hands-on learning. These modernized spaces will provide students with more opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and improved academic engagement.

"Today is a proud moment for our entire South El Monte High School community—our students, families, administrators, and alumni—many of whom were here when the school first opened," Dr. Zuniga said. "These improvements reflect the evolving needs of our students and staff. The modernized infrastructure will support 21st-century learning and prepare our students for future success. We are grateful for the endless support of our Board of Trustees and the community."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

EMUHSD SEMHS RIBBON-CUTTING 1: From left to right: South El Monte High School (SEMHS) Assistant Principals Lorrie Briones and Renee Tellez, Associated Student Body President Gabriela Garcia, El Monte Union High School District Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga, and SEMHS Principal Dr. Jorge Morales celebrate the completion of the school's modernization project during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 26.

EMUHSD SEMHS RIBBON-CUTTING 2: South El Monte High School Associated Student Body President Gabriela Garcia expresses her gratitude for the campus modernization during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 26.

EMUHSD SEMHS RIBBON-CUTTING 3: South El Monte High School's visual and performing arts students' welcome attendees with lively performances during the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the school's modernization project on Sept. 26.

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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.