



Press Release

For Immediate Release:
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MUSD Middle School Students Compete in Robotics Obstacle Course as Prelude to District's Inaugural Science Fair

The Science Fair Will Showcase New Science Standards, STEM and California Standards Curriculum

MONTEBELLO – Student teams from Suva and La Merced Intermediate Schools took a two week training course in robotic education and then maneuvered their Lego EV3 Mindstorm automations through a rigorous obstacle course, competing against each other for the right to display their champion robots at the inaugural MUSD Science Fair to be held May 27 at the Applied Technology Center.

“The ability to work as a team, to collaborate, to make an eloquent presentation of your findings, these are all part of the new rigorous California Standards that are helping us to prepare the next generation of leaders,” Montebello Unified School District Board President Edgar Cisneros said. “We look forward to seeing what our brilliant student scientists have in store for us at our first Science Fair.”

Montebello Unified is combining Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum and California Standards with fun to encourage students who can not only design and program a robot but also conceive and execute a Powerpoint demonstration explaining the technology and methodology required to produce a functional, productive cyborg.

For the second straight year, MUSD has partnered with Freeport-McMoRan Oil & Gas to introduce students to the joys of competitive robot building. They supply the Lego EV3 Mindstorm Robot kits and the software. The kids do the rest.

“We have been afforded the opportunity to conduct an amazing robotics competition for some of our middle school students, thanks to the support of Lisa Paillet and Freeport-McMoRan and robotics trainer Michael Nevels,” MUSD Science Program Specialist Arturo Navar said. “It’s been very rewarding for our students to experience STEM in an engaging manner and we are excited for them to showcase their learning and participate at our inaugural District Science Fair.”

Both Suva and La Merced convened five teams of four students to participate in a two-week training prior to the obstacle course competition, held on May 1 and May 8, respectively. The first week found the student teams learning the science and vocabulary behind robotics.

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The second week, after assembling their robots, the teams went through a process of trial-and-error, trouble-shooting their creations and honing their presentations.

At first, the students found the process of robot-building a bit silly, but as the training got more intense – and prizes were awarded for various side competitions leading up to the final – the student teams buckled down, applied their new knowledge, communicated their advanced science jargon and played to win.

The Suva Intermediate School winning team, The Humble Ones, is comprised of Irania Ochoa, Giselle Perez, Charlie Martinez and Moises Montano. The La Merced Intermediate School winning team, The Smarties, includes Christopher Villegas, Dominick Ortiz, Denise Alvarez and Pamela Ybarra.

The two schools will vie against each other for the MUSD robot championship to be held as a feature event at the District Science Fair.

“This new event allows us to expand and promote the real-life science experiments and activities happening in our classrooms,” MUSD Superintendent of Education Susanna Contreras Smith said. “It is so rewarding to see that our students are responding with great enthusiasm and competitive fervor as they experience our STEM curriculum and ponder higher education and careers in technology.”

The MUSD Science Fair is designed as an opportunity for students to showcase their creativity and knowledge of the world around them, as well as supporting the attainment of the Next Generation Science Standards, STEM and California Standards.

The Science Fair will focus on the scientific methods being taught at MUSD schools and, along with the robotics championship, will include:

- A District-wide fifth-grade science project competition, with one project selected from each of MUSD’s 16 kindergarten through fifth-grade schools; a panel of judges will determine the winner.
- Exhibits of District fourth-graders demonstrating a “speedometry” grant from the University of Southern California and Mattel, which uses Hot Wheels cars and tracks to demonstrate the workings of velocity.
- Middle School Robotics Competition
- Special presentations from the Applied Technology Center’s science department.
- Bell Gardens High School GREEN Pathway
- Science Interactive activities

Photo Captions:

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Montebello Unified School District is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone’s efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District’s number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at www.montebello.k12.ca.us.

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