



El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career

PRESS RELEASE

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Mad City Money Tests El Monte Students on Real-world Money Management

EL MONTE – More than 100 El Monte Union business and finance students received a crash course in personal finance management during Mad City Money, a hands-on simulation held Nov. 2 that left some students with a surplus of imaginary income and others in the red.

Paired with a spouse and assigned a job, set income, family obligations and debt, students from the financial services pathway programs at El Monte, Mountain View and South El Monte high schools navigated a world they have yet to fully experience as teens. They were tasked with shopping for housing, transportation, food, household necessities, clothing, child care and other wants and needs, all while balancing their monthly budgets through unexpected windfalls and unplanned expenses.

Some lost their debit cards, while others lost signed checks, one worth at least \$500,000. But all students learned about the repercussions of their spending decisions in a realistic – but safe – environment.

“They are learning about the things that will be important to them after high school,” El Monte High School business teacher Richard Dougé said. “They’re developing real life skills and learning how money works. They are setting the foundation for their future success.”

After a short briefing on how the game would work, the juniors and seniors rushed to merchant tables to purchase food, budget for household items and shop for fun activities, such as movie tickets. Guided by each of the school’s business teachers, students came up with budgets and tracked their expenses.

“It’s very stressful,” said El Monte High senior Van Gieng, who was partnered with EMHS senior Kaley Tran.

Gieng, who wants to study business in college, was given the job of drafter and Tran an economist.

“The experience is really fun, but it’s complicated to budget everything,” said Tran, an aspiring surgeon. “As we go through the process, though, the concept makes sense.”

The program was sponsored by the SCE Federal Credit Union’s Center for Financial Empowerment and Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio, who delivered opening remarks.

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“While we continually strive to prepare our students for college and professional careers, we also want them to gain the skills and knowledge to navigate life, from buying a home to paying bills,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “This program gives students a sense of adulthood, especially as they reach graduation. We hope to continue expanding the program across the District and give all of our students the opportunity to learn how to make better financial decisions.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

111618_EMUHS_D_MADCITYMONEY1: El Monte Union Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga and Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio visit with students who participated in a Mad City Money finance management program held Nov. 2 at El Monte High School.

111618_EMUHS_D_MADCITYMONEY2: El Monte Union students visit a real estate merchant to discuss housing and rent as part of a Mad City Money event during which students received a lesson in budgeting. Students were tasked with shopping for housing, transportation, food, household necessities, clothing, child care and other wants and needs.

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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.