

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

OCTOBER 2013

PHS Students Travel the World through the Earthwatch Program

Nine Paramount High students had the opportunity to travel to various states and countries by participating in the Earthwatch Program. This is the second year in a row PHS students have attended exciting scientific research expeditions through this program. All of our students were provided scholarships by Earthwatch to cover travel costs, meals, and lodging. Interested students attended a meeting with an Earthwatch representative arranged by Mr. John Teeple, AP Chemistry and Honors teacher at PHS, and Mr. Eric Lindshield, counselor at PHS. Students then had to complete a lengthy application, provide two letters of recommendation from teachers, and write two essays which focused on their specific interests in science and the environmental, as well as their leadership qualities.

Deserving PHS students included Dhamar Lopez, who spent eleven days in Arizona studying the effects of climate change on caterpillars and various plants in the Riparian Forest. Judith Santano and Patricia Ortiz stayed 12 days at the Teton Science School near Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Patricia shared that it was an awesome experience to do field work with students from different high schools as well as undergraduates from various universities. Patricia and Judith explored the effects of rural and populated surrounding on local bird life.

Ian Leon, Daisy Macias, and



Jennifer diving and recording reef information.

Oliver Mendez headed north to the California Delta near Davis, California in order to explore the area's fruit and vegetation, as well as various species of animals and insects living along the Sacramento River. Oliver added that after doing research most of the day, students also had some free time, which included kayaking, swimming, and exploring the rivers with guides on rafts.

Gisel Lopez, a junior at PHS, flew to Belize in Central America for twelve days. Gisel was a part of an expedition that focused on isotope studies and shark conservation. Gisel explained that from a research boat, she helped put out lines with as many as 25 hooks on which they mainly caught grunts, reef sharks, and nurse sharks. The research team would then measure various parts of each fish and tag them if

they weren't already tagged. Gisel also shared that in their free time, students went snorkeling, kayaking, and paddle boarding.

Dante Valenzuela headed north to Halifax, in Nova Scotia, Canada. Dante's research trip looked at ways global climate changes are impacting different species near Halifax. According to Dante, this included being trained in actually trapping animals and weighing them in a safe and humane way. Dante shared that this trip "increased his appreciation of the outdoors as well as spiking his interest in majoring in Environmental Science." After graduating from PHS, Dante would like to attend UC Berkeley or Stanford University.

Jennifer Garcia, a junior at PHS, traveled to the Bahamas for two weeks. Jennifer's research included



Jennifer pictured with Dr. Alistair.

a lot of time snorkeling and diving near reefs. One day, Jennifer said that "we saw thousands of grunt fish swimming along one patch reef." Besides recording fish population and finding the rugosity of coral reefs, Jennifer also was responsible for recording the day's data on the lab's computer. Jennifer shared that one of the most enjoyable aspects of her trip was "meeting new people who were incredibly nice and being out in the field every day." Free time included exploring nearby

caves and going to Governor's Harbor. After graduation, Jennifer is interested in attending UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, USC, or Stanford; and majoring in biology or the medical field.

Thanks to Mr. Teeple and Mr. Lindshield, these outstanding students were introduced to the Earthwatch program. And due to their outstanding applications, these deserving students were awarded with research expeditions that included life long memories.

Readers are Rewarded at Wirtz Elementary School



Mrs. Garcia's fourth grade class eager waits to turn in their completed reading logs for a book of their choosing.

Wirtz Elementary School is rewarding student readers every month. It's one of the many ways in which we promote student literacy at our school.

Students are asked to read at home on a daily basis and then complete a monthly reading log. All students with completed reading logs at the end of the month are invited to visit the Principal's office to select a book of their choosing from the numerous titles offered. Our first students,

fourth graders from Mrs. Garcia's class were excited to come in and select their books. They had a difficult time deciding which books to select as their reward.

Among the titles selected were Harry Potter, A to Z Mysteries, Magic Tree House, Junie B. Jones and Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes.

We look forward to rewarding our Wirtz Wizard Readers every month with new and exciting books!

PHS Sports

The 2013-2014 school year has begun at Paramount High School. The Athletic Department is excited about the upcoming seasons of football, boys water polo, girls tennis, boys and girls cross-country, and girls volleyball. All these teams look to have fun and successful seasons.

As our current PHS athletes have begun the fall season, some of our former athletes have begun new seasons at the college level. Three of our former boys' soccer players have moved on and are playing on college soccer teams. Frank Perez is a member of the Cal State Dominguez Hills team. Tyrone Pitter and Frankie Ortega are playing at Mount San Antonio College. It is our goal in the athletic department to try and place as many athletes in college programs once their prep careers have ended.

This year's football team looks to repeat as San Gabriel

Valley League champs for the third consecutive year. The team is loaded with speed and excellent skill position players. If the offensive and defensive lines can remain consistent and play well, the Pirates could be playing deep into the playoffs. Girls' volleyball is young and rebuilding. After a successful 2012 season which saw the Lady Pirates make the playoffs this year's team looks to accomplish similar goals. Girls' tennis is coming off a 2012 San Gabriel Valley League championship. With a number of girls returning, the Pirates look to repeat as champs. Boys and girls cross country have been training all summer and expect

to have great seasons. They began league meets on Sept. 26. Boys' water polo enters this season with new coaches, A.J. Cunningham and Rachel Dominguez, and with the new coaches, a new attitude. The team looks to improve on last season and be competitive in all games.

The Paramount faculty, staff, student body, and administration would like to invite the entire Paramount community to all athletic events. We feel that our teams are competitive and fun to watch. On behalf of all Pirate fans we look forward to an even more successful 2013-2014. Go Pirates!

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATE

October 9 • October 23, 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

Thinking Maps: A Common Language for the Common Core



California will begin implementation of the Common Core Standards in the 2014-15 school year. The Common Core Standards will provide teachers with a clear and concise framework of what students need to know in grades K-12. These rigorous standards will ensure that students are equipped with the skills necessary for college and careers by requiring students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts through high level thinking and problem solving skills.

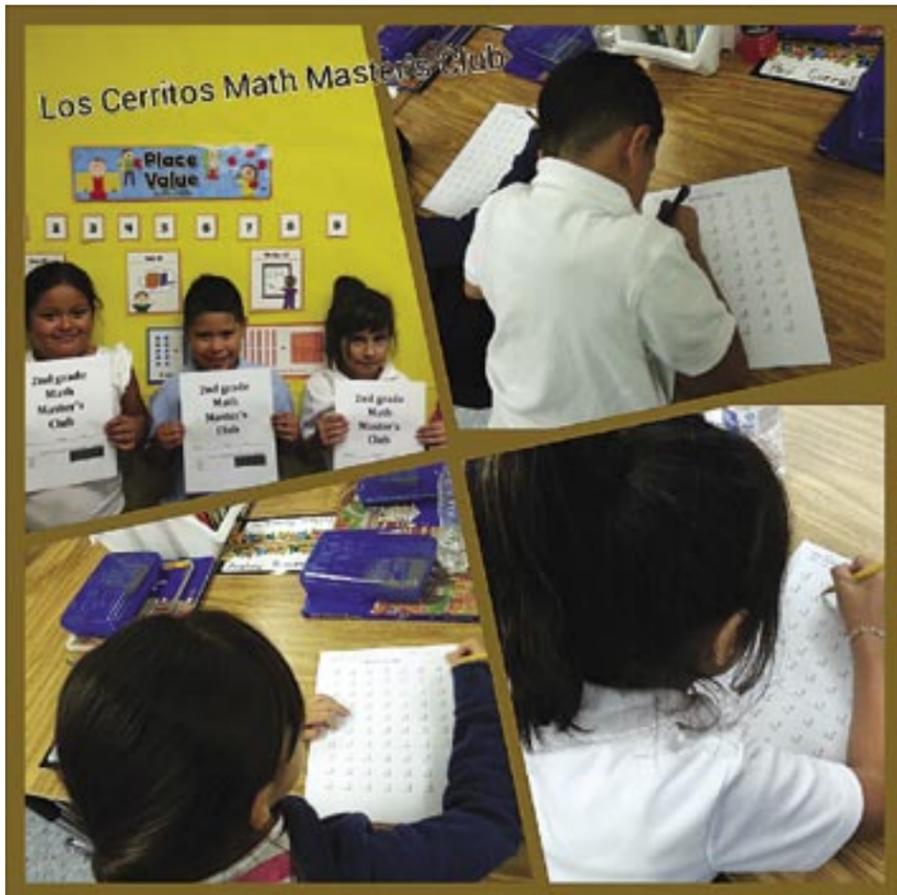
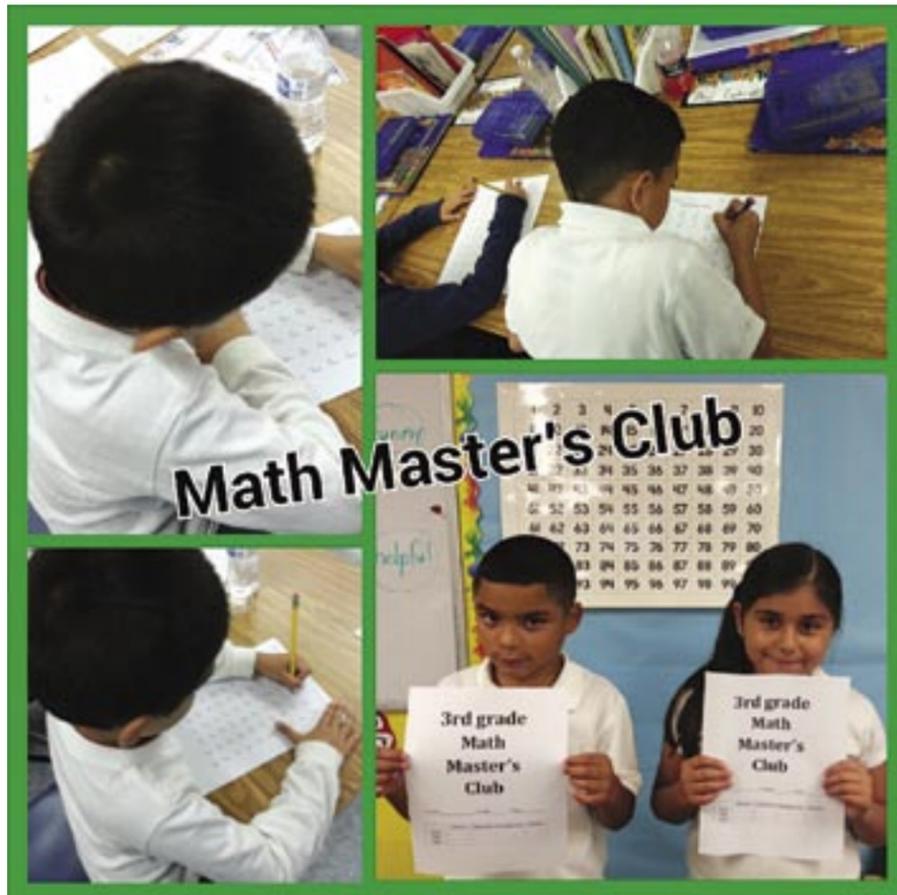
To ensure that our students are ready for the challenges of the Common Core, Paramount Unified School District brought together a team of teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators for 3 days of training on Thinking Maps, a program designed around eight visual patterns, each representing fundamental thought processes. With Thinking Maps, students learn a common language which will give them the ability to mentally organize or "map" the necessary thought processes needed to solve complex problems imbedded in the

Common Core. During the training, teams worked collaboratively to develop a deep understanding of the Thinking Maps tools, concepts and instructional applications, resulting with teachers excited to begin implementation of Thinking Maps in their classrooms. The 3 day training also qualified participants as Thinking Maps Teacher Trainers, prepared to train and support teachers at their sites. Missy Bergman, a second grade teacher states, "I am going to immediately review all 8 maps with my class and begin applying them across all content areas."

This fall, Thinking Maps Teacher Trainers have teamed up to continue training all K-8 teachers from each site and to provide continuous support for the program. Students in the Paramount Unified School District will soon use Thinking Maps as their common language for the Common Core.

Michael Naruko
Curriculum Specialist

Los Cerritos has HIGH EXPECTATIONS and BELIEVES!!!!



Schools Receive Recognition



Pictured are Board of Education members, Superintendent Mendez and Principals representing the various schools being recognized.

During a recent Board of Education meeting, schools were recognized for meeting their state's API target for 2013 and/or exceeded the state target of 800 based on the STAR results. The State's goal for schools is to achieve an API of 800 or to make progress toward this target. Schools recognized included: Alondra Middle School – 823

API, Gaines School – 826 API, Keppel School – 804 API, Lincoln School – 833 API, Los Cerritos – 812 API, Mokler School – 800 API, and Zamboni School – 823 API. Schools that made progress included Buena Vista High School, Jefferson School, Paramount High School, Paramount Park Middle School and Wirtz School.

Los Cerritos School has worked its way to the heights of achievement through dedication, perseverance, excellent teaching and working hard. The main expectation teachers have for their students is that they do their best in whatever they do. There is no boundary to this expectation, doing their best is not limited to just academic work. Of course, Los Cerritos expects that each student puts forth his/her best effort in each assignment, project, test or quiz, however we also expect them to put forth your best effort during interactions and relationships with classmates, teachers, principal, parents, and most importantly themselves.

Los Cerritos is narrowing the gap in reading and math and have achieved an API score of 811. With this dedication the students are now challenged to increase their Basic Math Facts Scores to Advance Proficient for 1st – 5th grades;

Kinder's goal is number recognition. Ms. Vitetta, the school principal, has challenged each student to complete their assigned Math facts under 5 minutes with 100% proficiency. As the students complete these Basic Math Facts Goals they will be part of the exclusive MATH MASTER'S CLUB. The criteria to be a member is to achieve the grade level goal by a certain date. When that goal is met the student will then receive a Certificate of Math Master's Advance Proficiency and a Surprise Reward!!!!

Los Cerritos educational team has set high expectations for our students. Together, the entire staff and parent community will work together to support each student in meeting these expectations. Students will rise to expectations, so let's keep our expectations high and believe in them. Los Cerritos Believes....

Rose Vitetta, Principal

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: Paramount Unified School District Mourns the Loss of a Dedicated Administrator and Teacher

A dedicated Paramount Unified School District employee and educator who was devoted to Paramount's students and families passed away unexpectedly on September 9, 2013. Mr. Lee Besler, who served as Assistant Principal at Alondra Middle School for the past six years was a dynamic leader whose presence will be deeply missed by all who knew him. Mr. Besler taught physical education at Alondra, coached baseball at Paramount High School and was Assistant Principal at both Collins and Alondra Schools during his tenure in PUSD. He interacted with students on a daily basis, offering encouraging words and taking the time to make sure each one knew he cared about them and their success at school.

As the result of his many years in PUSD, Lee knew multiple generations of students—current Alondra students as well as their parents. Mr. Besler was a true student advocate who worked on behalf of every child. He was an important member of our Paramount family and we will feel his absence greatly.



Assistant Principal Lee Besler works with students in a science classroom at Alondra Middle School in September, 2013.

Zamboni Goes To Washington



As the 2012-2013 school year came to a close, Zamboni Middle School and Paramount Unified boarded a plane and headed to Washington D.C. to accept their National Schools to Watch Award. Zamboni Middle School was chosen as one of 71 schools from across the nation as a National School to Watch in 2013. Zamboni Middle School Principal, Elizabeth Salcido, along with Paramount Unified School District's School Board Member, Alicia Anderson, Superintendent Dr. David Verdugo, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Dr. Debbie Stark, Zamboni Middle School Assistant Principal Hilda Verdugo and Zamboni staff participated in the National Forum for Middle School Reform Conference. The conference brought together middle school administrators and staff to share and network proven practices for student learning during the middle school years. The conference provided an opportunity for Zamboni Middle School to highlight their student success and growth to other schools around the country.

The award winners attended a Gala Dinner where they received their plaque on stage in front of a packed ballroom. It was a distinguished night centered around the impressive happenings in education. Zamboni Middle School received overwhelming applause when presented their award. The "oohs" from the crowd could be heard when the presenter noted the demographics of Zam-

boni. "It goes to show that students from all socio-economic backgrounds can succeed with great teachers and proven practices", remarked Lucy Duran, one of Zamboni's counselors in attendance for the conference. In addition to receiving the award, the Zamboni Team presented their "Guidelines for Success" during the breakout sessions. Once again, the team highlighted their proven practices for raising student achievement and meeting the needs of the whole child. The presentation was a tribute to the great practices of the Zamboni teachers. The Zamboni Team had the opportunity to visit Capitol Hill and meet with their State Representative, Lucille Roybal-Allard. The team was able to speak with Representative Roybal-Allard before an important vote in the House and discuss important educational issues pertaining to middle school education and the Paramount community.

Washington D.C. provided a historical background for a defining moment in Zamboni Middle School's history. Receiving the 2013 National School to Watch Award brought attention to Zamboni Middle School and the Paramount Unified School District. There are great things happening in Paramount and now the nation has a glimpse of our future leaders and their greatness.

Jennifer Berkson
Language Arts Coach

What Buena Vista Means to Me

Rosalinda Morales is a star student at Buena Vista High School. Last year as a Junior, she maintained a 3.5 GPA and was awarded numerous honors for her academics. She represented the school at the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) and is enthusiastic about her Senior year that has just begun. Rosalinda is the type of student who enjoys to be academically challenged, and her teachers praise her consistency and hard work. I asked some students to write down some ideas about why Buena Vista has been a positive factor in their lives. Rosalinda wrote a very compelling piece. After you read her words, you will have an understanding and appreciation of the students like her who have taken advantage of the supportive environment that Buena Vista provides.

Two years back, I ended the year failing every class I had. I entered Buena Vista with a determined thought to start fresh. I earned "A" after "A" and success seemed to be pouring out of me. Any and all traces of my past mistakes were well behind me. In

my opinion, the best thing about Buena Vista is the staff. Each and every one of them positively influences and motivates students to not only graduate from high school, but also to do so while achieving to the best of our ability. Thanks to Buena Vista and the amazing role models within, I have caught up my credits, made new friends, and was literally given a second chance to correct the path I had wandered into. Buena Vista is an extraordinary school, and I consider it my home away from home.

Buena Vista High School is a place where determination, dedication, and a positive attitude will set students on the road to success. In order to graduate, students must complete all District requirements as well as pass the California High School Exit Exam. We are very proud of our past graduates, especially those who have continued their education in college and career programs.

**Mrs. Law, Principal &
Rosalinda Morales, Student**

Paramount Unified School District

Parent Workshops

LOCATION: Jefferson School
8600 Jefferson Street
Paramount, CA 90723

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Oct. 10, 2013	Homework Help with Academic Skills
Oct. 24, 2013	Parenting with Love and Logic
Nov. 7, 2013	Obesity, Health and Wellness
Nov. 21, 2013	Building Self Esteem
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

Teaching Students to have "Agile Mind"s



Paramount Park Middle School is piloting a new Common Core mathematics program called Agile Mind. The 8th grade students who are placed in the Agile Mind class have the benefit of working with two credentialed teachers for 2 hours every day. Students are given real world applications in mathematics to solve with their peers. During the first hour of the block, students learn the Common Core standards in depth using technology, images, group work, thinking strategies and manipulatives. The second hour of the block is a program within the Agile Mind program called Academic Youth Development. During this hour, students explore and reflect on their thinking, their feelings about mathematics, their views of themselves as learners and their understanding of how to learn. The program focuses on

teaching students to be motivated learners that persevere through problems.

The images above were taken during an Academic Youth Development lesson, students are working on building a tower with spaghetti and marshmallows. The only instructions given are to build the tallest tower possible. Some students individually worked on their tower (and did not build very tall towers). Other students worked in pairs and groups and had much more success. After the towers were built, students brainstormed elements of effective group work and made commitments to actively participate in their learning and the leaning of others.

Nancy Manning
Math/Science Coach

Mokler Pilots Soar to 800!



Students celebrate the news of scoring 800 on the STAR test during the weekly morning assembly.

Each year students throughout the state of California are assessed with the California Standards Test (CST) to demonstrate proficiency in grade level standards. The Academic Performance Index (API) target for all schools in California is to reach 800 points. Based on official results from the California Department of Education, Major Lynn Mokler School met its targeted growth rate of 5 points to achieve a score of 800! Mokler school is one of five elementary schools in the Paramount Unified School District to have met the 800 target.

When asked what contributed to the school's success, Kindergarten teacher Susan Hooper stated, "We have a very dedicated staff that strives to ensure that every child excels to the best of their abili-

ty." Stephanie Nutall, fourth grade teacher said, "Our consistent application of professional development has been instrumental in fostering student achievement."

One of our goals at Mokler School is to strive for continued success and prepare all students for future success. This year, all teachers will continue to engage in ongoing collaboration and professional development in preparation for Common Core Standards implementation in 2014-2015. Additionally, all students will have an opportunity to engage in technology lessons in a newly constructed computer lab and library. We look forward to a productive year as Mokler Pilots soar to success!

Linh Roberts, Principal

Paramount's Foster Youth Services Program

The Paramount Unified School District's Foster Youth Services (FYS) Program, is a grant-funded program for a specific student population. Its goal is to provide services to student identified as Foster Youth.

Students in formal foster youth placements are students who live in an out-of-home placement or, any student not living with either of their birth parents. The student might live with a foster parent, a relative or non-relative court appointed guardian, or a relative who has obtained a District Guardianship for school placement.

Tutoring services are offered in both Language Arts and Math. The tutoring occurs during the school day for a minimum of 30 minutes, one time a week. The FYS Program, in collaboration with Cerritos College, also offers a series of Parent Workshops at Jefferson School. Past Workshops have covered a variety of topics such as Internet Safety, Building Positive Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Understanding Educational Rights. Information flyers are available at every school site office. These

Parent Workshops are open to all Paramount Unified School District parents and employees at no cost. Free childcare is available for children who must be toilet trained between the ages of 3 to 12. Preregistration is recommended for babysitting at least one week prior to a Parent Workshop to facilitate sufficient childcare services.

Additional services provided to formal foster youth students include an annual field trip, scholarship opportunities and applications, information about FYS Programs at colleges and universities, invitations to participate in a College Readiness Program provided in collaboration with United Friends of the Children and referrals to community agencies and resources. Each year the FYS Program has been able to assist our foster youth with graduation-related expenses such as yearbook, prom, cap and gown, etc.

If you believe a child in your home may be eligible for services, please call Manuel San Miguel, Student Services Director or Judy Morrison, FYS Program Coordinator, at 562-602-6048.

Early Childhood Education

A new group of preschool children began their educational careers in Paramount Unified School District with classroom visits to meet their teachers, assistants and fellow classmates. Over 450 families first attended an orientation and classroom visit before the first day of school. The parents learned about the preschool program guidelines, and ideas in how to help their children at home. The preschool children got to interact with materials in the different learning centers in the classroom. Part of the preschool instruction is that children are encouraged to explore and experiment with materials in the learning centers that include; blocks, puzzles, math, science, literacy, dramatic play, and art.

The families also received a "Welcome to Preschool" packet with parenting tips, child activity book, and a storybook. The preschool program will continue to promote family learning throughout the school

year with an interactive homework calendar and monthly family learning projects. You will be able to look for the family learning projects on display in the preschool classrooms this year.

The District also offers a year-round Full-Day preschool program that currently has enrollment openings. The Full-Day preschool program is funded by the California State Preschool Program and serves children ages three to five. Program eligibility is based on family income and size. Families must be employed, in job training, going to school, or seeking employment in order to be eligible. Families may need to pay family fees depending on income and family size. Please contact the Early Childhood Education Office for more information, (562) 602-6900.

Elida Garcia
Program Director