

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

MAY 2013

Life changing opportunity for FIVE PHS Students as they earn the Gates Millennium Scholarship for 2013!

Paramount High School is proud to announce five students have won the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship (GMS) this year. This is the first time Paramount High School has had five Gates Millennium winners in a single year. Seniors, Faviola Zuniga, Crystal Estrada, Thalia Hernandez, Xavier Aldana and Lucio Lopez bring the total number of Gates Millennium Scholarship winners to 17 coming from Paramount High School. Faviola is planning on attending Brown University, an Ivy League school. Xavier Aldana is planning on attending the University of Southern California (USC) in the fall. Thalia Hernandez is bound for the University of California in Irvine while Lucio Lopez and Crystal Estrada are both going to the University of California in Berkeley. Only five schools in the nation have had five or more scholarship winners for each of the last two years, according to Gates Millennium Scholars Program spokeswoman Mary Williams

These five PHS seniors are part of 1,000 students selected nationally each year for this highly competitive scholarship that requires strong academics along with school and community in-



volvement. The student's accomplishment is especially notable in context of the more than 54,000 students who applied in January making this year the largest and most competitive group of candidates in the program's history. The application takes three people to complete; the student, a nominator (counselor), and a recommender (teacher). The Gates scholarship reduces financial barriers for African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American and Hispanic American students with high academic and leadership promise who have significant financial need.

The Gates scholarship also helps increase the representation of these target groups in the disci-

plines of computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health and the sciences, where these groups are severely underrepresented. The Gates Millennium Scholarship renews each year as long as students maintain satisfactory academic progress. Graduate school funding continues for Gates Millennium Scholars in the areas of computer science, education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health or science.

The GMS program is so much more than the scholarship funds students will receive. Many GMS programs and activities have been designed for the recipients as resources, to assist them with continued development as a leader

and to allow them to connect to the Gates Scholar community in a variety of ways. One example among the wide range of resources the Gates program provides is the GMS Freshmen Leadership Conference, specifically designed to orient and prepare students for a smooth transition to college and to help them maximize the GMS experience. Other GMS Leadership Development Programs include Academic Empowerment services (ACE) to support academic success, graduate school planning for continued education and a mentoring program. There is also an online resource center and a social networking website that gives students exclusive access to other Gates Scholars, tips on developing good study habits and time management, a calendar of GMS events and announcements of internships, fellowships and other scholarships, some unique to Gates Scholars.

The Gates Millennium Schol-

ars Program was established in 1999 and was initially funded by a one billion dollar grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. To date, this program has funded more than 16,000 Gates Millennium Scholars since its inception. Gates Scholars have enrolled in more than 1,500 colleges and universities. The program has obtained a five year graduation rate of 79.9% and a 6 year graduation rate of over 90%. Since the programs inception, over 7,900 students have completed their degrees. Faviola, Xavier, Thalia, Crystal, and Lucio will join other Gates Scholars across America in developing a diversified education and join the future leaders of our country by successful completion of their bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees – all paid for through the Gates Millennium Scholarship. This scholarship opportunity is truly a life-changing event for these five Paramount High School students.

New Computer Lab at Paramount Park Middle School



Paramount Park Middle School is just days away from opening its updated, state-of-the-art computer lab. Now housed in the spacious area that was formerly the library, the lab has been outfitted with 37 brand-new computers and monitors, a teacher's station, and an overhead projector for instruction and/or presentations. Our precocious Panthers will be able to utilize this technology for research, word processing, class projects and individual assignments under the supervision of either their teachers or our Computer Lab curator, Edgar Diaz.

These resources are essential in developing the technological savvy of our middle-school population, as the students can practice key skills that will eventually help them demonstrate their proficiency in California Common Core Standards. We all know that this significant paradigm shift is imminent, and the Paramount Park Computer Lab is yet another example of our district fulfilling its obligation to provide students with the tools necessary for the first-rate education that they all deserve.

Making a Difference

Throughout the month of March, it was common to see Paramount High School students walking around campus carrying toothbrushes and other hygiene related products. These students were participating in the personal hygiene drive that Paramount High School hosted to benefit the Love in the Mirror foundation.

Love in the Mirror is a charitable organization that was created by Jonas Corona when he was only six years old. The idea for his own organization arose when Jonas was denied the opportunity to help his mom at homeless shelters because he was too young. While volunteering, he noticed that there were entire families that were homeless. Until that point he did not know that there were homeless children and this realization led him to found Love in the Mirror. The name Love in the Mirror was devised to fulfill Jonas's desire that "every child should look in the mirror and



love what they see." The Love in the Mirror organization has held numerous drives for food, clothes, and hygiene products in which they donate to disadvantaged families.

In February my AP Chemistry teacher, Mr. John Teeples, told all of his AP and Honors Chemistry students about the Love in the Mirror organization and left it up to us to get our school involved. Four other students and myself

took leadership roles on the project and went to different teachers in order to spread the word and get more people involved. We also cooperated with our school's Interact club so teachers had someone to contact when an item had been donated. We made announcements about Love in the Mirror almost daily and placed flyers up around the school, which led to the drive being successful. The fact that in a few short weeks, Paramount High School was able to raise hundreds of dollars worth of hygienic supplies for Love in the Mirror shows that anyone can get involved. Love in the Mirror is constantly holding drives and making sandwiches for disadvantaged families and anyone is welcome to participate. Jonas is truly an inspiration and has made us all realize that one person can make a difference.

Kenneth Teeples,
PHS Student

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

May 8, 2013 * May 22, 2013

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

Student Achievement Recognized through West Campus' Day of the Scholar



On February 28, Paramount High School West Campus held its annual Day of the Scholar event to recognize ninth graders who earned a 3.0 grade point average for the fall semester. Over 45% of the student body (567) participated in the spring activity on the West Campus field. These students were excused from their fourth period class to have fun hanging out with friends and enjoy a deejay playing the latest hits, which included hip hop and merengue music.

All students enjoyed a delicious lunch that included Domino's Pizza, cookies, snacks, and drinks. Students were also



given a Pirate Scholar t-shirt in school colors of maroon and white with our motto "Once a Pirate, Always a Pirate." Each attending student received a raffle ticket, which gave them a chance to win grand prizes including PHS Pirate gear, tickets to the Aquarium of the Pacific, Knott's Berry Farm, and Magic Mountain as well as gift cards to Starbucks, Subway, McDonald's, Jamba Juice, and See's Candy. Students also had a great time playing a variety of carnival games such as football, basketball, and baseball throw in addition to favorites like the balloon blow up, ring toss, ball tick tack toe, and the strong-man hammer slam. Upon winning a carnival game, students were given a ticket; and



they had a choice of redeeming the tickets for prizes or putting the ticket into a box for the grand prize drawings.

According to Activity Director, Frank Bignami, the highlight of the day was seeing over 50 ninth graders line dancing on

the softball diamond to a variety of songs including the Spanish version of Billy Ray Cyrus' song "Aching Break Heart." Once the bell rang to signify the end lunch, students were heard commenting to Mr. Bignami, "The carnival games were awesome!" while other students stated, "This was so much fun; are we doing this again for our grades for second semester?"

A big thank you goes out to the ASB students and ASB adviser Mr. Bignami for ensuring that the Day of the Scholar was a day filled with fun celebrating the success of West Campus student achievement.

Dr. Yvonne Rodriguez
Assistant Principal

Collins School PTA is Thriving at Collins School



just completed an early Spring Cheesecake Fundraiser where every student was encouraged to sell only one item in order to be invited to the ice cream party. We are all very excited that so many students participated and were invited to the ice cream social held on Tuesday, March 26th. 122 students were treated to waffle cone sundaes, in which they could add sprinkles and/or Oreo cookies. The event was a great success and all students and parents were thanked for their efforts. We have 33 students who will participate in a DJ party in April along with 12 students who will be given a limo ride to the pike in Long Beach. PTA is an organization that is dedicated to the well-being of all children and their families. The students and staff appreciate our PTA at Collins School. Thank you to our PTA President: Britney Stone; Vice-President, Shameka Horton; Treasurer, Suliana Luna; and Secretary, Josefina Minor.

The Parent Teacher Association has been up and running all year long at Collins School. We have had various activities sponsored by PTA this year such as the very informative and insightful West African Dance troupe from Long Beach that performed for all students on February 22nd in honor of Black History month. We also

Getting Ready for Common Core



Throughout this school year, over 80 Paramount Unified School District teachers, coaches and administrators have participated in monthly professional development sessions to learn more about the California Common Core Standards (CCCS). As part of the District's three-year plan to transition to the Common Core, sessions held this year promote awareness of what students are expected to learn and do, as well as the implications for instruction. In order to further their understanding and practice the strategies and information learned during the sessions, Common Core Lead Teachers developed and taught Common Core aligned lessons.

In English Language Arts, these lessons addressed Common Core instructional "shifts" such as the importance of reading complex text and using evidence from text to guide questioning, discussion and writing. During the instruction, students were expected to answer a range of text-dependent questions and present arguments based on careful reading of the text. This strategy is based on the idea that when students are required to support their answers through a close reading (and rereading) of the text, they are deepening their understanding of

the text and are more prepared to provide evidence and justification for their answers.

In Mathematics, the major Common Core shifts include focus, coherence, and rigor. With these shifts in mind, Math Common Core Lead Teachers developed Common Core aligned lessons which allowed students to engage in meaningful problem-solving investigations that promote a balance of conceptual understanding and procedural skills as well as increase the ability to apply these skills to solve real-life problems.

During the last CCCS session, teachers reflected and shared their experiences in teaching the Common Core aligned lessons. Teachers were overwhelmingly positive and found the experience to be extremely helpful in enhancing their understanding of the Common Core shifts for teachers and students alike.

As we continue in this year of awareness in Paramount, CCCS professional development sessions will continue to emphasize the key instructional shifts. By better understanding how the shifts impact student learning and classroom instruction, we take the first steps toward helping students become successful in school and beyond!

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



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Great things are happening in Paramount Schools

PUSD Education News

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

Preparing Dolphins to Ride the Waves of Success in High School



Alondra Middle School is committed to preparing their Dolphins to ride the waves of success in high school. As the end of the year rapidly approaches, Alondra 8th Graders are not only getting excited about the end of the year activities, but about making the transition to high school. We know that for some students this transition can be a little nerve racking, so here at Alondra we do our best to debunk some of the rumors they have heard and give them accurate information about high school. We want them to have a good idea of what to expect when they arrive at West Campus, so they will be successful from day one.

Alondra counselors have been working closely with their 8th Grade Dolphins to prepare them for the transition to high school. They worked to empower students to find information about Paramount High School through a digital scavenger hunt. Each 8th grade Social Studies class went into the new Dolphin Computer Lab,

where they paired up with partners to go on a digital scavenger hunt in search of high school knowledge. The counselors helped guide them to find information on graduation and A-G requirements, credits, GPA, sports, community service, clubs and other fun extracurricular activities offered in high school. The students were excited to explore the PHS website and envision themselves as successful Pirates! At the end of the guidance lessons, the counselors reviewed the pertinent information and opened up a discussion with the students to address their questions and concerns. Alondra was also very thankful to have the West Campus counselors come speak to our students about high school. They had an informative and interactive presentation, complete with student speeches and PHS prizes. We look forward to seeing our Alondra Dolphins, as they continue riding the waves of success and transforming themselves into Pirates!

Adult School's New Medical Assistant Class Takes Off



Back in September of 2012, Paramount Adult School launched a brand new program—medical assistant, nicknamed “MA.” All the preparation was finished—the classroom and lab in Paramount High School’s multimillion dollar science building graciously offered to be shared with the adults, the materials ordered and on hand, the advertising out, the curriculum and schedule finalized, the teacher hired. Now all that was needed were students...

And students are exactly who showed up. Five at first, then ten. Now, only a half year later, the program has served 30 students. The first cohort has finished their 4-week externship that follows the 20 weeks of instruction. They’ve learned through lecture, through hands-on practice in a fully equipped lab, and by working in the field. Local clinics and doctors have been nothing but pleased with the quality of the externs. “Doctors say they’re doing an excellent job. They know that when one of our students comes in they’ve got the knowledge they need,”

teacher Laura Ortiz said recently.

Speaking of the teacher, students roundly praise her with comments like, “She’s really great,” and “She cares a lot about us succeeding.” They’re also pleased with the low cost of the program compared to other MA classes and with the payment plan.

Best of all, Ortiz said, “I just found out that one of our students got hired in a brand new externship clinic in Huntington Park. The doctor loved her clinical skills.”

By now you might be thinking, how can I find out more? I’d like to sign up to become a medical assistant, or I know someone who would. Well, just call Paramount’s Adult School at (562) 602-8080 or stop by the office at 14507 Paramount Blvd., next to the swap meet. We’re open 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and till 4:30 on Fridays.

Change your life. Get work experience in your new profession. Be the next to proudly wear the PAS logo.

Jerry King, Assistant Principal

Superintendent’s Message: California Day of the Teacher



The thirty-first annual “Day of the Teacher” will be commemorated in California on Wednesday, May 8, 2013.

Please join our Board of Education as we recognize and thank our teachers for their outstanding service and important work with our students and families.

Our Paramount Unified School District teachers rank among the best in the entire State and not only provide excellent academic instruction, they also strive to give valuable guidance, encouragement, and care to our students on a daily basis. Teachers are not only selfless givers, but also very often the mentors of our lives who have devoted and dedicated their life to their profession and students.

Please join me in expressing your gratitude for your child’s teacher. A message, a note, a card, a poem, a compliment expressing your appreciation is truly a reward.

I believe we can all think back to that special teacher who made a profound difference in our lives.

Thank you for joining me when I say thank you to the teachers of Paramount Unified School District for making a positive difference in our lives.

David J. Verdugo, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Revamped Attendance Incentives Starting to Show Effect

The Teacher Leadership Team at Wesley Gaines took a hard look at the incentive program in place designed to promote attendance. The incentives are meant to increase the average daily attendance (ADA) in each classroom and the school overall.

With support from administration, the incentives were revised to pump up the motivation factor and early indicators show that it is working. Maggie Carranza, one of our wonderful PTA moms, made yellow flags to post outside of each classroom that has perfect attendance for the day. The students exhibit pride when their classroom is flying the flag. They motivate each other to make it to school on time and the new incentives have caused the classes to start setting goals as a group.

If a class achieves perfect attendance for the week they get to choose between four class incentives. The choices are difficult as they must choose between Movie Madness, Sports Adventure, Play Day or Art Adventure. For Movie Madness the students get to watch a short movie or video and nosh on freshly popped popcorn. Sports Adventure

will find students participating in a series of sports challenges with changing teams and non-stop action. Play Day is simply getting to use the normally crowded play yard and equipment with only 33 of your closest friends. The most popular incentive by far is the Art Adventure, where students get a chance to explore art through different mediums.

Each of the incentives takes an hour and is supervised by the principal, meaning, the teacher gets an hour to plan, or prepare for the next week. So needless to say, the teachers are also finding some motivation with this new set of incentives. Classes that had previously not achieved perfect attendance have managed to do so. Even if not perfect, daily attendance has increased across the board. The incentives are having a positive impact on attendance and are letting our students explore their athletic and artistic talents.

Jenni Neff, Marci Maldonado
Jeff Bowers

Benchmark Wii Celebrations at Jackson School

This year at Leona Jackson School have recognized students that achieved benchmark and/or challenge on their Language Arts and/or Math Benchmarks. This year we have already had two celebrations after the 1st and 2nd Quarter Benchmarks. After the assessments are scored, students that meet the criteria are identified and invited to attend the celebration.

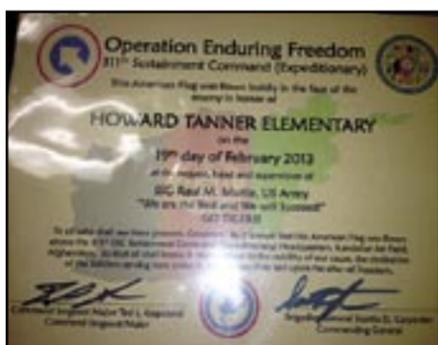
We had our second celebration on March 13, 2013, during the student’s lunch. We had 540 students meet the criteria after the 2nd Quarter Benchmarks in Language Arts and/or Math and were invited to attend. During this celebration, students were able to enjoy playing with several Wii and Konect games. In addition, students were treated with ice cream sundaes with the toppings of their choice which included chocolate syrup, caramel

syrup, M&M’s, Oreo cookies pieces, and sprinkles. Our PTA volunteered to help serve the ice cream sundaes to students. The Wii and Konect consoles were provided by the City of Paramount’s STAR program. Students that attended the celebrations enjoyed the lunch time activity.

Students have just completed their 3rd Quarter Benchmarks and we are eager to identify students that will meet the benchmark and challenge scores. We look forward to continuing to recognize students for their achievements throughout the year. Thank you to our PTA and the City of Paramount for helping with making this event a success. Go Knights!

Dr. Andrea Aguilar-Nuno,
Assistant Principal
Leona Jackson School

Howard Tanner School Receives Flag and Commendation from Staff Sergeant Raul M. Muniz.



On March 12th, 2013 during our Semester Awards Assembly Mrs. Myriam Muniz, her father Mr. Hopper, baby Muniz, and daughters Issabella and Rebecca (students at Howard Tanner School) presented an American Flag, Certificate, and Letter of Commendation to the staff and students of Howard Tanner School. This special gift was sent by Staff Sergeant Raul M. Muniz who is currently serving in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Staff Sergeant Muniz and his wife are faithful and active parents at Howard Tanner School. Staff Sergeant Muniz is currently serving in Operation Enduring Freedom part of 311th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

The flag that was presented was flown boldly in the face of the enemy in honor of Howard Tanner Elementary School on February 19th, 2013. The certificate reads as follows "Be it known that this American

Flag was flown above the 311th ESC Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Headquarters, Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan. So that all shall know, it bears witness to the nobility of our cause, the dedication of the Soldiers serving here under it, and the sacrifices laid upon the altar of freedom". The Certificate was signed by Command Sergeant Major Ted L. Copeland, Command Sergeant Major, and Brigadier General Scottie D. Carpenter, Commanding General. Staff Sergeant Muniz also enclosed a Letter of Commendation to the staff and students and a beautiful scarf from Afghanistan for our Principal Mrs. Sanco.

The staff, students, and parents are grateful to Sergeant Muniz for his service, sacrifice, and remembering Howard Tanner School in such a special way.

The Secret Garden at Wirtz School



Wirtz Elementary teamed up with the Missoula Children's Theater once again during a week long residency. MCT is a non-profit theatrical company that tours the country with a mission to help develop life skills in children through participation in the performing arts. With the financial assistance from our wonderful Wirtz PTA and our neighbors at Paramount Petroleum; plus a generous discount from the Bellflower Travel Inn and accompanist Dustin Callahan from Marymount College, we are extremely grateful to have MCT at our school to put on the theatrical production of, *The Secret Garden*.

On the morning of March 4th, Wirtz students enjoyed an interactive assembly about musical theater that was presented by the two talented MCT Actors/Directors, Cassie Gress and Laura Barron. During the assembly students learned about musical theater and the basic skills needed to perform in a play.

After school, eighty kindergarten through fifth grade students anxiously auditioned in the Wirtz School Cafeteria to be cast in the play, *The Secret Garden*. By the end of the two hour audition, sixty Wirtz students were cast for a part in the play. Students diligently rehearsed their lines, songs and dances each day after school for five consecutive days. On the sixth day, Saturday March 9th, students energetically performed during two separate hour long shows in front of a live audience full of Wirtz staff, family and friends. Both shows were a great success, and Wirtz students and families were glowing with pride and joy as they knew that all of their hard work had paid off!

Cast of Characters:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Presenter- Ashley Howard, Wirtz Counselor | |
| Mary- Rajae Wilhite | Dickon- Andrew Ramirez |
| Susan- Karina Aguilar | Collin-Jesus Aguilera |
| Archibald- Samuel Alvarado | Martha-Priscilla Jimenez |
| Mrs. M- Lianna Bolanos | Dr. Craven- Jose Flores |
| Ayah-Leilani Magaña | Ben-Zion Palmer |
| Robin-Fernanda Flores | |

Bugs- Erik Arellano, Zerrya Bobo, Cielo Felix, Diana Flores, Kenya Mendez, Crystal Torres, Junes Comez, Cristian Dominguez

Fireflies- Kamari Bay, Jubilee Gil, Mathew Lopez, Arlene Mendez, Anthony Sanchez, Nia Hall, Samantha Ceja

Geese- Adriana Arellano, Noe Castillo, Melissa Garcia, Saglara Gonzalez, Angela Ibarra, Cecilia Salomon, Miguel Sanchez, Dayana Villalta, Damian Lopez,

Moor Folk-Amelie Belmontes, Julisa Gutierrez, Kaitlyn Mujica, Giovany Parra, Samantha Sanchez, Mya Serna, Briana Zendejas

The Secret Garden-Sylea Bay, Irey Felix, Stephanie Garibay, Terrah Hughey, Andrea Ibarra, Victoria Jimenez, Paola Landeros, Jose Lopez, Nayeli Nuñez, Ramsey Ramos, Emily Sanchez, Joshua Lopez,

Directors- Laura Barron, Cassie Gress
 Assistant Directors- Ashley Lopez, Edith Perales Muñoz Gustavo Marquez
 Accompanist- Dustin Callahan

Paramount Unified School District

Parent

Workshops

LOCATION: Jefferson School
 8600 Jefferson Street
 Paramount, CA 90723

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

May 9, 2013	Handling Difficult Behaviors
May 23, 2013	Creating a Life Book

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

Autism Added Authorization for Credentialed Special Education Teachers

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) affect roughly 1 in 88 children and has dramatically increased over the past 40 years. There is a growing need for qualified and trained professionals who can provide proven behavior strategies to help improve the outcome for individuals with ASD.

Paramount Unified School District is completing the final courses for the Added Authorization in Autism Spectrum Disorders for approximately 60 District teachers. Courses in this program are designed to help individuals gain the necessary knowledge

and understanding needed to address the behavioral characteristics of children with ASD. Teachers will learn key instructional strategies for setting up a well-structured learning environment along with various approaches to understanding communication deficits among children with ASD.

The District is dedicated in providing teachers with professional development that supports Paramount's students in their education, behavior and daily living skills.

Kim Cole, Director