

PUSD EDUCATION NEWS

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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Transitional Kindergarten: An Early Start to Life-long Learning

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is an exciting, educational opportunity for children in California who were born in the Fall. TK is the first of a two year kindergarten experience for those students who are born between September and December. It offers children developmentally appropriate curriculum aligned with the Preschool Learning Foundations and the Kindergarten standards.

TK was established by a new California law called the Kindergarten Readiness Act. This law changed the kindergarten entry date from December 2 to September 1 so that children enter kindergarten at age 5. Thus, TK was created to provide a developmentally appropriate grade level to serve younger school children with



birthdays between September and December.

TK bridges the path between preschool and kindergarten and gives students a jump start that will yield huge payoffs in future academic success. It provides the gift of time that will help students build a strong foundation for success in elementary school. In the TK classrooms, students develop early literacy and math skills by engaging in fun, hands-on activities. The TK students also develop social and decision-making skills while they play in the different learning areas of the classroom. TK benefits children, families and schools as our youngest learners are better prepared



with maturity, confidence and skills for their educational journey.

The District implemented the TK program in the 2012-13 school year, and today the District has TK classrooms at a total of ten schools in the District with over 200 students. The District offers TK at Collins, Gaines, Hollydale, Keppel, Lincoln, Los Cerritos, Mokler, Roosevelt, Tanner and Wirtz School. Jefferson School TK students attend Lincoln School for TK only.

Dr. Elida Garcia and Rita Cruz
Program Director and Curriculum Specialist

Eye on Paramount Athletics

As the fall sport seasons come to an end at Paramount High School, the Pirate family is proud of the accomplishments of all the athletes and teams. We had an outstanding fall season with four of our five sports qualifying for or having an opportunity to qualify for the CIF Southern Section playoffs.

In girls' sports, our tennis team had a great season. They finished second in league and will play Walnut High School in the first round of the division three playoffs. Our number one doubles team of Amy Ochoa and Jessica Martinez finished fourth in the individual portion of the San Gabriel League finals. Good luck to the team as they enter playoffs. Our girls volleyball team finished tied for 2nd place with a league record of 6-4 in the tough San Gabriel Valley (SGV) League. They finished the season with an overall record of 12-11 and played one of the toughest schedules in many years. They will now enter the CIF playoffs with a goal of advancing into the later rounds. Girls



Student Matthew Cobian

Cross Country had an excellent season. They finish second in both league meets only behind Warren. They will now run in the league finals with the hopes of advancing into the playoffs.

In boys' sports, our water polo team showed tremendous improvement from the previous two years. They won six matches this season which is three times more than in years past. With a very young squad the future of boys Pirate water polo is bright. Boys Cross Country also had an excellent season. They finished second in both of their league meets. They now will run in the SGV league finals with the goal of

qualifying for the playoffs. Our football team is currently 5-4 and tied for third place.

A win in their last game of the season will qualify them for the playoffs for the fourth year in a row.

Paramount High School would also like to give special recognition to one of their students. Sophomore Matthew Cobian has qualified for the Special Olympics in track and field and will represent the USA in China. He will run the 100, 200, and 400 meter dashes and is a member of the relay team. The Pirate family wishes Matthew the best of luck and we are all proud of him.

As the fall seasons come to an end we are looking forward to winter sports. With girls and boys basketball and soccer, wrestling, and girls water polo, winter season promises to be fun and exciting. On behalf of the Administration, faculty and students the Pirates would like to thank the community for your support and hope to see you at some of our sporting events. GO PIRATES!!!

Wirtz Celebrates Reading and Math Wizards

Wirtz Elementary School is rewarding student Reading and Math Wizards. It's one of the many ways we promote student success at our school.

Each month students are challenged to read at home on a daily basis and then complete a monthly reading log. All students with completed reading logs at the end of each month are invited to visit the Principal's office to select a book of their choosing from the numerous titles offered. Students always have a difficult time deciding which book to select as their reward. Some of the more popular titles have been books from the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series as well as the Junie B. Jones books. To date, we have rewarded our Reading Wizards with well over 500 books. We are very proud of our Reading Wizards.

With the success of our reading challenge, we began a Basic Math Facts Challenge at the beginning of this school year for our Fourth and Fifth grade students. Similar to our reading challenge, students are asked to study their basic math facts each day and keep a basic math facts log. Students who complete their logs are also rewarded by the Principal.

Students have once again risen to the challenge as our first quarter basic math facts scores reflect. Both fourth and fifth grade saw strong gains from last school year's first quarter results in all areas, especially subtraction, multiplication and division.

Winter Break Schedule - December 15, 2014 - January 2, 2015
School will resume January 5, 2015

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATE

December 10, 2014

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

Paramount High School Honor Roll Recognition



On October 7th, Paramount High School (PHS) recognized 428 students at the Principal's Honor Roll Luncheon. All students who earned a grade point average of 3.75 and above last semester earned High Honor Roll certificates and were served lunch and refreshments in the main gym. The area was decorated and transformed by the Associated Student Body class who portrayed a theme of stardom as each student walked on a red carpet entering the event. PHS principal, Dr. Buckner, congratulated all students at the event and gave special recognition to the top 10 students at each grade level. The top students in the senior class include Gisel Lopez, Judith Santano, Dhamar Lopez, Jorge

Cardenas Jr., Jesus Cervantes, Edgar Lopez, Xandria Ortiz, Angie Gomez, Karen Gonzalez and Oliver Mendez.

On October 17th, 248 students received Honor Roll certificates and were invited to an ice cream social hosted in Pirate Plaza. Students enjoyed a delicious custom-made treat while congratulating fellow classmates for earning a grade point average ranging from 3.5 to 3.74. The Paramount High School community is incredibly proud of all 676 students who achieved Honor Roll recognition. Thank you for continuing to praise community members for setting and achieving high academic goals that challenge each to follow their college and career dreams.

Senior Accounting Assistant is a Weekend Warrior Who Loves Mud

Most employees of Paramount Unified School District (PUSD) don't spend their weekends climbing over twelve foot high wooden walls or crawling under barbed wire through mud two feet deep but Francisco "Frank" Rocha does. Frank is the Senior Accounting Assistant in Educational Services' Curriculum & Instruction – Projects Office. He has been in his current position since April 14, 2014. Frank attended St. Paul High School in Santa Fe Springs and resides nearby in Norwalk. He first began working in PUSD in February 2007 as a Substitute Clerk Typist. He left for a couple of years but returned in 2012. Prior to his current position, he worked in long term substitute assignments at Los Cerritos, Keppel, both high school campuses and the District Office. In his role as senior accounting assistant, Frank monitors all budgets using state and federal funds, provides support to all schools with their site budgets and assists with all projects including Supplemental Educational Services and Visual and Performing



Arts. Frank said that his greatest challenge currently is becoming well-versed in the complexities of the Local Control Accountability Plan. He added that the thing he enjoys the most about his job are the people he works with in PUSD and especially those in the Projects Office. Frank recently completed his third Tough Mudder adventure race in Temecula, California. He returned to work with scrapes and scars on his hands and knees that he received climbing and crawling over the 11 mile course. Frank has a unique way of relaxing on the weekend

Agile Mind Mathematics, is Making a Difference



Teacher, Katherine Thomas, works with students in the Agile Mind Intensified Algebra program at PHS West Campus.

A new mathematics program in the Paramount Unified School District is making a difference in math classrooms at PHS Senior, PHS West, and four middle school campuses. The innovative program, Agile Mind, enhances both equity and high achievement in mathematics. The Agile Mind program provides teachers and students with tools and strategies that help students excel in the courses that are crucial for admission to America's leading colleges and universities. One of the team of Agile Mind teachers includes PHS West mathematics teacher, Katherine Thomas, who said, "The structure and built-in routines [of the Agile Mind program] help guide students in their learning. It challenges them. Even though it may be a struggle, they learn."

Teachers at PHS Senior Campus and PHS West Campus and all our middle schools, participating receive support training and materials that address the needs of diverse learners and enable students to explore concepts in greater depth. The program builds student confidence through problem solving and perseverance in mathematics. One tenth grade student who completed the program last year felt the program helped him build his understanding of math. He said, "We had opened core activities. If we got it wrong, we learned from our mistakes."

In addition to math content, these courses include lessons to help students understand the impact of effort and persistence on the brain in an effort to increase confidence and attitudes toward mathematics. When asked what part of the Agile Mind experience one student found the most rewarding, she responded, "Sometimes it's hard, but we work it out with partners or with the teacher. We always work it out." Thanks to the hard work of students and the dedication of teachers, Agile Mind is transforming academic engagement and achievement in the Paramount Unified School District.

Theresa M. Diaz, Curriculum Specialist

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.

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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It Takes A Village!



They say it takes a village to raise a child, but it takes a community, parents, teachers, PTA members, brothers, sisters, and even grandmas and grandpas to hold a successful Harvest Festival. That's exactly what happened on Oct. 23 when all of the above came together at Jefferson School to hold yet another incredible event.

Our many costumed guests had the opportunity to participate in a total of 25 games with imaginative names such as: "Zombie Walk", "Ratsketball", "Skull Pitch", and "Frankenhoop". If they were daring enough, they could enter the "Jefferson Haunted Maze" where dangers

were lurking, as they traveled down the "Haunted Hallway" or entered the "Gypsy Room". As the "Brave of Heart" ran screaming out, a ghostly hologram bid them farewell!

We, at Jefferson School, owe a huge appreciation to our PTA president, Rachel Jijon, and her wonderful team of volunteers who spent countless hours of the time making all of this possible. We would also like to thank the following businesses for their generous donations: Food 4 Less, Home Depot, Stater Bros, and Superior.

Toni Sawyer - Teacher

Superintendent's Message: Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)

The California 2013-14 Budget Act and related legislation made significant changes to the public school funding system. The legislation introduced the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) which simplifies the funding process and strengthens local accountability. Through the LCFF, districts receive funds based on local student demographics.

An important component of the LCFF is the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Districts, charter schools and county offices of education developed a plan that includes annual goals and actions to address eight State priorities and described the related budget to support the plan. The priorities are grouped into three categories: Conditions for Learning, Engagement, and Pupil Outcomes. Each LCAP goal may include more than one priority.

During the 2013-14 school year, the Paramount Unified School District worked with its LCAP Consultation Committee to develop a plan, which was approved by our local School Board and later by the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

The Paramount Unified School District identified four goals with actions to support the achievement of the goals. As an update, I would like to share our progress on two of our goals.

Goal 1: Support Academic Progress and Behavior

- In support of our foster students we have added three Foster Youth College Aides, bringing the total to thirteen.
- We now have Math Coaches for every K-5 school to support math instruction.
- Physical Education and music teachers were hired to provide music, PE instruction and collaboration time for grade level teacher teams at the elementary level.
- We are piloting at two schools a K-5 GATE program, with the intent to expand it to other schools
- Our schools were allocated funds to update technology to support instruction and the new on-line computer based state testing. We also hired computer lab aides for every school.

Goal 2: Creating a College Going Culture

• Our plan provides for an expansion of our College and Career Center at PHS, and also provides for the addition of a College Center at PHS West. We have hired dedicated College Counselors to staff each center, which has been accompanied with additional training with an emphasis on expanding access for college entry for our students.

• We have added new courses that include: Web Design/CTE Capstone Course at PHS, Expository Reading and Writing Course at PHS, AVID course at Jackson Middle School and Agile Mind Common Core Math 8 at all middle schools.

I invite you to visit our website (<http://www.paramount.k12.ca.us/>) to learn more about our progress on Goal 3 (Implement Common Core Standards and Assessments) and Goal 4 (Provide Basic Services), as well as other important LCAP information.

Tri City Consortium Forges Ahead

Adult education here in Paramount and the surrounding area has continued to make strides in addressing the workforce and learning needs of our communities. While their school years progress and programs continue to help tens of thousands of students, representatives from Compton Adult School, Lynwood Community Adult School, Paramount Adult School and El Camino College Compton Center have been meeting as the Tri City Adult Education Consortium. Touching bases weekly, they've been analyzing data and programs, writing draft plans, and meeting deadlines. The purpose is to improve the area's educational programs for adults—especially concerning the workforce—leverage resources, and build partnerships with local business and civic leaders.

The second draft of Tri City's plan was submitted before the October 31

deadline and reflected these efforts. Stakeholders such as teachers, students, and industry leaders have taken part in multiple events to provide perspective and input. The latest events were held on December 3 and 5 and were hosted here in Paramount. Input from these events will be included in the next draft, due December 31. Along with plans from almost 70 other consortia across the state, Tri City's efforts will help inform the governor's budget proposal in January.

The outlook is hopeful, and the cooperation between the consortium's members is strong. If you are curious about the draft plan or want to play a bigger role in the future of adult education in this region, call the Paramount Adult School at (562) 602-8080. You'll be welcomed with open arms.

Jerry King
Assistant Principal

Los Cerritos School Bulldog Scholar's Jog-a-thon



Los Cerritos Elementary students showed off their speed and dedication to their school on Oct. 10, during the first annual Bulldog Scholar's jog-a-thon, where students ran to raise money for school field trips. Each week student's brought in donations and competed with their fellow classes! The weekly winning class would win an extended recess and the honor of being a Bulldog winner! The class that brought in the most donations won a Wii party, teacher received a "planning day" subbed by the principal. The winner of the most donations collected was one of our kindergarten classes, Mrs. Niebres. Congratulations!

The Bulldog Scholar's jog-a-thon is a fundraiser to raise funds to send every child on a field trip such as Knott's Berry Farm, LA Zoo, LA Brea Tar Pits and Story Book Theater. It also offered student participation incentives including a gift cards to AMC Movie tickets, Coldstone Ice Cream, Target, Walmart, a family trip to the LA Zoo, Free Dress Pass, Homework pass, a dance party, and ice cream social.

Ms. Vitetta, the school principal,

said the event's goal was \$5000, however it totaled close to \$8,000!! "It's was great," Vitetta said. "Our goal as a school was to stay focused on fundraising that not only raised the funds we need to provide the programs we provide, but to also focus on building a community and bringing people together." So many parents were involved on this special day running with their child or helping with the jog-a-thon!! Our parent volunteers lead warm up exercises before the kids ran during their designated time. The students had a wonderful time running the field with their teachers and parents!

A special thank you to the following sponsors for our prizes, water bottles and snack donations: Northgate, Jethro, Veracruz Mexican Restaurant, City of Paramount STAR program. Thank you to Genesis Entertainment for playing awesome music during the jog-a-thon.

Bulldog Scholars Jog-a-thon was a success for the school and especially the students – who will reap the rewards of their hard work when they get to participate in these educational field trips!!



Order of Daedalian Flight No. 7 Grant Report



Two years ago, under the Command of Cadet Battalion Commander Gonzalez,

JROTC leadership diligently worked to apply and earn the Daedalian grant. The process took long days and nights to write up the report for the Daedalian Grant, but after multiple sessions of work and gatherings, leadership managed to complete and submit the application. Organization and time were two elements that the commander was well in control of, despite the fact that she did not hear

of the grant after submission, she did not fret. The results finally arrived in 2014; the JROTC Battalion was awarded \$300 through the Order of Daedalians Flight No. 7. The grant funds will be put to good use, as the competitions arise and the duly necessary equipment can now be purchased for the good of the Battalion and it's function at Paramount High School and the community.

Elizabeth Solorzano,
Junior Cadet Class of 2016

Community and School Partnerships

Paramount Unified School District and The Guidance Center Clinic have developed a partnership that has benefitted many families within the Paramount Unified School District. The Guidance Center provides counseling through mental health services to many of the families in the Paramount area and has a solid reputation of dedicated service.

Paramount Unified School District reached out to The Guidance Center and a plan was developed for the Guidance Center to provide services to families at the local school sites. Through a referral process initiated by the counselor at each school in the District, and with parent approval, the student and families receive mental health community services by Guidance Center counselors at their school.

Due to work schedules and/or transportation limitations, this counseling service has enabled many families to participate in the program. The clinicians support families that may be in challenging situations to reduce family stress.

