

EYE ON EDUCATION

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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DECEMBER 2011

Get Your Hands on an Electrician Career

Whether you are a total beginner, a handyman/woman who has dabbled with electricity, or a construction industry professional who is looking to start on the path toward state licensure, the electrician classes at Paramount Adult School are designed just for you.

Since the spring of 2009, both Basic and Intermediate Electrician classes have helped about 200 men and women gain the theoretic and hands-on skills they need to launch or improve their careers.

Starting wages of \$12-\$14 an hour, and building toward \$28 or \$38 or much higher, certainly add to the classes' appeal.

And the program is growing.

Two new teachers, both with extensive experience in the field, have been hired. One teaches Electrician (Basic) on



Monday and Tuesday evenings. The other teaches Electrician (Intermediate) on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. All classes run from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and continue for a 13-week trimester. Cost is \$75 for Basic, \$175 for Intermediate.

"These classes are a steal at that price," said instructor Rich Iadevaia. Especially since private schools that cover the

same material charge upwards of \$12,000 or \$14,000. "I can't imagine why anyone interested in the electrician field wouldn't jump at this chance."

Especially, too, since this rock-bottom prices will probably be going up soon.

"This teacher's great," said an intermediate level student recently. "He helps us identify and focus on our individual

goal then points out what we need to do to get there."

Both classes start with a thorough discussion of safety, then move on to presentations of theory blended with actual wiring, testing, and problem solving with equipment and materials used in the field. Switches get flipped, conduits run, light bulbs lit, and motors connected. Both 110 and 220 volt applications come to life in the class.

So what's next? A coding class will be added in the Winter trimester. And next summer, plans are being made to add a photovoltaic class. Yes, Paramount Adult School will be going solar! Eventually, other classes such as energy auditing and those necessary to get the adult school approved as an official site for licensure-appropriate instruction are planned.

"We want to move into

the 21st century by using on-line technologies, too," added instructor Hal Hernandez. "We're building a program of excellence here, and these technologies play right into the expectations and skill sets of our students." Technologies that include hybrid courses which are taught live as well as having computer-assisted components for assignments, feedback, and tracking online.

Registration for the Winter trimester will begin in December. Call the Paramount Adult School at (562) 602-8080 for details, or stop by 14507 Paramount Blvd. and see this class in action. Many of the adult students from other classes do every evening—and many of them wind up enrolling, too!

Jerry King
Assistant Principal
Paramount Adult School

CTE Parent Orientation Meeting



Approximately 500 students and parents attended the CTE parent orientation meeting held on Tuesday, November 8, at Paramount High School. Paramount High School Principal Dr. Greg Buckner welcomed the parents and Mr. Manuel San Miguel, Director of Secondary and Alternative Education

presented an overview of the Career Technical Education.

After the introduction, CTE teachers presented information regarding their specific pathway and course content. Parents displayed a lot of interest in Career Technical Education and were excited about the new facilities that will house the

CTE programs at Paramount High School.

A special thanks go out to the CTE staff, administrators, and student helpers who put on a very successful event.

Manuel San Miguel
Director Secondary/
Alternative Education

Harvest Day Celebration



looked like fun was actually learning.

The children had opportunities to milk a cow, make butter, squeeze fresh lemon aide, explore cut pumpkins, take a hay ride, play memory games, have their face painted, bake cookies and make harvest art projects.

Children and the numerous parent volunteers all had a wonderful time.

The Preschool students (ages 4 and 5 years) at Gaines Preschool celebrated Harvest Day on October 31st. What

Nancy Kelley-Kuhn
Early Childhood
Education Director

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

December 7, 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

Red Ribbon Week Observed at PHS



Recently, the Paramount High School Advanced Theatre Arts Class celebrated Red Ribbon Week with the production of "How to Make an American Teenage Quilt" By Tom Akers. Numerous PHS

students, staff members and STAR students from Alondra School were invited to watch the play in the school's Little Theater. The play highlighted numerous ways for teenagers to cope with diffi-

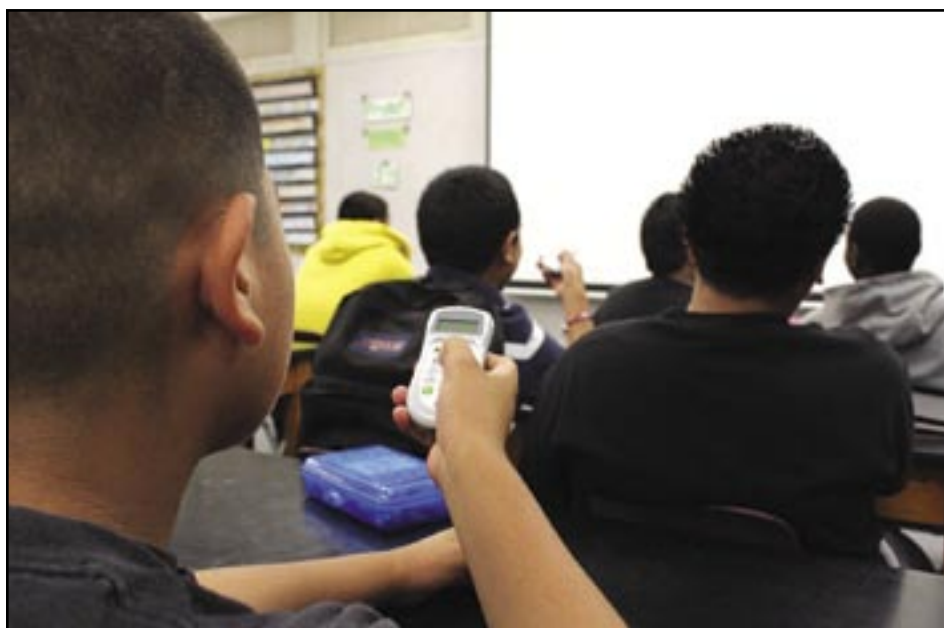
cult, real-life situations. Various scenes depicted such topics as peer pressure, poverty, self-image, violence, bullying, and substance abuse.

PHS Senior, Tadeo Marquez played the roles of three different characters in the play and urged all students that are currently going through difficult situations to not wait, but to seek help as soon as possible, before it is too late. Xavier Alexander Campos had the challenging task of playing four different characters in which he shares that he could personally relate to many of the scenes depicted in the play. Along with providing him with an avenue to express himself, and make new friends, the play allowed him the opportunity to show positive ways for

his peers to deal with their personal problems. PHS Senior, Tanai Spencer is currently in her third year of Drama class and remarks that being in drama inspires her to encourage others to simply be themselves and to be happy of the person that they are inside. At the conclusion of the play, Tanai exhibited this by sharing some of her own personal experiences with the actual audience. She also shared strategies that she used herself to overcome the odds. She comments that "I just want them to know that they are not alone, and that there is someone out there that can help them."

Gregoire Francois
Assistant Principal, PHS

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 teachers in order to improve middle school students' achievement in science, math, health and technology. During this second year of implementation of the grant, math and science teachers from Jackson and Hollydale have joined teachers from Alondra, Paramount Park and Zamboni Middle Schools in several days of training held in the summer and during the school year.

This year, math teachers are being trained in the use of technology recently purchased for schools with grant monies. The technology that will be used in math classrooms includes a Mobi, an instructional tool that serves as an interactive whiteboard. Teachers are able to teach from anywhere in the classroom as the Mobi projects teacher examples from the whiteboard to a screen. This allows for more teacher mobility and

increased student interaction. Teachers also received class sets of the CPS student responders. These "clickers" are used by students to log in their responses to teacher questions and prompts. For example, a teacher can ask students a multiple choice question and students enter their response (e.g., A, B, C, D) into the CPS. This information is then communicated to the teacher immediately enabling the teacher to check for students' understanding more effectively.

Instructional coaches and administrators will also receive training throughout the year in order to support the implementation of the new technology in math classrooms.

Paramount USD is fortunate to have the opportunity to provide teachers with training that will enable middle-school students to be more technologically literate and better prepared for the 21st century.

Kelly Morales
Curriculum Specialist District

New district, new school, new program, new adventures!

As a Northern California native and recent transplant to Southern California (January 2011), I'm still adjusting to my new home. Things like traffic (Why does it take 1 hour to travel 20 miles?) and smog are taking longer to get used to. The diverse populations and many cultural activities are some of the things I'm really enjoying. I was initially worried because life was so much faster paced, people here would be less friendly, aloof. What I'm finding is the opposite. I have met some really nice people who are willing to go out of their way to help you. A lot of them have been at my new school, Hollydale.

On the day I was interviewed, I was impressed by how professional and friendly the office staff were. It was the first day of school and the office was full of students and parents. Even though I have been a teacher for several years, and have experience interviewing in both education and engineering fields, I still get butterflies in my stomach. Ms. Elizabeth & Ms. Cecilia helped calm my nerves before I met with Mr. Longworth and Ms. Cole.

Since I was hired after the start of school, I jumped right into the mix of things. This being the first year of the Autism focused program, it has definitely been a whirlwind experience. We have an incredibly talented team of teachers, instructional aides, therapists, program specialist, and collaboration with an out-of-district consultant, "Autism Partnership" to help us create a dynamic and innovative service model to meet the unique needs of students on the Autism Spectrum.

Each time I have introduced myself, I have received a heartfelt welcome! Ms. Mikelet & Ms. Contreras were among the first teachers I met who introduced me to other teachers in the staff room. When we have had challenging behaviors to deal with, staff members have checked in with us to see if we need more sup-

port. Danny from the Technology department came by to help with my classroom computer and he found out I was a new teacher, he welcomed me to the district. Having worked in Technology myself years ago, it was cool to hear from him that Paramount is a GOOD district to work with. I also think it is a good sign when many of the teachers at Hollydale have had longevity with our district and at Hollydale itself. In this ever-changing economy, it's nice to know that we have some stability to count on.

Yet what truly stands out to me about Hollydale are our students. Many times, children with special needs are excluded from playing with their typically developing peers who may be afraid of others that are different from them. The students of Hollydale welcome and encourage my students to play with them. A game of catch may be insignificant to some. Yet for my students who sometimes have a difficult time relating to others, a game of catch offers a wealth of opportunities of sportsmanship, turn taking, and other essential social skills. It really makes me smile when I come out to recess and see the kids being kids!

Many challenges and opportunities will continue to come our way as the school year unfolds. Personally, I am looking forward to the experiences. Already in the past month, I know I have grown as an educator. I also know that I am part of a great team of educators and support staff who truly want to inspire and educate our students. Thank you to all who have helped my students and I feel welcome at Hollydale. I wish you a successful school year of personal and professional growth!

GO HORNETS!!!!

Cyndi A. Ting
Teacher, Hollydale School

Movie Night Comes to Los Cerritos Elementary School

Last year, Los Cerritos School held its first Movie Night where students and their families were able to come out and enjoy a newly released movie under the stars. The families enjoyed freshly popped popcorn and all the goodies you would typically find at a movie theatre, in front of a 7 by 11 foot screen.

Our movie nights provide a safe environment where families are able to come together and enjoy a fun filled night. It

also provides parents the opportunity to enjoy an evening with their children.

This year we are having our 2nd annual movie night on December 9th, 2011. Students and their families are invited once again to bring their blankets and chairs to enjoy another great family movie.

Connie Toscano
Principal, Los Cerritos 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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Wirtz Schools Celebrates Red Ribbon Week



During the week of October 24-28, Wirtz Elementary School proudly participated in the nation's oldest and largest Drug Prevention Program. Red Ribbon Week was supported by our diligent PTA, as well as our dedicated students and staff. A creatively decorated campus, themed days, a school-wide poster contest, and a Halloween Read Night exhibited our drug free pride in a fun and festive way!

Our spooktacular PTA helped set the tone for the week by creating a drug-free zone at the heart of our campus. Red and white ribbons were draped between trees, and anti-drug ghosts were placed throughout the quad area to serve as a reminder that doing drugs can haunt you for the rest of your life.

Students and teachers contributed to the colorful décor by creating classroom posters. Winners of the school-wide poster contest include: Mrs. Reno- kindergarten, Mrs. Loza- 1st grade (We Don't Give a Hoot About Drugs), Mrs. Valdez- 2nd grade, Mrs. Lujan- 3rd grade, Mr. Cervantez- 4th grade, Mrs. Mabini/Eugenio- 5th grade (Life's Too Sweet To Do Drugs).

On Monday, we kicked off Red Ribbon Week by wearing a red shirt. We teamed up against drugs on Tuesday by wearing our favorite sport team's jersey. Our cool



Hawaiian attire on Wednesday showed that we were too cool to start using drugs; and on Thursday we wore our shirt backwards to display that we were turning our back on drugs. Friday may have been the best themed day of all as we stayed in our pajamas and continued to dream of a drug-free world!

Decorations, a poster contest, and themed days were only part of the fun during Red Ribbon Week. Wirtz students, staff and parents finished off the festivities by celebrating during a Halloween Read Night. Students and their families joined forces with Wirtz staff and PTA for a fun filled evening that included a story time, treats, a parade, and a costume contest.

**Ashley Howard-M.Ed,
Counselor , Wirtz School**

Superintendent's Message: State Revenues and Mid-Year Budget Cuts



The State Controller's Office recently released its monthly report on State General fund revenue collections for October. The Controller is reporting that overall revenues for the month of October came in at a staggering \$810.5 million below the estimate included in the enacted 2011-12 State budget.

After accounting for October revenues, the Controller is reporting that year-to-date general fund revenues for the State of California are now behind the budget's estimates by \$1.5 billion dollars.

It goes without saying, that revenue figures reported by the State are not a good sign for school districts' and school district officials hoping to avoid the mid-year budget cuts that are called for in Assembly Bill 114.

Assembly Bill 114 applies various levels of Mid-Year cuts that are dependent on the amount of revenue that falls short of the State's monthly and yearly estimates. The California Director of Finance will assess the State's tax receipts in December and determine if forecasted revenue levels are on target or falling below. If the AB 114 target levels range from \$1 billion to \$2 billion short, additional cuts will take place in Child Care and Community College funding. If the shortfall level is \$2 billion or more, there would be a reduction or cuts of up to \$1.9 billion dollars in

K-14 education across the State.

What does this mean to Paramount Unified School District? Paramount Unified School District stands to lose \$4 million dollars in our revenue limit or a reduction from \$5,233 per student to only \$4,973 per student. Approximately 4% reduction to our revenue limits.

This potential budget shortage will cause Paramount Unified School District to be even more cautious as we near the end of the 2011-12 school year and attempt to project our District's budget.

We plan to keep our school sites, teachers, classified employees, parents, and community stakeholders informed of any potential mid-year cuts that may occur due to AB 114 and with the formal introduction of the Governor's proposed budget in early January 2012.

Thank you.

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

Adults with Special Needs Dance to Success

The Paramount Adult Transition (PAT) program hosted the first annual "Five District Fall Dance" on October 28 at Progress Park. The event ran from 11:00 a.m. to about 1:00 p.m. and included students and staff from not only PAT but also from similar programs in Bellflower, ABC school district, Downey, and Norwalk/La Mirada.

PAT is designed for 18-22 year-olds with special needs, with a focus on Work Skills, Daily Living Skills, and Personal/Social Skills. Judging from the amount of laughter, dancing, and sharing of good food, the students had many opportunities to practice social skills lessons. A long Conga line stretched around the room at one point, followed by classics like La Macarena and the Chicken Dance.

The greatest response from students when asked? FUN!

"It was cool," said PAT student Mario Ruvalcaba recently, "especially the DJ."

Vanessa Barrientos, one of his classmates, added, "I liked the music. I met Lupe from Norwalk/La Mirada and a guy asked me to dance." Her response to him? "I said 'Yes!'"

In fact, part of student assignments was to ask at least three people to dance. PAT students also created the menu, prepared homemade strawberry shortcake and a fresh

garden salad, and set out the food/service items. Students from the other districts took public transportation to the event to practice their travel training skills.

The five-district Transition Consortium started almost by chance a few years ago when a former PAT student moved to Bellflower. PAT teacher Renee Aguilar and Bellflower Adult Transition teacher Larry Davis started talking in an effort to build more bridges for the student into his new program. Those conversations, along with state budget cuts for social activities funded through Regional Center, led to Aguilar and Davis creating social events for their students, including a similar dance last year (but on a much smaller scale).

Now the five-district Transition Consortium members are meeting monthly to come up with ideas for strengthening their Transition programs.

"We all want to put adult Transition programs on the map," Aguilar said. "Our goal is to provide our students with life lessons, experiences, and opportunities that will empower them to live a happy life based on their own choices of where to work, where to live, and how to spend their free time."

**Jerry King, Assistant Principal
Paramount Adult School**

iPad Technology

The District Special Education program is using ARRA funds to purchase Apple iPad technology for student use in many classrooms, Pre-School through Adult Transition. The iPads will be downloaded with pre-approved applications (apps) that will be used as a supplemental technology device to support students

with speech & language articulation skills, interactive lessons through touch and sound and picture communication. Each Special Education classroom will receive two Apple iPads.

**Kim Cole, Director
Special Education/ECE**

Paramount Unified School District

Parent Workshops

LOCATION: Jefferson School
8600 Jefferson Street
Paramount, CA 90723

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Dec. 1, 2011	Parent Project
Dec. 15, 2011	Handling Difficult Behaviors
Jan. 12, 2012	Creating Life Memories <small>(Children 7+ older may attend with parent/guardian)</small>
Jan. 26, 2012	Understanding ADHD

Spanish Translation will be available.
Co-sponsored by Paramount Unified School District
and Cerritos College (FKCE Program-Certificates for renewal hours)
Babysitting available for children ages 3-12 (must be toilet trained)
MUST pre-register for babysitting one week in advance;
MAY pre-register for individual workshops
Call: Myra McGinnis at 562-602-6035

Workshops Open to all PUSD Parents

Jefferson Jaguars Rally for Red Ribbon Week



In October, Jefferson Jaguars pledged to live productively and drug-free during Red Ribbon Week. Students celebrated each day of the week with reminders of living a healthy lifestyle: Writing a pledge and committing to drug-free activities, Socking It to Drugs with crazy socks; Putting a Lid on Drugs by wearing hats; and being Too Cool for Drugs by wearing our sunglasses. The week ended with a school-wide rally where students dressed in red, and all classes shared vibrant banners with creative slogans, such as "Choo...Choo...Choo...Choose to be Drug-free" from our Kindergarteners with their drawings of trains.

Ms. Ayanna Holland, our counsel-

or who organized all our week-long events, spoke about the history of Red Ribbon Week. Our Student Council officers of Jesus Vazquez, President, Andrew Gutierrez, Vice-President, Daniela Arvizu, Treasurer, and Lucia Rodriguez, Secretary, wrote and spoke eloquently about the dangers of drugs and encouraged all students to study diligently, follow their dreams, and lead bountiful lives.

We ended the rally with rhymes and chants as a school community to take a stand against drugs and make a commitment towards a healthy, productive life!

Ayanna Holland, Counselor
Yuki Mio, Principal

Keppel School Says "Thank You"



Principal Linda Go along with Keppel Staff and School Site Council members stand next to the new classroom building under construction.

Over the past 12 months, Keppel students have been afforded a live lesson on how an actual building comes into existence. They have been able to observe the construction process from demolition to near completion. Everyday has been a day of anticipation and excitement as they see the changes. They are anxiously awaiting the first day of instruction in their brand new classrooms.

On November 16, 2011, the Keppel School Site Council members had the opportunity to walk in the building and have

a first glimpse of the interior. We were all impressed. We can't wait to see the faces of the students when they finally enter the new classrooms. We want to thank the Paramount Community for its support of education through the Measure AA Bond. We are blessed to be the recipient of the love of the community. It is just fitting to express our appreciation during this season of Thanks.

Linda Go, Principal
Keppel School

Pirate Graduate Continues to Succeed!

Sarah Gonzalez, a Paramount High School Class of 2009 graduate and currently a student at Vanguard University has demonstrated what our Pirates are destined to achieve, to reach for success.

While a student at Paramount High School, Sarah was involved in a variety of clubs. She was active in the Drama Club, College Club and was also a member of the high school Marching Band. As a student of music teacher Mr. Morvan in 9th grade, she now reflects back and is grateful for all that she learned from him and indicates she is also very grateful to Marching Band Director, Mr. Angel Carmona for all that he taught her as well.

Sarah is currently a junior at Vanguard University and is studying International Business. She is also one of only 200 members of the Vanguard University Concert Orchestra and is enjoying every moment of being a student and orchestra concert member at the Collegiate level.

Sarah also attributes her success to all of her Paramount High School teachers, PHS Counselors Patricia Jacobo, Anna Martinez, Lourdes Talamantes, Arianna Bates and Board of Education members Alicia Anderson and Tony Peña and thanks them for the guidance that they provided her while she was a student at Paramount High School. Her appreciativeness is extended to Paramount Petroleum for affording her the opportunity to work as an intern this past summer and is looking forward to returning to Paramount Petroleum in the summer of 2012.

Sarah encourages all students to continue their education beyond graduation and reach for success. She wishes to one day give back to the community and return to Paramount High School to mentor fellow Pirate students.

**Once a Pirate,
Always a Pirate!**

Paramount Football Gets A Share of the SGVL Title

The PHS Fall sports season came to an exciting close as four programs qualified athletes for the CIF playoffs. Boys' Cross-Country sent several runners to the CIF prelims on Nov. 15, Lady Pirate volleyball gained an at-large berth, and the SGVL champion Lady Pirate tennis team hosted a first-round match on Nov. 14. The "new kid on the block" was Pirate football - but more on that later.

Coach Anna Yasuhara's volleyball team qualified for the CIF playoffs for the 4th straight year, and played a 1st-round match at John Burroughs HS on Nov. 8. While our ladies fell to the league champ Lady Indians in straight games, there were flashes of great play by our girls, especially in the first game. Our ladies led 16-13 before the more-experienced Lady Indians took a 25-21 decision. The great news for Coach Yasuhara's team is that it loses but two seniors to graduation next spring, so the potential is there for improvement in league play and the playoffs.

Lady Pirate tennis, with both the Varsity and JVs winning league titles, had never gotten out of the 1st-round in previous playoff experiences. But Coach Curtis Mu's 2011 edition handled Alhambra with ease on Nov. 14 before falling to Long Beach Wilson in the 2nd round. Coach has called this team the best girls' squad he has coached in his 7 years at PHS and the ladies showed why with an 11-1 league mark and qualifying 3 players for the CIF Individual tournament on Nov. 17.

As of last month's article, Paramount football stood at 1-4 in its non-league schedule with then-undefeated Gahr coming in on Homecoming Friday, Oct. 14. But the Pirates shocked the local sports press and area with a solid 23-9 win, then proceeded to win 3 straight road games over Lynwood, Downey, and Warren, respectively, to clinch a share of the program's first league title since 1999. The 3 road victories were all tough games, with the clincher at Warren being a heart-stopping 43-42 overtime thriller. While the Pirates lost a tough one at home against Dominguez on Nov. 10, Paramount won a coin flip to become the SGVL's #1 seed in the CIF playoffs. The first-round opponent, St. Francis of the tough Mission League, would visit Pirate Stadium on Nov. 21. Along with a league-champion JV squad (a 9-1 record) and improved freshman team (7-3), Pirate football seems to have turned a corner into relevance again in southern California high school football. Congratulations to Coach Matt Howard and his staff on staying with the program and realizing the goal of a league title in only its 2nd season running the show.

As the holidays approach, Winter sports are on the horizon, with both basketball programs, both soccer programs (including the two-time defending CIF champion boys), the CIF runner-up wrestling program, and girls' water polo gearing up for tournaments and non-league games. All the best to our Winter programs as they get ready for an exciting season!

Dr. Mark Kemp -Athletic Director, PHS