

PUSD EDUCATION NEWS

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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FEBRUARY 2015

Leona Jackson Student Wins Prestigious Art Contest

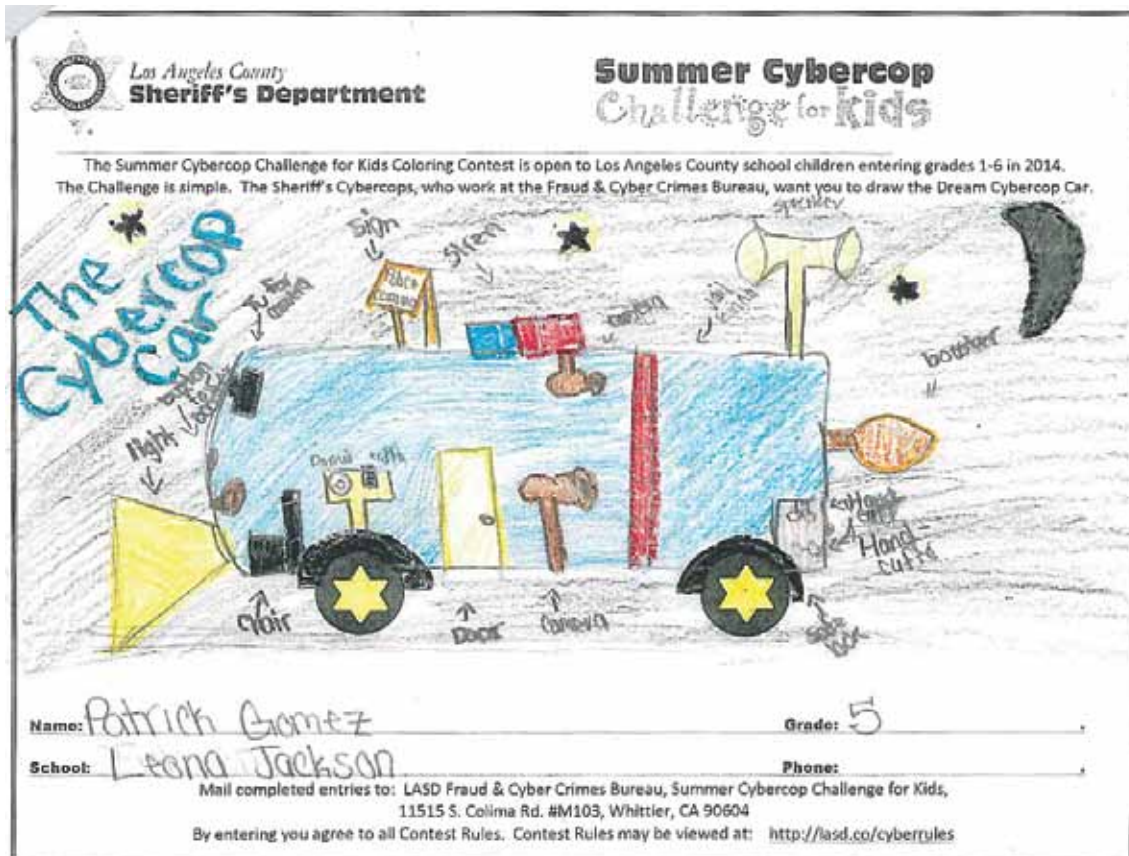


Leona Jackson School recently received great news as Captain Shaun Mathers of the County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department called to inform us that our 5th grade student, Patrick Gomez-Guillermo had won first place in a special art

contest. The Sheriff's Department of Fraud & Cyber Crimes Bureau ran a contest titled "The Summer Cybercop Challenge for Kids." The purpose of the contest was to raise awareness to the dangers our youth face regarding cyber crime. The category for children entering grades 1-6 involved coloring and designing their Dream Cybercop Car. Patrick's drawing was selected from nearly 10,000 entries as the overall winner.

Patrick was excited to be recognized at a recent Paramount City Council Meeting by Mayor Diane Martinez and her fellow council members. On behalf of the LA County Sheriff's Department, Lieutenant Mark Stevens presented Patrick with a certificate accompanied with a

check for \$1,000. Leona Jackson School was also presented with a \$1,000 check for Patrick's efforts. Patrick explains that he felt that the inclusion and specific labeling of the televisions, speed boosters, and cameras to see the "bad guys" really helped his Cybercop Car to look cool and to really stand out. He goes on to share that "I felt special getting praised by the mayor and being invited to take pictures by everyone including the Mayor, the Superintendent, a Board member, our school Principal, and many others. It feels good to make my family proud of me." Although Patrick is only in the 5th grade, he has his sights set on potential careers that will highlight his artistic abilities which include being a chef, an artist, or possibly a classroom teacher.



The Summer Cybercop Challenge for Kids



During a recent Board of Education meeting, Board members and Superintendent Mendez recognized Patrick Gomez, 5th grade student at Jackson Middle School for his participation and winning the L.A. County Sheriff's Department of Fraud & Cyber Crimes Bureau's "The Summer Cybercop Challenge for Kids" contest.

Thinking Maps: Becoming a Common Language Districtwide

Last year, teachers and students in grades K through 8 learned to use effective visual tools for life-long learning such as – Thinking Maps. This year, to help build a common language districtwide, the use of Thinking Maps has expanded to include high school 9th and 10th grade teachers and students.

The high school Thinking Maps learning experience began with 9th and 10th grade lead teachers participating in a three-day professional development in the summer. During these sessions, teachers discovered in great detail the answers to the questions "What are Thinking Maps?" and "How do we use them?" "Thinking Maps," the consultant explained, "is a language of eight visual patterns each based on a thinking process (for example, comparing and contrasting, analyzing cause and effect, or sequencing)." In other words, teachers and students use Thinking Maps as visual tools to help clarify concepts and think deeply about topics. The professional development sessions provided high school teachers with many opportunities to learn key information and make content connections while constructing thought-provoking maps.

Over the course of several months, Thinking Maps lead teachers have used their knowledge and expertise of the maps to teach both students and colleagues. With this new shared learning, Thinking Maps are being used in high school classrooms across content areas. During the follow-up sessions, teachers reported that the maps have helped students to become more independent critical thinkers.

When teachers at all grade levels use the same eight Thinking Maps, students have the opportunity to deepen their understanding and strengthen their thinking skills from elementary to high school and beyond. Next year, 11th and 12th grade teachers and students will receive the training, making Thinking Maps a true K-12 common language for thinking and learning in Paramount Unified School District.

Debra Bolds, Curriculum Specialist

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATE

February 11, 2015 * February 25, 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

Celebrating Our Students at Buena Vista



It has been a tradition at Buena Vista High School to recognize students every quarter for their citizenship, work habits, and their determination to succeed. Each teacher selects a student for each content area that is taught and highlights the students' accomplishments. It is a fun and festive event at lunchtime, as students and teachers mingle and eat carne asada tacos together. At our recent celebration in December, Dr. Myrna Morales and Mrs. Dee Stephens joined us and expressed how proud they were to hear about our students' hard work to reach their goals.

At the luncheon, teachers stood up and spoke passionately about their selected students, many of whom

have overcome obstacles to create positive changes in their lives. Students shared how they look forward to graduating, going to college, and joining the work force of the 21st Century. An 11th grader stated that she was so motivated by her Language Arts teacher, Mrs. Smeltzer, that she composed a song on Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, and sang it to her teacher as she played the ukulele. This is a reflection of how our students at Buena Vista inspire us with their creativity and hidden talents, and why it is important to celebrate them with every opportunity we have!

Yuki Mio
Interim Principal
Buena Vista High School

Attendance Counts

Students usually begin each new school year with excitement and enthusiasm, even if they don't show it to adults. The anticipation of new classes, new friendships and renewing old friendships provides real motivation for daily attendance at school during those first few weeks.

Unfortunately, after a brief time, some students become careless about regular attendance. According to a recent California Department of Education report, California is facing an attendance crisis. Estimates from a sample of California schools points to an alarming picture reporting that one million elementary school children in California were truant in 2013-14. Approximately 80,000 California elementary children missed 10% or more of the school year. Missing a few classes does not seem to be a "big deal" to some students. Sometimes it might seem insignificant to parents as well. However, regular attendance at school is important for every student. It is difficult for young students to learn if they are not in class. The teaching/learning process builds upon itself because each lesson

presented to students is based upon or related to the lessons that were taught earlier. Just as we can never regain a moment of time wasted, the child who misses a day of school also misses a day of education that cannot be retrieved. Indeed, all research shows that those children who attend school regularly are more likely to be successful during their school years. First grade students with 9 or more absences are 2 times more likely to drop out of high school than their peers who attend school regularly.

From experience, most educators know that students' success in their school years is directly related to the importance that parents attach to education. When parents believe that consistent attendance is important and communicate that belief to their children, unnecessary absences from school will be drastically reduced.

Students should attend school every day, unless illness or emergency prevents them from doing so. Please encourage your children to attend school and actively participate in the learning opportunities provided in their classroom.

Winter Festival at Tanner School



Each year, Tanner School hosts a Winter Festival to promote community spirit at our school. The Winter Festival is a time for families to spend an evening together participating in various activities that promote reasoning, creativity, and collaboration. This is an opportunity for teachers, parents and students to interact in a merry, educational atmosphere!

This year's festivities began with the Tanner School Children's Choir singing a collection of holiday songs. These vibrant, non-traditional songs ignited the spirit of the holidays in our listeners, and showcased students' natural singing abilities. As the audience transitioned from the gallant performance of the choir, Santa Claus arrived on the scene, adding more joy and holiday cheer to this festive occasion. Santa spent the remainder of the evening interacting with families and posing with students for memorable holiday photographs. At the same time, the "Happy Choo Choo Train" chugged down the track on the Tanner grounds with loads of jubilant Tanner Tigers. Exuberance and excitement filled the air!

Students and their families were invited to work together at various stations located along the perimeter of the Multi-Purpose Room: At the Guesstimation Station, families strategized with one another to determine the number of jelly beans nestled together in a festive holiday jar. Students created lovely holiday cards at the Geometric Holiday Card Table, and the younger students created zippy patterned necklaces at the Arts and Crafts Table.

An additional "Grand Finale" writing activity was added to this year's queue of activities where students were invited to write an original holiday story that detailed a sequence of colorful pictures that chronicled a holiday event. Parents scribed for younger writers, while older students worked diligently under parents' watchful eye. Students who were not able to attend the festival were given the same opportunity to write their story the following week. After reading and re-reading the submitted entries, Tanner School's Math and ELA coaches selected the following winners: K-1, Jayden Reyes-first grader; 2nd -3rd, Javier Villa-second grader, and 4th - 5th, Rodrigo Arenas-fourth grader.

Tanner School is proud of its annual Winter Festival. It is a popular, well-attended, joyous occasion and all who participate applaud the event!

Kimberly Triche-Harris and Maria Loreda

Donation Made Possible by Starbucks Employees



During a recent Board of Education meeting, Board member Linda Garcia on behalf of her daughter Marcie Bridges presented the District with a collection of donated school supply items for District students. Mrs. Bridges is a manager at a Starbucks in Compton and fellow co-workers and herself came together and donated boxes filled with a variety of school supplies.

**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

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Alondra Dolphins are MAD about Bullying!



Alondra Dolphins are Making A Difference when it comes to bullying! For the entire month of November, Alondra Middle School participated in a variety of STAND UP against Bullying activities. The school-wide goal was to enhance Alondra's ongoing Safe and Civil environment by focusing on bullying awareness, prevention, and interventions.

The STAND UP to bullying awareness began with interactive guidance lessons presented by the school counselors to all Dolphins. The lessons focused on the different types of bullying, as well as the difference between bullying, conflict, and teasing. Most importantly, however, they taught lifelong skills on how to deal with bullying and conflict in a safe, civil, and appropriate manner. Students collaborated in productive discussions about what present day bullying looks like and the real-life impact it has on today's youth. They also discussed what they can personally do to STAND UP and Speak Up against bullying.

It was also great to see Alondra staff and parents Making A Difference with their STAND UP and Speak Up activities. Parent volunteers helped kick off the month by creating yellow banners, promoting powerful messages about standing up to bullying, and placing them all around campus. Parents

also set the tone by placing Post-It Notes on the desks of every student with a positive and encouraging message for them to find when they arrived on a Monday morning.

Alondra Middle School's student council members also played an important role during the STAND UP month by making heartfelt morning announcements daily. They shared poems and other important facts about bullying and the impact it can have on others. In addition, students were excited about the different activities held during lunchtime. For example, students signed the STAND UP and Speak Up Pledge, committing to help keep Alondra bully free. They also participated in the "Kindness... Pass It On" message board, in which students wrote ways to Stand Up and support other students that are being bullied. Lastly, students and staff wore yellow on Wednesdays and PTSA provided all students with "STAND UP and Speak Up" wristbands containing messages to further promote anti-bullying.

Alondra's community is doing their part to Make A Difference when it comes to bullying!

Dolores Barrios & Devin Dawson
Counselors

Common Core For All

The state of California has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS are evidence based and describe what all students are expected to learn in grades K-12.

The CCSS are for students in general education and students identified with learning disabilities who receive services in special education. The CCSS ensure all students are receiving an education with rigor and focus on career and college readiness skills.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities will also be taught in ways that align to the CCSS grade-level standards. The curriculum for

students may be modified; however, it is aligned to grade-level standards.

Paramount Unified School District (PUSD) began training their teaching staff on the CCSS in 2013-2014. General Education and Special Education staff collaborate on trainings for CCSS, pacing guide revisions and assessments. It is the goal of PUSD that all students have high-quality, standards-based instruction that will prepare them for college, career, and community life.

Julie Hernandez
Program Specialist

Superintendent's Message: Smarter Balanced Tests and the Common Core State Standards this Spring

This spring, students throughout the state of California will be taking the new Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests, aka Smarter Balanced tests. The tests are aligned to the new Common Core State Standards. The tests will be administered to students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 for English-Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.

The SBAC is very different from the previous California Standards Tests (CSTs) that were part of the (STAR) system*. The new tests focus on the Common Core standards, which stress problem-solving, communication skills and conceptual understanding of Math. Because the Common Core standards are more rigorous, than the previous standards, the state tests will be harder, too.

Last year, students from California and 16 other states belonging to the Smarter Balanced consortium took a Smarter Balanced "field," or practice, test. Smarter Balanced is predicting that between 33 percent and 44 percent of students in California and elsewhere will reach the threshold for Level 3 this spring. Level 3 is roughly equivalent to proficiency in this four performance levels test. Specifically, level 4 designates advanced work and Levels 1 and 2 demonstrate partial or minimal knowledge of the standards.

It is important to be prepared for a big shift in test results, and as some experts predict, initial scores will be low, as we all adapt to a whole new testing system.

In Paramount Unified School District, we have been working hard over the past and current years to prepare for this big shift by first and foremost training our teachers to teach the new Common Core standards to our students.

Teachers have attended professional development on Language Arts, Writing and Math to support this shift in curriculum and instruction. I am pleased to share that we are seeing good results in the work that our students are producing and in the deeper engagement of our students in their studies.

Additionally, we have invested our resources in the purchase of new computers and support technology that are used in day to day instruction. Because the SBAC test is administered on a computer, our teachers have been working to familiarize and orient our students to the new test format.

CAASPP testing window for the Paramount

Unified School District runs from:

April 20 through May 22, 2015

[schools will share their specific testing schedule with the parents and students they serve]

* Note: Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, STAR testing program has been replaced by CAASPP, the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress program. For 2014-15, the CAASPP System encompasses the following assessments:

- Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for English-Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics in grades three through eight and eleven.
- Alternate assessments for English-Language Arts and Mathematics in grades three through eight and eleven.
- Science assessments in grades five, eight, and ten (i.e., California Standards Tests [CSTs], California Modified Assessment [CMA], and California Alternate Performance Assessment [CAPA]).
- Standards-based tests in Spanish (STS) for Reading/Language Arts in grades two through eleven (optional).

Great Expectations for 2015

As the Paramount High School Athletic Department looks back on a successful 2014 year, the forward momentum in 2015 is marked by goals to reach new heights and fulfill great expectations.

The girls' varsity soccer team completed their preseason schedule with a winning record of 10-3-1. In the San Pedro Invitational tournament, the team triumphed and earned the championship title. They will open league play at home against Dominguez and Gahr. With a number of girls playing well, a league championship is in their sight. Girls' basketball is off to one of the best starts in school history. With an overall record of 9-2, their future looks bright. With continued high-performance play in league, the Pirates can earn a spot in the CIF Southern Section playoffs. This would be an outstanding achievement that the lady Pirates are aiming to accomplish.

The boys' varsity soccer team continues to play at an elite level and is currently ranked in the top ten of the CIF Division 1 polls. The team has played one of the toughest schedules in the Southern Section. They have taken on the likes of Servite, Cathedral, San Clemente, Loyola, and Los Alamitos all which are ranked in the top ten

in their respective divisions. They finished preseason competition with a record of 8-3-1 and now prepare for the rugged San Gabriel Valley League. Boys' basketball scheduled for an intense preseason that included three tournaments and three non-league games. With no seniors on the team, the Pirates are looking forward to league play and gaining much needed experience for the future.

Both boys and girls wrestling continue their non-league schedule after participating in a number of individual tournaments over the weeks of winter break. Female wrestler, Chazel Becerra, was crowned champion of the San Dimas tournament and named the Most Valuable Wrestler of the tournament.

The Paramount High School community is proud of the accomplishments of student athletes both in the classroom and in athletic arenas. There are over 80 coaches who contribute to the successes of Paramount athletes and their team goals. Thank you for your hard work as you guide the Pirate athletes to be champions of character, academics and athletic excellence.

As we look forward to winter sport competitions, come out and support our water polo, soccer, wrestling and basketball teams. GO PIRATES!

Specialty Graphic Imaging Association - PHS Student Winners



Eddie pictured with Board of Education members and Superintendent Mendez.

During a recent Board of Education meeting, Board members and Superintendent Mendez recognized Alexandra Salcedo and Eddie Becerra, students at Paramount High School who represented PHS at the annual SGIA Annual National Conference in the t-shirt design competition which they designed and printed in the PHS ROP Screen Printing class last spring. Their entries were among over 100 entered in several categories. The conference was held this past year in Las Vegas in October 2014. This is a National competition and schools from across the United States (from California to Florida) enter the

competition.

Alexandra was honored with a 1st place Award of Excellence with her 6 color design "Loud Music" in the category of Finished Garments (Dark), Subgroup: Single/Multicolor. She did an exceptional job on her design and printing of her shirt and still proudly wears it.

Eddie was honored with a 1st Place Award of Excellence with his 6 color design "TILT" in the category of Finished Garments (Light), Subgroup: Single/Multicolor. In addition, Eddie's design was also selected as the "Best Of Show" out of all of the entries in the competition.



Alexandra pictured with Board of Education members and Superintendent Mendez.



Eddie's winning 1st place Award of Excellence and Best of Show winning entry- "Tilt"



Alexandra's 1st place Award of Excellence winning entry "Loud Music"

Parent Development Workshops

The Paramount High School Counseling Department welcomed all families and hosted a Parent Development Day on Saturday, December 6th from 8-11:30am. The event began with a breakfast social in the new College and Career Center followed by an introduction from counselor Anna Martinez.

Participants were able to choose from six different workshops which were offered in both English and Spanish. The presentations included information on the following college readiness focuses: Graduation Requirements & A-G College Requirements, Financial Aid: How to Fund a College Education, The California Dream Act, 4 Systems of Higher Education, Community College & the 4-Year College Transfer Process and Guiding Your Child to Success in School. Representatives from Long Beach City College, Cerritos College and University of California Irvine provided informational materials, navigated parents through topics and were available to address specific questions.

In a workshop geared toward supporting students, one guest speaker with over 30 years of experience in educational administration provided guidelines for developing achievement motivation and a positive view of one's personal future.

She emphasized the importance of parents helping their child to set high expectations along with developing positive future planning skills and becoming a goal-oriented decision maker. As seniors are on the horizon of making important college and career decisions this spring in preparation for life after high school, funding their futures is an important topic that was covered in 2 workshops. In addition to the workshops geared toward parents, every senior student participated in a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) workshop through his or her social science class upon returning from winter break.

For more information on financial aid and scholarship searches, visit the Paramount High School SchoolLoop Counseling website at <http://pchs-pusd-ca.schoolloop.com/PHSCounseling>. Powering one's future is PARAMOUNT and the Pirate high school community is highlighting the importance of the many college options that students are afforded.

If you are a graduate of Paramount High School and are interested in sharing your college or career success story, please e-mail Maria Garcia (MIGarcia@paramount.k12.ca.us) or Krystal Fierro (KFierro@paramount.k12.ca.us)

A Roller Coaster Assignment

Mr. Diaz's Community Day School science class used a roller coaster creation project to simultaneously learn about physics and collaboration. Students culminated their study of the laws of motion by working in groups to build roller coasters using cardboard and construction paper. At the same time, students had experienced working together and negotiating with each other to make group decisions.

Groups of four students were given a rubric on how their roller coaster was going to be judged, with criteria such as the number of turns and loops that must be present, length of time the "ride" must last, and dimension maximums and minimums. From there, it was left up to the students.

Mr. Diaz relates that with previous classes, tubing was provided for students to use in

constructing their coaster, but this class had nothing but construction paper and cardboard. There were no instructions provided for making loops or turns or supporting your structure. The group had to figure it out on their own. Not only did this lead to great trial and error discovery, but once one group developed a workable procedure for a loop, they were generous in sharing that with the other groups. Other groups may refine the procedure and then pass it on. By the end of the project every group had an impressive and functional roller coaster.

The culminating activity was a contest judged by the principal, assistant principal, and the district director of Student Services. Using a rubric, the judges rated the coasters and selected a winning team who received McDonald's gift cards for their efforts.

Roosevelt School's Parent School Visitation Day

This year has been an exciting one as the school district continues the journey of implementing Common Core Standards and the changes that this entails regarding the way our students learn.

On Tuesday, November 18, 2014, Roosevelt School parents had the opportunity to participate in "Parent Visitation Day". This is the second year that Roosevelt School has hosted this event. Last year was such a resounding success that we brought it back by popular demand!

The morning began with site Math Coach, Mrs. Anastasia Bias, and school English Language Arts Coach, Mrs. Jessica Jennings, presenting an overview of the Common Core Standards to the attendees. Parents also received English and Spanish versions of the "Parents Guide to Understanding Common Core State Standards" which outlines ways in which parents can help their children at home.

Classroom visitations were the high point of "Parent Visitation Day". Staff "tour guides" escorted small groups of parents to classrooms to observe the implementation of the new district-adopted writing program, "Write From the Beginning and Beyond", as well as "Number Talks Math" which is being used in grades K-2. Prior to the classroom visits,

parents received an overview of both programs via a presentation facilitated by Mrs. Bias and Mrs. Jennings.

During their classroom visits, parents also observed students learning from each other through the collaborative process. Students engaged in "taking it off the map" for our guests as well as demonstrated appropriate behaviors for listening and speaking when presenting to their peers.

In addition to the classroom observations, parents actively engaged in the new computer program "Spatial Temporal Math" which is currently being used in third and fourth grades.

"Parent Visitation Day" was an overwhelming success prompting positive responses by our attendees: "I really appreciate the school for allowing the parents to be a part of this. It was great being able to visit the classrooms and learn more about the Number Talks." "I want to thank the principal and all of the teachers for teaching us how we can help our children."

Due to the positive feedback, an additional "Parent Visitation Day" has been scheduled for Thursday, February 19, 2015. Thank you to our teachers, parents, and students for making this event such a success.

**Susan Marilley, Principal
Roosevelt School**

