

# EYE ON EDUCATION

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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APRIL 2010

## Superintendent's Message:



### Dear Paramount Unified School District Community,

I want to inform all of our stakeholders that our Board of Education took careful and prudent action on March 2, 2010 at a Special Meeting to approve and adopt a new 2010-11 Revised Fiscal Stabilization Reduction Plan.

The following represents the Superintendent's Expenditure Reductions totaling \$3,223,000 million

dollars beginning in the 2010-11 school year:

• Increase use of one time Tier III Funds	300,000
• Elimination of K-8 Summer School (one time)	400,000
• Employee Reductions	690,000
• Reexamination of Maintenance & Operations Plan	933,000
• Increase use of Flexibility Tier III Programs - Adult School and ROP	900,000

Total additional expenditure reductions \$ 3,223,000

In addition, a decision has been made to establish a 24 to 1 student teacher staffing ratio in grades K-3. This decision continues to support and fund our Class Size Reduction/CSR program during the 2010-11 school year.

With the approval of this plan, the District will be able to meet its financial obligations through 2010-11 based on current assumptions. This revised plan must be revisited during the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years since the ending balances are projected to be deficits of \$6 million and \$15 million in the two subsequent years.

In addition, you will recall that we are continuing to negotiate with our CSEA classified employees and our teachers association TAP to request a four day furlough for the 2010-11 school year. Management will be subject to a six-day furlough. The furlough program with all employees participating will save approximately \$1.2 million dollars a year and is essential if we expect to maintain financial stability, personnel positions and our vital programs in the immediate future.

I want to thank everyone for their support and understanding that our goals remain:

- ✓ Fiscal Solvency
- ✓ Student Achievement
- ✓ Positive Labor Relations and
- ✓ SAVE JOBS!!

Sincerely,

**David J. Verdugo, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

## Paramount Boys' Soccer Captures CIF Section, Regional Titles



In a historic playoff run which stunned the local high school sports scene, Paramount High's boys' soccer team captured its first CIF/Southern Section title on March 6 and topped that a week later by winning the CIF/State Southern Regional championship as well. The Pirates, San Gabriel Valley League champs for the 6th time in 7 seasons, entered the playoffs as the #10 seed, but parlayed an

exceptional defensive effort to win eight playoff matches, including four in the penalty kick round. Following an easy first-round win over Santa Ynez, Paramount won tough matches over Garey, Savanna, and Canyon to qualify for the Division III title match at Mission Viejo HS against Santa Ana Valley, at that time ranked #8 in the nation. Taking a 1-0 lead in the first half, the Pirates withstood a ten-shots-on-goal

onslaught by the talented Falcons in the second half, surrendering only one goal as the match moved into the first ten-minute overtime. Making the most of its opportunities, the Pirates got a penalty kick from the left side of the Falcon goal about halfway through the overtime. The kick by senior Juan Ochoa was headed into the goal by junior David Trevino, stunning the large Paramount crowd that had traveled a long

way to support the team, the Falcons, and even the Pirates themselves in the sudden knowledge that they were CIF Division III champs.

That victory propelled the Pirates into the CIF/State Southern Regional playoffs, and on March 9 and 11, they hosted Edison (ranked #17 in the nation) and, once again, the Falcons of Santa Ana Valley. Partisan Paramount crowds saw the Pirates win both matches in the penalty kick round as senior goalie Antonio Flores blocked multiple kicks to move the Pirates into the Regional final at Warren High on March 13. The match with the Dos Pueblos Chargers of the Santa Barbara

area was all but a home game for the Pirates as a large and supportive Paramount crowd braved chilly temperatures to cheer the team. Paramount controlled the match throughout and made two goals by Jose Antonio Salgado stand up to clinch the Regional championship in decisive fashion.

Congratulations to the Pirate coaching staff, led by co-head coaches Juan Navarro and Rafa Villasenor, and to the players for an unforgettable season and thrilling playoff run. Their determination and belief in each other overcame the strongest challenges by talented teams. We wish them the best as they enjoy the fruits of victory.

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

**April 13, 2010 & April 27, 2010**

Board of Education meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at the District Office, 15110 California Avenue, Paramount, and are open to the public

# Buena Vistas Eagles Look to the Future



Christopher Turner, Ramiro Medellin, and Tiara Heard took wings and with the determination of an eagle set sight on their hopes for the future. Mr. Makin-Principal at Buena Vista stands proudly next to the only students so far to have ever taken the SAT from Buena Vista High School. These seniors are true leaders and trend setters. As a result of their tenacity and courage, several of their peers have requested vouchers for the upcoming SAT exam. Christopher Turner a mid year grad completed his graduation requirements in January, and is now attending Cordon Bleu School of Culinary Arts in Hollywood, California. Ramiro, a June grad

received a provisional letter of acceptance from California State University at Northridge, making him the first PUSD Alternative school graduate to receive a provisional letter of acceptance as a current student. Tiara, also a June grad, will make a pit stop at the local community college before spreading her wings at one of our nation's Historical Black Colleges. In the 1970's Famous Amos was only famous to those of us who lived nearby his small L.A. based cookie stand. Today his Fame is world-wide. He never let his small beginnings deter his dreams, and neither will we. We introduce three stand-outs today, but with eagles- the sky is the limit.

# Students' Voices Heard at Rotary Roundtable Forum



## Everyone was a winner at this year's Rotary Club Roundtable discussion.

These yearly roundtable discussions, sponsored by the Paramount Rotary Club and Paramount Petroleum, provide Pirates with an opportunity to discuss their opinions about debatable topics of today's world.

During this event, students sat at tables of 8-10 with a moderator and a judge. Throughout the auditorium there were 20 tables, at which five questions were presented to participants to discuss. Some of the topics discussed were healthcare, music stores, causes of obesity, re-instating the draft, and national scandals regarding some role models (e.g. Tiger Woods). Each question was to be discussed for ten minutes, which was challenging for some people who wanted to state their opinion clearly.

Looking around it was evident that each student did his/her best to be heard even though the minutes went by quickly. One couldn't imagine just what the students of Paramount had to say about certain topics. Some felt nervous at first not knowing what to expect, but soon it was evident that they became

comfortable and started to participate. Dr. Verdugo stated, "Outstanding turnout! The largest turnout of students in the history of the school and event with an estimate of 200 students. It was a great opportunity for our students to exchange ideas." Dr. Verdugo added, "Our city, our state, and our nation have a bright future with these students." Attending the event with members of the Rotary Club were board members Alicia Anderson, Tony Peña, and Sonya Cuellar; Paramount City Manager Linda Benedetti-Leal; Rotary President John Rodgeron; Paramount Petroleum Vice-President of Human Resources Bill Winters; and Superintendent Dr. Verdugo.

The judging was based on how creative, inspirational, or distinguished an individual was during the discussion. Everyone left the auditorium with something: cash prize or gift certificate for a free hamburger from Doublz or a free smoothie from Jamba Juice. For each category there was one person who won \$75 and many who won \$30 in cash. Susy Cuevas (11th) won for most creative; Arianna Morales (10th), most inspirational; and Kosheena Smith (10th), most distinguished leader.

By Glory Lopez, Senior

Eye On Education is a monthly Publication of the  
Paramount Unified School District



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Sonya Cuellar, Member  
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District Superintendent  
David J. Verdugo, Ed.D.

Good things are happening in Paramount Schools

Eye On Education

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# PHS Students Remember the Past

The lessons learned in History class have come alive for three special Pirate students. As part of a class assignment, students in Mr. Jason Sewell's Advanced Placement European History course took part in the 11th Annual Holocaust Art & Writing Contest hosted by Chapman University and the 1939 Club. The 1939 Club is a Los-Angeles based group comprised of Holocaust survivors and their family members. Its mission is to provide Holocaust education and preserve the memories of those who perished.

To begin the assignment, Mr. Sewell presented the students with a video interview of a survivor named Selene Bruk of Poland. Mr. Sewell explained, "The students were absolutely focused on her words as they heard about her experiences. To hear the story of a survivor in her own words really inspired them." After viewing

the video, the students were given the task of responding to the video by creating their own poem, short essay, or original artwork. From all of the wonderful responses, the top three were chosen to represent PHS for the contest.

Lotusa Chan created a poem full of imagery; Mariana Castro wrote a short essay focusing on the tragedy caused by the Nazis; and Kelly Florimon drew a haunting scene from one of Selene Bruk's memories. These three students were given the honor of attending a special ceremony at Chapman University on March 5, 2010. There they were able to hear a presentation by Curt Lowens, Holocaust survivor and actor, and appreciate the entries submitted by thirty-three other participating high schools.

PHS is proud to recognize these students for their thoughtful, creative



responses to one of the most tragic events in history. The maturity, insight, and sensitivity with which they approached this subject help keep

alive the memory of those who suffered.

Jean Law, Assistant Principal

## JROTC Cadet Command Formal Inspection



Above is a picture of the Battalion. Our vision is to provide quality citizens, character, and leaders, while fostering partnerships with communities and educational institutions.

On February 2, 2010, the JROTC Pirate Battalion endured a very memorable experience. The two-year-old program had its very first Cadet Command Formal Inspection. For weeks prior to the date, the leaders of the program put all their time and effort into prepping for the event. The battalion even had after school practices during the early release dates. It was definitely a display of their dedication and commitment to the program. Throughout the preparation the instructors stayed very supportive of the cadets, and taught them how they could improve. Not only did the instructors show loyalty, but so did some of the "big bosses." The superintendent, principal, assistant principals, and a counselor came to show support for the Pirate Battalion during the staff briefing. The parts of the inspection consisted

of a Staff Briefing and Inspection, In-Ranks Inspection, Knowledge Team, and Marching Inspection. During the briefing, cadets presented about how the mission of the school is intertwined with that of the JROTC's mission which is to motivate young people to be better Citizens. It is a pleasure to say that the Battalion performed with professionalism and excellence in all parts. Their efforts did not go unnoticed. Not only did the Battalion pass the inspection, but passed it with the distinction of Honor Unit. Honor Unit is the second highest award that a Battalion can earn in the inspection process.

The Raiders Team (athletic team) is pictured. The members have brought home our first place competition trophy. They appreciate the importance of physical fitness in maintaining good health.

## Los Cerritos Graduates First Parent Class



Los Cerritos School was very fortunate to have been chosen as one of the schools to receive the Planned Parenthood series of Parent Education classes. The group was led by Guadalupe Estrada from Planned Parenthood. The classes ran for fifteen weeks at Los Cerritos. This series focuses on mobilizing the Latino women in the community. Some of the topics included Self Esteem, Communication, Drug Prevention and Parent Involvement. The parents involved attended weekly and participated in group discussions and activities. The classes were focused on helping the participants develop their sense of self esteem.

On February 10th 2010, parent participants graduated in a ceremony. All participants were dressed in caps and

gowns. They proudly stood before an audience and shared what they had learned and their feelings regarding their graduation. Many of the parents faced their fears of public speaking. With their classmates chanting "Si se puede" ("Yes you can") they gained the courage to speak in front of the group. With tears welling in her eyes Lourdes Aguayo shared "This is my first graduation, I only completed 2nd grade". Not even the threat of giving birth would keep another parent from attending. She joyously stood in her cap and gown while feeling labor contractions throughout the ceremony. Guadalupe Estrada did a wonderful job of motivating parents to become more aware of the issues in their community. As a result they are now able to pass this knowledge down to their children.

## Making a Difference!



Fourth graders at Mokler School were excited about the idea of starting their own business! They sold Christmas cards and ornaments during the holiday season. Students were able to apply what they had learned about business in their Open Court, Dollars and Sense Unit. The motive was to raise money for those in need, so we decided that all profits would be donated to a children's charity.

Students worked tirelessly during their spare time and after school. Mrs.

Rosa and several students gladly took on the responsibility of working at home to design cards and make Christmas tree ornaments. Students worked as a team to make our business a success! With the help of students and teacher donations, we raised \$340! Our profits were donated to The Spark of Love Toy Drive and Olive Crest Children's Foundation.

Written by Ms. Avila

## Newcomers are Welcome at Leona Jackson School!



Moving to a new school is always difficult, but especially if the new school is in a different country! When foreign middle school students arrive in Paramount, they are transferred to the Newcomer Program at Leona Jackson School.

The goal of the program is to provide a fast-paced and intensive education to non-English speaking students, which is loaded with all of the strategies that English Learners need: group work, dialogue, visuals, total physical response, active participation, modeled writing, and even regular technology lessons in the computer lab. Newcomers stay together all day receiving specialized instruction in all subjects. In recent years, the program has serviced students from as far away as Egypt, Armenia, and the Philippines.

With a sheltered and intensive

instruction during the first year in the United States, many newcomers are ready for success in their second year. Most students skip a language arts level and some move up into the highest language arts class, Prentice Hall.

Part of the reason for the program's success is that these students feel a strong sense of safety as they experiment in producing their new language. One newcomer, Mary Olivas, summarized the feeling like this, "I like the newcomer program because I am with other students just like me and I don't feel embarrassed to speak English."

Clearly, in order for all learning to take place, students must feel safe. At Leona Jackson School, the Newcomer Program offers this experience to our newly arrived students.

Rebecca Perez

## Come and Get Your "Passport to Success" April 17, 2010!



On April 17, 2010, a School Readiness Resource Fair will be offered to the community at Progress Park from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The fair is named "Passport to Success" and offers information and activities for families with children under the age of 5 years. Attendees will receive a passport that can be stamped at each booth as they travel throughout the fair. Each booth will offer both information for parents and crafts and activities for children. The fair will

feature many local agencies and lots of family fun.

The Fair is being organized by the District's Ready By Five program with a Zero to Five Collaborative. The Collaborative is comprised of local community groups seeking to increase community investment and involvement in early intervention to ensure success for all children. If you are interested in joining the 2010-2011 Collaborative in their mission, please call 562-602-6913 for more information.

## Paramount Unified School District Promotes High Academic Standards for Middle School Students

This year, the Paramount Unified School District launched three new middle schools as part of the K-12 program. Alondra, Paramount Park and Zamboni, all K-8 schools in the past, currently enroll only students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades. These schools provide a focused academic curriculum with the goal of preparing all students for high school.

As part of the District's goal to promote high standards for learning, this year all middle school students will be required to meet specific academic criteria in order to participate in the

8th grade promotion ceremony. For the first time, all eighth grade students must pass at least five of six classes to be part of this end of year promotion event. In addition to communicating this new requirement to students and parents, middle schools are providing tutoring sessions and academic support for students who need additional help. Teachers, administrators and counselors at each PUSD middle school are committed to making the end of year promotion celebration a meaningful rite of passage in preparation for high school.