

# PUSD EDUCATION NEWS

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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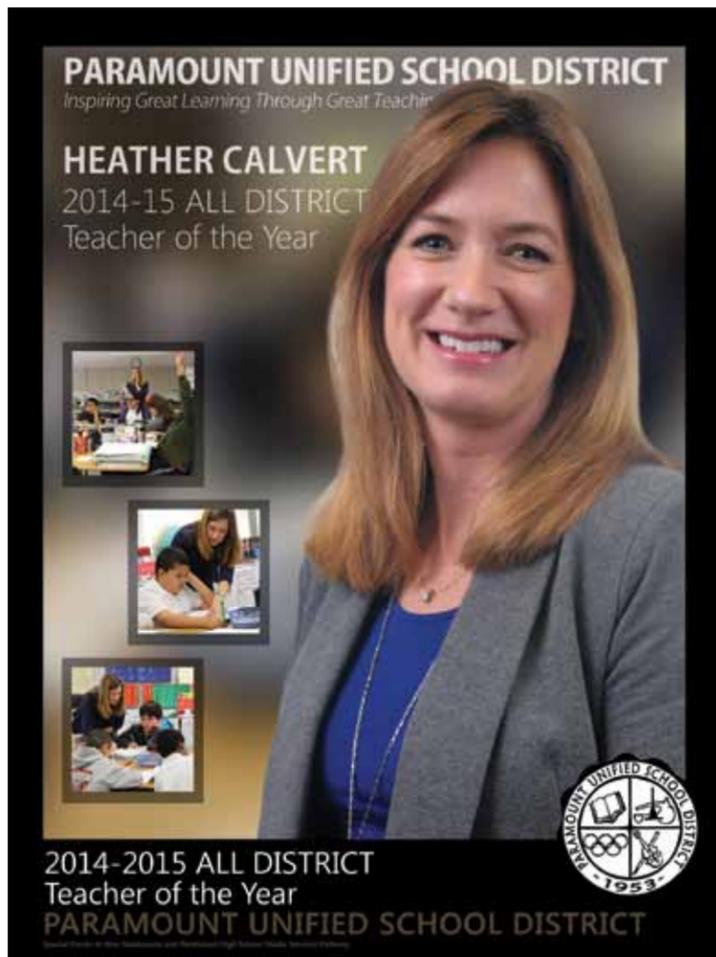
## Paramount Unified School District Celebrates Teacher of the Year



On May 14, 2014, school and district staff and members of the Board of Education met to celebrate each school's Teacher of the Year. The Teacher of the Year recognition honors the positive effect teachers have on the lives of students each day. The Board of Education awarded each of the 20 recipients a plaque to honor their contribution to Paramount Unified School District's students and community.

Schools select one outstanding teacher to represent their school for this honor. In making this selection, teachers give careful consideration to the person who best meets all of the following criteria:

- Shows commitment to professional growth.
- Supports his/her colleagues to develop their skills.
- Pursues educational activities beyond the school day.
- Delivers high quality in-



struction. with students and parents. After a selection commit-

- Communicates positively

tee chooses the District-wide Teacher of the Year, he or she has the opportunity to apply for the Los Angeles County Teacher of the Year competition. This year the RSP teacher from Jefferson, Heather Calvert was selected to represent PUSD as the district wide Teacher of the Year. We congratulate Ms. Calvert, her students and her school for this outstanding honor!

### Paramount Unified School District's 2014-15 Teachers of the Year

Early Childhood Education	- Damaris Peraza
Alondra Middle School	- Isela Griffith-Wu
Collins School	- Kirsten Albert
Gaines School	- Wafa Kaluzok
Hollydale School	- Imelda Espinoza
Jackson School	- Sandra Gonzalez
Jefferson School	- Heather Calvert
Keppel School	- Helena Chun
Lincoln School	- Mandy Murrietta
Los Cerritos School	- Sonia Morales
Mokler School	- Shauna Grover
Paramount Park Middle School	- Janel Lenox
Roosevelt School	- Toby Tryon
Tanner School	- Margie Domino
Wirtz School	- Cheri Lujan
Zamboni Middle School	- Julie Ortiz
Paramount High School-West	- Dannie Brayboy
Paramount High School	- Julia Fulton
Buena Vista High School	- Mira Smeltzer
Paramount Adult School	- Jennifer Tribe

## Paramount Unified School District Plans Textbook Adoption for Students with Severe Disabilities

Paramount Unified School District will implement the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics in the 2014-15 school year. In order to provide students with programs aligned to these standards, new textbooks and materials are needed to meet the needs of students with disabilities. A committee composed of Special Education teachers evaluated materials aligned to the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and mathematics and other content areas. The following programs are being recommended to the Board of Education for approval.

Pathways to Literacy is a research-based curriculum for preschool students with significant developmental disabilities who do not consistently use words, pictures, or other symbols to communicate. This curriculum addresses the needs of students with multiple

disabilities, including those who are nonverbal. It provides strategies to increase awareness and engagement in story reading while systematically building comprehension.

The Early Literacy Skills Builder program for grades Kinder through 5 incorporates systematic instruction to teach both print and phonemic awareness. ELSB is a multi-year program with seven distinct levels and ongoing assessments so students' progress at their own pace.

Teaching to the Standards and Explore are curricula for grades 6 through Adult Transition. The curriculum supports students of varying abilities by providing materials at three literacy levels: objects/photos, concrete symbols and abstract symbols/text. The authors created and/or adapted popular works of literature used in gen-

eral education classes (like Holes, Number the Stars and Dragonwings) using simplified text with symbol supports. Genres covered include fiction, nonfiction, plays, and poetry—16 forms of literature in all.

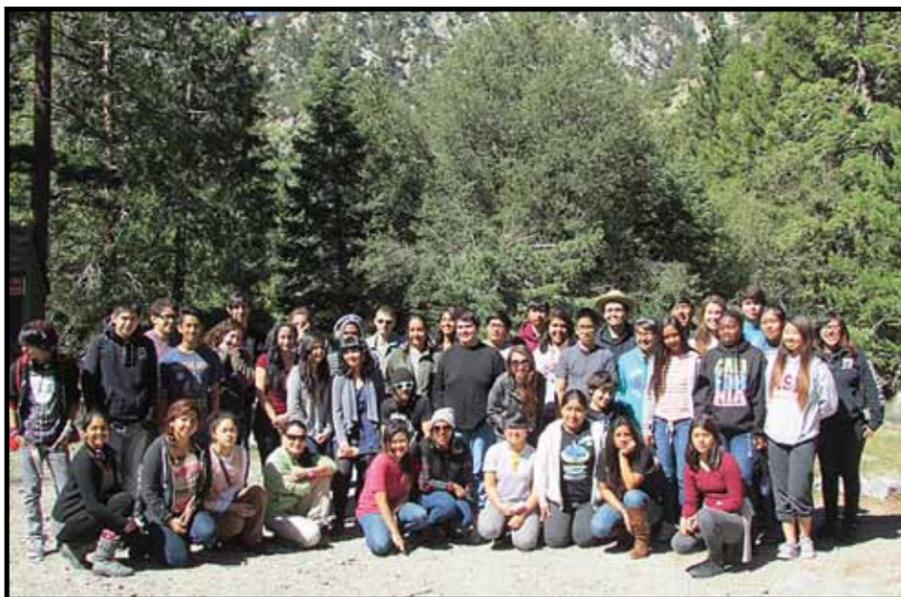
The recommendation of the materials for students with severe disabilities is an important step in the transition to Common Core State Standards.

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATE

June 11, 2014 \* June 23, 2014 (Monday)

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

# PHS Green Club Visits Harwood Lodge



The PHS Green Club recently spent a weekend at the Harwood Lodge in Mt. Baldy, California. Thirty-seven members of the Green Club, along with PHS staff chaperones took leisurely nature hikes, made smores around the campfire, and enjoyed the beauty of nature that Mt. Baldy had to offer. Upon arriving at the lodge on a Friday evening, all club members were divided into groups to either cook or cleanup, in which everybody had their part to play during the weekend.

On the following day, members took a long hike to see the beautiful San Antonio Falls. Given the fact that there was not any cell phone reception or WiFi available at the lodge, everyone entertained themselves

by interacting with one another by playing board games such as Charades, Monopoly, and Uno, while others cooked dinner. One of the guilty pleasures enjoyed by all was making smores. After enjoying the smores, Green club members took a night hike to look at the stars, in which such constellations as "Orion's Belt" and the "Winter Triangle" was visible. The Harwood Lodge trip proved to be a memorable experience that no one could forget. It was the time to get your mind off of school and the city life to enjoy the sounds of nature and the human interaction we sometimes forget about.

**Daisy Sanchez,**  
PHS Senior

# District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)



In Paramount Unified School District (PUSD), parents have the opportunity to participate in decision-making at both the school site and District level. Parent committees at the schools including School Site Council (SSC) and English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC), meet regularly to discuss issues related to their students' education. Representatives from ELAC also meet regularly at the District Office with representatives from other schools to discuss issues on a District wide level. The ELAC representatives collectively form the District English Learner Advisory Council. The DELAC members (see attached picture) annually review the assessment data and English Language Development (ELD) programs for English Learner students.

Additionally, this year the DELAC

members received training on Common Core, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), and the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). DELAC members reviewed the draft of the LCAP and provided comments.

Please speak to your school administration for information on parent committees, meeting schedules and possibly serving as your school's representative. Your participation is always welcome and encouraged.

One parent comment summarizes it best, "The information provided is always very useful to me as a parent because it helps me help my child succeed in school and in life, and what is more important than that."

**Randy Gray, Director**  
Curriculum Instruction & Projects

# A Tribute to Keppel PTA



PTA began on February 17, 1897. It is known as the largest and oldest non-profit organization dedicated to the education, health and welfare of children in the United States. Their efforts have included the introduction of kindergarten into the school system, the promotion of a nationwide school lunch program, and the support of automotive safety restraint systems for children.

At Keppel School, we are blessed to have dedicated PTA parents that continue with the vision to a better education for our children. Each year, active PTA members volunteer numerous hours planning and working at the many school-wide events such as the Harvest Festival, Family Read Nights, Schoolwide Fund Raising Events, Book Fair, Teacher and Staff Recognition Events, Mother's Day Breakfast, Classroom Incentives, 5th Grade Celebration Parties. Another unique student incentive program that PTA supports is the very popular Keppel Dollar Store. Students use their hard earned Keppel dollars for academic efforts and good behavior to shop at the store stocked with enticing merchandise. Students count their money with pride as they pick their favorite items. They also learn how to save and budget. Dedicated

PTA parents ensure that the store is well-stocked during student shopping days. In addition, the parent volunteers have assisted the office and classroom teachers with tasks ranging from counting flyers, preparing decodable books to practicing letters, sounds and high frequency words with the students.

The above-mentioned tasks needed dedication, hardwork and TIME. As of this date, Keppel parents have put in more than 3,500 volunteer hours recorded. Add on the planning and working behind the scene hours. Just imagine how much would it would amount to if we were to convert them into \$ figure!

As the school year begins to wind down, the staff and the Keppel School community would like to give a shout out to the dedicated parents. Words can't thank you enough for your sacrifice. This year, we especially want to thank Teresita Zamudio, Ruth Sanchez, Angelica Trespalacios, Maria Villanueva, Guadalupe Miranda and Teresita Bedolla. You are appreciated and will be remembered for helping students become future great leaders.

Keppel students will always be grateful!

**Linda Go, Principal**

## Graduation Dates

**Buena Vista High School**  
**June 10, 6:00p.m.**

**Paramount High School**  
**June 12, 6:00 p.m.**

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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## Superintendent's Message:

For the fourth year in a row, California's graduation rates climbed as the dropout rate fell, particularly for students of color. More than eight out of ten students statewide or 80.2% who started high school in the year 2009 graduated with their class in the year 2013. That is up 1.3 percentage points from the year before. Graduation rates among African-American and Hispanic stu-

dents climbed faster than the statewide average. Among African-American students, 67.9% graduated with the class in the year 2013, up 1.9 percentage points from the year before. Among Hispanic students, 75.4% graduated with the class, up 1.7% percentage points from the year before.

For the Paramount Unified School District, I am pleased to share that we

increased our graduation rate from 78.3% to 80.1 and decreased dropout rates from 14.3% to 12.7%.

I echo the same sentiment as our State Superintendent of Schools Tom Torlakson who said, "For the first time in our state history, more than 80% of our students are graduating, a clear sign of their hard work and the support the receipt from the teachers, families, and communities".

Cohort & Graduate Data Summary  
Embargoed Until 4/28/2014

Type	School	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13*	1-year Change	3-Year Change
Cohort Graduates	Paramount High	79.4	80.5	84.3	84.8	0.5	5.4
	District	71.3	75.3	78.3	80.1	1.8	8.8
	LA County	70.5	73.7	75.1	77.0	1.9	6.5
UC/CSU A-G Completion	Paramount High	40.2	27.9	25.4	32.4	7.0	-7.8
	District	36.6	24.2	23.0	29.5	6.5	-7.1
	LA County	43.0	38.2	39.6	39.2	-0.4	-3.8
Cohort Dropouts	Paramount High	14.5	14	12.5	11.4	-1.1	-3.1
	District	16.4	15.9	14.3	12.7	-1.6	-3.7
	LA County	18.9	16.7	14.8	12.7	-2.1	-6.2

Positive change in green

## New Librarian in town At Collins School

Collins School has a new Librarian, Raquel Villanueva, and we are very excited to have her at Collins School. Ms. Villanueva has revived the atmosphere in our library and all staff and students are thoroughly appreciating her passion for student learning. She has extended the library hours to include before school; this time allows time for students to truly read for the sake of pure enjoyment.

Ms. Villanueva also assists students and staff while they are in the computer lab. We have been very busy in the library with all of our new initiatives that began in January: ST Math for 3rd and 4th, Type to Learn for 2nd-5th, and now we have our state-wide testing practice times for 3rd-5th grade students. On behalf of all students and staff, we want to welcome Raquel Villanueva to Collins School and we are very happy that she is a new COLT! Go Colts!

## PHS Athletic Accomplishments

A number of Paramount High School athletic teams had outstanding winter-sport seasons. In girls' sports, the pirate soccer team finished in third place in the tough San Gabriel Valley League and qualified for playoffs. After a wild card win against Marlborough High School, the girls traveled to play Santa Monica High School who was seeded as the number 1 team in the division. It was hard-fought battle, but in the end it was Santa Monica who was victorious by a score of 2-0. Our girls basketball team did not qualify for the playoffs, but showed great improvement. With a young roster the team is looking forward to next season. Girls water polo had a productive season. The program under went a coaching change which helped the attitude and the level of play. The players and coaches are enthusiastic for next season.

In boys' sports, our soccer team once again led the way capturing another San Gabriel Valley League championship. They won their first CIF playoff game and then were beat in the second round by Colton High School. Boys basketball saw a tremendous improvement from the previous year. They finished with 14 wins and a tie for third place in the league. They were led by three sophomores, so the future looks bright. In wrestling the team finished in third place. With a number of wrestlers returning, next years the team could be favored to capture another league title.

Not only were team sports successful this winter, but a number of individual athletes received recognition for their accomplishments. In girls wrestling, now an official CIF sport, three female wrestlers qualified for the state championships held in Visalia, Ca. Seniors, Marjoree Fargas and Margarita Borrayo, qualified for the state

championships along with sophomore, Chazel Beccerra. Marjoree Fargas finished 6th in the state which is a tremendous accomplishment for our girls wrestling program! The Pirate family is proud of all three wrestlers and their accomplishments as they inspire more females to give wrestling a try. Sophomore basketball player, Natalie Santos, was selected to the All League team within the San Gabriel Valley League. In girls soccer, Stacy Poz Poz, Yaqualine Garcia, Genesis Patino, and Giovanna Recinos were all selected as All League members and Dilma Romero was selected to the All League team in girls water polo.

In boys' sports, recognition was given to a number of Paramount athletes. In basketball sophomore, Jonathan Guzman, and senior, Johnathan Fleming, were selected to the All League team. In soccer, senior, Alfredo Solis, was voted as the league Most Valuable Player. Also selected as All League members were Juniors Alfredo Garcia, Hector Rojo, Danni Garcia and Israel Gonzalez along with senior, Kevin Alvarado, and sophomore Daniel Martinez. In wrestling, seven of our Pirates qualified for the CIF championships including Pablo Garcia, Marc Ruiz, Brandon Vista, Jose Estrada, and Daniel Aguirre. Steve DeLeon and Noe Sandoval captured San Gabriel Valley League championships in their weight classes. Noe Sandoval was also the CIF champion at 220 pounds for the Inland division. At the Southern California championships Noe finished in the top ten and advanced to the state championships held in Bakersfield.

Paramount High School is proud of the accomplishments of the winter sport athletes and coaches.

WAY TO GO PIRATES!

## Positively Totally Awesome



These words are not enough to describe Jefferson's School's PTA. Under the leadership of the 2013-2014 president, Rachel Jijon and board members: Nereyda Lopez, Sandra Picasso, Carmina Rivera, Grace Guardian, and Malis Pech, the list of activities and accomplishments that they have achieved are almost endless!

This very active group of parents, teachers, and family members are often in "their room" from early morning to late afternoon working on projects, gathering ideas and completing and doing anything from laminating to cutting out papers for teachers.

Thanks to all their fundraising, they arranged and financed a school-wide anti-bullying assembly, an X-box to be raffled off at Open House, a Harvest Carnival, A Dancing with the Stars event, Christmas ornaments for all students, Valentine candy grams, red ribbon bracelets for students, and

funds to help families during Thanksgiving and Christmas. Events still to come include a Mother's Day breakfast, as well as Donuts for Dads. They have even offered funds to help sponsor field trips to wherever teachers would like to take their classes.

Our school is extremely thankful for all the hard work that the Jefferson School PTA does to make our school an even better place to be. They never say, "No", they only say, "How soon?"

We are excited to welcome our newly voted board for the 2014-2015. President - Rachel Jijon, Vice-President - Karen Bucio, Secretary - Grace Guardian, Treasurer - Sandra Picasso, Auditor - Elizandra Lopez, Parliamentarian - Natalie Ruiz, and Historian - Griselda Vega. Jefferson's School's PTA will continue to be the best as we begin the new school year.

Toni Sawyer

## Model School Recognition



On Friday, May 2, 2014, the faculty and staff of Buena Vista High School accepted the California Department of Education's award of "Model Continuation High School." On hand to lend support were Paramount Unified School District Board Members Alicia Anderson and Vivian Hansen, along with Superintendent Mr. Herman Mendez. The evening kicked off with a presentation by former State Superintendent of Education, Jack O'Connell, who eloquently spoke about the numerous opportunities that alternative education schools provide to students. Mr. O'Connell was a former continuation high school teacher, so his perspectives are grounded in the reality that not all students learn in the same way or in the same environment.

When Buena Vista was called to the stage to accept the Model School award, it was an affirmation of the dedication and commitment of the entire staff's work for the past years. Buena Vista now stands as an example to other continuation schools and will serve as a resource for those schools looking to improve their own school-wide programs.

To become a Model School, a rigorous written application followed by a site visit occurs. Buena Vista's written application scored well and earned a site visit, which occurred in late October 2013. During the

visit a team of experts visited classrooms, met with students, and interviewed parents. They affirmed that the school met all of the rigorous criteria categories set forth in the written application, including: school management, curriculum, instructional strategies, educational climate, and guidance/counseling. The school was notified in February of the selection as a Model School; the official presentation of the award in May occurred as part of the California Continuation Education Association's annual state conference in Hollywood.

Buena Vista faculty member Jerome McCullough, a Physics and Mathematics teacher, explains it best. According to him, "Earning Model School status is a huge validation of our entire faculty and staff's vision for what our school provides to students." He enjoys working in alternative education because of the impact that he can have on individual students' lives and shaping their futures. Mr. McCullough explains that differentiating for the various learning styles is critical in the small school setting because it allows for a more personalized learning experience.

Congratulations to the Buena Vista Eagles for this well-deserved recognition!

Jean Law, Principal

## Common Core Prepares Lincoln Students for Smarter Balanced Assessments



Lincoln School's Student Council members lead the school with a cheer at the morning assemblies to encourage our students on the Smarter Balanced Assessments!

At Lincoln School, students are catching on to the Common Core! With these new State Standards, instructional shifts have been taking place in the classroom for more rigor and a focus on how students tackle text complexity to understand the content more thoroughly and in depth. In Language Arts, you will see students practicing evidence-based reading and writing strategies as they learn to cite evidence from the text when discussing stories and answering questions in a Close Read. There is a greater emphasis on informational text, where students are building knowledge through non-fiction content. As students begin their responses with, "According to the text..." or "I infer that..." they also beam with new-found confidence and poise as a learner. In Mathematics, students are expected to explain or write their thinking as they solve multi-step problems, correct a problem, and explain with visuals.

Under the Common Core guidelines, students will be tested using the Smarter Balanced Assessments, also known as the

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). The Smarter Balanced Assessments, which is a computerized testing system, replaces the traditional California Standards Test. Lincoln students are busy in our new computer lab taking this Field Test. Nathan Endo, 5th grader, commented after taking the English Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment, "I like taking the test online rather than paper and pencil testing. It is more fun!" Students in 3rd through 5th grades are excited about taking the Smarter Balanced Field Test in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. It is inspiring to observe how diligently our students are navigating through the test on the computer. Lincoln students are embracing the Common Core standards as well as the use of technology, and will be prepared to meet the higher demands of today's college and career readiness!

Yuki Mio, Interim Principal  
Mandy Murrietta, Instructional Coach

## Hollydale School New Gymnasium



Students, faculty, staff, and administrators at Hollydale School are all filled with excitement and anticipation as they watch the building crew put the final touches on the new gymnasium located at the north end of the campus. The head custodian, principal, assistant principal, and P.E. coaches have recently been through orientation trainings for using some of the features of the new facility. On one occasion, selected students were invited in so we could get their reactions to it.

For the most part, the students were speechless. They excitedly turned and pointed to all the new features, and shouted with delight. They were especially excited about the school logo in center court, and the school and mascot names at each end of the court. They also pointed out the electronic scoreboard, while custodian Jason Garcia demonstrated the buzzer and other sounds for timing games. Above one entry is a beautiful bas-relief of the school name. All around the gym are six hoops that drop down from the ceiling, and in the center, professional quality volleyball net was set up.

We are all excited about being able

to use the gym next year. Coach Diaz says he has been waiting for this gym since he first came in 1986, and Coach Moore is excited about how many more activities they will be able to do with the new facilities. Students will be able to have P.E. activities now, even on rainy days or days of extreme heat, as we have had lately. Mr. Longworth and Ms. Cervantes, Hollydale's administrators, are also excited about the Physical Education opportunities, and they see a wide variety of usages.

"The new gym will allow us to have really great student and parent assemblies. The sound system is awesome!" Mr. Longworth said.

All of Hollydale's staff members are very appreciative for the enhancement to the campus and the increased opportunities for students and community members. Their thanks go out to the Board of Education, the District, and the community members for passing Bond Measure AA.

Dr. Kathy Vaughn,  
5th Grade Teacher