

PUSD EDUCATION NEWS

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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OCTOBER 2012

Scores on the Rise

With standardized test scores recently released community members of Major Lynn Mokler School have reason to celebrate this fall. After years of hard work and dedication, our staff and students have surpassed the Academic Performance Index (API) target of five points with a total growth of eleven points!

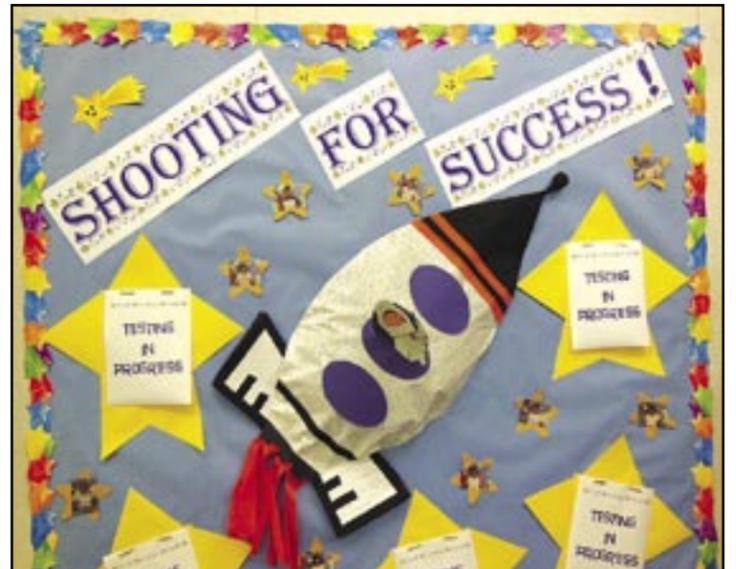
This is the credit that is given to students who have shown enough improvement on the STAR test to move up one or more levels in the five performance bands. The target was not just met by the overall student population in grades 2-5 but also in the subgroups identified as African American, Hispanic, English Learners, and So-

cio-economically Disadvantaged (SED).

Results of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) show overall growth in English Language Arts with the same subgroups making the target scores. In Math, the subgroups of Hispanic, English Learners, and SED students met targets.

With a continued focus on classroom instruction and student commitment to learning, we will continue to see a rise in test scores and overall student achievement.

Michele Dutton
Principal
Mokler School



K-12 Professional Development on California Common Core Standards



Over 80 Paramount Unified School District teachers, coaches and administrators participated in professional development on the new California Common Core Standards (CCCS). Throughout the session, participants were actively engaged in learning about the new academic standards and PUSD's plan for bringing them to classrooms.

Why Common Core Standards?

Educators throughout California have joined a national movement to adopt K-12 common standards and assessments in English language arts and mathematics. Currently, standards for what students should know and be able to do vary from state to state. Common academic standards allow for collaboration among states on best practices and professional development. These standards ensure that students meet college and work expectations and are prepared to succeed in a global economy.

When did California Adopt Common Core Standards?

The CCCS add strength to the existing California standards by integrating technology and collaboration skills into reading and writing. In addition, literacy standards that focus on reading and writing instruction during history/social studies, science and technology are integrated. In mathematics, standards were added to demonstrate a stronger emphasis on problem solving and reasoning in real world applications.

What is the Plan for Paramount's Schools?

Paramount Unified School District has a three year transition plan for fully implementing the new standards in 2014-2015. This year is an awareness year for all teachers and principals, with 2013-14 being a transition year and 2014-15 the year for implementation. Over the next three years, teachers will learn teaching strategies that will prepare students for the new standards. This transition will provide Paramount Unified School District's students with the skills they need to compete in the 21st century.

Lihn Roberts
Facilitator/Supervisor

Star Eagles



Pictured (L to R) are: Carlos Elias, Ricardo Ramirez, Aisleem Garcia, Edson Torres, Hector Gonzalez

Every spring, students across the state participate in standardized testing to measure their knowledge in various core subject areas. Although Buena Vista is a small school, students approached the exam with a high level of tenacity. In fact, several students earned excellent results and were recognized at school for their efforts.

When the STAR results were delivered to the site on the morning of September 4, 2012, a plan was hatched to recognize the outstanding Eagles. Certificates were designed and the top students in the school were congratulated by the administration and counselor in a special meeting in the Principal's office. At first, the students were con-

cerned about being summoned to the office, but the mood quickly turned to smiles when they realized that they were the reason for the celebration.

A number of Eagles earned improved marks over their prior years' attempts and overall, the school showed growth thanks to the students' focus on learning. In all core classes, teachers align their instruction to the state standards and students have opportunities to learn in a small environment.

We are very proud of our shining Eagles for their accomplishments on the STAR exams!

Jean Law
Principal
Buena Vista High School

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

October 10, 2012 * October 24, 2012

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

Early Childhood Education



Before the school doors even opened this year, the incoming preschoolers and their families were already quite busy getting to know what preschool is all about. Close to 500 children and their parents made their way to parent orientations and classroom visits at 18 preschool classrooms on 8 school campuses. Parents learned about the engaging pre-kindergarten curriculum offered by the Early Childhood Education Department at Paramount Unified School District. Teachers shared informative tips in how to help the children have a successful year and be prepared for Kindergarten. The orientation meetings also covered the partnership between the preschool program and home, and parents were encouraged to serve in the leadership role with the Parent Advisory Council, helping as a classroom volunteer, and offering ideas for home learning opportunities.

During the classroom visits, the preschool children were able to meet the classroom staff and were introduced to the different learning centers in the classrooms. The children will look

forward to participating in interactive, developmentally appropriate activities in the areas of literacy, math, science, art, and social skills.

Preschool education has shown to give children a strong foundation in problem solving, pre-academic readiness, and forming positive social relationships. Children who attend preschool are better prepared to meet the District's rigorous curriculum standards in Kindergarten and beyond. The District has two different types of preschool programs. The Full-Day State Preschool Program is for eligible families, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., funded by California Department of Education. There are also several half-day preschool programs at 8 campuses funded by State Preschool-California Department of Education and the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP). For more information, please contact the Early Childhood Education Office at (562) 602-6900, located at 7340 E. Jackson Street.

Elida Garcia, Ed.D.
Program Director
Early Childhood Education

New Early Childhood Education Program Director, Dr. Elida Garcia

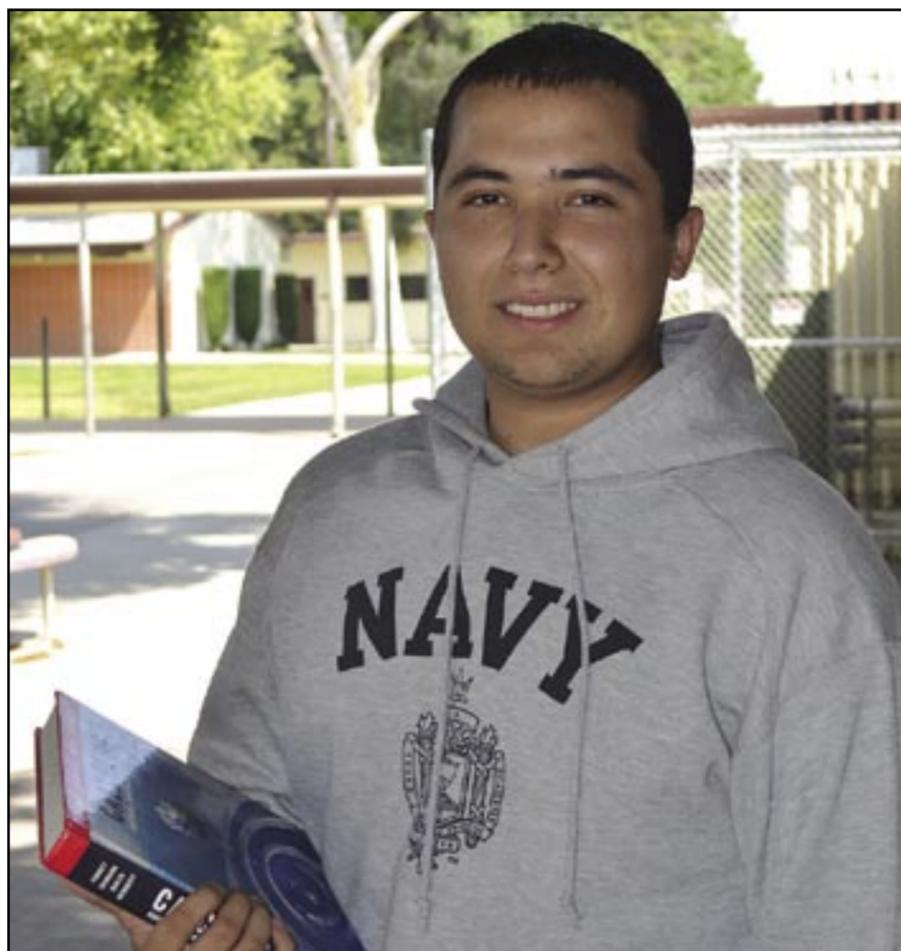
It is with a great deal of pleasure, that we announce the new Early Childhood Education Program Director, Dr. Elida Garcia. Dr. Garcia is a highly regarded educator. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles. She received her Master's Degree in Counseling/School Psychology from California State University Northridge and Doctorate from Pepperdine University in Educational Leadership and Policy.

Dr. Elida Garcia has a vast experi-

ence in education having previously served as a School Psychologist, Parent Involvement Facilitator, Family Literacy Facilitator and most recently Grants Administrator. She has worked for Hawthorne School District and Los Angeles County Office of Education.

Elida comes to us with vast experience in the area of Early Childhood Education curriculum, instructional strategies and program management. She is professional and personable and will be a great addition to our Paramount family.

Memories of Annapolis



Upon attending The United States Naval Academy's Summer Seminar at Annapolis, Maryland for six days, my desire to attend The United States Naval Academy grew stronger than ever. From waking up at 5:30 am and pushing through days full of classes, activities, and team-building activities, I actively experienced the US Naval Academy's mission first-hand, which is to develop Midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty; to have potential for future development in mind and character, to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government.

I set out to gain valuable experience, greater understanding, as well as to expose myself to the requirements of the US Naval Academy. Working collaboratively with various students from across the United States, in states ranging from California to Washington DC was truly an unforgettable experience. From learning basic self-defense maneuvers in a martial arts course to time spent learning about the various

majors offered along with taking classes in the areas of Physics, Astro-Engineering, and Aero-Nautical Engineering, it was just awesome!

The Sea trials proved to be the biggest challenge for me. They can best be described as various forms of physical training that take place on dry-land as well as inside the water. They were very difficult and proved to be one of the hardest challenges that I ever experienced in my life. I was exhausted due to extreme humidity and the high-intensity exercises, yet satisfied that I successfully completed all of the challenges that they threw at me. Sleeping inside the historic Bancroft Hall was an unforgettable experience. This huge dormitory serves as the home to 4,000 midshipmen, and contains 1,700 rooms, which span approximately 33 acres of floor space. My experience revealed that this institution of higher learning is in reach for me. I learned that I have what it takes to succeed at a top rank university.

Brandon DeSiqueira,
PHS 12th Grade Student

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



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Great things are happening in Paramount Schools

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Engaging Students Outside the Classroom



Wirtz School designed and implemented a Structured Recess Program during the 2011-2012 school year with the primary goal of encouraging students to be more active, engaged and accountable at recess. This program has proven to be a great success at Wirtz School as students have the opportunity to learn new games in a structured, supervised and organized format during every lunch recess grades first through fifth.

The game choices vary from week to week and are determined by popular demand and appropriate play. Some of the new and exciting recess games include: tetherball, racquetball, Capture the Flag, Flag Football, Parachute, Relay Races, Kickball, Dodgeball, sidewalk chalk, Field Frisbee, various board games or a guided craft. Plus, when the library is available, students also have the option

to silent read, write or draw.

This program was created by the counseling staff, Ashley Howard and Diana Villa, in the Fall of 2011. However, this program would not be possible without Wirtz Safety Captains, Angelica, Maria, Jeannette, Vanessa, 'Nessa and Taylor, who wear many hats on campus including their role in enthusiastically maintaining this program.

In the year that this program has been in place, Wirtz School has noticed a significant decrease in student office referrals and an increase in morale as students are more excited about the ever-changing options that they have to exert their energy, while having fun and learning new games at recess!

**Ashley Howard-M.Ed,
Counselor, Wirtz School**

Paramount Athletics

The 2012- 2013 Paramount Athletic Season is under way. On Friday night, August 31 our varsity football team made their season debut against Los Alamitos High School who is one of the most prestigious football programs in the State of California. After a tough and hard fought contest the Pirates came up a bit short in a 29-26 loss. The Pirates showed that they can play with any team in So-Cal. The rest of the season looks to be fun and exciting. Playing Los Alamitos for the first time since the 1988 season when the Pirates defeated the Griffins for the CIF Championship was a great way to kick off the season. We look for many more exciting games through out the season.

Our girls volleyball team opened the season with a hard fought victory over Schurr High School of Montebello. The girls' next match will be at Norwalk High School. Girls tennis is also in full swing winning their first two matches. Their next match is Thursday Sept. 6 at Santa Fe High School. Cross Country and Boys Water Polo will also

get under way.

Paramount High School is very fortunate to have some Pirate Alumni teaching and coaching on this year's staff. Our Co-Head Boys Soccer Coach is Rafael Villasenor. He has led our boy's soccer team to 3 consecutive CIF championships and is currently preparing to defend their crown. Rosheka Liwang-Polk is another Pirate Alum. She leads our girls basketball program as the Head Coach. Under her leadership, the Lady Pirates have grown and are looking forward to this coming season. Finally, we look at Michael Fletcher. In his high school days he was an outstanding football player who went on to play at the University of Oregon. He is now coaching varsity football as our defensive coordinator.

As the 2012-2013 athletic season continues we look forward to many great accomplishments from this years boys and girls teams.

**Alex Acosta
Athletic Director
PHS**

Superintendent's Message: 2012-2013 Budget

Dear Community,

I want to express my sincere appreciation to all of our outstanding employees for all that they do for our students. Whether it's repairing a sprinkler, fixing a computer or teaching our students to read, they make a tremendous difference.

As you know, the State's budget crisis has had a major negative effect on California schools. This fiscal crisis will once again threaten our District's ability to provide the support our kids deserve.

The most concerning component of the Governor's proposal is that education funding relies heavily on this November ballot initiative. With that in mind, I want to take a moment to provide you the following District budget forecast as it relates to the Governor's Tax Initiative Proposition 30.

Passage of Tax Initiative Prop 30
2012-13 PUSD Budget

- The base revenue limit funding from the State would remain at the current level
- The District will be able to maintain current personnel
- Class sizes will continue at current enrollment
- Extra-curricular programs such as the arts, music and athletics will be maintained
- Student support programs will



continue providing services

Defeat of Tax Initiative Prop 30
– 2012-13 PUSD Budget

• If the Governor's tax initiative is rejected by the voters, it is anticipated that our school district will be faced with a mid-year cut of \$457 per student. This would result in a \$9.2 million loss in funding to the school district. For our District, the potential loss of \$9.2 million, should the tax initiative fail, would be devastating for our students and community.

Therefore, the District must develop a contingency plan which would likely include further negotiations relative to wages and benefits with our employee groups.

While this budget news is daunting, I continue to believe with the support from our employees and community, the District and most importantly, our students will continue to succeed.

Sincerely,

**David J. Verdugo, Ed.D.
Superintendent**

Taxis for Students with Disabilities in Paramount Unified School District

Paramount Unified School District piloted a taxi service for transporting students with disabilities as part of the District's recent summer school program. This pilot program was successful in meeting students' needs and has been implemented during the 2012-2013 school year. Many districts have moved in the direction of providing taxis to transport students due to the benefits for students and the reduction in cost to the district. Some of the benefits for students being transported by taxi include: less time en route from home to school, fewer students per taxi and the opportunity for students to establish a relationship of trust between driver, student and parents.

Zamboni Wildcats Back to School Night Builds School Community

On Thursday, September 20, 2012 Zamboni Middle School opened the school year with an amazing show of parental support at our Back to School Night.

Parents were welcomed into the Wildcat gym. At the meeting Mrs. Salcido, principal, shared with parents school wide expectations including behavior, attendance, and academics along with the school's most recent API score of 806. In addition, she introduced the teachers and staff. The evening continued as parents followed their student's daily schedule. They visited classrooms as teacher's reviewed academic content, standards and behavior guidelines. Stu-

dent council members assisted throughout campus supporting all activities. They greeted parents as they entered school, supported with spirit wear and assisted in the Book Fair.

At the conclusion of the evening, families were able to socialize with one another while enjoying delicious food and ice cold treats from the shaved ice truck. Zamboni's Back to School Night was a wonderful opportunity for our school community to come together as we begin a new school year.

**Lucy Duran & Wendy Settles
Counselors
Zamboni Middle School**

A New School Year Begins at Los Cerritos

After weeks of anticipation and countless hours shopping for school supplies, students began a new school year at Los Cerritos with the ringing of the bell at 8:15 a.m. on August 22nd. Students were greeted on the yard by their teachers, eager to begin the day. Once in their classrooms, students jumped back into their lessons and school day routines with great enthusiasm.

Several days later, it was the parents turn to officially start the school year with an invitation to our Back-to-School Night on September 13th. As parents visited classrooms, they were able to see a variety of student work.

After all the classroom visitations were over, the evening ended as the school day had begun earlier, with the ringing of the bells- and so marked another well-attended and successful

Back-to-School Night at Los Cerritos School. Thank you to all who shared this evening with us!

The beginning of the school year also marked our annual participation in the Safe & Smart Fair sponsored by the City of Paramount. Los Cerritos once again showed our love of reading by awarding books to students and adults who visited our booth. We also won, for the third year in a row, the award for one of the best booths at the Fair.

The start of this school year has been such a success, that we know the rest of the school year will only get better. Thank you to everyone for your support!

Connie Toscano
Principal
Los Cerritos School

A Once in a Lifetime Experience



Students at Major Lynn Mokler School filled the playground on the afternoon of September 21st as they anxiously awaited the opportunity to have a final view of the Space Shuttle Endeavour as it crossed the skies of our community.

Many thought that their lunch break came too late in the day and that they had missed the small window of time that would allow them to see the magnificent shuttle riding on the back of a modified jumbo jet. As the saying goes, good things come to those who wait and wait they did. Several students stood staring to the sky ready to spread the cry if and when they could see history in the making.

Just when some were ready to give up, there she appeared in full glory. The pairing of aircrafts was larger and closer than any had expected. The cries rang out from the watchers and a mass of students stopped, looked to the sky, and ran across the field as if they could catch the speeding shuttle.

Whether students were sharing with others that the Endeavour was on its way to the Los Angeles Airport or asking about the two escorting fighter jets, students knew that this was a little piece of history that they would be able to share with others for the rest of their lives.

Michele Dutton
Principal, Mokler School

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 Park Middle School Guidelines for Success "Leaving our Mark"



In considering "Leaving our Mark" on our school and community, our students at Paramount Park Middle School met together to determine what they felt were true "Guidelines for Success". After much thought and discussion, students' unveiled six guidelines they felt were essential for success at school and in our communities. The first guideline is a positive attitude. People who keep a positive attitude tend to have positive things happen to them. They make others around them positive and they are generally pleasant to be around. The second attribute is dedication. Students who are dedicated have a better time in school, they learn more and they participate in activities that help the school and community. The third attribute is time management. Students who are able to manage their time accomplish more. Time managers start and finish projects which make them highly successful in life. The fourth attribute is responsibility. Students who take responsibility for their actions grow to be responsible citizens. Middle school is a time in children's lives where the concept of taking responsibility becomes extremely important. Responsible students become leaders at school and in the community. The fifth attribute is respect. Giving and receiving respect is at the pinnacle of our success in life. Students who receive respect from each other and school staff gain a respect for themselves. These students take on new challenges, seek out wise advisors and overcome fears. The sixth and last attribute is education. We at Paramount Park are committed to the education of all of our students. We have high standards and expect the same commitment from each student. Students who are committed to learning become the professionals that run our communities and our country.

In response to the "Guidelines for Success" established by our students, Paramount Park Middle School will celebrate twenty-seven "Student of the Month Nominees" and one "Student of the Month" each month of the 2012-13 school year. Teachers will nominate one student they teach whom they consider to possess all or most of the attributes for success. One student per month will receive special recognition for their positive attitude, dedication, respect, time management, responsibility and focus on education. The winning student, nominees, teachers and parents will be honored at a monthly "Student of the Month" breakfast and awards ceremony.

The teachers and staff at Paramount Park Middle School are commitment to molding students into positive, dedicated, respectful, responsible, organized and educated citizens. Look for our "Student of the Month" on our school kiosk and join us in celebrating the educational growth, the individual maturity, and the success of all of our students.

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.