



PRESS RELEASE

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El Monte Union Students Return to School with ‘A New Hope’ and Pride

EL MONTE – Cheer squads, marching bands, and colorful balloons welcomed more than 7,200 students back to El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD) on Aug. 19, as campuses came alive with enthusiasm and pride for the 2025-26 school year.

Associated Student Body (ASB) and Link Crew leaders across the District greeted students with music, cheers, hand-made posters, chalk art, and photo stations, while parents lined entrances to snap photos and celebrate the start of the school year. Districtwide, campuses also kicked off the year with spirited assemblies, pep rallies, and themed spirit weeks.

“With it being my senior year, it feels surreal, but I also feel so much Panther pride,” Rosemead High School ASB president Jodie Ha said. “I’ve been involved with ASB since middle school, and it has shaped who I am. I’m excited to connect with students from all groups and inspire our freshmen to know that we are all a community, and it starts with us.”

Freshmen began their high school journey with campus tours and themed orientations, including a Ninja Turtle-inspired event at Mountain View High on Aug. 14 and a vibrant program in Arroyo High’s newly modernized gymnasium, where students played games and received guidance ahead of their first day. El Monte and Rosemead high schools also hosted welcome activities that included lively performances and introduced students to clubs, athletics, and extracurricular opportunities. South El Monte High marked a milestone in student leadership, swearing-in two students as District board members for the 2025-26 school year.

“I’m excited because it’s my last year and I have so many opportunities,” El Monte High School ASB Commissioner of Publicity Javier Diego said. “Getting to know new people helps me feel more connected to the school. I’m really looking forward to putting myself out there, because having connections and a support system you can trust is so important.”

Additionally, the District held its annual Opening of Schools Celebration on Aug. 15, which brought staff, faculty, and administrators together under the theme ‘Star Wars: A New Hope.’ Student leaders greeted attendees with balloon arches and posters, followed by breakfast, a skit with students and staff, employee milestone recognitions, the announcement of the District’s 2025-26 Teacher of the Year, and a spirited finale by the El Monte High School cheer team.

This school year will also see Fernando R. Ledesma High School host a gymnasium renaming ceremony to honor educators and community leaders, while Mountain View High will unveil its campus modernization during a ribbon-cutting event this fall.

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"We are thrilled to welcome back our students, staff, and families with such energy and excitement for the 2025-26 school year," Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. "The theme of 'A New Hope' reminds us that our students are not only the promise of tomorrow, but the hope we hold today. We will continue to empower them to dream boldly, achieve greatly, and shape a future filled with opportunity and promise."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

EMUHSD FIRST DAY 1: Rosemead High School Link Crew leaders beam with excitement as they greet and cheer on students arriving for the first day of the 2025-26 school year on Aug. 19.

EMUHSD FIRST DAY 2: El Monte High School students exchange signature handshakes and smiles as they celebrate the beginning of the 2025-26 school year on Aug. 19.

EMUHSD FIRST DAY 3: El Monte Union High School District Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga faces off against Darth Vader in a lively skit during the District's Opening of Schools Celebration on Aug. 15, launching the 2025-26 school year with a 'Star Wars: A New Hope' theme. The performance featured students and staff, along with mascots from across the District.

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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.