

PUSD EDUCATION NEWS

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

15110 CALIFORNIA AVE., PARAMOUNT, CA 90723 • TEL: 562-602-6000 • FAX: 562-634-6029

FEBRUARY 2012

Alondra School Takes a STAND AGAINST BULLYING

Alondra Middle School students participated in three one-hour lesson workshops in the course of the 2010-2011 school year. The lessons targeted the ill effects of bullying, as well as the strategies required for standing up to the bully. What we found as a result of these efforts was less than encouraging, as the bullying incidents continued at much the same rate. Also noted, however, was that more of the incidents were being reported and that was encouraging. In further study of the data, we learned that our students knew how to recognize bullying, how to report it and also how to stand up against it, but then became paralyzed in their ability to actually do so. This is not a surprising discovery. Many adults have trouble with this kind of confrontation, so why would it be any less challenging for our young people? American schools harbor 2.1 million bullies, creating 2.7 million victims. These statistics are alarming. Our school's Healthy Kids survey indicates students believe bullying on the Alondra School campus continues to be a major problem, unfortunate indeed.

During the current school year Mrs. Barrios and Ms. Morrow presented three "bully" lessons to sixth-graders and two "bully" lessons to seventh and eighth graders. Our goal was to teach, encourage and empower



our students to STAND UP TO BULLYING! The lessons were designed to facilitate as much interactivity possible between all attending students. Our hope was that this strategy would assist them in feeling more confident, should they ever confront the problem, in their ability to STAND UP TO BULLYING!

We put these lessons to the test, implementing an Alondra STAND UP TO BULLY DAY on November 22nd. The PTSA and many of our teachers arrived at 4:45 a.m. to create a sea of yellow as far as the eye could see. It was a spectacular vision. The school-front archway was covered in yellow balloons and the students were greeted by teachers and staff wearing yellow STAND UP shirts. The students were all dressed in yellow as well, as a symbol of peace. There were yellow ribbons everywhere, trees decorated with student-created hanging art, along with their posters adorning each wall on campus,

and trash cans were wrapped in yellow. The students also transformed the amphitheatre with an anti-bullying chalk-art mural, including very creative messages and images. Even Food Services joined the fun, serving lemon Danish for breakfast and a selection of yellow-colored entrees for lunch! Lunch time activities included "Face up, Give up and Stand up" and a phenomenal sixth-grade shuffle contest!

This special day included morning and afternoon assemblies. Extraordinary students and special-guest speakers participated, each sharing their views on the power of STANDING UP TO BULLYING. Following these assemblies, the teachers taught anti-bullying lessons in their classrooms as well.

This event was a great success and much fun was had by all, with the added benefit of the bullying issue being brought to the forefront for at least one



day. We all know, however, that much more needs to be done. Wearing ribbons of any color for any "cause" is never enough to perpetuate long-term change. Undoubtedly there are a myriad of different opinions from many different people on how to successfully conquer this menacing behavior. Some would say it's societal, some would say it's a missing link in a person's life, while others might think it's merely a lack of

proper discipline, lest we "hurt" the bully's feelings – a very prevalent sentiment in today's society. Whether the problem can be attributed to one or all of the above, let's hope that events such as this can make a small difference – if only in one heart at a time.

**Dolores Barrios and
Debbie Morrow
Counselors
Alondra Middle School**

Recognizing the Top Eagles

We all apply reinforcement every day, most of the time without even realizing we are doing it. You may tell your child "good job" after he or she cleans their room; maybe you got a promotion at work after doing a great job on a project. All of these things increase the probability that the same response will be repeated. It is a known fact that reinforcing a positive behavior will help an individual achieve a desired action as well as recognize positive choices.

During one of our teacher-directed Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings a question came up: "How can we immediately reward students and provide recognition for them in a schoolwide manner?" One idea was that a weekly recognition could be instituted and thus, the "Eagle of the Week" idea was born.

At Buena Vista a Student-of-the-Month program has existed for a number of years, but there was not a more frequent way for the school to recognize those students



Top row: Antonio Ruiz, Justin Perea, Anthony Acosta. Bottom row: Yadira Rochin, Miriam Aguilar, Bree Peters

who contribute to a positive environment for the school. "Eagle of the Week" is an opportunity for teachers to discuss and recognize those students who academically strive in the classroom or do something outstanding on campus. These students then serve as positive role models for their peers, nurturing a school climate of respect, cooperation, participation and high achievement.

Students get nominated by one teacher and the other teachers vote

to make them "Eagle of the Week" and receive a special certificate and award. These special students' names are displayed on the school marquee for all to appreciate. Those students who have been selected are sometimes surprised, but always proud of their accomplishment. We congratulate these eagles for their dedication!

**Jose Mendez
Counselor
Buena Vista High School**

Jackson Knights Celebrate Family Read Night

To celebrate National Young Readers Week, parents and students from Leona Jackson School were invited to Family Read Night. Read Night took place on November 9, 2011. This night was filled with family fun and learning. Students were asked to come dressed as their favorite book character to present to families. Students also created book reports prior to showcasing their favorite character. Over sixty students came in costume ready to present.

To start the night, students and parents interacted with the students in character and read book reports while filling out a scavenger hunt. Paramount Librarian Julie Chan came to donate books to families once they completed their scavenger hunt. To finish the night, parents and students were invited to attend a language arts class to listen to a read aloud. Teachers read different books and students and parents participated in different activities related to the book. Some teachers held open discussions about a moral lesson while others gave students and parents a writing assignment that was presented to the class. In addition to the family fun time, students made a bookmark that they could take home at the end of the evening. One parent commented that the night was different from past evening events; she liked spending the time learning with her daughter.

Mrs. Perez, Leona Jackson's Language Arts coach, said "The goal of the night was to encourage reading as a family and give strategies to make reading fun for everyone, and I think we did that". This interactive parent night has set the tone for our upcoming parent education nights. The staff at Leona Jackson School has made a commitment to not only strengthen our academic program but also truly build a partnership with the parents and families of the different communities we serve every day.

**Ina Campos, Counselor
Leona Jackson School**

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

February 8, 2012 - February 22, 2012

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

PHS Wins at Specialty Graphic Imaging Association and Imprinted Sportsware Shows



Assistant Superintendent Dr. Morales and the Board of Education recognized Paramount High School students whose screen printing work was submitted to the annual Specialty Graphic Imaging Association screen printing competition that took place in New Orleans during the National Convention. Schools from across the United States enter their work and a panel of professionals in the industry, judge the designs along with the quality of the print. This year Paramount High School had the work of four students receive awards.

Honorable Mention awards were awarded to Vanessa Baker for her Index Color printing of the "Lion", Janine Loera for her 4 Color Process job "Fish Eye", and Cassandra Mon-

tenegro for her "Crazy Pirate".

Gold Medal awards were awarded to Casandra Myers for her print "Spring Time" on White and also for her print of "Spring Time" on Black.

The "Best of Show" award was also awarded to Casandra Myers for her "Spring Time" print. In addition, as a "Best of Show" recipient, Casandra was awarded with a \$500 check.

Their work was also entered into the Imprinted Sportsware Show that took place in Long Beach just recently and again PHS Girls received awards with Aimee Montoya receiving the "Best of Show" for her piece.

Congratulations to them for their outstanding work!

Fourth Grade Students Take to the Sea!



In December the fourth grade students at Roosevelt School participated in "Think Watershed", a field trip program offered by the Central Basin Municipal Water District in partnership with the Los Angeles Office of Education. The program provides students with the opportunity to increase their water knowledge, specifically water conservation methods, water cycling processes, watersheds, as well as an appreciation of locally-found terrestrial and marine life.

The students and their teachers enjoyed a 3-hour cruise through the Long Beach harbor. They participated in several hands-on activities designed to educate them on how human behavior affects the quality of air, water, and habitat as well as plant, animal, and human life. The

activities included a plankton lab, bottom sediment study, water visibility testing, water chemistry, and wildlife observation.

The field trip supports the fourth grade life science program which focuses on ecosystems, particularly water ecosystems, as well as the Open Court Reading unit "Mystery to Medicine" in which students learn about the invention of microscopes. As shared by teacher Craig Lane, "There is no better way for a student to learn than through experience."

Perhaps this unique experience will encourage some of our young students to pursue a career in science!

Susan Marilley
Principal
Roosevelt School

PHS Girls' Varsity Tennis Team Earn 2011 SGVL Championship Title



Assistant Superintendent Dr. Morales and the Board of Education recognized the Paramount High School Girls' Tennis team on their success for earning the 2011 SGVL Championships Title.

This year's Varsity team led by Coach Curtis Mu included Mayra Briones, Bianca Felix, Kelly Florimon, Alejandra Franco, Miriana Hernandez, Karina Luquin, Isabel Perez, Maria Toledo, Sally Varela, and Valeria Vidal.

Paramount Students Use Technology to Support Math Instruction

Throughout the year, select students in grades 6-8 across the Paramount Unified School District have participated in a math intervention program called ALEKS. So, what is ALEKS? ALEKS (Assessment and LEarning in Knowledge Spaces) is a web-based, artificially intelligent assessment and learning system designed to provide student with interactive opportunities to reinforce previously taught math concepts. During the double block of math support, students log into their account to solve mathematical equations based on standards identified by their teacher. ALEKS is an adaptive program that quickly and accurately determines exactly what a student knows and doesn't know within pre-determined math standards. ALEKS provides students with opportunities to practice and solve the equations. Step-by-step

directions are provided to students if they struggle with solving the problem.

ALEKS support classes have been available at West Campus for the past few years. Due to its success in supporting math instruction, licenses were purchased this year to support the 6-8 math program. Teachers have received initial training and will continue to participate in follow-up trainings to support this new implementation.

A special thank you goes to ALEKS teachers, administrators and Curriculum Specialist, Durrell Jackson for their hard work and dedication in supporting the implementation of ALEKS for Paramount students.

Linh Roberts
Facilitator of
Instructional Improvement
District

PUSD Education News is a monthly Publication of the
Paramount Unified School District



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Great things are happening in Paramount Schools

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Editor - Isela Preciado
Paramount Unified School District
15110 California Ave., Paramount, CA
(562) 602-6000 • Fax (562) 634-6029

Young Entrepreneurs on the Rise



Fourth graders in Ms. King's class spent the last six weeks learning various aspects of starting and operating a business. They read stories about different ways to turn ideas into products that can be marketed and sold for profit. In two of the literary selections, young entrepreneurs set their sights on a specific goal and created businesses to achieve it.

Based on the projects presented by the students at the end of the unit, it was evident that they were inspired by the thought-provoking actions of the kids from some of the stories they read. Damian Beltran demonstrated his understanding of marketing advertisement in the commercial he created for a popular candy. (Commercial can be viewed on Keppel's website). Students, Oscar Carmona and Jordan Alvarez,

developed games that involve spending and investing money. Josiah Ramos created a power point presentation outlining the basic tenets of starting a business, while Susan Cota presented a pre-recorded interview with a hair salon owner in Tijuana, Mexico. Jimena Nava did a research report on the pitfalls of young adults with credit cards. Overall students did a great job with the research and projects. They sure made "Sense" in the area of "Business."

These motivated students are well on their way to making sound decisions about money and becoming the future product developers, writers, reporters and business leaders of the twenty-first century.

**Joy King, 4th Grade Teacher
Mark Keppel School**

Superintendent's Message: Governor's New Budget again contains Trigger Cuts



The State of California is once again facing an unprecedented budget crisis. Education budget experts say the financial assumptions and policy choices in Governor Jerry Brown's new budget amounts to one of the most far-reaching education proposals in years.

After using mid-year trigger cuts as the method to build a balanced spending plan this year, the Governor looks again to this strategy for 2012-13. In addition, the budget proposal hinges on a \$6.9 billion package of temporary tax initiatives for the November ballot of which schools would receive only \$2.4 billion.

If voters reject the tax hike measures, the Governor's budget plan would cut an additional \$4.8 billion from public schools and community colleges.

This year once again, school leaders will be required to stay vigilant and vocal in their advocacy and support of public education.

California's 6.3 million students are counting on us to ensure their success in our schools and in their futures. I intend to keep our education community informed and updated on a regular basis.

Thank you for your continued support of our students, teachers and schools.

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

Paramount Unified School District



Workshops

LOCATION: Jefferson School
8600 Jefferson Street
Paramount, CA 90723

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

- Feb. 9, 2012 Conflict Resolution
- Feb. 23, 2012 Building Positive Communication
- Mar. 8, 2012 Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Mar. 22, 2012 Understanding Educational Rights
- Apr. 19, 2012 Test Anxiety vs. "I can do Attitude"
- May 3, 2012 Drugs and Alcohol
- May 17, 2012 Internet Safety
- May 31, 2012 Preparing for the Summer

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

Special Needs Students are Really Cooking



For five weeks in November and December, 2011, students from Paramount Adult Transition (PAT) program took cooking classes through Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution Mobile Kitchen Classroom. PAT is designed for 18-22 year-olds with special needs, with a focus on Work Skills, Daily Living Skills, and Personal/Social Skills. The cooking sessions took place in a 52-foot state of the art big rig trailer parked at Long Beach City College and were a huge hit with the students. "At the Big Rig I learned to cook chicken nuggets and

how to make Caesar salad," said Luz Avalos. "It was fun."

Each day, she and her classmates received a lesson on nutrition and then prepared a healthy meal. Dishes included a Mexican breakfast, minestrone soup, shake & bake chicken nuggets, meatballs & pasta, and finally carrot cake. "I love the class. I am learning a lot," said Vanessa Barrientos. "I am reaching my goal."

Jerry King, Assistant Principal
Renee Aguilar, Teacher

California State Assemblymember Isadore Hall visits PHS

Every six weeks Paramount High School's African American Cultural Club (AACC) invites local African-American role models to speak to students during lunch time as a way to motivate and inspire students to stay focused in school and set post-secondary goals. Recently, California State Assemblymember Isadore Hall of the 52nd Assembly District came to PHS to address the students. As he engaged the student audience for nearly two hours, he shared his life journey which has included many struggles and many successes.

After listening to Assemblymember Hall, PHS Senior Diamond Caradine shared, "no matter how many people discourage you, you have two choices: prove them right or proving them wrong, as was the case in Assemblymember Hall's life." PHS Senior Virnesha Dowdell was also inspired

by his "get your act together" message. She was especially moved by his challenge of remembering where you come from and to always give back to the community.

Ms. Broussard, a parent who attended the motivational speaker session, expressed gratitude for having local community heroes visit and speak to the students. "Not only was it a "treat", but a rewarding experience as well, to hear how an individual can overcome and defy negativity, economic hardships, and excel against all odds at such a young age," as Assemblymember Hall shared. He not only spoke to students from the position of an elected official, but as a brother, uncle, friend, mentor, counselor, role-model, and motivator.

Lourdes Talamantes,
AACC Advisor
PHS

Pirate Winter Sports Produce Mixed Results

Paramount High School's winter sports programs went through an exciting tournament and pre-league month in December before opening San Gabriel Valley League competition in January 2012. Pirate teams traveled to variety of venues in order to compete, including as far away as San Jose, to give our student-athletes great experience in seeing other schools and meeting other competitors.

Boys' varsity basketball played in three tournaments and made a mark in Century Tournament in late December by finishing third, then parlayed that momentum into a first-round, double-overtime upset of defending CIF champion Gahr, 64-59. But the young Pirates, with three sophomore starters, were brought back to earth by other league rivals. They will look to gain from that experience in a strong second round. Lady Pirate basketball also struggled in early league play after a full tournament schedule in December.

Pirate wrestlers opened league competition by defeating Gahr but fell to Downey in a close match. The Pirates, led by returners Jose Sandoval and Chris Borrayo, could still clinch a co-championship by beating Warren on January 26, and both team and

individual CIF competition looms in February. The Pirates were Division 6 runners-up last year.

Lady Pirate water polo was also experiencing average results in early league play, with a victory over St. Joseph's compensating for an earlier loss to Gahr. Big matches remain with Downey, Warren, and Cerritos.

Paramount boys' soccer won the prestigious Golden State Invitational in San Jose in December, and powered into league play as well, finishing with a 4-0-1 first round record. The two-time defending CIF champs face a powerful challenge from Warren and will need to finish strong if they plan to win another league title. Meanwhile, the Lady Pirates were trying to score league points, having tied Gahr and Lynwood in the first round while losing to Downey. The programs features some young talent that is learning the hard way against veteran teams from other schools.

All the best to our Winter teams as they turn the corner in league play and try to qualify for the CIF playoffs in February.

Mark Kemp
Athletic Director
PHS

Added Autism Authorization

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing has made significant changes in the area of Special Education. It is now possible to add additional authorizations to a basic educational specialist credential. The "Added Authorizations in Special Education" (AASE) will expand teaching opportunities available to special education teachers. Special Education teachers are required to have the Authorization in Autism Spectrum Disorders by 2014 if they are teaching students with

the primary disability of autism. An approved program is currently being provided to Paramount Unified School Districts special education teachers by an experienced trainer at no cost to the teachers. The District recognizes the time and cost of this added authorization requirement for teachers and the benefits the program will provide for our students.

Kimberly Cole, Director
Special Education/
Early Childhood Education

WALKING SAFELY

These student safety guidelines were developed by Paramount Unified School District. Please review the following safety precautions with your children:

- Do not speak to strangers.
- Do not walk alone, particularly in isolated areas not intended for walking, especially along the railroad tracks.
- Use the appropriate dismissal gates, ones where there is supervision.
- Walk in areas where you can be seen by others.
- Travel in groups whenever possible.
- Report any suspicious behavior school authorities and the Paramount Sheriff Station at (562) 220-2002, Lakewood Sheriff Station at (562) 623-3500, Long Beach Police at (562) 570-9800 (Collins School) or South Gate Police at (323) 563-5400.

Please remind your children to be careful and constantly aware of their surroundings.