

PUSD EDUCATION NEWS

A Publication of the Paramount Unified School District

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APRIL 2015

PHS Student Matthew Cobian - Recipient of the Association of California School Administrators Region 14 Every Student Succeeding Award

The Board of Education recognized PHS student Matthew Cobian on being the recipient of the ACSA Region 14 Every Student Succeeding award.

ACSA's Every Student Succeeding program honors students at all grade levels who have succeeded, against all odds, beyond expectations or simply won the hearts of the administrators and other educators who helped them achieve



their goals. One student from each region is honored.

Matthew is a hard working

student and is also in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program. He

is an active participant on the Track and Field team and exhibits great talent and stamina

as both a sprinter and long distance runner. With the support of his family, Matthew has participated in the Long Beach Special Olympics since 2013. Matthew traveled to Shanghai, China this past November to compete in the Special Olympics, earning gold status in 3 events. Matthew has also been selected as an alternate for the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, which will be held in Los Angeles.

TAG Art Show Student Winners



The first place and special recognition student award winners of the 18th Annual Traditional Artists Guild Show were congratulated and introduced: Jaylen Lomeli, Kindergarten; Melanie Rodriguez First grade; Christian Bahena, Second grade; George Biramontes, Third grade; Destiny Mancillas, Fourth Grade; Ariana Jerez, Fifth Grade; Luis Gutierrez, Sixth grade; Ameren Martinez, Seventh grade; Jonathan Napoles,

Eighth grade; Nataly Campos, Ninth grade; Nahum Flores, Tenth grade; Mulan Thomas, Eleventh grade; Monica Gonzalez, Twelfth grade; Sydney Thaxton, Judge's Award-Best Use of Color; Raul Plascencia, Judge's Award-Best Composition; Mesai Lorenzo, Superintendent's Award; Angelica Torres TAG Chairman's Award; Athena Rea, Parks and Recreation Commission's Award; Ailany Meza, Chamber of Commerce Award; and

Haven Jovel, Mayor's Award.

The Board of Education members and Co-Interim Superintendent Dr. Verdugo recognized the students for their artistic excellence and presented them with a Certificate of Merit. Co-Interim Superintendent Dr. Verdugo thanked John Nowlin, Show Chairman from the Traditional Artists Guild, for his continued support of our students in the area of visual arts. 1,274 entries were received this year.

Central Basin Municipal Water District Donates \$2,500 to PHS



Central Basin Water Municipal Water District Site Sponsor Mark Moss, presented the Board of Education and PHS staff members and students with a \$2,500 check that will be designated to the PHS Solar Cup team for the upcoming Solar Cup competition that will be held May 15-17, 2015 in Lake Skinner

in Riverside County.

In attendance to also receive the check was Paramount High School Solar Cup advisors Alicia Megofna, principals Morrie Kosareff and Greg Buckner, and participant students Jishaly Castillo, Angelica Ceballos, Evelyn Figueroa, Aquiles Hildago, Geovanny Mora,

Jose Olmos, Justin Pena, Victor Rendon, Jessie Reynoso, Abelardo Rivera, Samantha Rodriguez, Jorge Sanchez, Salvador Sanchez, Joann Seals, and Briana Villaverde. Paramount High School is in its fifth year of participation thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Central Basin Municipal Water District.

Paramount High School Honor Roll Recognition



On Saturday, February 7th, there were close to 300 students who attended the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) hosted by the University of California, Irvine. The program is designed to support qualifying students to become academically prepared and competitively eligible for a four year university. Additionally, a "Cash for College" workshop was hosted by California Student Opportunity and Access Program (CalSOAP) representatives as they walked each student through the Free Application for Federal and Student Aid (FAFSA) or Dream Act applications. As students prepare for their college and career goals, it is critical for the community to highlight the hard academic work of students who have accomplished their goals academically.

On February 26th Paramount High School (PHS) recognized 282 students at the Principal's Honor Roll Luncheon. All students who earned a grade point average of 3.75 and above last semester earned High Honor Roll certificates and were served lunch and refreshments

in the main gym. The area was decorated and transformed by the Associated Student Body class who helped prepare for the event. PHS principal, Dr. Buckner, congratulated all students at the event and gave special recognition to the top 10 students at each grade level. The top students in the senior class include Jorge Cardenas, Edgar Lopez, Mouthcheata Se, Alex Chavez, Kevin Ramos, Judith Santano, Oliver Mendez, Fabian Perez, Angie Gomez and Gisel Lopez.

On March 6th, 311 students received Honor Roll certificates and were invited to an ice cream social hosted in Pirate Plaza. Students enjoyed a delicious custom-made treat while congratulating fellow classmates for earning a grade point average ranging from 3.5 to 3.74. The Paramount High School community is incredibly proud of all 593 students who achieved Honor Roll recognition. Thank you for continuing to praise community members for setting and achieving high academic goals that challenge each to follow their college and career dreams.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATE

April 22, 2015

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

GATE Super Saturday



Paramount Unified School District GATE students in Grades 3-5 and 6-8 participated in a three hour hands-on lab exploring the science of forensic chemistry, fingerprinting, DNA and forensic dentistry on Saturday, February 21, at Jefferson School.

Students analyzed evidence in order to determine the culprit of a fictitious dastardly crime much like the Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) television shows. Evidence included a half-eaten

apple, fingerprints on a plastic cup, and a strand of hair.

More than 200 students attended the event and most were able to successfully apply their newfound forensic knowledge to identify the culprit who had stolen the prizes to be distributed to students at the conclusion of the event. The photos show the students analyzing evidence.

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



Zamboni Wildcats are College Bound



Zamboni Middle School MESA students boarded the bus on the last day of February and were headed to college. Even if it was only for a day, they were going to college in hopes of one day making UCLA or another four-year university their school of choice when choosing college.

Zamboni MESA students attended the Chicanos/Latinos for Community Medicine's "Beyond the White Coat: Discovering your Role in Community Health" Conference at the University of California Los Angeles. The CCM provided a conference aimed at providing students education on the healthcare field with hopes of one day giving back to underserved communities. Students were able to attend a variety of workshops that provided opportunities to learn and become inspired. The workshops ranged from discussions on medical cases, learning what it takes to attend a four-year university, information on obtaining financial aid and empowering communities through health education. Oscar

Camarena, a seventh grade student and MESA member, was inspired by the visit. Oscar was most impressed by one of the panel members named Bo and his journey to college. Bo explained that he was unprepared for college and had not thought that a four-year university was an option for him while he was in high school. Bo recounted that through mentorship and focus on studies he found he was more than capable academically, and as he applied for scholarships and grants he found himself attending UCLA for nearly free. Oscar hopes to attend UCLA also and see that his dream could be his reality just like Bo's.

The goal of the conference was to inspire students and Zamboni students embraced the conference message and many left with dreams of attending a four-year university and entering the healthcare field to one day give back to their community.

**Scott Law
Assistant Principal**

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Great things are happening in Paramount Schools

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Annual Rotary Student Forum



The annual Rotary Student Forum sponsored by the Paramount Rotary Club, Paramount Petroleum and Paramount Unified School District took place on Saturday, February 21st. Over 100 students in grades 9-12 from Paramount High School-West, Paramount High School and Buena Vista High School came together to participate and further discuss their opinions about debatable topics taking place in today's world. Joining the students participating as moderators or judges in the discussions were, Rotarians, Board of Education members, City Council members, Paramount Petroleum representatives and several community members.

This year's topics for discussion included Gun Control, Mass Media, U.S. Values, Minimum Wage, and Challenges Youth Face in the Future. Each question was to be discussed for fifteen minutes and the judging was based on three categories that included Best Creative Idea, Most Distinguished Leader and Most Inspirational. Each category consisted of one grand prize cash winner of \$50 and this year's winners were: Brian Ramirez-Most Inspirational, Kacy Lopez- Best Creative and Brianna Hodge- Most Distinguished.

8th Annual Black Family Forum

On Saturday, February 28, 2015, Paramount High School (PHS) hosted its 8th annual Black Family Forum. Ms. Lourdes Talamantes, PHS counselor, coordinated the event which included student performances and prestigious speakers. The day was kicked off with a delicious breakfast as the 150 people in attendance watched the PHS Color Guard presentation and the PHS Prancing Pirates show off their dance skills. Dr. Buckner welcomed everyone to the event and introduced Dr. Deborah Stark, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, to the families and students present. The event was hosted by two of PHS's own students, Jazz Lee and Jordan Van Buren.

The keynote speaker for the BFF was Dr. Tyrone Howard. Dr. Howard is a Professor of Education at UCLA in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies' Urban Schooling Division. He is one of the foremost experts on race, culture, teaching and learning in urban schools and inspired those in attendance as he spoke about "Parents, Children, and Educational Success". Additionally,

Elder Larry V. Houston, an educator in the Paramount Unified School District, addressed the crowd about the power of words. Mr. Houston is involved in several community outreach organizations and summer camp programs designed to enhance the lives of inner-city youth. Mrs. Shenella Wright, one of the original members of the BFF, was the third speaker. She holds the position of Assistant Registrar at Whittier Law School and spends her professional and personal life mentoring students and counseling them to pursue higher education.

The event was closed with an Alumni Panel. Those in attendance heard different PHS alumni share their post high school experiences as they pursue higher education. Thanks to the generous donations from the African American Culture Club and the Associated Student Body (ASB), a raffle was held and attendees were eligible to win a bicycle, a tablet, gift cards and more. The speakers were incredibly inspirational and this was evident when the whole crowd joined Ms. Houston to sing aloud, "I believe I can fly."

Superintendent's Message:



Dear students, parents, faculty and staff,

On behalf of our Board of Education, we wanted to extend to all of our Paramount family best wishes for a relaxing and enjoyable Spring Break.

I hope that you, your loved ones and families take advantage of the time off together to reflect on all of the privileges and opportunities that are afforded to us in this great nation.

Once again, thank you for allowing us to serve our students and families. Sincerely,

Dr. David Verdugo and Delores Stephens

Paramount Community Comes Out to Celebrate Read Across America Day with Jackson Knights



For the first time this year, Leona Jackson School joined thousands of schools across the country in celebrating Read Across America Day on March 2nd.

The outpouring of support from the school community was outstanding. Twenty-five energetic volunteer readers from the Board of Education, Paramount City Hall, the City of Paramount Recreation Department, the Paramount Unified District Office, Paramount schools, as well as community members came out to share their love of reading with Leona Jackson's fourth and fifth grade students.

Guest readers exemplified the zany Dr. Seuss spirit by wearing Dr. Seuss hats and other Cat in the Hat attire to celebrate the special day. Many volunteers acted out parts as they read, impersonated characters with their voices during dialogue and even used some improvisation techniques to engage students. "My favorite part of the day was reading to the kids and seeing the anticipation in their eyes as they wondered what would happen next," noted Dr. Francois, who also jumped in on the fun and read his own rendition of "The Talking Eggs."

Among the many distinguished

guests was a former Leona Jackson School student, Erika Perez, who graduated from Paramount High School in 2014. Erika has recently written, illustrated, and published her own children's book, *My Friend the Prince*. After reading her book aloud, Erika answered student questions. "How did you write your own book?!" asked fifth grader Jimmani Timmons impressed that a nineteen year old could have her own book selling at Barnes and Noble. Erika described her creative book writing journey inspiring students to work at making their dreams a reality.

Listening to a wide variety of read alouds by role models in their school community, piqued the interest of Jackson students in reading. "My students loved listening to the excerpt from *The Chronicles of Narnia*," shared Mr. Saldaña about his fifth graders' reaction to Dr. Buckner's read aloud on Read Across America Day. "Now they are asking me for other books like it," he added as he pointed to his new pile of books on his back table to share with his book hungry class.

Rebecca Perez,
ELA Academic Coach

A Celebration of Cultures through Literature: Developing Appreciation through Awareness



February was African American Heritage month. In the spirit of this month, Mokler set aside an evening to celebrate the diverse cultures that make up America. Our objective was to help the Mokler community learn to appreciate the beauty and contributions of all cultures, recognize similarities in all people and celebrate unique characteristics of others.

At our CELEBRATION OF CULTURES through literature night, students and their families read books about people from all over the world. We enjoyed savory samples of cultural treats such as Yams, Pan Dulce, Edamame and Seaweed. We closed the evening with personal heartfelt



stories of cultural traditions shared by our Mokler family.

Ayanna Holland, Counselor

Wesley Gaines Celebrates Dr. Seuss



During the week of March 2nd, students at Wesley Gaines Elementary School participated in Read Week to celebrate the birthday of Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known to the world as the beloved Dr. Seuss. The Read Week kick off began as Mr. Naruko read an excerpt from *Oh the Places You'll Go* while the cafeteria served Green Eggs and Ham for breakfast. Throughout the week, community members and middle school students visited classrooms to read their favorite stories. Students and teachers dressed up in their favorite "Seuss" colors. Christian Madrid, a transitional kindergarten student said "I like having a policeman read *The Cat in the Hat* to us. It's fun!" Later that week, the festivities continued into the evening with the annual Pajama Night. Parents

and students wore pajamas to school to enjoy an evening of food, fun, and storytelling. At the conclusion, every student received a free book.

Thanks to Fanny Varela, the instructional coach and a dedicated team of teachers and PTA volunteers. Read Week was a tremendous success and has helped to promote literacy throughout the community. Dr. Seuss wrote the classic book *The Cat in the Hat* in 1954 using a list of only 250 words that were important to beginner readers. Sixty years later, Dr. Seuss' clever use of rhyme continues to influence millions of children and adults around the world to love reading.

Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss!

Michael Naruko, Principal

Spring is in the Air for Paramount Sports



Donzale Roddie signing his intent to play for Boise State.

The Winter sports season has come to an end at Paramount High School. A number of Pirates had outstanding seasons and have been recognized by coaches from the other teams in the San Gabriel Valley League. Our girls and boys soccer teams did well in the CIF playoffs. The girls opened the playoffs with a 1-0 win over Silverado and then were beaten by highly ranked Quartz Hill in the second round. Our boys' team opened the playoffs with victories over Alemany 6-0 and San Clemente 3-2. In the quarter finals, they faced the number one team in the state, the Servite Friars. After a tough hard fought game that ended in a win for the Friars, the season for the Pirates came to a close.

Paramount had a lot of athletes recognized for All San Gabriel Valley League first team honors. In basketball, two boys and one girl were honored; Nakia Golden and Sherwin Lewis were awarded 1st team honors and Freshman, Mariah Stewart, was awarded 1st team honors among the girls. In soccer, ten of our boys and girls were named first team. In girls' soccer, Yaqualin Garcia, Christian Godinez, Giovanna Recinos, and Vivianna Castaneda were named. On the boy's side, Bryan Ortega, Hector Rojo, Alfredo Garcia, Jesus Salazar, Oscar Canela, and Daniel Martinez were honored. One girl's water polo player was named to the first team. Valeria Barboza represented the Pirates on the SGV league team.

In wrestling, one boy and one girl had outstanding seasons. Junior female wrestler, Chazel Becerra, was a CIF finalist and finished 4th in the state of California. She made it to the CIF championship match losing in a close final. She went on to represent Paramount High School at the state meet in Visalia, CA. There she lost her first match and came all the way through the silver bracket to reach the semi-finals. She lost in the semifinals and finished 4th in the state. Male wrestler, Noe Sandoval, was the San Gabriel Valley league champion and went on to finish 4th in the CIF Southern Division. He then went on to the Southern California Championships Masters Meet and finished in the top eight. His accomplishments qualify him for the State Meet.

Football player, Donzale Roddie, was honored with a full football scholarship to play for the next four years at Boise State University. The Broncos are a top 25 division one football team. This marks the third year in a row that a Pirate football player has received a full scholarship. Donzale follows Chris Borrayo (CAL BERKELY 2013) and Joe Brown (MIAMI of FLORIDA 2014).

The Pirates are proud of all their athletes and look forward to many more being honored in the spring. Spring sports are in full swing and in the next edition we will have game results of baseball, softball, boys' volleyball, boys' tennis, boys and girls swim and boys and girls track & field. GO PIRATES!!

Importance of Positive School Attendance (Did you know?)

Positive school attendance is essential to student achievement. All parents need to focus their attention on their student's attendance and this should begin as early as kindergarten. California law defines "chronic" absences as any student, missing 10 percent or more of school in one year, for any reason, including both excused and unexcused absences. Chronic absences are proven predictor of academic breakdown. If poor attendance patterns continue into middle and high school, course failures will limit student success and possibly equate to students becoming high school dropouts.

A chronic absence exacerbates the student achievement. Missing school

undermines efforts by schools to improve struggling students. Since it is difficult to measure improvement in classroom instruction, students must be in school every day and in class on time to benefit from classroom instruction.

As parents, we all know it is extremely important for children to be in school. Therefore we encourage parents to make the commitment and focus on positive attendance for your sons or daughters, throughout the school year. Parents working together as a family, and with school personnel, to promote positive attendance, will help students to become academically successful and will help create a positive influence within our community.