



Tiger TRADITIONS

Inspiring Excellence and Leadership in All!

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Meet Dr. Runner: Mexico's new Superintendent

With a large range of experience in education and an enthusiasm to get the best out of every student, Dr. Donna Runner was appointed in November as Mexico's new Superintendent by its Board of Education.

Dr. Runner spoke about her excitement to join the Mexico Academy and Central School District as she officially began her position in mid-December.

"I got a chance to tour every school and meet a lot of teachers and students while watching a lot of focused learning taking place. Everyone was so passionate and the buildings are so clean and beautiful," Dr. Runner said. "I'm really honored and appreciative to the Board for their support and trust. I can't say enough how wonderful things have been, and I look forward to meeting more of you in the near future."

MACS Board of Education President James Emery introduced Dr. Runner officially, touting her diverse background and wealth of educational history along with her strong leadership qualities.

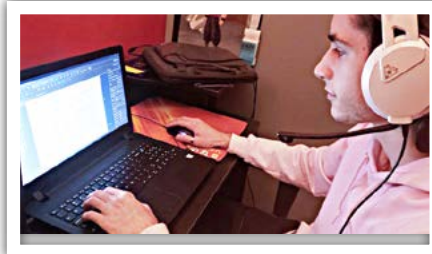
"Dr. Runner possesses a wide range of educational experiences and is very excited to share her experiences and knowledge with the students and staff of our district and looks forward to meeting the many challenges that lie ahead using a collaborative, transparent and honest style of leadership," said Emery during the introduction.

Dr. Runner came to Mexico via the Gouverneur Central School District where she has served as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Federal Programs for the past four years. She took over for Interim Superintendent Michael Schiedo, who district officials thanked for his leadership since July while the district conducted an extensive months-long search for a permanent appointment.

After growing up in Columbus, Georgia, Dr. Runner went to school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she met her husband. She spent more than a decade

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MACS senior band student composing piece for full orchestra



Pictured is Mexico High School senior Logan LaFlamm working on his music composition that will be performed later this year as part of a cooperative performance with Symphoria and Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music.

A Mexico High School senior is seeing his musical composition come to life through a rare and enriching opportunity with a local professional orchestra.

Logan LaFlamm, a senior at the high school, has been attending regular sessions featuring musician-led cooperative orchestra Symphoria and Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music. He is one of just three CNY-area students to have pieces selected to compose a short work to be performed by the professional orchestra in concert.

"I was very thrilled to say the least," said LaFlamm. "Being able to speak to these professionals who have a passion for music from bigger schools and get this direct interaction with renown professors, it has been great and an amazing learning opportunity."

He attends sessions every other week but sometimes more often as they flesh out the composition he submitted. LaFlamm describes his composition that is slated to be performed at a concert in April as a "dark and eerie" piece that has swing elements to give it a "kind of jazzy" feel.

"I wanted to utilize the orchestra and take something that's a bit less conventional and apply it to string instruments in the orchestra setting," he said. "Something upbeat but dark at the same time, I find that mood very entrancing so I'm excited to flesh out the piece I have so far."

LaFlamm submitted a short composition for consideration as part of the joint venture with Symphoria and Syracuse University, and the final

version will be roughly 40 measures long while lasting around a minute.

It's up to him to make sure each of the nine sections has the proper instructions and music to make his work come to life as he'd like it to be, and he's been receiving tips and incorporating feedback from top musicians in the area.

"He's a self-starter, he went out and said 'I want to do this' and really without a whole lot of help was able to compose an original piece of music that got him another opportunity to compose even more music," said Brian Carnes, the HS director of bands. "This experience is going to be so valuable and it's an incredible opportunity for him."

LaFlamm has been a member of the MACS band program since fourth grade, taking up the saxophone which he still plays today. He's taken part in All-County band, NYSSMA solo fest, marching band, jazz band and more throughout his time in the band program, which in 2020 once again earned MACS the distinction of Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association for Music Education.

"I really enjoy our band program," said LaFlamm. "Because we're a fairly small school, it's a lot more personalized, and it really helps you on a personal level get better. It's fun and informative, gets you to love music and has made me want to share that with other people."

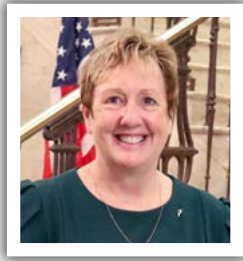
After graduation, LaFlamm said he hopes to attend college for musical composition with applications already out to Nazareth College and SUNY Potsdam. One day, he hopes to compose music for any form of media including movies and video games, noting he hopes to show "someone who underestimates the power of music that it can enhance their experience."

LaFlamm thanked Carnes for his guidance, noting the MACS teacher as a force and major influence in his musical passion and ability. He also thanked his family, parents Steve and Carrie LaFlamm along with his sister, Sage.



A message from the Superintendent

Dear MACS School Family and Community,



Seventy-eight days!

Seventy-eight days to fall in love with the people and the community of Mexico. Seventy-eight days to appreciate the staff of the district. Seventy-eight days to discover all that Mexico Academy and Central School District means to our scholars, their families and the community as a whole. As I write this in early March, 78 days ago, I began my journey

as your Superintendent of Schools without even once looking back. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

We are one year into the pandemic that has changed (and continues to change) the world as we knew it. Everyone has been stretched to “do education” in a totally different manner. We have been flexible and patient, though on occasion frustrated and exhausted. I appreciate your willingness to partner together to educate the children of our community.

When I read in the news media about reopening schools, I am anxious to share that we have not been closed, as our students have experienced both virtual and in-person learning opportunities since September. With the recent lower infection rate percentages in Oswego County, we have been able to offer some sporting events and extra-curricular activities.

We continue to follow the directives of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Oswego County Health Department as we seek to bring our students into the buildings full-time. Be assured that we will bring everyone back as soon as we can safely do so. Trust that we will be thoughtful and intentional in how the re-

integration will occur. We will not compromise the safety of anyone in our buildings. County health guidance still requires that we maintain social distancing and full masking, as well as the protocols for handwashing. This remains in place to ensure the health and well-being of our young people.

We will deliver robust instruction around academic standards. We will comply with state requirements around assessment and reporting. All of this will take place with teachers identifying areas of student need and addressing any gaps in learning and offering extension to students who are ready to dive deeper into subject area content.

This is what good teachers do — they meet students where they are and move them forward academically. Those are the kind of teachers we have at MACS.

We have strong support staff, including experienced administrators who offer steady leadership in both instruction and operation. We have additional support staff whose primary role is in meeting the needs of our students in a myriad of ways. Our buildings and grounds staff maintain the cleanliness and security of our buildings.

We are ready for what the future holds as we anticipate life beyond the pandemic. We are ready for what our “new normal” will become and will adjust as necessary to uphold the strong traditions of the Mexico Academy and Central School District.

Once again, thank you for the warm welcome and entrusting me with this important responsibility! I’d love to meet you, please feel free to stop by with questions or just to say hello for our next virtual town hall meeting on April 21. Signups will go live via our website early in the month.

Sincerely,
Dr. Donna Runner
Superintendent

Meet Dr. Runner: Mexico’s new Superintendent

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in various roles there, including middle school teacher before becoming an academic coach, principal and Acting Deputy for Curriculum and Instruction.

When her husband took a job in the North Country noting family as the most important thing in her life, Dr. Runner moved too and accepted the position of assistant superintendent in Gouverneur.

Dr. Runner said she truly believes that all children can learn given the right resources, and that “everyone can get better,” adding “it’s our job as teachers to identify where kids are and use all the tools we have” to encourage that growth.

She also stressed that ensuring students are safe is a top priority, noting the ongoing pandemic and school safety as a paramount task for all administrations today.

“We will never compromise the safety of scholars or staff, it’s not going to happen,”

Dr. Runner said. “To do that, you take all the information you have available, the experts who give you advice and you put systems in place to ensure you have plans for every situation. We want students and staff to be safe emotionally and physically when they come to our buildings.”

Dr. Runner also spoke about the wonderful community she is excited to be joining as she plans to live in the area, saying area residents are very friendly and passionate about their home.

“The people are proud to be from Mexico, they are proud of their community and school district,” she said with a smile. “I just fell in love with the idea of living in the school district. You just get a really good feeling about the people, they’re all very nice and they’ve certainly made me feel welcome.”

New Haven marks 100 days of learning, growth

New Haven Elementary recently celebrated its 100th and 101st days of school. Pictured are students dressed up after doing activities to mark the occasion. Wonderful work!



MACS educator inspiring others to embrace social and emotional learning

As an 18-year veteran of the Mexico Academy and Central School District, Lisa Buske knows social and emotional learning is “more important than ever” and she’s helped her district and community embrace these important skill sets.

Buske, a teacher’s assistant at Mexico Elementary School, does a multitude of things around the school and online to help children and adults alike acquire and effectively apply knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships and the whole gamut of social and emotional learning (SEL).

“As a teacher’s assistant I have the luxury of a little more time than the teachers, so I dedicate time in my schedule to help uplift, encourage, inspire and motivate our amazing staff and families to keep moving forward and not to give up,” said Buske. “SEL is important because if the teachers, administrators, and families don’t care

for themselves first, they aren’t going to be able to maintain this level of resilience and strength to endure the pandemic. I work with amazing, strong, dedicated and loving people who give all they have, every day.”

A large part of Buske’s SEL training has been through the Center for Instruction, Technology & Innovation (CiTi BOCES), where Staff

Development Coordinator Liane Benedict and Staff Development Specialist Kate Ginney help organize and lead SEL offerings.

Buske called Benedict and Ginney “an inspiration” for many of the ideas she has utilized and thanked the duo for creating such a strong SEL community in the area.

“They deserve a huge shoutout for organizing and leading so many beneficial SEL offerings, networks and groups to help the staff in Oswego County remain strong and resilient, and to have the tools to share with our students in the process,” said Buske.

Buske organizes monthly SEL bulletin boards for staff and students, sends out an email to staff every weekday with SEL, Leader In Me and motivational boosters, shares videos and links that could help teachers and holds a voluntary Zoom check-in every week to share some strategies and tips she’s picked up through SEL professional development.

CiTi’s Benedict noted the ability to connect with awareness, to ourselves first and then with others in the world, is vital to the resilience of communities. That includes not only students, but also showing up for educators to support them during this upheaval and changes to their way of educating.

“We are wired for connection, but our opportunities for this are being limited right now,” said Benedict. “The impact of this on students, educators and families must be realized and offered as much time, focus and effort as the content if we are to thrive on the other side of these challenges.”

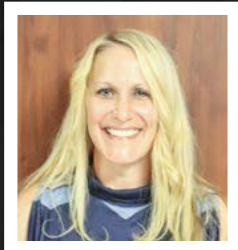
Buske currently works with kindergarten and second-graders in addition to being Mexico Elementary’s Leader In Me staff Lighthouse team facilitator. Throughout her career, Buske has also worked as a program TA, 1-to-1, 3-to-1 and the SBIT Coordinator.

More information regarding SEL trainings and developments can be found on the CiTi website, CiTiBOCES.org.



Pictured is Mexico Teacher’s Assistant Lisa Buske in front of a bulletin board specifically designed to help social and emotional learning.

Proud to be MACS



Melissa Terzulli, October 2020

The MACS Board of Education honored School Social Worker Melissa Terzulli as its October 2020 Proud to be MACS recipient.

Melissa grew up in Oswego and graduated from Oswego High School before attending Monroe Community College for criminal justice and finishing her associate's degree at Broward

Community College in Florida. She received her bachelor's degree in public justice and psychology from SUNY Oswego.

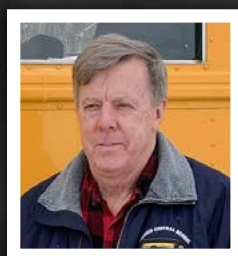
She has always loved traveling and moved to Las Vegas to get her master's degree in social work from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. As she earned her degree, Melissa worked full-time at Nevada Children's Center as a child development specialist and supervisor while working with foster care children ages 5 through 14 who experienced social-emotional disabilities.

Other stops included Syracuse and Charlotte, N.C., working in social work and education.

During that time, Melissa and her husband Aaron had twin daughters Emma and Sophia. After stops working at Oswego Hospital and Fulton City School District, she found her role at Mexico High School as a School Social Worker though she is now called a Home to School Liaison.

Melissa's nominator, Shannon Bigelow said, "...Melissa has a tremendous amount of experience and a huge number of resources and connections available to assist students who are struggling."

Melissa said she is very proud of the difference she has made in helping youth overcome struggles and find a safe space. In addition, Melissa helped pioneer the Community Connection Day offered in spring 2019 that connected 270 families with the school, community and outside organizations and support systems.

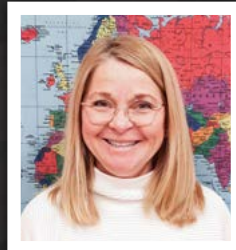


Bill Cook, December 2020

In the office of Transportation Department Director Julie Bradish, there is a quote that reads "School Bus Drivers Make Special Deliveries." As the December 2020 Proud to be MACS honoree, the board celebrated Driver Bill Cook for making about 40 years of these "special deliveries."

Bill grew up in nearby Oswego and attended the city school district until eighth grade when he attended Oswego Catholic High School until graduation. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in biology from SUNY Oswego.

He worked jobs at the nuclear power plant and as an executive secretary in Manlius, and he also substituted at Oswego County BOCES in the severely disabled class setting.



Mona Goble, November 2020

Teacher Mona Goble has been named as the Proud to be MACS honoree for November 2020.

Mona grew up in Kenton, Ohio, and graduated from Bowling Green University with a bachelor's degree in German education. During her education, she spent one year studying in Salzburg, Austria.

After teaching five years at an Ohio high school, Mona and her husband Will were blessed with three daughters in 15 months: twins Maynah and Maggie followed by Millie.

After staying home for 12 years to raise her daughters, the family decided that the girls needed to experience education with an international flavor. To that end, they found teaching positions with the International School in Vienna, Austria.

Following three years overseas, the family decided to return to the U.S., but she could not find a teaching opportunity in Ohio. As fate would have it, Mexico High School had an opening and she joined the MACS family in 2003.

In 2007, Mona came to the Mexico Middle School when the language opportunity was expanded to seventh-graders. Mona now teaches German 7, German 8 and German 4.

Additionally, Mona jumped at the opportunity, when it presented itself, to join the Blended Learning program offered by our Technology Department. She now enjoys assisting teachers in using the Blended Learning method and the technology associated with it.

Her favorite memory is the transformation of her students as she witnesses them fall in love with travel, realizing that they can manage the challenges of travel and gain knowledge from seeing the world at large.

As for the favorite part of her job, Mona enjoys nurturing her students' development, where they grow in self-confidence and self-management that all lead to the person that they want to be. She calls this nurturing her calling.

In addition to subbing at BOCES, Bill began working in the MACS district in the classroom and transportation around 1984 before becoming a full-time driver for Mexico in 1987.

Bill says he has had the children and now grandchildren of some of his first years of driving. He is now the most senior driver and drives all routes – pre-K, elementary and middle school/high school.

"To recognize this longevity, Bill has the honor of driving bus number one," said MACS BOE President James Emery.

The other activity that consumes much of Bill's time is that he manages a horse farm in New Haven. In this job, he utilizes some of his scientific knowledge. The job also allows him to raise exotic animals that he occasionally shows off to his fellow drivers and his students. These animals have included camels, monkeys and even kangaroos.

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Proud to be MACS

Bill Cook, December 2020 (continued from page 4)

When asked about his favorite part of the job, he replied that it is hearing some of the stories that his students relate concerning life at home - some surprising, some hilarious!

Bill also said he thoroughly enjoys the fun that he has with his co-workers. He says they are like a family.



Suzanne Dunn, January 2021

An alumna of MACS who has long taught mathematics at her alma mater, Suzanne Dunn was honored as the Proud to be MACS recipient of January 2021.

Sue, who teaches seventh-grade math at Mexico Middle School, grew up in Palermo and is the daughter of September 2015 Proud to be

MACS recipient Gregeen Koes, known as a passionate motivator.

After graduating from MACS, Sue attended SUNY Morrisville on a scholarship to play softball, and later transferred to SUNY Oswego for her bachelor's degree and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction.

She began her career as a teacher's aide with Sandy Creek before taking several long-term substitute positions with the Cicero-North Syracuse district and eventually getting a full-time spot with that district for five years.

In 2002, she applied for a position as a seventh-grade math education at Mexico Middle School and has been there since.

Along the way, Sue and her husband Larry raised children Dillon and Danielle who are both in college.

Nominator Adam Metcalf said of Sue, "As an educator, she succeeds at something which can seem impossible sometimes: she can make math interesting and engaging. Her students see the benefit of learning and using math in everyday life and for future careers. She gets them to see the point, her students don't ask 'When will I ever use this?'"

This ability to enlighten her students to the benefits of acquiring math skills was made more remarkable to me when Sue admitted that she struggled with math during her years at MACS always requiring tutoring and mentoring. It was not until a professor at Morrisville was able to hit the right switch with Sue to make that internal light go off.

Seeing this light go off for her students represents her favorite memories as an educator.



Mexico Middle School educator nominated for NHL teaching award

A teaching assistant from Mexico Middle School was one of just 20 educators across North America in the running for February's NHL Most Valuable Teacher award.

Julie Osborn, who works with fifth- and sixth-grade students, was nominated for this honor through her use of the program Everfi Future Goals, which is utilized to support math and science in her digital literacy class.

"Julie puts her heart and soul into our students, staff, building, district and community!" said Mexico Middle School Principal Kimberly Holliday. "She is kind, caring, passionate lifelong learner who strives to help our students excel in all that they do. Her dedication and commitment to our school district is inspiring."

The monthly winner will receive a \$10,000 grant to support Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) concepts in the classroom and advance to the final round later this year, with the overall winner receiving an additional \$20,000 grant and a \$1,000 personal grant to enhance the classroom.

"I'm dedicated to teaching applications for STEM because I know that it not only impacts how healthy and productive students are during this time, but also their well-being and success far beyond the K-12 years," said Osborn, who added she was "thrilled" to be nominated.

If she wins, Osborn said she would like to incorporate more coding, robotics and drones into her programs.

Osborn's profile on the website notes her hometown team as the Buffalo Sabres, and the team showed support for their nominee by encouraging everyone to vote for her through the team's social media channels.

"I'm an avid hockey fan as both of my boys played hockey when they were younger," Osborn said.

Osborn has worked for Mexico Academy & Central School District for 20 years, having started at Mexico Elementary School then moving to Mexico Middle School where she's worked for the last 18 years.

She works with Mona Goble for digital literacy classes for fifth and sixth grade, and alongside Kelly Hayes for fifth-grade social studies and science. Osborn also assists Galen Fellows at the high school with the robotics program.

Outside the classroom, Osborn grants wishes with Make-A-Wish of Central New York and volunteers at the local food pantry.

The winner of February's vote was not known when this publication went to print.

Buffalo Sabres @BuffaloSabres

Julie Osborn from Mexico Central School District has been selected as 1 of 20 teachers across North America to be in the running for the Most Valuable Teacher program for the month of February!

Vote for Julie: [NHL.com/MVT](https://www.nhl.com/MVT)

FUTURE GOALS MOST VALUABLE TEACHER presented by EVERFI

Congratulations to Buffalo Sabres Future Goals Most Valuable Teacher February Nominee

Julie Osborn
5th & 6th Grade Teacher
Mexico Middle School
Mexico Central School District

MS Students take part in Getty Museum Challenge

Students in Brittany Malone's art class re-created famous paintings and works on art known as the Getty Museum Challenge.

"Before break, I introduced the Getty Museum Challenge where they select a famous artwork and re-create it as a photograph," said Malone. "These students set the bar high."

Below are the photos:



MACS survey seeks input on budget priorities

The Mexico Academy & Central School District has launched a community-wide survey seeking opinions regarding the upcoming 2021-22 budget.

The roughly 5-minute survey has a wide array of subjects for people to offer opinions on, which will be utilized throughout the budgeting process.

"We are seeking input from parents, students, staff and community members regarding their priorities and how they align with MACS mission and vision," said MACS School Business Executive Sheilla Roth. "We value their feedback and appreciate the time taken to provide us with this important information."

The annual school budget hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11 at 6 p.m., with the budget vote and school board election set for May 18.

Scan the nearby QR code or visit MexicoCSD.org to find the link and fill out the survey.



State law modifies single-use bathroom designations

All Mexico Academy and Central School District buildings will soon designate single-use bathrooms as gender neutral in accordance with a recently passed state law.

Per Assembly Bill A5240A, the state requires signage on all single-occupancy bathrooms designating they may be used by any gender, instead of specifically for males or females as done in the past.

All schools in the state must "develop policies and procedures requiring that all single-occupancy bathroom facilities are designated as gender neutral for use by no more than one occupant at a time or for a family or assisted use," the new law reads.

The new requirements become effective on March 23.

Those with questions or concerns may reach out directly to the district office.



Please help us with the budget process
by providing your feedback as we
develop our proposal for
2021-2022!

MISSION:

Educate and motivate our students to be successful, responsible citizens.

VISION:

Recognized as a school district that inspires excellence and leadership in all!

CORE BELIEFS:

- We put students first.
- All students can learn.
- We provide a safe, secure environment for all.
- Collaboration among students, staff, families and the community is essential to our success.
- Our schools are the heart of the community.
- We value creativity and innovation.
- We lead with honesty and integrity.
- Our supportive and rigorous learning environment nurtures the whole child.
- All are treated with dignity, respect and compassion.

Sixth-grade MACS art students to feature work in legislative exhibit

Artwork created by two Mexico Middle School sixth-grade students has been selected for a virtual statewide legislative exhibit hosted out of Albany.

Madison Greenway and Isabella Abbott made their drawings during art class and found out this month their works will be going in the 2021 virtual legislative exhibit.

Art teacher Brittany Malone said she is “very proud” of the duo who completed much of their work online when the school was fully virtual following Thanksgiving.

“Both of them have dedicated an immense amount of time into developing their skills and conceptual ideas in art this year which is evident in the work they created,” Malone said. “Their experiences the past year have shown through in their artwork, it is important to highlight these incredible student achievements to give them a voice and encourage creativity.”

Founded in 1990, the New York State Art Teacher’s Association (NYSATA) Legislative Exhibit is the flagship event for Youth Art Month each March and the NYSATA’s largest display of student artwork in a government building. The event is held in the Legislative Office Building in Albany each spring, providing an opportunity for students and families to connect with their legislators.

For the safety of all during the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s exhibit will take place virtually.

“We invite dignitaries, administrators, students, families and friends to enjoy this 31-year tradition by the New York State Art Teachers Association, as we continue to celebrate the amazing artwork of our NYS children and the importance of the arts and art education in the lives of our students,” NYSATA wrote in a statement on its website.

The exhibit will launch in the spring, and be available via nysata.org/legislative-exhibit.



Mexico Public Library hosts virtual tour

The Mexico Public Library recently hosted its annual tour for local students with a virtual video and book reading.

The video was released via the Mexico Academy & Central School District’s Facebook and YouTube pages on Read Across America Day and Dr. Seuss’ birthday, March 2.



It was hosted by the library’s Colleen Grzesik, who talked about all the ways to utilize Mexico Public Library including borrowing books and DVDs in addition to take-home kits and more.

They can be reached at 315-963-3012 to sign up for a library card or to reserve books, as the library is currently only doing curbside pickup during the pandemic. More information, including the current hours, can be found at MexicoPublicLibrary.org.

The video can be viewed by scanning the nearby QR code or visiting YouTube.com and searching “Mexico Public Library Tour.”

Out in the snow in Palermo

Palermo Elementary physical education teacher Jon Gagnon introduced his students to snowshoeing. A winter storm allowed students to trek through fresh powder and enjoy a wintry PE class. Keep moving!



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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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You Matter Day

encourages kindness, positivity

Though a little different this year, You Matter Day still empowered and uplifted students from around the district. Sponsored by the True Beauty Project, the day was run through the Mexico Facebook account as students and staff submitted photos to raise each other up, some featuring a word that makes each of them special or just sharing their smile with the world. YOU MATTER!

Featured on this page are a selection of photos from the virtual event.
More can be found at [Facebook.com/MACSpride](https://www.facebook.com/MACSpride).

