

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

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Early Childhood Education

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program held an engaging parent workshop in November. Preschool parents learned about ways to better communicate with their children. They practiced using more questions and vocabulary when talking to children. Theresa Ybarra, ECE/TK Instructional Coach and Dr. Garcia, Program Director shared communication strategies from the Take Time. Talk! Project developed by the Los Angeles Universal



Preschool (LAUP). Parents also got an opportunity to review different types of books and talk about the importance of reading to the



children. Families received a gift book at the end of the workshop to add to their home libraries.

PARAMOUNT PARK PANTHERS VISIT JPL

After a long day of walking, talking, eating and exploring, it was a tired bunch of Paramount Park Middle School Panthers that climbed back onto the bus at the end of a very rewarding visit to one of the world's most renowned space centers, the famous Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), in La Cañada. It was the annual JPL Open House, which typically draws thousands of visitors each year.



PPark students (left to right) Keilei Ceja, Valerie Ceja, Eddie Silva, Daniel Sanchez, Aldo Bugarin and Alejandro Hernandez enjoy their visit to the JPL Open House in October.

JPL is home to the three Mars rovers, Spirit, Opportunity and Curiosity, and there were full-size models of these famous Martian explorers on display. One of the oldest surviving space probes, the famous Voyager 1, which just passed the outermost edge of our Solar System, and is still sending back data after nearly forty years, is also under the command of JPL scientists and

engineers, some of which were on hand to answer questions.

In addition, there were numerous displays and opportunities to talk to the very scientists who design, build and command most of the space probes currently operating in our Solar System, including the ones to the moons of Saturn and Jupiter, as well as New Horizons, which is just now passing Pluto.

Students who waited in one of the longest lines of the day were rewarded with a visit inside JPL's Command Center where engineers were communicating with Curiosity. There were also several movies highlighting the successes of JPL's various projects.

Jeff Kiesel
MESA Advisor

Paramount High School Students Attend College Fairs

Paramount High School Senior Campus offered two college fair field trips to students during the month of October. On the evening of Wednesday, October 7th, a group of 100 students attended the Southern California College Fair hosted at the Pomona Fairplex. On Saturday, October 24th, students traveled to the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) for the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Visual and Performing Arts College Fair.

The field trips are free of charge and are offered to all



students through daily announcements, flyers, School Loop messages, 1-way Remind text messages and counselor referrals. Students were able to interact with a wide range of college representatives who were able to answer specific ques-

tions regarding admissions and programming.

Exploring the various types of postsecondary institutions is important as students navigate through majors and careers of interest along with financial aid opportunities.

Big Blue Dog on the Loose!

Any other week that kind of announcement would cause concern, but not during the first week of October. It is the season for fall fund raisers and Blue Dog is a big part of that. Jefferson School began their fall fundraiser on Wednesday, October 7th with a series of kick-off assemblies. The principal, Mrs. Williams introduced Karston from Signature fundraising. Mr. Karston proceeded to raise the level of enthusiasm in the school's multi-purpose room throughout a rousing thirty minute assembly.

The students were motivated to help the school raise funds for field trip opportunities by selling a number of delicious foods and interesting products. Additional student enthusiasm came in the form of the possibility of earning their favorite prizes as a thank you for their participation. Students really liked the key chains with images of Blue Dog and one of their favorite key chains was a little electric guitar that they could pretend to play. The most thunderous applause and cheering came on the heels of the announcement that the top fund raisers will be taking a limousine for a fun filled pizza adventure.

The assembly ended with much excitement as eager students couldn't wait to start helping their school. The fund



raiser went on for two weeks, during which, activities and the appearance of Blue Dog helped to sustain the excitement begun at the kick-off assembly. The students and families of Jefferson School showed their Jaguar Pride as they did their best to assure a successful fund raiser.

Thank you to all of the Jefferson PTA and community for helping to make the fall fund raiser a positive experience for all involved and for supporting our students.

Jeff Bowers
Teacher

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

December 9, 2015

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 Supports the Arts



Paramount Unified School District (PUSD) is committed in its support of Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) and Physical Education (PE). An example of that commitment begins in grades TK-5 with the PE and music rotation. PUSD began a pilot program last year by providing each TK-5 schools with a PE and music teacher one week per month. Each TK-5 student had the opportunity to experience a four subject rotation of PE, music, computers and library once day per month.

Student, parent and teacher input were collected at the end of the year and the positive response to the program was overwhelming. Based upon that feedback, PUSD decided

to expand the rotation schedule for students to twice a month. Students receive PE instruction based on the PE national standards from a credentialed PE teacher. Music instruction includes an introduction to music through choral performance. Students in grade 5 have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder.

PUSD currently has four TK-5 PE and four TK-5 music teachers. In the photos above, are PE teacher, Taylor Tebay, and music teacher, Katie Fiorito.

Dr. Randy Gray
Director
Curriculum & Instruction/Projects



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

Donation Made Possible by Starbucks Employees



Pictures are Co-Interim Superintendent Dr. Verdugo, Board Vice President Peña, Board President Anderson, Board member Cuellar, Mrs. Bridges, Board members Hansen and Garcia and Co-Interim Superintendent Mrs. Stephens.

During a recent Board of Education meeting, Mrs. Marcie Bridges, presented the Board of Education with boxes full of donated school supplies for Paramount Unified School District students.

Mrs. Bridges is a manager at a Starbucks Coffee store in Compton and she was recently responsible in host-

ing a group holiday rally with fellow Starbucks co-workers at the Clearwater Building. This event has become an annual tradition for them and during their recent rally, they selected Paramount Unified School District as the project recipient of the donated school supplies that Starbucks employees donated.

The "Boo-tiful" People Come Out at Night..



On an unseasonably warm October night, the gates of Los Cerritos School creaked open to welcome a parade of ghosts, ghouls, princesses and one very appetizing donut as students from far and wide came dressed up in their best Halloween garb to celebrate at our annual Spooky Story Night.

Parents and students were greeted with the sounds of a haunting sound track and the wicked smells of pizza and nachos prepared by the hard working goblins of the PTA. Former Kindergarten teacher turned Zombie Bride, Mrs. Rivera, kicked off the event with a taunting dare to make it through the dark and harrowing maze in the haunted classroom.

Shrieks and laughter could be

heard throughout the halls as students made it out unscathed and settled into selected classrooms to listen to frightful tales told by a handful of cleverly costumed Los Cerritos teachers. A signal was given and all gathered to strut their spooky stuff during the Halloween parade while judges diligently deliberated to award the best in show for each grade level. As the bell tolled at seven o'clock, the costumed creatures slowly slithered out with tummies and sacks full of candy into the dark night returning Los Cerritos to a sleepy school once more.

Lisa Wood
Teacher on Special Assignment

Fall Ushers in Exciting Activities at Harry Wirtz Elementary School



Many exciting events have taken place at Wirtz during the first quarter of the school year. Wirtz Wizards and parents have showed their support and participation in school activities such as the Fall Carnival, the Water Science Family Day and the Recognition Assemblies. The presence of students and parents during special events builds on the importance of a school-home relationship and it allows for every event at Wirtz to be a success.

The Fall Carnival was an amazing event full of exciting games for our students to enjoy with their families. The carnival games which were led by teachers, parents and student volunteers included face painting, beanbag toss, and pumpkin races. Great prizes were won by all who participated. Those in attendance also enjoyed great food including pizza, nachos, ice cream, chips, churros, and drinks. A big thank you to Mrs. Reno for coordinating the Fall Carnival and to all of the students, parents, and staff who volunteered their time and hard work to put this event together. It definitely was a Fall Carnival to remember!

Another Wirtz event that allowed our community to come together was the Water Science Family Day. The event, sponsored by the Water Replenishment District of Southern California, was a great opportunity for students and parents to learn about this critical resource. After listening to speaker presentations, students and their families rotated between six stations to explore, learn and participate in water science experiments. The stations included topics such as Blue Planet, Ground Water, Fresh Water, Water Cycle, Water Pollution,

and Aqueducts. Students learned about water conservation and how to protect our ground water. What better time to learn about water than during a critical drought here in California. The students had a splashing good time learning with Squirt and his water cycle adventures. Thank you to Ms. Kaing for coordinating this event with the Water Replenishment District of Southern California.

Last but not least, our Wirtz Wizards were honored for their hard work and dedication during our first quarter recognition assemblies. Pre-K through fifth grade students proudly walked up to receive individual awards such as the Wirtz Wizard (student of the month), Academic Achiever, Most Improved, Super Citizenship, Perfect Attendance, Accelerated Reader, and the Principal's Challenge Award. Of course, the highly coveted class trophies in the areas of Attendance and Basic Math Facts were also awarded. Students cheered as their classes were recognized for their achievements in these areas. They can now proudly display these trophies in their classrooms until the next recognition assemblies. Lastly, students, with great attendance for the quarter, took part in a raffle for prizes. Congratulations Wirtz Wizards for all of your hard work and dedication to your education.

With the passing of these Fall activities, we now eagerly anticipate the coming seasons, because we know they will usher in many more exciting events and student accomplishments. We look forward to the great things which will continue to take place at Harry Wirtz Elementary School.

Maggie Elizondo, Counselor

Paramount Adult Transition Harper 5 Fall Dance

The Paramount Adult Transition class hosted the Harper 5 Fall Dance on October 30, 2015 at the Paramount Adult School. The Harper 5 is named in honor of a former transition student, Maurice Harper. The number 5 comes from the five districts that get together and do fun activities.

Learning how to plan things is part of our Life Skills program. We planned and did everything for the Fall Dance.

We made a budget, we made a grocery list and we went shopping. Each team bought ingredients like cake mix, eggs and flour. We baked cookies, cupcakes and made two different kinds of punch. We chopped carrots and cut cucumbers for the salad. We also made all the invitations and decorations.

Our Fall Dance was a lot of fun



because we had a good time planning it, plus we made new friends.

Story by Jesus Valdez, Leticia Sagredo, Daniel Soto, Salvador Chavez and Jennifer Salazar

Superintendent's Message:



Paramount Unified School District Solar Power Project



On October 14, 2015, the Paramount Unified School District Board of Education made a major commitment to continue serving our students and community by entering into an agreement to GO GREEN, SAVE ENERGY AND PUT MORE DOLLARS BACK INTO THE CLASSROOM with Partners For Many Generations (PFMG) Solar Energy Installations.

Beginning in 2016, 21 schools will begin the installation of solar powered facilities upgrades with shaded parking and shade structures designed to not only have a significant annual cost savings, but also to ensure and improve community and school air quality, reduce the carbon footprint and of course be a model school district by promoting clean, renewable energy.

Not only will this solar project have an impact to our General Fund, it will also provide for educational enrichment, local hiring, improve campus security and safety and it will benefit with shade for students, cars and the community.

Partners For Many Generations has also created a unique partnership with enrichment programs such as solar curriculum for schools, the donation and awarding of major college scholarships to our Paramount High School seniors and continue their community involvement for years to come.

As the Superintendent of PUSD, I am very proud of our Board of Education for their on-going passion for kids, commitment to education and the ability to make the future a reality with solar energy.

Thank you.

Dr. David Verdugo
Co-Interim Superintendent

Mark Keppel Students are Writing Across the Curriculum Using the Essential Elements of Project Based Learning

At Mark Keppel School our goal is to ensure our students master Common Standards. In effort to help us meet this goal we have implemented the Thinking Maps Program and a comprehensive writing program, Write From the Beginning and Beyond (WFBB) in order to support student learning. Both of these programs are a part of the Paramount Unified School Districts shift to Common Core Standards. Thinking Maps are consistent visual patterns linked directly to eight specific thought processes. Students use the visual patterns to communicate their ideas, analyze complex text and calculations, and they assist students with producing high quality work. The WFBB Program centers on a systematic approach to help students learn the foundations of writing using focused modeled writing, structured lessons, and analytic rubrics. At Mark Keppel School, both programs have been implemented in all classrooms. To foster further development of students' 21st century skills, Mark Keppel School included Project Based Learning (PBL) as an effective instructional practice.

Students at Mark Keppel School write across the curriculum and incorporate the essential elements of Project Based Learning (PBL). The features of PBL include a driving question regarding a real world



problem, an opportunity for students to conduct investigations, collaboration among students, teachers, or community members, and a representation of student's ideas. Students incorporate writing and thinking maps to create meaningful projects centered around open-ended questions, which allows them to showcase their learning in teams and individually. Students work collaboratively on classroom projects that reflect learning from various units of study and content areas.

In addition to the individual classroom and grade level projects, students at Mark Keppel School have the opportunity to participate in five (5) school wide learning projects throughout the year that include writing using a thinking map and a visual representation such as a diorama, poster display, PowerPoint, Prezi, clay model, or



any other form of artistic expression. Topics for this year include subject areas that involve Hispanic and Latino Heritage, I am Going to College, Inventions and Innovations, African American Heritage, and various scientific topics using the scientific method. Museums are created to exhibit the students'



projects with the help of parent volunteers. Students, parents, and community members are able to visit the museums and survey the student's projects

Our goal is to provide our students with meaningful opportunities to conduct active investigations that enable them to learn concepts, apply information, and represent their knowledge using the skills they learned from the WFBB and Thinking Maps Programs. Students are able to refine their oral language skills through the presentation of their projects and findings. All students at Mark Keppel School benefit from this program particularly our English Learner students and students with disabilities, because teachers provide students with multiple opportunities to refine their writing skills, engage in collaborative discourse with their classmates, and

use critical thinking skills to solve real world problems. These skills are necessary in order to master the rigors of our state reading and writing performance standards and state assessments.

Teachers are using a variety of active participation strategies to keep students motivated to learn. Students are participating in collaborative discussions, group work, and the level of academic language and discourse has increased because students are excited to share their work product. Posted student writing across the curriculum and classroom projects reflect an increase in students' ability to clearly communicate their thoughts and observations. Parents are also excited about our focus on writing and PBL, and have noted the difference in their child's academic progress and excitement about school.

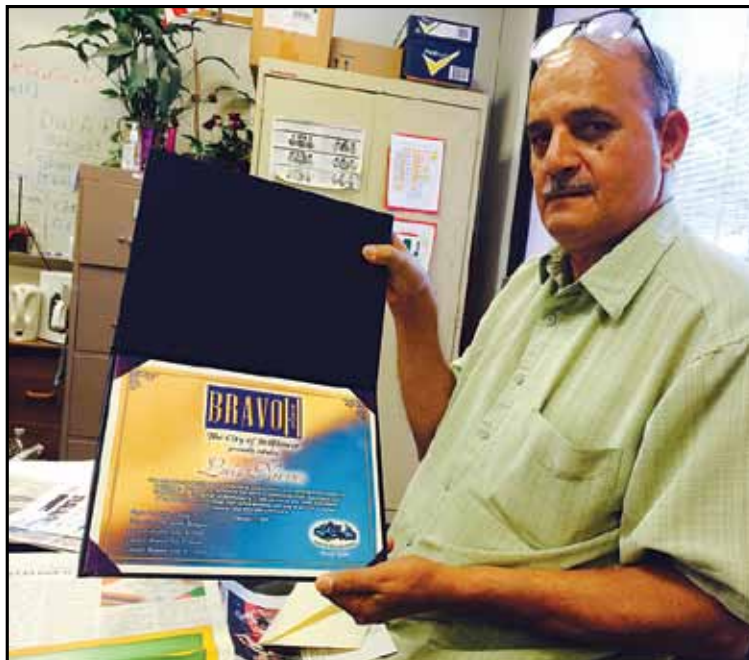
Adult Student Says, "Just Keep Trying"

"You'll never use your arms or hands again," the doctors told Luis Nieves after he was paralyzed by severe spinal injuries. But Luis, who now studies at Paramount Adult School, didn't agree. So he moved two of his fingers.

Despite his two spinal surgeries, the doctors had also told him that walking would be impossible. But again, he didn't agree. "I told myself, I'm going to walk." So walk he did.

Nine years later he's still walking—and a whole lot more. The list of his achievements would fill more than this article. In fact, they already have, from his appearance in the Lakewood Community News, to his Award of Valor from the City of Bellflower, to the card from former Lakewood Mayor Todd Rogers, to the ceremony hosted by former Los Angeles Chief of Police Lee Baca and special guest Faye Dunaway. "Yes," he said recently, "the Faye Dunaway." It was during that event that Chief Vaca told him, "If you need something, you just call me."

So how did a guy who moved here from Guadalajara, Mexico 40 years ago and learn English by himself achieve all



this? "I just try and keep trying," he said.

Since 2011 he has been studying in the Information Technology classes at our adult school. He's finished almost everything the department offers "except QuickBooks and accounting," which he's working on now. "Coming to school is like therapy for me," Luis said. "I talk to friends, to teachers, to everybody. It helps my life right here."

He met longtime PAS student Ramiro Salgado years ago and decided to start attending. Luis had also been talking to a young neighbor about Smart phones—which he didn't have

a clue about using—and decided it was about time to learn. By 2013, Luis was the recipient of our adult school's own annual "Lifetime Learner" award—named after his old friend Ramiro.

Now when someone mentions to him that they don't know how to use a Smart phone or a computer, it's Luis who offers to help them. Maybe you have a question for Luis. Or for us. Give us a call @ (562) 602-8080. Or take the bus to pay us a visit—that's how Luis has gotten here for years. Seems to be working out for him!

Jerry King, Principal

Shifting Mathematics Thinking in Paramount Unified School District

Mathematics education is evolving and expanding in the Paramount Unified School District. As Common Core strategies and problem-based learning becomes the focus in mathematics classrooms, students and teachers are collaboratively solving real world problems and coming up with innovative solutions.

Recent educational research suggests that by having students learn through the experience of solving problems, they can learn both content and thinking strategies. Inquiry and problem-based learning are instructional methods in which students learn through facilitated problem solving. Throughout mathematics classrooms (K-12) in Paramount Unified, student learning focuses on a complex problem that does not have a single correct answer. Students work in collaborative groups to identify what they need to learn in order to solve a problem, and then they apply their new knowledge to the problem and reflect on what they learned and the effectiveness of the strategies employed. The teacher acts to facilitate the learning process rather than to provide knowledge.

The goals of inquiry and problem-based learning include helping students develop 1) flexible knowledge, 2) effective problem-solving skills, and 3) effective collaboration skills. Maria De La Cruz, a Paramount High School Precalculus teacher, said, "When students learn through inquiry and problem solving, they are prepared for whatever problem college or life gives them." The result is, students develop flexible understanding and lifelong learning skills that will prepare them for their future in college and careers.

Theresa M. Diaz
Mathematics Curriculum Specialist