

PUSD Education News

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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The JROTC Paramount Pirate Battalion Leadership Team Competes in Washington D.C.

From October 2014 to June 2015, over 3,500 schools representing all military branches (Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force) participated in the Leadership and Academic Bowl competition. Out of the 3,500 schools, 1,731 have Army JROTC programs that consist of over 314,000 cadets. The Academic Bowl competition consists of three rounds, and the final round was held in Washington D.C. in June of 2015.

Rounds one and two determine which schools will compete for the National Championship in Washington D.C. The Paramount Pirate Battalion Leadership Team was selected to be one of the 40 Army JROTC programs to be invited to Washington D.C. These 40 schools represent the top 3% of cadets in the United States of America and only 3 California Leadership teams were selected to compete. The Paramount Pirate Battalion Leadership Team consists of C/1LT Solórzano, Elizabeth, C/2LT Garcia, Gabriel, C2LT Robielos, Joe Ann, C/SGM Aldana, Eric and C/PFC Chavez, Melissa.

Upon receiving news of their selection, the Battalion celebrated and quickly began to prepare reports, projects and personal biographies through numerous team collaboration meetings. The team met all of their requirements and received complimentary feedback from the competition personnel on their excellence in completing their personal biographies. The



competition personnel commented that they were deeply moved by the personal lives of the Paramount High School cadets.

Once the team arrived in Washington D.C., they quickly acclimated themselves and began study sessions for the 2-day competition. Teamwork was critical as all 40 teams rotated through 4 venues, (1) Leadership Media, (2) Higher Ordered Thinking Leadership, (3) Marshall & MacArthur Leadership and the Citizen-Soldier and (4) The Leadership Gauntlet (10 stations, hands on). After completion of the four events, the team completed a final self-paced paper exam. As a part of their experimental learning, the team was required to visit monuments, museums and other historical places in order to complete brief reports that connected leadership values and behavioral clusters with historical figures.

The Paramount Leadership Team placed 25th in the nation! They received three prestigious

awards: The Pritzker Citizen Award, MacArthur Leadership award and the General George C. Marshall award which is the highest leadership award a cadet can receive.

We have a saying in JROTC, "There are no short cuts to hard work." I am so grateful that our Leadership Team had a chance to experience that hard work, dedication and commitment which can bring about monumental successes. This achievement and national recognition is a reflection of that hard work and dedication. We are proud that our team represented Paramount High School, the Pirate Battalion and their families in an exemplary manner. Elizabeth Solarzano, the team captain, states, "Washington D.C. permitted me to realize that I am capable of obtaining my goals and that dedication and determination pays off. I hope to continue that as my legacy within our unit."

SFC (Ret) Dannie Brayboy

2015-2016 Athletic Seasons Begin

The 2015-16 athletic season started off with a bang for the Paramount High School Pirates. The football team opened their season with a convincing 34-7 victory over the Bruins from Long Beach Wilson High School. The Pirates looked good on both offense and defense as well as on special teams. It was a nice way to open the season and jump start what hopes to be a very successful football season. The Pirates will now continue what is a very tough pre-season schedule with games against powerhouse teams such as Los Alamitos, Carson, and nationally ranked Narbonne. With

a tough pre-season schedule, the Pirates hope it will prepare them for San Gabriel Valley League competition.

Other Fall sports started their seasons in the first week of September. Boys Water Polo, Girls Tennis, Girls Volleyball, and Boys and Girls Cross-Country are looking to do well in the pre-season. With tough opponents such as Mayfair, Valley Christian, La Quinta, and Edgewood our teams hope to be prepared for San Gabriel Valley League play.

Paramount High School is very excited to announce that two former Pirate baseball players, Ulysses Morneo, and

Alex Navarrete, class of 2013 have accepted athletic scholarships to continue their baseball careers at San Francisco State. Both played at El Camino College the last two seasons. The entire Pirate community wishes them the best of luck in their next journey.

On behalf of the student body, faculty, and Administration, Paramount High School would like to thank the city of Paramount for all your support throughout the years. We hope and look forward to your continued support and hope to see you at all our athletic events in 2015-2016. GO PIRATES!!!!!!

New Beginnings at Paramount Park!



Top left: Timothy Prangle, Serena Cowser, D'Andre Wilson, Doug Elizondo. Bottom left: Joy Go-Ng, Eva Oliver, Rebecca Dorantes, Sindy Figueroa, Joanna Cowser.

Paramount Park Middle School welcomes new staff members to our Panther family this 2015-16 school year! We are excited to introduce many highly-qualified teachers with years of combined experience in education.

In our Language Arts Department, we welcome the following:

- Serena Cowser: B.A. in English/ Master's in Teaching. She has prior Middle school experience. She shares, "My grandfather was a teacher, and I looked up to him. Teaching became a passion of mine."

- Rebecca Dorantes: B.A. in Music Literature/ Master's in Education Studies. She comes with experience in both public and private schools. She enjoys watching students rise to the expectations. "Each day brings a new challenge or success story."

- Doug Elizondo: B.A. in English. He comes with prior high school experience. He shares, "A college professor really shaped me as a student and human being. I want to impact others in the same way."

- Sindy Figueroa: B.A. in Social Science/ M.A. in Education. She brings prior experience working with students in Paramount USD. She adds, "Opportunities for learning are present in our everyday lives. I would love to guide students and watch them grow."

- Tim Prangle: B.A. in History. He comes to us with varied experience in numerous districts. He adds, "I want to be an agent of positive change in this world. I feel I can reach my maximum potential for this goal educating and empowering young people."

- Jovanna Figueroa: B.A. in Liberal Studies. She comes equipped with both general and special education experience. She has chosen education as her field of preference to "encourage and inspire [them] to pursue their education."

In our Math/Science Department, we welcome the following:

- Jason Elliot: B.A. in Radio/TV/Film. Mr. Elliott comes with diverse experience in both middle and high school. He enjoys the moment when "the light bulb turns on and the students finally understand deep concepts."

- Joy Go-Ng: B.A. Business Economics/Math Credential. Joy has extensive experience working in Paramount USD at different school sites. She believes, "Education is the ultimate equalizer."

- D'Andre Wilson: B.A. in Sociology. In recent years, he has worked within Paramount USD in different capacities.

- Eva Oliver: B.A. in Liberal Studies. She has prior teaching experience in Paramount USD.

- Christopher Lozano: He has joined our Physical Education team of teachers. He has taught math in Jr. High for years and is excited to fulfill his passion for physical education.

To further support our existing Counselors, we welcome to our team:

- Wendy Hunt: Has served the Paramount USD for years as both a teacher and a counselor.

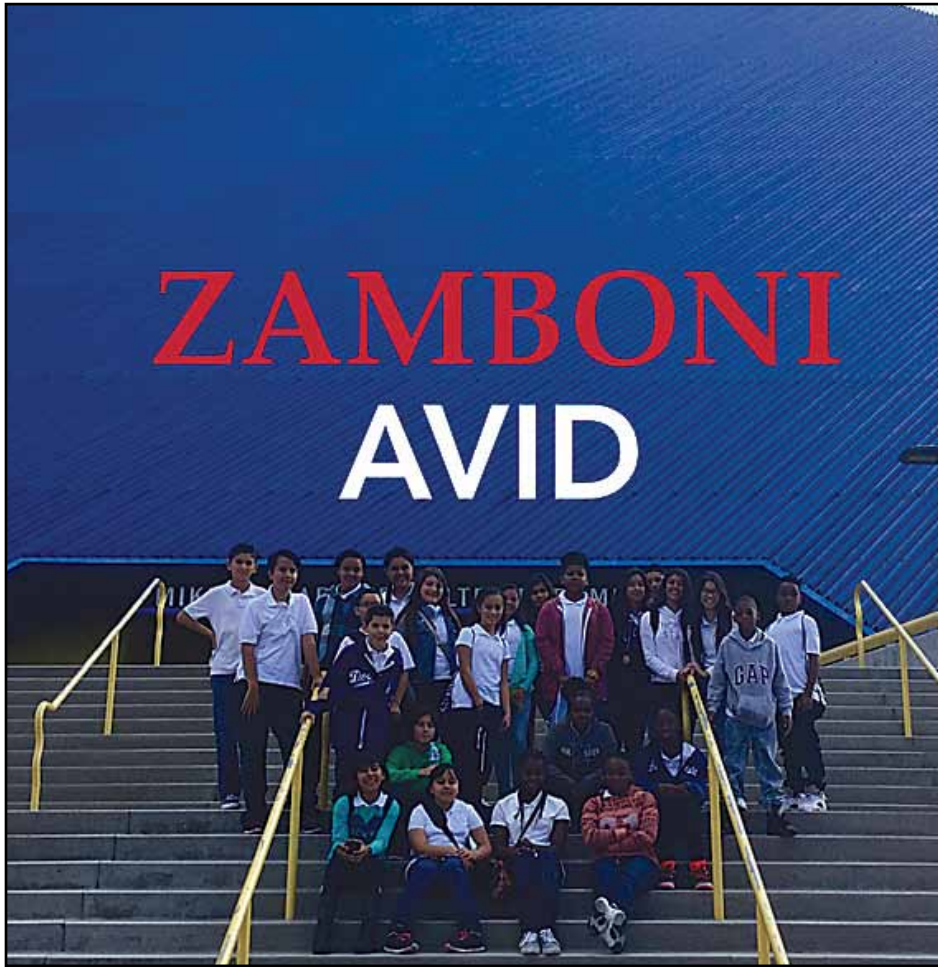
Margarita Romero
Language Arts Teacher

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

October 14, 2015 * October 28, 2015

Board of Education meetings are held at 6:00 p.m. and are open to the public

Zamboni's AVID Program Is Off To Great Places!



Their mountain was waiting...actually it was a pyramid. They were off to great places.... Long Beach State awaited! Zamboni's AVID students participated in their first college field trip on September 22. The tour was led by four current Long Beach State students. Much to our surprise, one was a Zamboni Alumni. The student was Sergio Manzo a junior in the Business Administration program. He shared with the students that he once was where they were and wished that AVID was available when he was in middle school.

Our very excited students were taken on a tour of the pyramid, athletic fields, the dance and music department, the business department, the student union, and the much anticipated food court! This was their first visit to a college campus for all our AVID students. They were bursting with questions which were answered by our four guides! We were very proud of our 7th graders as

they put a lot of thought and preparation into their questions. One student asked, "What makes Long Beach State so special?" Another student asked, "How many students apply and how many get accepted?"

The students were then given the opportunity to eat lunch on campus and shop in the university bookstore. The questions continued while in the bookstore with "How much do books cost?" and "How much does housing cost?" This visit opened a whole new world of possibilities and opportunities for our students. My favorite comment at the end of the day was "I never knew college could be this way." As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "You don't have to see the whole staircase... Just take the first step." On this day, our students took their first step on their stairway to College.

**Lucy Duran, Counselor
Zamboni Middle**

Thinking Maps: On the Path to Districtwide Implementation

The journey toward all teachers and students in Paramount Unified School District using Thinking Maps has been an exciting one! Within the past few years, teachers and students in grades K through 10 have learned to use Thinking Maps as effective visual tools for life-long learning. These visual tools have helped teachers and students to clarify concepts and think more critically about topics. This year, to broaden and deepen the use of the maps, the District has expanded the learning of Thinking Maps to include additional high school teachers and instructional leaders.

The high school Thinking Maps learning experience began with 9th and 10th grade teachers participating in professional development last year. During these sessions, teachers discovered in great detail the answers to the questions "What are Thinking Maps?" and "How do we use them?" Thinking Maps, as teachers learned, is a language of eight visual patterns each based on a thinking process (for example, comparing and contrasting, analyzing cause and effect, or sequencing). This year, 9th and 10th grade teachers are building on their learning through an Advanced Thinking Maps professional development in which they are discovering ways to help students construct maps to promote deeper thought.

To ensure that all grade levels are using the common language of Thinking Maps, 11th and 12th grade teachers as well as other high school teachers new to the District received the training this year. With this new shared learning, Thinking Maps are being used in high school classrooms across content areas and promote opportunities for teachers and students alike to collaborate and share their thinking using a common visual tool.

Since instructional leaders also play an important role in the learning process at the school site, administrators are deepening their understanding of Thinking Maps as they attend trainings this year specifically designed to help them support teachers. As administrators learn to apply the maps, they model for staff and students the thought process associated with each map and help to move the implementation process forward.

When teachers and instructional leaders at all grade levels use the same 8 Thinking Maps, students have the opportunity to deepen their understanding and strengthen their thinking skills. Paramount Unified School District is well on its way to creating a true common language for thinking and learning from elementary to high school and beyond!

Superintendent's Message:



PTA - Every Child. One Voice.

The new school year has started and we should be asking ourselves how can you make sure that your school site's PTA thrives?

Being an involved parent is not only a rewarding experience, but also an essential one. Research has shown that when parents or guardians are active in their children's education, their students are more successful.

The first thing parents need to realize is that they can make a difference at their children's schools. Everyone has something to offer, whether it is helping with a classroom art project or reading to students in the library. PTA helps create an opportunity for parents to truly become involved and encourages parents to contribute.

I would like to encourage all of our parents to not only join PTA this year but also become active members. Your school site PTA helps create a more welcoming environment and ultimately it will increase student success.

By joining PTA, you help to ensure that every child can reach his or her full potential.

Thank you.

**Dr. David Verdugo and Delores Stephens
Co-Interim Superintendents**

New Look, New Year



The Wirtz Elementary School entry way has been redesigned. As seen in the picture above, the gates surrounding the main office building have been removed and a section of the side gate has been moved inward.

On Wednesday, August 19th, students saw an official end to summer vacation and the start of a brand new school year. As students arrived to school, they and their parents were greeted with a new and improved "look" to the front of Wirtz Elementary School.

The Wirtz entry way on Contreras Street has been completely redesigned. The gates surrounding the main office building have been removed and a section of the side gate has been moved inward. This redesign has helped to create a more spacious and inviting waiting area in front of our school. We have received many compliments from both students and parents. We give a big thank you to our Maintenance and Operations Department for all of their hard work over the summer.

More changes are still to come in the future both to the "look" of our school and to programs and activities we have planned for students and families to promote and support student success. Among the new activities we have planned for the upcoming fall months are a Harvest Carnival on October 22nd and a family Science Night on November 19th. Not to worry, some old favorites will be returning as well, including our quarterly Recognition Assemblies, Spelling Bees and Fifth Grade Art Showcase.

We look forward to having you and your children participate in these returning and new school programs and activities. We hope you enjoy our new "look" and the new school year. We know it will be a success. Thank you in advance for all of your support.

Connie Toscano, Principal

Mark Keppel School Hosts Parent Volunteer Fair



The school year is off to a great start at Mark Keppel School. The theme for this year is "Our school family cooking up success with common core standards, collaboration, and consistency".

The parents at Mark Keppel School are a vital part of the team and our school family. In order to provide meaningful opportunities for parents to be involved on campus throughout the year, we hosted a parent volunteer fair. This fair was organized with the help of our parent liaison team: Mrs. Rubio, Mrs. Richards, Mr. Davies, and Mr. Fishing. Parents' were invited to come to the fair on September 2nd and had the opportunity to sign up to assist with a myriad of events and duties that would support the school throughout the year.

Some of these opportunities included: parent center support, school wide project based

learning displays, fundraisers, family fun nights, Keppel Incentive Store, Back to School night, Open House, and traffic control. In addition to signing up for volunteer opportunities, parents were able to get information from our PTA President, Mrs. Miranda and our Parent Center Chairperson, Mrs. Cortez. Mr. Lujan and Mr. Tovar from Paramount Adult School were also present, and shared information on the ESL class starting at Keppel School on September 9th. Mr. Lujan, Assistant Principal of Paramount Adult School and a former Keppel student gave an encouraging message to all of the parents present.

Parents were eager to sign up to assist and showed great Puma pride and school spirit. This event was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Patricia Brent-Sanco, Principal

Expanding AVID - Expanding Opportunity in Paramount Unified School District Schools

One of the primary goals of the Paramount Unified School District is to create a college-going culture and ultimately increase the number of students who are prepared for and enroll in four year colleges after high school graduation. The implementation of AVID across the district is a crucial step in that direction because it promotes early college awareness among middle school students and gives them the tools to succeed academically.

AVID, which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a non-profit organization that supports students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global economy.

Last school year, the Paramount Unified School District piloted AVID in one eighth grade class at Leona Jackson School, where the program was a monumental success. There, 32 eighth grade students led by their AVID Elective Teacher, Sandra Gonzalez and the AVID Site Team learned and refined the essential study skills crucial for academic success: Cornell Note-taking, binder organization, collaborative group work, writing, posing and answering high-level questions, inquiry, close reading, annotation, discussion and public speaking.

This year, AVID has been expanded to include all five middle schools and Paramount High School West Campus in the Paramount Unified School District. Leona Jackson School's AVID program has also been expanded to include grades sixth and seventh in addition to the eighth grade class. The other schools each host one seventh grade AVID Elective and the West Campus opened two ninth grade classes. Most importantly, AVID

is already producing results. When describing this year's new AVID Elective class at Hollydale School, Mrs. Leyva-Pardo shares, "I can already witness the pride that they feel and their ambition to thrive, from the way that they sit to the way they articulate their thoughts and ideas. They know that they are meant to succeed, and have taken ownership of their futures by willingly and enthusiastically participating in AVID."

One of AVID's cornerstones is its robust professional development program. This summer, each of the six participating schools sent teams to AVID's Summer Institute in Anaheim to learn the fundamentals for implementing AVID at their sites. Elective and content teachers learned about the AVID curriculum and signature instructional strategies. For example, in an AVID classroom, students are expected to pose inquiry questions and conduct research, problem-solve in teams, discuss high-level questions, and reflect on their learning. Both the AVID curriculum and instructional strategies align to and support the implementation of the Common Core standards by promoting a rigorous learning environment for students.

The vision is to increase the number of participants in order to ultimately prepare more students for four year colleges. Next year, AVID will be expanded to include more grade levels in all middle schools and tenth grade at Paramount High School. In 2019, the first pilot AVID class will graduate from high school. After that, the community of Paramount will begin to enjoy the results of this long-term effort when it celebrates the hundreds of students who will be accepted to four year colleges every June.

Becky Perez
CTE Curriculum Specialist

Paramount Unified School District Provides Support to Foster Youth

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

The term "foster youth" includes any child who has an open Department of Children and Family Services case, whether or not the child has been removed from his or her home. The student might live with a foster parent, a relative or non-relative court appointed guardian, with another caregiver, or with one or both of his or her parents.

Tutoring services are offered to Foster Youth in both Language Arts and Math. Tutoring occurs once a week during the school day for a minimum of 30 minutes.

Additional services provided to foster youth students include an annual field trip, scholarship opportunities, 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 Paramount Unified School District's foster youth with graduation-related expenses such as yearbook and prom tickets.

If you believe a child in your home may be eligible for services, please call Dr. Manuel San Miguel, Student Services Director or Judy Morrison, FYS Program Coordinator, at 562-602-6035.

Paramount High School JROTC Recognized



Board of Education members and Co-Interim Superintendents Mrs. Stephens and Dr. Verdugo congratulated and presented a Certificate of Achievement to the Paramount High School JROTC for their recent travels and participation in the JROTC Leadership Academic Bowl that took place in Washington DC. There was a total of 40 JROTCs throughout the nation who competed and the PHS JROTC team placed 25th overall.