

EYE ON EDUCATION

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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APRIL 2011

Music Center Announces PHS Teacher as Winner of the 29th Annual Music Center Bravo

SANDRA WILSON-ESPINOZA

The Music Center announced ten teachers and five schools as finalists for the Music Center's 29th Annual BRAVO Awards, honoring educators and schools for their commitment to delivering exemplary arts education in both visual and performing arts. One of the recipients of this prestigious award is none other than Sandra Wilson-Espinoza, the Paramount High School Choir Music Teacher!

Finalists were chosen from 28 candidates who participated in an extensive review process, which included site visits and feedback by a screening committee. Awards were presented in four categories: Generalist Teacher, Arts Specialist Teacher, School Recognition and School Program. BRAVO Awards nominations are made by principals, faculty committees, superintendents and parents.

All candidates were honored on March 7, 2011 at a



Sandra Wilson-Espinoza pictured with District Officials.



Sandra Wilson-Espinoza pictured with family members

celebration event at the Music Center's Walt Disney Concert Hall. Sandra Wilson-Espinoza was honored in the category of Arts Specialist and will receive a cash award dedicated to supplementing their arts programs.

Sandra joined Paramount Unified School District first as an itinerant grades 6-8 choir teacher in 2008. In 2009, she was selected to coordinate and direct the choir program at Paramount High School.

In the two years she has been at the high school, there has been a renaissance of the choir program. There is an increase of students participating in the various choir groups and a renewed interest in performing! She was recognized for her innovation and excellence in arts education. Sandra has revitalized the music department, enhanced student achievement and fostered self-esteem, teamwork and

cross-cultural communication and understanding through her outstanding choir program!

Sandra Wilson-Espinoza attended Whittier College where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Music. She continued her studies in dance at San Jose State and over time earned her Masters Degree in Education from the University of La Verne. Sandra spent many years working for the El Rancho Unified School Dis-

trict. Paramount High School is very fortunate to now have her join the talented music staff at the school.

Congratulations to Sandra Wilson-Espinoza for receiving the Bravo Award for 2011!

Established in 1982, the Music Center BRAVO Awards is an integral part of the Music Center's work in the community to advocate for and deliver quality arts education for all students.

Mokler's Learning Center is Making Gains in Student Achievement



Something remarkable at Mokler School this year is the Mokler Learning Center. The Learning Center is an innovative program that helps struggling students get the extra attention they need in order to succeed in the classroom. Select students are identified to participate in the program based on the skills (in language arts and mathematics) they need to improve. Students are given the opportunity to work with highly qualified personnel at their individual learning levels. One of the team of Learning Center staff includes Resource Specialist Connie McDonald who said, "I use materials and strategies to help students improve their reading and

spelling in a small group setting."

Students who come to the Mokler Learning Center for language arts receive targeted instruction four times a week for one half hour each day. Each grade level has several groups that are divided into 2-6 students guided by Learning Center personnel. The staff of the Mokler Learning Center includes Theresa Diaz (the K-5 Instructional Coach), Connie McDonald (the RSP Teacher), Evelyn Coronel (the Intervention Teacher), and RSP aides Bea Alvarado and Martha Alvarez. All grade levels, kindergarten through fifth grade, are serviced in the Learning Center. For mathematics, selected students come to the Learning Center ap-

proximately twice a week and work on their basic math facts with the intervention teacher, Mrs. Coronel. First grade teacher, Kathleen Shivers has noticed a difference in her students' performance already and said, "Between English Language Development and the Learning Center, I have seen improvement in writing and basic math facts."

As a result of working in the Mokler Learning Center, students of the program are using basic math facts, phonics, spelling, comprehension and fluency skills to enrich their classroom experience and achieve higher levels of learning. When asked what part of the Learning Center experience student Melissa Chavez, 5th grade, liked best, she responded, "I really like how it helps you get step-by-step directions for answering comprehension questions. It has helped me a lot. I passed my test!" Thanks to the hard work of Mokler students and the dedication of our Learning Center staff, Mokler's Learning Center is making gains in student achievement.

Theresa M. Diaz,
K-5 Instructional Coach
Mokler School

NEW RULE... Tdap SHOTS BEFORE SCHOOL

Student MUST have the Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Tdap Booster Shot!

There is a new California law that requires students in 7th through 12th grades that require proof of a Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Tdap Booster shot before starting the next 2011-12 school year. This new school entry law was enacted to protect California's youth against the recent pertussis epidemic. This requirement will begin July 1, 2011. If your student has received one dose of Tdap vaccine on or after the 10th birthday, they have met the requirement.

However, they will still need to show proof of the Tdap Booster. This requirement does not affect students enrolling in this year's summer school program.

The Paramount Unified School District is recommending parents contact your family physician today, to get a whooping cough shot (Tdap) before the 2011-2012 school year begins. Immunizations may be given by your family physician or are available at the health clinics.

If you have any questions regarding this new mandatory immunization law, please contact your student's school site today.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

April 13, 2011

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

6th Graders Visit the Getty Villa in Malibu

Zamboni Middle School students spent a day with Roman architecture and Greek art. The 6th grade Ancient History teachers Daniel Sepulveda, Robert Eman, Joan Camiling, and Ardelia Aldridge coordinated the field trip at the J. Paul Getty Villa in Malibu. Students looked forward to this one time experience.

Prior to the trip, they were prepared with a variety of artworks and housing structures. They examined the villa's replica, an actual ancient Roman villa, the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum Italy. In the classrooms, they read and viewed pictures about the Etruscan, Greek and Roman antiquities. They learned about a peristyle, a courtyard with a covered walkway around it. They were prepared to recognize the antefix which is a decorative tile used on ancient buildings to cover the end of the roof tiles; these antefixes were also used keep birds from building their nests in these tiles. They also studied the decorative waterspouts, frescoes on the walls, mosaics, and the use of plants and fruits on different artworks that were used as symbolism.

The forty-five minute drive to Malibu was an impressive scenic drive. The Santa Monica Pier was an exciting landmark for the students as they rode along the Pacific Coast Highway. The students' energy rose as the school bus pulled in to the driveway. The excitement and appreciation was overwhelming with their sight of the Getty Villa. The Zamboni Wild Cats were graciously



welcomed by an informative volunteer from the Getty. The students were very respectful and courteous towards the Getty Villa staff. At that moment, expectations were set for this self-guided tour. Because the field trip was reserved as self-guided, the history teachers designed a packet where students were to analyze the specific types of artworks from various locations within the villa. The students, divided into five small groups, and then were guided by a chaperone. Each group was given a different starting point within the villa to avoid overcrowding.

As students entered the Villa, they were greeted by an elegant garden where five maiden statues stood at the inner peristyle pool known

as the impluvium. Students in amazement quickly examined the statues and enjoyed the sight of the sparkling pool. Some students were quick to take out cameras to take photos and could not wait to show other friends. As students walked around the villa, they observed and analyzed different Roman designs. Students recognized that the Roman and Greek Art was present everywhere. While examining the floor, students were able to see first-hand mosaics which they found images made by different sizes of tiles assembled together. Fixing their eyes on the water fountains, they were able to see the waterspouts in the form of lions' heads. Looking up the roof, they identified antefixes,

which were palm tree shaped tiles that kept the birds from building their nests. All over the villa, students explored wall frescoes, which were paintings made on a wall of wet plaster using pigments. Students excitedly walked the villa's garden that had different types of herbs, apple trees, olive trees, grape vines, ivy, acanthus, and pomegranate trees. Three groups were given the opportunity to reserve the family room where students designed their own vases using patterns used in ancient Greece. Students explored the silhouette screen where they posed using different types of props to represent heroic stories.

Sixth grade Ancient History teachers were pleased to hear the conversations the students were having as they entered each room. Students generated great questions and discussions throughout, especially as they entered the "Greek Gods and Goddesses" room. Other favorite rooms included the TimeScape room, Stories of the Trojan War, and Mythological Heroes. The day ended with a trip to the gift shop where students bought unique souvenirs to bring home to their families to show what they have learned. Each student was given a free ticket to bring their own families to the Getty Villa. Zamboni Middle School was invited back again for next year's field trip.

**Joan Camiling, Teacher
Zamboni Middle School**

PHS School Community Unites To Potentially Save 288 Lives



Paramount High School held its first blood drive on Friday, February 18, 2011 in the school gymnasium. The event was organized by the school's Associate Student Body (ASB) along with our local American Red Cross office. Over a period of several weeks, students worked relentlessly in recruiting fellow students, teachers, and staff to donate.

ASB students began their day at 6:30am with the preparation of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for all of the donors. ASB members were proud to see more than 130 donors

present themselves throughout the day to support the cause. By the end of the school day, a total of 96 units of blood was collected which in-turn can be used to help save 288 lives.

Jocelyn Vargas, a Junior at PHS shared that "this experience was a life changing event. Watching the school come together to help such a great cause was wonderful to see." Keep up the magnificent work Paramount Pirates!

**Marleen Ruiz,
11th Grade, PHS Student**

Gaines Gives the Gift of Literacy



Gaines students were asked at a school-wide assembly in February if they thought that reading was important. All students agreed that indeed, it was. Then the students were asked what it would be like to come to a school where there were no books at all, not even a small library, not even books for the teachers. Could this be possible somewhere in the world today?

The students were left to silently think and were told that the answer was yes; there are places in the world where students attend schools where there is not even a single book. The students were shocked and when asked if they thought that they could do something to help change this, not many thought that they could.

This is when first grade teacher, Margaret Armenta told them that they could. She introduced the students to the African Library Project. Gaines School had been matched with a school in Swaziland, Africa. The Gaines community could start a small library at this school. Students and their families, as well as teachers and staff, were asked to donate any used books that they no longer needed or wanted. Students also did chores at home to receive a dollar from their parents to donate to the African Library Project.

Gaines School collected over 1,000 books and helped raise enough money to

ship the books from Louisiana to Swaziland, Africa. Trepanning Services of Paramount generously offered to cover the shipping costs from Paramount to the African Library Project's warehouse in Louisiana. First grade teachers and groups of students helped organize, count, pack, and weigh all of the books.

Throughout the book drive, Gaines students made a connection with our school-wide program, Character Counts! Gaines students are indeed Kids for Character, showing that they care for others. Some of our Open Court units also correlated nicely with the book drive, including "Friendship", "Kindness", and "Journeys". If you are interested in starting your own book drive and create a library in an African school, you can receive more information from www.africanlibraryproject.org.

In the spirit of giving, the Gaines community also collected \$1,850.00 to donate to the American Heart Association, participating in a Jump Rope for Heart Event in January. Students spent five minutes each in a total of five outdoor activities to exercise and pump up their hearts. All of the students had fun participating and raising money to help others with heart problems.

**Marci Maldonado, Teacher
Gaines School**

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



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Great things are happening in Paramount Schools

Eye On Education

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G.A.T.E. Super Saturday



6th-8th grade students waiting to launch their handmade rockets



Paramount Park 7th graders – Ivan Madrigal, Alexis Salazar, and Juan Rosales working together to build a bridge.

Paramount Unified School District held the first of two Super Saturday Enrichment Events for 3rd-5th and 6th-8th grade Gifted and Talented Education (G.A.T.E.) students. These events were held in partnership with Star Education, a non-profit organization selected as a “Model Program” by the White House and the U.S. Department of Education, and focused on providing G.A.T.E. students an opportunity to get hands on experience in a series of activities designed to build excitement around science, technology, math and engineering.

These events allowed the children to be introduced to the roles technology and engineering play in the world around them. Each student was given the opportunity to build and launch model rockets, design and race cars made entirely of edible materials and examine the different ways engineers build bridges by building their own structures with ZOME tools.

With the growing emphasis on technology in the job market, events like these help PUSD students understand the importance of science and math within their educational careers. It also provided students with the chance to learn how to collaborate with other students from

schools across the district.

This event, and the others like it, have provided an outlet for students to take what they have learned in the classroom and giving them an opportunity to apply this knowledge in real world situations. When asked about how this event helps you in life, Paramount Park Middle School 7th grader, Janet Diaz said, “It helps you think about what engineers do and what I have to learn to be one.” Fellow Paramount Park student, Gerardo Cedillo, 7th grade added, “When you are building, don’t give up on the first failure. If one idea doesn’t work, try another one.”

In the coming months, G.A.T.E. students will be provided with an opportunity to examine the field of computer programming. Seventh grader, Tieranie Hawkins, of Zamboni School writes, “I didn’t want to get out of bed [on a Saturday] but coming was worth it.”

Upcoming Event:

6th – 8th Grade
Saturday, May 7, 2011
Location: TBD

Lihn Roberts, Curriculum Specialist

Superintendent’s Message:

April as Public Schools Month

In the year 1920, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of California founded Public Schools Month to celebrate the contribution of public schools, the American way of life, and have designated April 2011 as Public Schools Month.

Our public schools have traditionally provided and continue to provide, the indispensable educational tools and institutional support to millions of young Americans to achieve both rewarding careers and fulfilling life endeavors.

In addition, American public schools have had the responsibility for instilling a love of learning in our children and teaching them the skills to pursue satisfying, productive lives.



Please join me in celebrating Public Schools Month by recognizing our schools throughout Paramount Unified School District. “Public schools are truly the foundation upon which we can build our nation’s future.”

Thank you for your continued support.

David J. Verdugo, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Middle School Literacy Achievement in Math and Science



The Paramount Unified School District has been awarded a grant in partnership with USC. The purpose of the grant is to provide professional development to improve middle school students’ achievement in science, math and health. This project is funded by the California Postsecondary Education Commission which supports initiatives to improve curriculum and instruction in California’s schools. Through this grant, teams of USC math and science professors, literacy consultants and Paramount Unified School District teachers work together to improve teaching practices and student learning in math and science classrooms in PUSD’s middle schools.

This year teachers from Alondra, Paramount Park and Zamboni Middle Schools have participated in several days of teacher training held in the summer and during the school year. The training addressed how to teach students to apply literacy skills in math and science—two subjects that require knowledge of specific vocabulary and in-depth reading comprehension skills. As part of this summer

institute, PUSD teachers traveled to USC where they worked in science and math labs alongside professors in these fields.

As the result of this project, teachers are not only learning more about the content they teach, but they are learning how to teach it in appropriate ways so students with diverse needs and abilities will learn. This is evident in classrooms as students participate in meaningful science labs where they have opportunities to do hands-on investigations that require scientific thinking. In math classrooms, students use a college-ready note-taking structure while learning about new concepts to help them organize ideas and prepare for tests. In all classrooms, students cooperate with each other to experiment and problem solve.

Beginning in summer, Jackson and Hollydale Schools will join the first group of schools by participating in a summer institute, bringing the grant’s benefits to all five of the District’s middle schools.

Kelly Morales
Curriculum Specialist

Paramount Unified School District

Parent Workshops

LOCATION: Jefferson School
8600 Jefferson Street
Paramount, CA 90723

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Apr. 7, 2011	How to Avoid Obesity
May 5, 2011	Improving Family Communication
May 19, 2011	Parenting Strong-willed Children
June 9, 2011	Preparing for the Summer

Spanish Translation will be available.
Babysitting available for children ages 3-12 (must be toilet trained)
MUST pre-register for babysitting one week in advance;
MAY pre-registration for individual workshops
Call: Myra McGinnis at 562-602-6035

Workshops Open to all PUSD Parents
Co-sponsored by Paramount Unified School District and Cerritos College

Health Career Academy Flourishes at PHS



Kierra Herrera, Cecilia Lopez, Jose Jaramillo)

Over the last three years, the Health Career Academy has flourished under the leadership of Ms. Elizabeth Rodriguez. She is a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), and has been teaching Regional Occupational Program (ROP) courses since 2005. The ROP program at Paramount High School provides students with the opportunity to explore careers in various areas, including medical and technical fields. Ms. Rodriguez shares that since arriving at Paramount High School, she has never had so many students hired or offered future positions so quickly and at such young ages. Ms. Rodriguez is proud to say that she “takes pride in instructing these students and watching them give back to their community through unpaid job training.”

So far, twenty two of the one hundred and eight third year Health Career Academy Exploration students have completed 100 hours of on the job training. It’s also exciting to report that since starting the externship portion of the Health Career Academy, five of these third year students have received job offers, contingent on receiving their medical assistance certificate at the end of this school year.

Two of the students offered employment this summer are Cecelia Lopez and Jose Jaramillo. Both have been offered jobs with a cardiologist in Long Beach. Cecilia plans on entering the medical field as a career, so the opportunity to work during the summer in a cardiologist’s office should provide a valuable experience. Cecilia shares that her experience in taking the Health Career Academy class has motivated her to attend school everyday. She further explains that “my ROP classes

make learning fun and interesting, the classes definitely make me like school more.”

In considering a career as a veterinarian, 11th grade student Jose explains how the feeling of others counting on him really makes him feel good inside. He further explains that being in the clinic has helped him to overcome his shyness. A third student, Kiara Herrera, has been offered a job at a pediatrician clinic in Downey. She shares that her confidence has increased as a result of her ROP class. She shares that she has learned a lot about responsibility in working in the clinics in which she states “this is preparing me for real life.” Two other seniors, Kassandra Ortiz and Greisy Baez, have also been offered full time jobs upon graduation this June. Greisy describes that she has always wanted to be a doctor ever since she was five years old. “This experience is allowing me to see that my dream is not too far away. I am excited about helping people and it feels good to know that my family is proud of me.”

The Health Career Academy is providing motivated students in Paramount the opportunity to explore and possibly enter careers in the health and medical fields. Lastly, Ms. Rodriguez would like to thank the Paramount Unified School District and its School Board Members, Mr. Manuel San Miguel, as well as the entire staff at Paramount High School for their support of the Health Career Academy and its students.

Jeff Beahn
Teacher on Special Assignment
Paramount High School

Paramount High Loses A Legend, Wins a Title

The end of the Winter sports season was a bittersweet one for Paramount High School as a legendary coach was lost while Pirate boys’ soccer battled its way to a second consecutive CIF championship. The athletic program already had a runner-up finish in CIF by Pirate wrestling when word was received on February 23 that former wrestling coach Bob Witham had been inducted into the CIF Hall of Fame for his thirty years of service to both PHS and southern California high school wrestling. The next day PHS was informed that Coach was hospitalized with heart problems, and he lost that fight the following Sunday, but he knew about his Hall of Fame honor.

Coach Witham created the wrestling program at Paramount High in 1963 and was its guiding light until he retired in 1993. Along the way, he turned Paramount wrestling into a southern California power, winning numerous league titles, producing several CIF individual champions, and leading his 1974-75 squad to the school’s first-ever team CIF championship. From 1993-2008, Coach continued to substitute teach at PHS and work with Pirate wrestlers - the day of his first heart problems in 2008 he had subbed at Paramount; Coach was 81 years old at the time. From then on he made only occasional appearances at the school he had given so much to, and his funeral on March 5 in Diamond Bar was a testimony to the respect and love generations of Paramount kids felt for him - over 200 former wrestlers showed for the ceremonies, many of them graying as well now; in addition, numerous faculty, fellow coaches,

and friends filled the church to bond in their memories, grief, and respect.

The somber tone of Coach Witham’s funeral that morning was juxtaposed with the excitement created that evening at Mission Viejo High School as Pirate boys’ soccer competed for its second straight CIF title. Paramount entered the 2011 Division 3 playoffs as the #4 seed and fought its way to the Finals with victories over Valencia, Yucaipa, Cabrillo (Lompoc), and Corona Del Mar, earning the right to play Fontana for the championship. The Pirates scored early in both halves, including their first goal in the first twenty seconds of the match. Stellar goalie play and tough team defense held the Steelers scoreless until the 68 minute mark when they finally broke through for a goal, but the Pirates held on despite being a man short the final ten minutes due to a red card. The 2-1 victory gave Paramount High its first “back-to-back” CIF title team since Paramount football accomplished the feat in 1988-89. Even a controversial first-round 2-1 regional loss at Rancho Bernardo on March 8 could not dampen the accomplishment of this great team and its coaches, who answered every challenge this season when every team they played brought their “A” game in hopes of knocking off the defending champs. Congratulations to co-coaches Juan Navarro and Rafa Villaseñor and their staff and to all the players for their second straight championship. Great job Pirates!

Mark Kemp
Athletic Director, PHS

Leona Jackson’s Project Lean on Me Mentoring Program



Research has shown that adolescents excel in environments that support their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Jackson school administrators, middle school teachers, and counselors have adopted Project Lean on Me for 6-8 students to meet their unique needs.

The goal of this mentoring program is to foster positive relationships among middle school students and adults to improve students’ social, emotional, and academic growth. This program provides students with the opportunity to form relationships with adults who understand them and who are willing to support their development.

Select students are paired with an adult whose primary goal is to get to know his/her students well in order to identify and counteract any negative influences that may impact a student’s overall well-being. A monthly luncheon is held to give students and their mentors the opportunity to connect in an

environment that is supportive and free from judgment or criticism. Constructive discourse takes place among students and their mentors during the luncheons in order to guide students in their problem-solving capabilities and to develop their self-esteem.

Project Lean on Me has allowed the educators at Jackson School to be responsive to the unique needs of 6-8 students and to tailor the middle school program to meet those needs. This powerful mentoring program has been embraced by all involved including parents who have contributed their great support.

At Jackson School, we believe that adolescents deserve an education that addresses the developmental characteristics unique to them and through Project Lean on Me, our middle school students get a chance to excel at being themselves.

Kristie Robertson
Counselor
Leona Jackson School

Paramount Unified School District

Kindergarten Registration Begins!

It is time to register your child for Kindergarten! Children who are five (5) years old on or before December 2, 2011 are eligible to attend Kindergarten. Registration for the school year 2011-2012 begins May 3, 2011. To register your child the following documents are required:

- o Proof of birth, such as birth certificate
- o Current immunization records
- o Proof of residency in the Paramount Unified School District

Further information about registration is available at your school. The contact numbers are the following:

Collins	562/ 602-8008
Gaines	562/ 602-8012
Hollydale	562/ 602-8016
Jefferson	562/ 602-8024
Keppel	562/ 602-8028
Lincoln	562/ 602-8036
Los Cerritos	562/ 602-8040
Mokler	562/ 602-8044
Roosevelt	562/ 602-8056
Tanner	562/ 602-8060
Wirtz	562/ 602-8068