

# PUSD EDUCATION NEWS

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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DECEMBER 2013

## Jefferson School Celebrates FALL!



As leaves begin to change color, the autumn activities were kicked off with the Harvest Carnival at Jefferson School. The PTA at Jefferson School beautifully organized an event that allowed the community to welcome the fall season and enjoy the carnival. Families enjoyed delicious food, fun games, and a frightening haunted house. Parents and volunteers spent many hours decorating the Parent Room and turning it into the haunted house. It was terrifying! Parents and their children devoured delicious tacos, popcorn, and cotton candy as they took in the frightening sceneries. Teach-

ers volunteered at different game booths and took pictures to preserve the wonderful memories. The costume contests for kids from grades Kindergarten through Fifth grade left haunting impression on the judges.

The fall season was a perfect opportunity to raise funds for students at Jefferson School. The funds will be used for books, fieldtrips, and various incentive programs. PTA's unwavering dedication has opened the pathways for students to go on meaningful fieldtrips. Parent participation and support has enabled Jefferson School to provide students with many differ-

ent resources and opportunities. The fall fundraiser was a success, thanks to parents, teachers, staff and community members, who all volunteered to make this a memorable tradition.

PTA has been the cornerstone of the Harvest and June Carnival. We are truly proud to have PTA's support to carry on the Harvest and June Carnival every year. As the 2013 year comes to an end, we are grateful to PTA for their endless contribution to the growth of all students at Jefferson School.

Malis Pech  
Instructional Coach



## Los Cerritos School Student Council



Los Cerritos School is proud of our Scholarly Students, their success and achieving their goals. The Bulldog's student council is a great example of this and much more. One of their first goals was to achieve a successful Red Ribbon Week. This gave the students the opportunity to give awareness about the danger of drugs and alcohol.

Student Council wanted to take a stand for the hopes and dreams of our students through a commitment to drug prevention, education and a personal commitment to live drug free lives with the ultimate goal being the creation of drug free America. On October 21st, the Bulldogs kicked off our week of participation, with "A Healthy ME is Drug Free" Rally with a school assembly. Student Council presented the dangers of drugs and alcohol and promoted the aware-

ness that is needed to be drug free. They challenged the students to sign a Drug-Free Pledge Banner. Students took turns signing their name on the poster.

Los Cerritos had a special visitor that day, Mr. Herman Mendez, our Superintendent; he also signed the Drug-Free Pledge. Student Council distributed red ribbons for each student to wear, a pencil and had a door decorating contest. The students had a great time giving awareness to the students. This is an example of what Los Cerritos Student Council is planning for our student body. Next on Student Council's agenda is to start the Morning Valet for parent drop off at our school, helping our community by promoting a food drive and ending this year with holiday activities for the students. Los Cerritos is proud of our proactive student council!!! Go Bulldogs!!!

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATE

December 11, 2013

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

## New Mathematics Course is Making a Difference for Students



Something remarkable in mathematics in the Paramount Unified School District this year is the Agile Mind math program that is being piloted in middle and high school classrooms!

Agile Mind is an innovative program created by math researchers at the Dana Research Center located at the University of Texas, Austin that uses on line curriculum to teach students concepts and skills required by the new Common Core Standards in mathematics. The Agile Mind program provides teachers and students with tools and strategies that help them excel in the courses needed for admission to America's leading colleges and universities. One Agile Mind teacher, Katherine Thomas, states "the structure and built-in routines help guide students in their learning. It challenges them. Even though it may be a struggle, they learn."

Participating Agile Mind teachers are teaching at Jackson and Paramount Park Middle Schools, Paramount High School and PHS West Campus. These specially trained teachers receive support and materials from the Agile Mind program to address the needs of diverse learners and enable students to explore concepts in greater depth.

The program builds student confidence by teaching them the importance of problem solving and perseverance in mathematics. One ninth grade student feels that the program has helped him build his understanding of math. He said, "We have open-ended activities. If we get it wrong, we will learn from our mistakes."

In addition to math content these courses include lessons designed to help students understand the impact of effort and persistence on the brain in an effort to increase students' confidence and attitudes toward mathematics. As a result of working with the Agile Mind program, students develop the tools and strategies they need to apply new ideas to learning. When asked which part of the Agile Mind experience is the most rewarding, a student responded, "sometimes it's hard, but we work it out with partners or with the teacher. We always work it out." Thanks to the hard work of PUSD students and teachers, Agile Mind is transforming academic engagement and achievement in the Paramount Unified School District.

**Theresa M. Diaz**  
Curriculum Specialist

## Rethink Autism

The Paramount Unified School District is in its third year contracting with Rethink Autism, a company that supports staff who work with student on the spectrum for autism.

Rethink Autism is a web-based autism treatment platform that delivers effective research-based treatment tools for children and individuals affected by an autism spectrum disorder.

The web site (RethinkAutism.com) offers over 1,200 video-based teaching steps depicting best practice interventions as well as step-by-step training modules. Innovative assessment tools help parents and professionals design individualized curricula to meet each child's learning goals, while state-of-the-art data-tracking systems allow users to track the learner's progress. Professional online support is also available to users.

The District is proud to continue its partnership with Rethink and will be providing professional development for teachers pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in the implementation of the Rethink program through out the 2013-2014 school year.

**Kim Cole, Director - Special Education**

## Early Childhood Education



Children wait their turn to help make pumpkin pies at Gaines State Preschool.



Mokler State Preschool making their "Friendship Fruit Salad."

In our District's preschool classrooms, we help prepare children for Kindergarten with daily lessons that incorporate alphabet letters, numbers, science and vocabulary. We also make sure that the preschool students learn the skills to get along with others so that they develop positive relationships, and self-confidence. The preschool teachers use different strategies to teach social-emotional skills.

The teachers were trained to use strategies from the Center on the Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). You will often hear preschoolers talk about "Tucker the Turtle" who reminds children of how to cope when they are upset. Children are also encouraged to talk about their feelings using feeling faces charts. Getting used to being in a classroom full of other children and adults can be overwhelming for some young children so the preschool classrooms have "cozy areas" where children could go when they want some alone time. Two of the preschool teachers, Angie Rodriguez (Gaines) and Theresa Ybarra (Mokler), composed a song this year that incorporates common solutions for conflicts that children may encounter during interactions with other children. The "solution song" is sung on a regular basis in the preschool classrooms.

Classroom lessons also integrate social skills so that children practice these skills in natural contexts. Preschoolers, developmentally, are learning how to be members of a larger group. Therefore, learning to share, contribute, and being aware of the needs of others are part of the teaching. Some of the recent class lessons demonstrate these social skills. At Collins State Preschool, Ms. Dena's class made a "friendship quilt" composed of children's drawings of the activities they like to play with their friends. They also practiced their fine motor development and language skills as part of the lesson. In Ms. Charlene and Ms. Angie's classrooms (Gaines), all the children took turns helping make pumpkin pies. The class lesson also reinforced vocabulary, measurement, and science. At Mokler State Preschool, Ms. Theresa's classes made a "friendship fruit salad" in which each child contributed some type of fruit. Each child's contribution was acknowledged as the class collectively made the fruit salad. The fruit salad lesson also covered vocabulary, size discrimination, science, and sorting. The sample lessons described illustrate how preschoolers develop social-emotional skills during school readiness activities.

**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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# Pirate Athletes

The 2013-2014 school year is in full swing at Paramount High School. The athletic department has been busy overseeing five different sports for boys and girls. In girls sports our Cross Country, Tennis, and Volleyball teams have been competing at a high level. The Pirate volleyball team is in its last week of San Gabriel Valley League play. They are currently tied for third with one game remaining. With some big wins this season over top opponents the lady Pirates are ready to make a run in the CIF playoffs. The playoffs begin on November 9th. The girl's Cross-Country team has been training since early July and they have benefited from the hard work. In their first two league meets the team has finished in fourth place. Only a few points have separated them from the top three. The girls next meet is the San Gabriel League Finals. A positive finish in that meet and the girls will be off to the CIF prelims. Girls Tennis concluded San Gabriel Valley league play with a 7-5 record which was good for third place. They have qualified for CIF team tennis playoffs. Three singles players and three doubles teams qualified for league finals. In singles, Maribelle Leang, Patricia Osuna, and Nayelli Sais represented the Pirates. The three doubles teams consisted of Amy Ochoa/Christina Toledo, Krystal Rivera/Eishelle Hernandez, and Yesenia Covarrubias/Jessica Garcia. Congratulations to these girls, Paramount High School is proud of you. Maribelle Leang advanced to the league finals where she finished in fourth place.

In boys sports our water polo, Cross-Country and football teams are finishing up their regular seasons. Water Polo has shown significant improvement from the start of the season until now. With two new coaches the boys have competed at high level. With a number of players returning for next year the future of Pirate water polo looks bright. Boys Cross-Country is off and running with two third place finishes in league meets. A top three finish at league finals will land the team in the CIF playoffs for the 20th consecutive year. A tremendous accomplishment for both the school and the team. The entire Paramount family wishes them good luck in their quest to get to 20. The Pirate football team is in the hunt for their third consecutive SGV league championship. With one game remaining, a victory could give them a share of the league championship. With wins over Gahr, Lynwood, Culver City, Long Beach Wilson, Bellflower, and Downey the team has fought through a number of injuries to boast a 6-3 record. The Pirates are looking forward to the CIF playoffs with a goal of advancing well into the later rounds.

As we transition from Fall sports into Winter sports, the Paramount Athletic Department would like to thank all those who helped out during Fall sports. Your contributions were appreciated. On behalf of the Administration, Faculty, and staff the Pirate family would like to wish all teams entering the playoffs the best of luck.

GO PIRATES!

# Superintendent's Message:

California recently passed legislation that changes the way state funding is allocated to public school districts. This new model is called the Local Control Funding Formula. This new approach to funding requires that districts establish goals toward eight areas that provide students with high quality educational programs through the development of a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The goals and the strategies to address them need to be described in a (LCAP), and are to address the following state priority areas:



1. Providing all students access to fully credentialed teachers, instructional materials that align with state standards, and safe facilities.
2. Implementation of California's academic standards, including the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math, Next Generation Science Standards, English language development, history social science, visual and performing arts, health education and physical education standards.
3. Parent involvement and participation, so the local community is engaged in the decision-making process and the educational programs of students.
4. Improving student achievement and outcomes along multiple measures, including test scores, English proficiency and college and career preparedness.
5. Supporting student engagement, including whether students attend school or are chronically absent.
6. Highlighting school climate and connectedness through a variety of factors, such as suspension and expulsion rates and other locally identified means.
7. Ensuring all students have access to classes that prepare them for college and careers, regardless of what school they attend or where they live.
8. Measuring other important student outcomes related to required areas of study, including physical education and the arts.

Paramount Unified School District 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 primary purpose of the LCAP Consultation Committee is to:

- Provide input from various stakeholder groups within the district and community.
- Review data that reflects PUSD's student population's needs and understand how LCFF funds must be used to meet these needs.
- Understand the required components of the Local Control Accountability Plan and provide feedback on its content.

The Committee will meet regularly to provide consultation in the development of the Plan that will be 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.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Parent involvement is typically cited by educational researchers as one of the most influential factors affecting student achievement. Students whose parents take an active role in their education have higher achievement levels than their peers whose parents are not involved. And, the earlier in a child's educational process that the parent involvement begins, the more powerful is the effect. According to research sponsored by the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), when parents are involved, their students have:

- ✓ Higher grades, test scores and graduation rates
- ✓ Increased motivation, better self-esteem
- ✓ Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
- ✓ Fewer incidents of violent behavior
- ✓ Better school attendance
- ✓ Lower suspension rates

Joyce Epstein, of Johns Hopkins University, has created a framework that defines six different types of parent involvement:

1. **PARENTING:** Parenting skills are promoted and supported through parent education.
2. **COMMUNICATING:** Meaningful, two-way communication between home and school.
3. **VOLUNTEERING:** Parents as school and classroom volunteers.
4. **LEARNING AT HOME:** Parents play an integral role.
5. **DECISION MAKING:** Parents actively involved in decisions made by PTA, School Site Council, and English Learner Advisory Committee.
6. **COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY:** Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families and student learning.

In Paramount Unified School District (PUSD), parents have the opportunity to participate in decision making at both the school and District level. Parent committees at the schools, School Site Council (SSC) and English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), meet regularly to discuss issues related to their students' education. The District English Learner Advisory Council (DELAC) is comprised of parents of English Learner students from all schools and meets four times during the year. Please speak to your school administration for information on the various parent committees and meeting schedules.

For parents who would like to volunteer at their child's school, a handbook is available that contains information for volunteering including the volunteer application in both English and Spanish. The Volunteers Assisting Paramount Students and Staff (VAPSS) handbook is available in each school office and on the PUSD website. Potential volunteers simply submit a completed application with their TB clearance to the school office. All applications are reviewed for TB and Megan's Law clearance. Schools contact applicants and maintain a list of approved volunteers. All volunteers sign in and wear VAPSS badges whenever on campus.

Additionally, each school has an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that supports students and their families through a variety of activities throughout the year. All parents are encouraged to join and participate in any way they can. Please contact your school office for more information.

According to Joyce Epstein, "There are many reasons for developing school, family and community partnerships. The main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and later life."

**Dr. Randy Gray, Director  
Curriculum & Instruction/Projects**

## Paramount Unified School District



### Workshops

**LOCATION:** Jefferson School  
8600 Jefferson Street  
Paramount, CA 90723

**6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

- Dec. 5, 2013 Healthy Eating During the Holidays
- 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**

## Transition Students Learn and Celebrate



On Oct 25, 2013 our class hosted the Harper 5 Adult Transition Fall Dance. The Harper 5 is named after Maurice Harper. He used to be in our Paramount Adult Transition class. One day he moved out of his parent's apartment and into an assisted living house in Bellflower. Our teacher, Ms Aguilar, and Mr. Larry Davis from Bellflower started putting activities together so Maurice could stay in touch with his friends in Paramount. Two districts grew into five, now including Norwalk – La Mirada, ABC, and Downey. We socialize with different people our age and do fun things like eating and dancing.

To get ready for the Fall Dance at Progress Park, our class worked really hard. We baked cupcakes, cut up the lettuce and veggies, made



decorations and punch, plus we greeted our guests and served them lunch. Afterwards we got on the dance floor and didn't stop until the DJ turned off the music.

**Sarah Lambert, Stephanie Tejada, Christopher Meeks, and Rocio Rivera Students**

## 2nd Annual Mini Cheer Camp at PHS

The Paramount High School Spirit Squad welcomed over seventy five young participants to its 2nd Annual Mini Cheer Camp on October 5th. Participants ranged from ages four to fourteen and represented schools throughout the Paramount Unified School District. Led by captains, Grisel Vazquez and Giselle Vasquez, the Spirit Squad taught six exciting cheers to the future Pirates in efforts of getting them ready for the October 18th live performance at the varsity football game against San Gabriel League rival, Gahr High School at 7:00pm.

On October 18, 2013 the "Mini Pirates" took to the field alongside the PHS Spirit Squad and cheered the Pirates on to victory under the bright lights of Pirate Stadium. Ariel Raygoza, a 4th grade student at Lincoln Elementary School stated, "it was so much fun cheering at the football game. I loved everything about it!" Senior cheerleader Irene Castillo stated, "it was so much

fun working with the girls and seeing how excited they were to cheer alongside us was a great experience for us."

The mini cheer camp paired with the live game performance in front of the lively, Pirate Home Crowd proved to be a memorable experience for cheerleaders, participants and parents. Co-cheer advisors, Ms. Lopez and Ms. Aguayo introduced this event as a way to not only raise funds for the PHS cheer program, but also as a means to include community members to be a part of the Paramount High School football game experience. "It's an opportunity to showcase how wonderful our students are," remarks Ms. Aguayo. She goes on to say that "it is very exciting to see the young girls cheering and saying things like, I'm going to be a cheerleader when I go to Paramount High." She further explains how she hopes to be able to continue the Mini Cheer Camp every year and make it a PHS tradition.

## Great Things are Happening at Wirtz Elementary School

Great things are happening at Wirtz Elementary School and the month of October was no exception. October was a month of two big celebrations for the students, staff, and community of Wirtz.

First, on Thursday, October 24th, Wirtz held its Spooky Read Night. From ghosts and goblins to witches and zombies, Wirtz' students and parents showed their support and made the night a true success. We know a good time was had by all who attended!

Students and families first entered one of our classrooms to hear spooky stories read to them by teachers and staff. After hearing the ghoulish stories, students received sweet treats!

Students then participated in our grade level costume contest. Our judges had a difficult time choosing winners at each grade level from all the creative costumes which were worn by students.

A big thank you to Christie Martin, our Spooky Read Night Coordinator, and to all of the teachers and staff who volunteered their time and worked extra hard to put

this event together. They helped to make our 2013 Spooky Read Night a night to remember!

Next, on October 31st, Wirtz School recognized it's Star Students at our first school-wide Recognition Assemblies. Students were recognized in the following areas: Wirtz Wizard (student-of-the-month), Academic Achievement, Most Improved and Super Citizenship. Students also joined the Principal's Challenge Club if they passed the principal's basic math facts challenge. Class trophies were also awarded to the class at each grade level with the highest basic math facts and attendance percentages. Lastly, students with great attendance for the quarter, took part in a raffle for prizes.

Congratulations to all of the students, teachers and parents for working together to achieve these accomplishments. We know that the coming months will bring many more exciting events and accomplishments. We look forward to sharing all of the great things that are happening at Wirtz Elementary School.

## PHS Students Attend College Night at CSULB!



Paramount High School Senior Anthony Sanchez's dream is to go to college and earn a degree in Business Administration. He and 50 other Paramount High School students were excited to be able to attend College Night at the Mike and Arlett Walter Pyramid at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) on October 30th. Over 100 college representatives were there to help guide students in their many decisions when choosing a college. PHS students were sponsored with a bus that left from the senior campus and took them to the venue. Four staff members accompanied the mix of students from all grade levels of the high school. Ms. Lorena Chaidez brought several 9th grade students from the West Campus while Ms. Brittany Dotson, Mrs. Tamara Calero-Hill and Mr. Erik Lindshield rounded out the team that accompanied the other students from 10th through 12th grades. Many more PHS students attended on their own and were accompanied by their parents. Students had time to wander through the college fair, speak with college representatives and network with outreach

programs. Many of these students are planning on applying to the colleges they visited with here as the next step in their education.

During the months of October and November, seniors at PHS participated in the process of applying to four-year universities. PHS school counselors will meet with over 1,087 seniors during the college application workshops this year alone. Students sign up for these workshops through their Language Arts classes for UC applications, Cal-State applications, or a Community College application. Each student typically spends an hour within the computer lab at school to complete their applications. The deadline to submit their applications to the four year colleges was November 30th, 2013. It is the counseling department's goal to have every senior working toward a plan after graduation. These plans are important in making sure our students are prepared for a successful future as they enter into their early adult lives.

**Erik Lindshield  
Counselor**