

Hello, and welcome to the 2017/2018 school year. This is the start of my third year as Principal for several of the Autism Spectrum Disorder programs with the Monterey County Office of Education. This year I serve Ruth Andresen Elementary, Boronda Meadows Elementary School, Bolsa Knolls Middle School, and Seaside High School.

My educational career began as a paraprofessional for five years in special education self-contained classrooms. At the encouragement of several teachers and a principal, I enrolled in the education program of Montana State University, Billings where I earned two Bachelor's degrees, one in elementary education and the second in special education. My first teaching position was at a residential facility for court adjudicated youth where I learned a great deal about behavior management, social skills training, and myself. As a teacher I then went on to help begin several new programs located in Montana and spent seven years teaching students with behavioral and emotional issues. Prior to my tenure as a principal with MCOE, I had the opportunity to spend eight years as a special education administrative program specialist in California. In addition, for two years I had the pleasure of serving as a coordinator for Foster Youth Services for the county of San Bernardino in Southern California. I obtained a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Concordia University and have put to use all the courses and information obtained to become a Principal for the MCOE Autism Spectrum Disorder programs.

I am very pleased to be serving teachers and professional staff who take pride in working hard to create and maintain a structured, safe, and motivating learning environment for our students.

My door is always open should you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year. If you need to reach me, I can be contacted at (949) 636-8213. Please do not hesitate to call or stop by to chat.

Autism Spectrum and Communication Disordered Programs

The Monterey County Office of Education Autism program is designed to serve students ages 6 to 22 that are recognized by their District of Residence as needing greater assistance than is available within the District. Students placed in the MCOE ASD programs are identified by their District as having autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disabilities that involve communication difficulties and require a lower staff to student ratio and a reduced class size. Program components include developmentally appropriate curriculum aligned with California Common Core. Each classroom uses a combination of instructional strategies and interventions to address individual student's learning needs and abilities. A highly structured environment is found in each classroom with a focus on the intensive communication and language needs of students. Students are provided visual supports, functional communication training, and if required, augmentative or alternative communication. Social skills training is delivered on a daily basis in the classroom and while students engage with typical peers during recesses and lunch. Positive behavioral programming is data-driven, based on research-based methods, and implemented by every classroom teacher and staff member. Related services are provided based on individual student needs and may consist of speech/language, occupational therapy, adaptive physical education, nursing services, and behavioral assistance and supports.