

El Monte Union High School District

Community Committed to College and Career



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Aug. 25, 2026

CONTACT: Maria Hernandez PHONE: (909) 447-2406

El Monte Union Welcomes Students Back for Historic 2026-27 School Year

EL MONTE – More than 7,000 students returned to El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD) campuses on Aug. 19, kicking off a historic 2026-27 school year as the District and El Monte High School commemorate 125 years of serving students and the community.

From music and spirited welcomes to colorful displays and student-led traditions, schools across the District brought their own personality to the first day of school. Associated Student Body (ASB) leaders, Link Crew members, band, cheer, and staff greeted students as they arrived. Several schools also welcomed new administrators who are beginning their first year leading their respective communities.

“As we begin this remarkable 125th anniversary year, we have an opportunity to honor the people, accomplishments, and traditions that have shaped El Monte Union while looking ahead to our bright future of possibilities,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “Our history gives us a strong foundation, but it is our students, educators, and staff who continue to move that legacy forward.”

When El Monte High School opened its doors in 1901 as the community's first high school, it helped lay the foundation for what would become EMUHSD. Today, the school continues that legacy as it begins a new school year with more than a century of history.

At Mountain View High School, students walked through a Viking-themed tunnel as they entered campus and received free bike helmets as part of a traffic safety enforcement effort. El Monte High School featured a balloon arch, student-made posters, and campus maps, while Arroyo High School seniors marked the occasion with a “Last First Day” photo frame, capturing a memorable moment at the start of their final year.

“I’m glad to be back at school, and I’m most excited about playing soccer and experiencing football games again,” El Monte High sophomore Neveah Flores said. “It’s awesome knowing this year we’re a part of history celebrating 125 years.”

The excitement surrounding the return to school was months in the making, with Link Crew leaders across the District completing training to serve as mentors and peer leaders for incoming freshmen. Rosemead High School hosted its leadership training on Aug. 3, where students participated in team-building activities and learned how to help new students feel connected and confident as they begin high school.

South El Monte High School welcomed incoming ninth graders for their Freshmen Orientation on Aug. 13 with performances by band, cheer, dance, and color guard, along with rotational games and campus tours designed to help them connect with their new school community.

– MORE –

“Our ‘Need Help’ balloons we have attached to us for the first day give students an easy way to identify helpful hands around campus and know who they can turn to,” Mountain View High senior and ASB President Douglas Martinez said. “Students already seem lively and spirited, and there’s a great atmosphere on campus. I’m looking forward to the rallies and seeing that energy continue throughout the year.”

The District also hosted its annual Opening of Schools Celebration on Aug. 17, which brought together administrators, staff, student leaders, bands, cheer teams, and school mascots for a morning centered on school pride and connection. The event included breakfast and a program recognizing employee milestone anniversaries, the 2026-27 Teacher of the Year, and the 2025-26 Classified Employee of the Year, along with an overview of District protocols, responsibilities, and required training for the new school year.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

EMUHSD FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL 1: An Arroyo High School student commemorates her first day of school by posing with a decorated frame on Aug. 19.

EMUHSD FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL 2: El Monte High School Associated Student Body members cheer and welcome students to campus for the first day of school on Aug. 19.

EMUHSD FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL 3: Mountain View High School partnered with the El Monte Police Department to provide free helmets to students on the first day of school, Aug. 19, as part of a traffic safety enforcement effort.

EMUHSD FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL 4: El Monte Union staff share smiles as they reunite after summer break during the District’s annual Opening of Schools Celebration on Aug. 17.

#

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.