

# 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

JANUARY 2014

## Sonya Cuellar Elected President



The Board of Education elected new officers for 2013-14 during their December statutory meeting. Trustee Sonya Cuellar was elected President and Alicia Anderson will serve as Vice President/Clerk.

## Trustees Alicia Anderson, Sonya Cuellar and Tony Peña Reelected



Newly reelected Paramount Unified School District Board of Education members Alicia Anderson, Sonya Cuellar and Tony Peña were given the Oath and Office by Superintendent Herman Mendez at the December 11, 2013 Statutory Board meeting. Trustees Anderson, Cuellar, and Peña were reelected for an additional four year term and ran uncontested. They have continued to provide extraordinary service to the students, staff and community during their prior service as members of the Board of Education. Congratulations to Trustees Anderson, Cuellar and Peña!

## Outgoing Board President Vivian Hansen Honored

The Board of Education, Superintendent Herman Mendez, City of Paramount Mayor Gene Daniels and husband and Councilmember Tom Hansen, Supervisor Don Knabe's representative Erin Stibal, and

Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard's representative Alfonso Alfaro congratulated outgoing President Vivian Hansen on her successful year as President of the Board of Education.



Pictured are Superintendent Mendez and Board of Education with outgoing Board President Vivian Hansen.



Pictured with Mrs. Hansen is Supervisor Don Knabe's field representative Erin Stibal.



Pictured with Mrs. Hansen is Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard's representative Alfonso Alfaro.



Pictured with Mrs. Hansen are husband and Councilmember Tom Hansen and City of Paramount Mayor Gene Daniels.

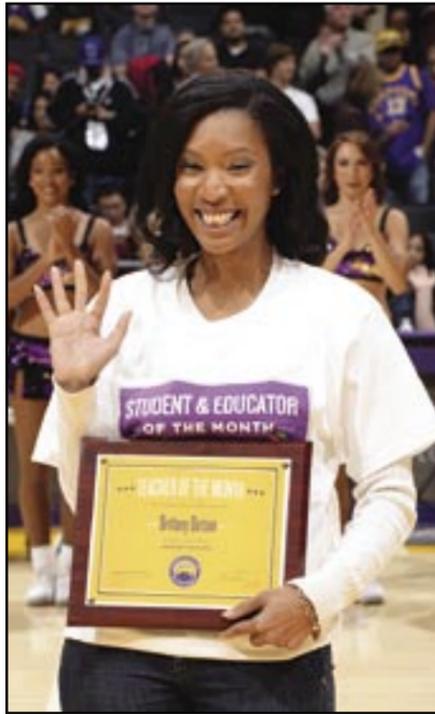
### SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATE

January 8, 2014 (Special Meeting) \* January 22, 2014 (Regular Meeting)

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

# Ms. Dotson is LA Lakers Educator of the Month

Ms. Brittany Dotson was recognized as the Los Angeles Lakers Educator of the Month for November. Ms. Dotson, who teaches Language Arts at Paramount High School, received the award during halftime of the Los Angeles and Golden State Warriors game which took place on November 22, 2013. Before the game, she was able to tour different parts of Staples Center such as the players' parking area and entrance tunnel. Also, Ms. Dotson visited the press room where she recognized some of the Laker television announcers. After the first half of the game was played, Ms. Dotson was escorted to mid court where she was presented with a plaque and a commemorative shirt to mark the occasion.



Before teaching at Paramount High, Ms. Dotson also attended PHS. While a student, she was a member of the track and field team, served in leadership as a class representative and participated in the community service oriented Macaws Club. As a student, Ms. Dotson's excellence in the classroom is evidenced by being awarded with scholarships such as the Maureen McCarthy Scholarship, the Governor Gray Davis Scholarship, the Soroptimist of Paramount Scholarship, and the Elks Lodge Scholarship. After graduating, she attended the California State University of Dominguez Hills and went on to earn a Master's Degree in Special Education.

Currently, Ms. Dotson is a Language Arts teacher, which she describes as "a dream come true," adding that "working amongst those that pushed and influenced me to be the best person that I can be is priceless." In the classroom, Ms. Dotson's commitment to teaching can best be expressed by the words of a current student. Nick Hudson, a sophomore at PHS, shares that Ms. Dotson "inspires me to try harder and always do my best. She was my first

choice to present my football jersey to for the staff luncheon." Beyond the classroom, Ms. Dotson is also an African American Culture Club Advisor. Student appreciation for her participation in the club is exhibited by the words of a current student, Demetrius Williams, who shares that "it is special that she gives up her lunch time to be involved with the AA Culture Club. She works hard to provide us with memorable learning experiences like field trips and special school events."

The LA Lakers Educator of the Month program allows for schools of the greater Los Angeles area to nominate exemplary teachers to be invited and recognized at a Laker game. Ms. Dotson's excellence in the classroom and commitment to her students make her a deserving recipient of this award.

# Mokler Student Council



I am very excited and proud to be part of the first School's Student Council at Mokler School. Student Council gives students the opportunity to have a voice in school. Students will gain leadership skills through decision making, collaboration, and dedication. Mokler Student Council is made up of fifteen fourth and fifth grade students led by three teachers, Mrs. Azua, Mr. Perez and Ms. Song. Representatives were chosen by their teachers and/or peers to represent their class.

In October, representatives were busy helping with Fall Read Night. Banners were made during lunch time and were displayed around school campus. A few of the representatives also helped out during the costume parade by passing out candy. It was a fun event.

One very important project this December was the Canned Food Drive. The students at Mokler collected over 15 boxes of food to help needy families. All the food collected was donated to a local church in the City of Paramount.

Student Council representatives have also been busy planning other projects



and activities. Some of these activities include Read Across America and a recycling program.

**Tippy Nokham, 5th Grade Student Council Representative**

## WALKING SAFELY

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

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

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

Paramount Unified School District



Workshops

LOCATION: Jefferson School  
8600 Jefferson Street  
Paramount, CA 90723

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Jan. 16, 2014 Mental Health 101  
Jan. 30, 2014 You Hear Me, But Are You Listening?

Spanish Translation will be available.  
Co-sponsored by Paramount Unified School District  
and Cerritos College (FKCE Program-Certificates for renewal hours)

Child care available for children ages 3-12 (must be toilet trained)  
MUST pre-register for child care one week in advance;  
MAY pre-register for individual workshops  
Call: Myra McGinnis at (562) 602-6035

**Workshops Open to all PUSD Parents**

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



*Board of Education*  
**Sonya Cuellar – President**  
**Alicia Anderson – VP/Clerk**  
**Linda Garcia – Member**  
**Vivian Hansen – Member**  
**Tony Peña – Member**

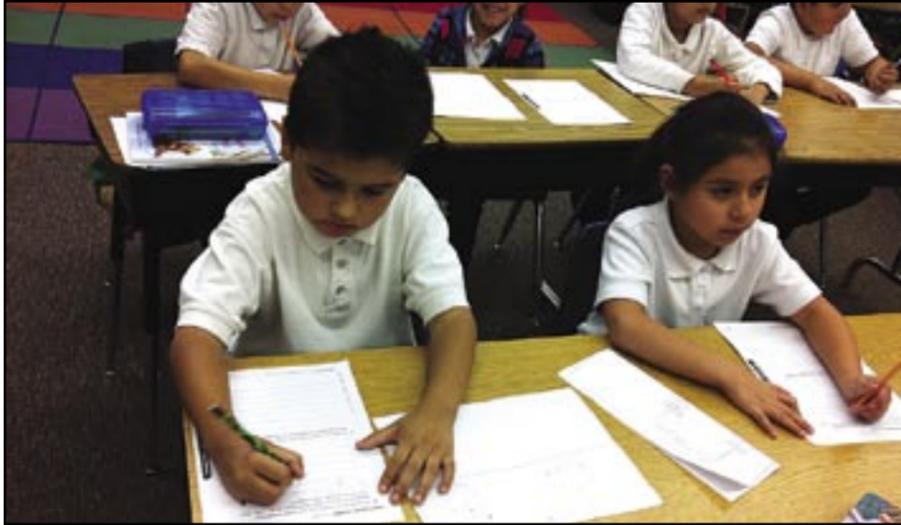
*District Superintendent*  
**Herman M. Mendez**

*Great things are happening in Paramount Schools*

**PUSD Education News**

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# Hollydale School Readies for the CCSS Challenge



Second graders Daniel Arguello and Zenianda Hernandez use a thinking map to organize a response to a text dependent question. (Walker/Pritchett)



Brianna Alferez in the same class.



Victoria Espinoza and Michael Miller, in Camiling's 8th grade math class, using writing to plan a solution to a complex problem.

In a press release distributed this fall, Sacramento announced legislation calling for new computer-based assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. It signals the state's commitment to the deeper learning and critical thinking embedded in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The bill calls for the new program that will permanently replace STAR tests in the 2014-15 school year, and will better prepare students to meet the challenges of a changing world.

The Paramount Unified School District is supporting a transition plan for the new state assessment system, measuring how students apply knowledge and solve complex problems. The teachers and students at Hollydale School are working through changes in curriculum, instruction, and interim assessments, in order to be ready for kind of problems students will be expected to tackle on the new tests.

In Reading and Writing, Hollydale teachers are crafting lessons that base all questions on the material being read, and students are

learning to base all their answers on the evidence in the reading. Writing assignments are focused on "Big Idea" questions, and must be tightly focused and organized.

In math our students are doing more problem solving. Each student participates in "Problem of the Day" each day during their math class. Students are given opportunities to share their solutions in front of the class, while other class members are invited to question the solution, or provide alternative ways of solving the problem.

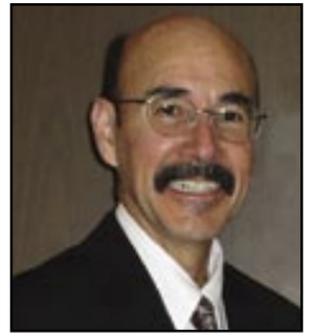
In addition to these changes, we are working to ramp up the technology needed for computer embedded assessments. We recently held a very successful fundraiser, and are gearing up to upgrade our existing computer labs and install two new ones.

In every way from lesson design to technology upgrades, Hollydale School is getting ready to meet the challenge!

**Dr. Kathy Vaughn**  
5th Grade Teacher

# Superintendent's Message:

California state law sets out the system for funding public schools. State leaders largely decide how much money is available to schools each year as part of the state budget process. In 2013, California adopted a new formula for deciding how much money each school district gets, called the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). School districts will decide how to use the funds, but under the new system they must get input from their local communities, which for PUSD will be by way of the newly formed PUSD Local Control Accountability Plan Consultation Committee. Districts also have to tie their budgets to improvement goals by creating a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).



### How does the LCFF compare to the old school funding system?

BEFORE LCFF	PER PUPIL FUNDING OLD SYSTEM	PER PUPIL FUNDING UNDER LCFF	AFTER LCFF
Much of the money given to schools districts was restricted to particular programs, called categorical programs.	Categorical Funding	Concentration Grant 50% of Base Grant	Base Grant: Per student funding is now called the Base Grant with different amounts depending on grade level.
Amount of money each district received per student was called "Revenue Limit" and was based on a complicated formula not on the needs of students.	Revenue Limit Funding	Supplemental Grant 20% of Base Grant For each at-risk Student	Supplemental Grants go to help high needs students: English Language Learners, low-income students and foster children.
		Base Grant Grades K-3 Grades 4-6 Grades 7-8 Grades 9-12	Concentration Grants go to districts with more than 55% of their students identified as EL/LUY.

Note: Actual funding will depend on district's prior revenue levels along with other factors. ERT-Economic Recovery/Target means no district will receive less money than under the old system. Most will receive more.

Under both systems, the Governor and the Legislature are mostly responsible for determining annually how much funding schools will receive through the state budget process.

### Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

- Replaces the current state model of funding with a more streamlined formula and removes most existing spending restrictions.
  - Collapses over 20 categorical programs (funds earmarked by the state for different types of uses with spending restrictions). However, some categorical programs remain, including special education, afterschool programs, school lunches, transportation and TIIG (Targeted Instructional Improvement Grant).
  - Shifts decision-making to the school district level with flexibility for local communities to decide how to best spend resources.
  - Requires that districts must use supplemental and concentration funds to "increase or improve services for EL/LI pupils."
  - Requires districts to adopt Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) that show how funds will be spent to provide high-quality educational programs and improve student outcomes. (See California State PTA's LCAP flier for more information.)
  - Implementation begins in 2013-14 and will be phased in over an eight-year period.
- Source: LCFF information adapted from California State PTA

### Local Control Accountability Plan Consultation Committee

PUSD's will be working with a representative group of stakeholders in the development of a LCAP. We have formed a Local Control and Accountability Plan Consultation Committee made up of parents, teachers, administrators, student and board of education representation.

The Committee will meet regularly to provide consultation in the development of the Plan that will brought to the PUSD School Board for approval later in the spring.

Information related to the Committee's work will be posted on the District Website for review.

# A.R Reader Leaders Crush Reading Goals

Wesley Gaines Grizzly students just love a challenge. They love it even more when they surpass the challenge put in front of them. That is what is happening this year with the Accelerated Reader (AR) program. The AR program is the computer based testing program that helps to reinforce foundational reading and comprehension skills. Students establish their reading level, read books that are within that level and then take computer-based comprehension tests related to a given book.

Last year a teacher committee increased the goals that students need to reach before each quarter of the school year (think, progress report or report card period). The change was made as a way of motivating and challenging students. We are very pleased to announce that a number of students have taken on the challenge with gusto. In first through third grades a large number of students are within the Approaching Benchmark range, a good number of students have already met the Benchmark. And then, we have students that have surpassed 2nd and 3rd Quarter goals already.

Jared Gonzalez, Jesus Guijarro, and Adonis Lee are the Reader leaders in first grade. All

three have more than 28 points, which places them in the challenge level- for the 3rd quarter! Adonis leads this stellar pack with 38.7 total points and Jesus has the highest percentage of correct answers at 97.6 %.

Jessica Martin Osorio, Natasha Vega, and Samantha Velez are the Second Grade Reader Leaders. Jessica has blown right past all the goals set for her and has a total score of 57.4 points as we head into December. Natasha and Samantha have surpassed the challenge level in total points and both are above 96% in average correct answers.

Briceida Reyes Campana, Paul Garcia, and A'aran McGiffert are the students setting the bar as the Reader Leaders in third grade. A'aran is proving himself to be quite the example of a Reader Leader with the highest total points for his grade at 42.9 points and the highest percentage of correct answers at almost 91%!

A hearty Grizzly Congratulations to all of our Reader Leaders as they continue to set great examples for other students and reach new heights in the AR Program.

**Jeff Bowers, Principal**

# 'Tis the Season for Giving



The holiday season is full of joy, laughs, great food, loved ones, and most importantly—generosity. The students, staff, and ASB at Paramount High School West Campus are doing as much as possible to keep in the spirit of giving during the holidays and support the less fortunate. West Campus students are extremely generous by donating to canned food and toy drives sponsored by ASB.

During the month of November, the West Campus ASB sponsored a school-wide canned food drive. ASB Leadership students collected cans from all first period classes on campus. The food items donated by the students and staff were arranged into a holiday baskets full of goodies for families in need to enjoy. With over seven hundred cans, ASB was able to assist six families. To complete their Thanksgiving meal, each family was given a twenty-five dollar gift card to a local market.

In the month of December, West Campus

held its annual Su Casa Holiday Toy Drive. Su Casa is a shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children. West Campus students were greeted every morning in December with ASB students and large gift boxes needing to be filled at the door. Both items reminding students of the importance of giving to children who have experience hardship in their lives. For this toy drive, ASB collected board games, books, dolls, sports equipment, teddy bears, and many other toys and art supplies. The gifts donated by West Campus Pirates brought a smile to the face of less fortunate children.

The holiday season is full of generosity here at Paramount High School West Campus as well as so many other places. It does not matter where the giving takes place just that families are able to have a better holiday season. West Camus is happy to play a part in this season of giving.

**PHS-West Campus ASB**

## Students in Paramount Unified School District's Science Classes Use Ipad to Conduct Research



Students at work in teacher Jason Gonzalez's class at Alondra Middle School.

Ipads have come to eighth grade science classes at Jackson and Alondra Middle Schools! Students in these classes use an Ipad to research a scientific topic they are studying. Recently during a class visit students researched biomolecules to gather information and classified them using a Thinking Map to describe the qualities of proteins, carbohydrates and lipids. Students sent their completed assignment

electronically to their teacher who was able to review it and provide feedback almost instantly. Teachers in these classes attended professional development to learn how to use the applications on the Ipad for science instruction. Ipads used in these classes were purchased from a grant that partnered PUSD with USC to provide teachers with new skills in science and technology.

## COMMON CORE PARENT UPDATE

Grades 6-12

### CURRICULUM

The Common Core State Standards are a set of clear, consistent, internationally-benchmarked K-12 standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics that will provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our students for college and the workplace. 2013-14 is a transition year for Paramount Unified School District for Common Core State Standards with full implementation in 2014-15. But what is different about what your child is learning this year due to the Common Core State Standards?

English Language Arts	Mathematics
In English Language Arts, students will be using the same textbook but will analyze the author's words in a different way. They'll be searching for evidence instead of simply giving their opinions about the text. Students will be asked to think about questions that will cause them to go back into the text and then write responses to explain their thinking. By the end of this year, your child should be able to support oral and written responses with evidence from the textbook.	In mathematics, students will learn fewer different topics at each grade level with more depth on topics. Students will search for the answers to problems that they are trying to solve and will share their thinking with others. In addition to sharing their own thinking, students will listen and respond to other students and how they are solving difficult math problems. By the end of this year, your child should be able to explain, write and illustrate their solutions.

### TECHNOLOGY

Common Core State Standards assessment will involve the use of technology.

Paramount Unified School District is in the process of updating computer labs in all schools to ensure that we are prepared for the Common Core assessment. For the assessment, students will be required to use computers to answer multiple choice questions and constructed response or essay type questions. In addition to the Common Core assessment, students will use the labs to for research projects and reports.

## Pirates Making a Difference

Paramount High School recently launched a new program aimed at highlighting staff members who were making a positive difference in the lives of others both on and off campus. The concept originated from a discussion on ways to promote a positive school culture between Data Technician, Lourdes Aguayo and Assistant Principal, Greg Francois. According to Mr. Francois, "we wanted to create and implement a program that would publicly recognize classified and certificated staff members at PHS who were not just exemplary employees, but went above and beyond the call of duty in making PHS an even better place."

Staff members are nominated by their colleagues and administrators in using a nomination form that includes a written rationale explaining why they feel the person deserves to be recognized. As winners are selected, the completed forms are sent to teachers overseeing the PHS Video Production courses in the R.O.P. Technology Pathway. Once they are received, the teachers organize teams of PHS students to venture out to interview and photograph/videotape the nominated staff members. Under the direct supervision of their teachers, the students then spend time creating, editing, and producing the video segment in preparation for upcoming Pirate News episodes that are

shown weekly through streaming video on campus, as well as through the school's web portal. The Pirates Making a Difference episodes appear twice per month in which the following PHS staff members have been featured so far; School Administrative Assistant Yolie Velasquez, World History teacher and Varsity Football Coach Matt Howard, Campus Security Officer Olive Fukofuka, Geometry teacher Catherine Huang, Classroom Instructional Aide Cecilia Sanchez, and U.S. History teacher Melissa Marchesini. In being the first Pirate recognized by this program, Mrs. Velasquez shared that she felt special, honored and surprised.

Mrs. Aguayo goes on to share "it's a great way to recognize those individuals that make a difference in someone else's life. It has also been an effective way for current students and staff members to learn more about one another. I am really excited to see this recognition take off." Former PHS Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Marchesini commented that "it was very nice to be recognized. It was also fun to have students throughout the week, both my own and others in the hallway, say hello and comment that they saw me on Pirate News and ask questions about something that was said in the segment."

**Way to go Pirates!**

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