



# El Monte Union High School District

*Community Committed to College and Career*

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Sept. 27, 2019    **CONTACT:** Juliette Funes, William Diepenbrock    **PHONE:** (909) 445-1001

### **El Monte Union Strengthens Commitment to Healthy Living with Opening of Eco-Garden**

**EL MONTE** – Arroyo High School officially opened its Regenerative Learning Garden – a 1-acre site that will double as a community garden and learning laboratory for students studying horticulture and water conservation – during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sept. 21.

Developed through a partnership with Eco-Urban Gardens and the U.S. Green Building Council Los Angeles (USGBC-LA), the student-run garden underscores El Monte Union’s commitment to supporting ecological solutions and sustainable living in the greater El Monte community.

“We are excited to be a part of this great partnership that will not only provide students the opportunity to grow their own food, learn science and take classroom learning outdoors, but also engage our community in health and nutrition,” Superintendent Dr. Edward Zuniga said. “I want to thank our partners for supporting our efforts to develop sustainable gardens and create healthy lifestyles for El Monte Union families.”

The Regenerative Learning Garden represents the completion of the second phase of the Arroyo garden’s restoration. The first phase including cultivating a dozen raised beds to grow a wide variety of leafy greens, vegetables and herbs, as well as an abundance of fruit trees. The garden is used as an outdoor classroom. Arroyo’s culinary arts students harvest crops to use for preparing meals.

“I love every part of gardening activities – planting, transplanting, digging, watering,” Arroyo High sophomore Andrew Ramos said. “I am out here every day. You learn how to be healthy and active and be in touch with your food and with your community.”

The garden’s second phase features several conservation modalities that can preserve water and help plants endure months of drought, including a meadow basin, a bioswale and a hugelkultur bed, where wood debris and mulch are placed under the soil to capture rainwater like a sponge. A meditative path dotted with benches and medicinal herbs encourages students to relax and enjoy nature.

The ribbon-cutting event included garden tours, harvesting, seed planting, yoga, face painting, recycled arts and crafts, and vegan food using vegetables grown in the garden.

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**PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**092719\_EMUHS\_D\_ECOGARDEN1:** El Monte Union Board of Trustees President David Diaz, Arroyo High students and community members cut the ribbon on Arroyo High School's new regenerative learning garden during a celebration featuring tours, harvesting and seed planting opportunities on Sept. 21.

**092719\_EMUHS\_D\_ECOGARDEN2:** El Monte Union students, who helped build the regenerative learning garden, enjoy fruits and vegetables grown in Arroyo High School's garden during a ribbon cutting ceremony on Sept. 21.

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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.*