

# PUSD EDUCATION NEWS

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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SEPTEMBER 2012

## Paramount Students Lend a Helping Hand



Paramount High School students help out the city in cleaning and painting public thoroughfare.



The Board of Education for the Paramount Unified School District adopted a graduation requirement on February 23, 2011, which stated all students needed to perform at least 30 hours of community service in order to graduate.

The new requirement, which began with the graduating class of 2015, was designed to encourage student participation in worthwhile social service activities as part of the high school curriculum. Community Service provides an opportunity for students to help out and

support their community, take pride in their neighborhood, and build positive relationships with local business and city representatives.

Since its inception, Paramount students have performed hundreds of hours of community service. Among some of their activities, students have volunteered to clean up beaches and community walkways, repair houses for elderly and disabled individuals, and work with younger children in academics and recreational activities.

## PHS Green Club Experiences Yosemite



A person can only dream of going to such a place as Yosemite National Park, and the Paramount High School Green Club was fortunate enough to do so in July. Not only did we help the park become healthier by removing invasive species, we also enjoyed the different sights it had to offer, from the giant sequoia trees of Mariposa Grove to the beautiful Vernal Falls. We camped near the Merced River, relaxing at Sentinel Beach during the day and also at night under a canopy of stars. At a nearby campground, a Search-and-Rescue unit allowed us to observe

their planning for a mission the next day. We hiked the Mist Trail and explored the Yosemite Valley. Although there was volunteer work to be done, nothing seemed like work since such large amounts of enthusiasm came from the Green Club members.

Apart from finding and crushing endless amounts of recyclable bottles, Green Club members also attended hikes and beach clean-ups, which help native species to thrive. The Green Club also gets students involved and informed, so the community can become a smarter, cleaner, greener one, for generations to come. The Yosemite trip was one of many steps to help the world win its confidence back and one of many steps to gain the interest of the Paramount High School student body. One can only hope to have such an opportunity again, and for many others to receive such an experience.

**Ruby Zepeda,**  
PHS Student



### SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATES

September 12, 2012 \* September 26, 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

# Parent Involvement in PUSD



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

In addition to simply attending meetings, parents are also provided opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding of current issues that their children are facing. Parents' needs are assessed through surveys and programs are developed based on the

responses. As an example, a recent meeting focused on how parents can make sure students make safe use of the internet.

Paramount Unified School District's Educational Services Office provided two full day parent workshops during 2011-12. The workshops were attended by more than seventy-five parents representing schools throughout PUSD. The workshop presentations were provided by consultants from the Los Angeles County Office of Education and several PUSD Kindergarten teachers. Parents completed evaluations at the conclusion of each workshop. One parent's evaluation summarized it best, when she wrote: "The information provided today is very useful to me as a parent because it helps me help my child succeed in school and in life, and what is more important than that?"

**Randy Gray- Director  
Curriculum & Instruction/Projects**

# Paramount Athletics is Ready to Set Sail

Over the summer, Alex Acosta and Anna Yasuhara eagerly prepared to serve as new Athletic Directors of Paramount High School. Their commitments to the coaches who work countless hours and the players who demonstrate great effort have fueled their excitement for the upcoming season of fall sports.

Head Football Coach, Matt Howard, and his coaching staff have set high expectations this year after their league championship and advancement into the playoffs last season. Friday night football games bring the Paramount community closer together and are a testimony to the enthusiasm that the student athletes have created within the fans who cheer them along week after week. The Girls' Volleyball program eagerly awaits the completion of the newly renovated gym and the 6 returning seniors are thrilled that they have the chance to play their final volleyball season in the main gym where their volleyball journeys began. Their sights are set on a 5th consecutive CIF playoff appearance and the discipline needed to reach this goal will be at the forefront of their minds. The Boys' Water Polo team, powered by the dedication and advocacy of Coach Eduardo Osorio, trained in the early morning hours this summer and are eager to compete in a tough league and make a splash this season. Coach Joe Peterson's determined Cross Country squad tirelessly trained this summer to prepare for their upcoming season. The guidance of their well seasoned coach and dedicated coaching staff will be the main ingredients for success in upcoming competitive meets. The Girls' Tennis team is defending their

league championship title this season with only four returning players. Coach Mu has expressed that his entire squad is on board to compete for a back-to-back league championship; his enthusiastic efforts demonstrate his commitment to the teams' goals. Go Pirates!

As the Paramount sports programs look forward to another year of setting and achieving new academic and athletic heights, the pirate family applauds the dedication of Dr. Mark Kemp who served as Athletic Director for the past 12 years at Paramount High School. During Kemp's tenure, he diligently served the Paramount community, student athletes, parents, coaches, fellow colleagues, the San Gabriel Valley League and the CIF Southern Section.

Dr. Kemp's service and exemplary traits were recognized in 2004 when he was honored with the CIF Southern Section "Champion for Character" award which emphasizes the many components of "Pursuing Victory with Honor." His leadership within the San Gabriel Valley League manifested when he served as league coordinator among appreciative fellow Athletic Directors and administrators. Creating foundations of success for Paramount student athletes to participate in character-building athletic programs is the legacy of Dr. Kemp's commitment to athletics. His poise and integrity through the years is unforgettable and greatly appreciated! Thank you Dr. Kemp for your great sportsmanship and immeasurable efforts at Paramount High School!

**Anna Yasuhara  
Athletic Director**

# Learn to Earn Big at Paramount Adult School



Three recent events kicked off new or expanded vocational programs at Paramount Adult School (PAS). First were two open houses—one for PAS teachers and staff, then another for students—regarding the new medical assistant (MA) class. An orientation for the expanded electrician program followed. All were well attended, showing strong interest amongst community members in training for professions of high demand and high wages.

Scheduled to be launched September 4, the adult school MA class will be held in Paramount High School's new science building, which is already home to the highly successful MA program for teenagers during the day. Adults will study from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The program includes 20 weeks of classroom instruction and hands-on practice, followed by a 4-week externship in clinics and doctors' offices. Not only are the facilities state of the art, but the price is also a fraction of similar programs offered by the private sector. Not to mention that there's a payment plan offered that spreads the cost over the duration of the program. Even local colleges can't compete with the pricing and quality. "This is beautiful," said one of the open house participants of the science building lab. "It's so big and well-equipped." That response was typical of almost every visitor. Similar responses happened over and over regarding the pricing, as well.

The electrician program at PAS has also been expanded from two classes to a full 4-year program. This state-approved program now helps students quickly obtain their Electrician Trainee (ET) card, which

allows them to legally work on any C-10 construction site in California. Student responses to the ET card have been similar to the enthusiasm show by visitors to the MA open houses. "This is great," said continuing student Jerry Hernandez recently as he re-enrolled. Teacher Hal Hernandez (no relation) added, "the [ET] card makes all the difference." This program, too, allows students to make more than one payment on the total amount, which costs approximately \$600 per trimester—compared to the \$21,000 private sector schools charge for similar electrician training that lasts only nine months.

As if this weren't enough, PAS has also revamped and updated another vocational program—the Information Technology classes. Career pathways have been simplified and now focus on an industry-recognized certificate called the IC3. This certificate proves that the holder has a wide range of entry-level computer skills and is known nationally as well as internationally.

For anyone interested in launching a new career or improving their current job status through any of these programs, PAS can be contacted at (562) 602-8080, via the PUSD website or directly at <http://www.paramount.k12.ca.us/schools/adulted/index.html>.

If you'd rather stop by in person for more information or to sign up, PAS is located at 14507 Paramount Blvd. Summer hours (until September 11) are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. As of September 11, regular hours will return—8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday.

**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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# Keppel Olympic Spirit



June 11, 2012 was a day filled with excitement at Keppel School. A Field Day was held at the new and beautiful Keppel Field. Physical prowess of students, parents and teachers was tested. The entire school was divided into Blue, Green and Red teams to compete in a variety of sports activities. It started with a relay race around the newly finished track. Thundering cheers were heard as the Kinder representatives started the race for each team. After the last pass of the baton to the fifth grade representatives, the Red Team was declared as the winner.

A game of Tug of War was held between the parents and teachers. Students were absolutely entertained by the activity. Each grade level also engaged in various competitive games.

Team members contributed to the team scores as winners emerged. The score board instilled a fiery competitive spirit. The sports competition united all grade levels to aspire for physical fitness. It also ushered in the 2012 London Olympic spirit amongst us.

**Linda Go - Principal  
Keppel School**

# Superintendent's Message: Students' Post High Scores on State Test



I am pleased to report that the State test scores for Paramount Unified School District released by the California Department of Education have surpassed County averages and in many cases, are all-time records for our school district.

Our student academic test performance scores continue to improve every year. Our students are to be congratulated for their hard work and our faculty, staff, and administrators are to be commended for their tremendous work and dedication to ensure that our students continue to achieve their very best.

The percentage of students who pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) is at an all time high. In 2012, 80% of tenth grade students who took the CAHSEE passed, and 90% of all 12th grade students passed. The gains students made last year are the result of a focus on providing high quality instruction in math and English Language Arts in all grades, from kindergarten to high school.

Paramount Unified School District's ninth grade students made exceptional

gains in Algebra last year. The number of ninth grade students who scored at the Proficient or Advanced Proficient level on the California Standards Test in Algebra I increased to a record high of 55%! In addition, 48% of student in grades 2-8 scored Proficient or higher in Language Arts.

I am very pleased and proud of the continued partnership and support existing between our students, schools, parents, and faculty that truly enhance our effectiveness and ability to increase student achievement for all students.

The State test scores are available to view at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov).

Thank you for your continued support.

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

# Deputy Ariana Hernandez New School Resource Officer



A new and additional Los Angeles County Sheriffs' Department School Resource Officer has been selected to be employed and work directly with our students, families, and school sites in Paramount Unified School District.

In yet another example of the outstanding partnership and relationship between the City of Paramount and the Paramount Unified School District, the financial resources required for this position will be shared by both entities. Both the City and the school district are dedicated to ensuring our students safety and well being.

The new officer assigned to join our current SRO Mike Abbott is Deputy Ariana Hernandez. She is a graduate of Cal State Long Beach with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. She completed the Sheriff's Academy and graduated in 2006. She is very familiar with the City of Paramount and has served on patrol in Paramount as well as the Lakewood Sheriff's Station.

She has already become a great role model for our students. She looks forward to serving and mentoring our students throughout the District.

We are all looking forward to working with Deputy Ariana Hernandez.

# Pirate Pride!



The 2012-2013 PHS Spirit Squad is off to a great start! In preparation for the upcoming school year, the team of forty-nine dynamic girls recently had the opportunity to attend the USA Spirit Camp at the Anaheim Convention Center. While at camp, the PHS Spirit Squad worked extremely hard and earned numerous awards and recognitions for sportsmanship and overall performance, in which six of the girls received "All American" recognition.

The team erupted in cheers of joy and excitement as Paramount was called over the speaker system as the winner of the coveted Spirit Stick Award, which

goes to schools that show unity and spirit throughout the duration of the week-long camp. Varsity Cheer Captains Tori Harris and Lexie Sullivan found going to camp to be a great experience. Lexie further explained that, "It was fun and rewarding to see our team bond and grow, as well as interact with other schools." This years PHS Spirit Squad is led by new advisors Lourdes Aguayo and Rocio Lopez and coaches Kimberly Gonzalez and Kyrie Chappell. Great job team!

**Lourdes Aguayo  
PHS Co-Cheer Advisor**

## Parent Involvement at Jefferson School



As a new school year begins, we look forward to our parent volunteers' continued support for our students and teachers in classrooms and school events. It is exciting to have our Parent Center where parents have created an environment to share and collaborate with each other over coffee and doughnuts as they run copies, cut and laminate items, and organize folders and decodables. They also provide assistance with Basic Math Facts; support PTSA with flyers, field trips, and carnivals; and participate in important School Site Council and ELAC meetings. Our dedicated PTSA works tirelessly to make memories for our students! A special annual tradition has been our parents' contribution of delectable dishes on Day of the Teacher with chilaquiles, taquitos, tamales, mole, and flan. The whole staff looks forward to this day!

As our parents contribute their time and talents to support our school's practices and festivities toward student achievement, we also want to enrich and support their growth. This year, we have planned Harvest Fair/Read Day to share reading strategies, Tea with the Principal to observe Writing and Active Participation strategies, Basic Math Facts routines, Blending and Comprehension strategies, Cuddle Up and Read Night, and STAR Fiesta to review testing strategies. Our parents' involvement is essential to our students' success, and we look forward to working together for another outstanding year! "The shared responsibility of the entire community fosters the growth and development of the whole child and empowers adults to learn, think, grow, and create."

**Yuki Mio - Principal  
Jefferson School**

## Howard Tanner School is Racing to Success!



The students, staff, and administration of Howard Tanner school are all excited about beginning the new school year. Our school wide theme this year is "Racing to Success, Our School Family Committed to Learning"

This year we will be committing ourselves to learn more about rigor, questioning techniques, and understanding common core standards. Our Administrator and Teachers will be investigating the correlation between rigor, relevance, and relationships to students academic achievement. Our school will continue to implement the Basic Math Fact Program, our pyramid of interventions through our Learning Center, and active participation strategies through our theatre arts integration program with the Music Center. We are excited about the progress our students made last year. Tanner's English Learner students met both AMAO1 & AMOA2 target goals on the CELDT Test. In Math most grade levels were above the district average on the quarter four Basic

Math Fact assessment. Students who participated in our Learning Center Intervention Programs increased their Fluency level by over 30% and their comprehension level by over 26%. We are "Racing to Success".

Our students will start the year with beginning of the year assemblies on August 24th that will share school wide expectations and incentive programs for academic achievement and attendance. All Tanner parents were invited to attend our 1st Day Parent Reception on August 22nd at 7:50am in the Multipurpose room. Our first school wide Parent event - our Hispanic Heritage Celebration will take place on September 28th 4:30pm-6:30pm.

The Tanner Tigers are preparing for an outstanding 2012-2013 school year. They are Racing to Success as they work as a team to ensure all students have the best educational experience each day.

**Patricia Brent-Sanco - Principal  
Tanner School**

## PHS West Campus Holds African American Parent Forum

Paramount High School West Campus kicked off the new school year with the African American Parent Forum. Approximately, 40 parents and incoming ninth grade students attended the event on the evening of Monday, July 16. Dinner was served at 5:30 PM and the meeting began at 6:00 PM.

In attendance for the event, were all West Campus counselors as well as administrators. Principal Morrie Kosareff welcomed the group noting that this was the first of several African American Parent meetings to be held during the upcoming year. Counselor Rebecca Watkins and Program Administrator Alicia Megofna arranged the event so that parents were able to interact with the staff throughout the meeting.

Counselors Sharon Bryant, Kelly Gray, and Sheryl Ramirez provided information on graduation requirements as well as on the high school's Career Technical Education and Community Service programs. Additionally, Katherine Thomas, Mathematics Department Chair, was on hand to represent the West Campus teachers and greet the parents. Overall, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss with parents how they can continue to be involved in their student's education.

Parents had an opportunity during the meeting to ask questions or make comments. Several of the parents commented that they were impressed by the West Campus staff's commitment to meet the needs of their students as demonstrated by the attendance of all administrators and counselors to the meeting. Moreover, Mr. Kosareff

stated that it was clear from the parents in attendance that their desire was to reach out to all African American parents and to convey the importance of participation in the forum and their student's education. Overall, Ms. Megofna, stated of the forum, "The energy and dialoguing was uplifting, and all of us walked away with a determined spring in our step to move forward in involving our parents in their children's education."

The development of the African American Parent Forum came as a result of PHS West Campus' participation in the professional development on African American students offered by the Los Angeles County of Education and UCLA's Center X. Mr. Kosareff, Ms. Megofna, Ms. Thomas, and Ms. Watkins who attended the training sessions over the course of two years and were able to develop a plan on how to actively engage parents.

Additionally, counselors held a round-table discussion with the African American students from the Class of 2015 who shared that the school needed to approach "things differently." PHS West Campus will hold quarterly African American Parent Forum evenings this year as well as form a planning group for the meetings which includes both parents and staff. Parents interested in participating in the African American Parent form should contact Ms. Megofna at (562) 602-8065.

**Alicia Megofna  
Special Projects Coordinator  
PHS-West**

## Alondra Middle School Opened its Gates to the Community

To get a jump on the 2012 - 2013 school year, Alondra Middle School opened its gates to the community August 13 - 14th. The event proved hugely successful as hundreds of incoming and returning Dolphins were in attendance. Students and parents had the opportunity get an early start on the new school year. They were able to pick up their books and purchase their PE uniforms, to guarantee they will be ready to go on the first day of school. Many students reported that they were eager to return

to school and that they were excited to get their books early, to get a head start on the year.

The Dolphins and Parents were greeted by the smiles of the Administration and Counselors, who were excited to welcome the community back to school. This event is just one of the many strategies that Alondra Middle School employs to make incoming 6th graders feel welcome on campus and to ensure that their students are prepared like Champions for the first day of school

**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.**