

# 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

MARCH 2014

## PHS Cheerleaders are "Varsity It Girls"



Lorena Romero and Grisel Vazquez have been participating in a unique program called "Varsity It Girls" this school year. They are part of a 24 member "west coast" team that is one of five teams in the country. The

program is overseen by the Varsity Cheer Company and the United Spirit Association.

The program involves monthly meetings with cheer representatives from various high schools in the area. Meetings, which

take place in the city of Cypress, consist of discussions regarding new products and programs that are cheer related. Members share their ideas and opinions regarding these topics, which are kept confidential. An important aspect

of this program is that it provides members with the experience of a business internship that provides a great experience for college and beyond.

The "It" in the organization's name stands for "Intelligence Team." Members on the team are chosen through evidence of strong communication skills and leadership experience, as well as holding at least a 3.5 GPA. Both Lorena and Grisel are members of varsity cheer at PHS and are enrolled in AP courses. They are also active members in Ms. Bignami's Leadership class, which meets at 7:00 o'clock every morning.

Lorena shared that she found the program while looking online for possible business internships that would strengthen her resume for college applications. Since she plans on majoring in business, everything about the program

proved to be a perfect fit. Lorena shared information about the program with fellow cheerleader Grisel Vazquez, who also applied and was chosen to be on the team. Another exciting aspect of the program is that both Lorena and Grisel will be attending the school year's last meeting at Varsity Cheer's headquarters in Texas, along with the other four teams from other parts of the country.

Grisel Vazquez, an 11th grade student at PHS, is planning on attending the University of Bournemouth after graduating from PHS. Bournemouth University is located on the south coast of Britain, about two hours from London. Lorena Romero, a senior at PHS, has applied to several universities for next year and has already been offered admission by a school. Lorena shared that she would like to attend San Diego State University as a business major.

## Alondra and Leona Jackson Middle Schools Recognized California and National "Schools To Watch"



Principal Lynn Butler is joined by her staff, parents, student, Board of Education and Superintendent Mendez.



Principal Lisa Nunley-Macon is joined by her staff, parents, student, Board of Education and Superintendent Mendez.

During a recent Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Mendez and the Board of Education recognized and presented Alondra Middle School Principal Lynn Butler and Jackson Middle School Principal Lisa Nunley-Macon and staff with a plaque recognizing their commitment and dedication to the students and for their recent "Schools To Watch" Award. Schools To Watch is a recognition program similar to Cali-

fornia Distinguished Schools that recognizes middle schools that are academically excellent, socially equitable and have a culture of strong collaborative leadership. It is a highly selective process and few middle schools are given the Schools To Watch status. Alondra and Leona Jackson Middle Schools are two of 11 schools named in California for this current year, making it now three schools including Frank J. Zamboni

Middle School in Paramount Unified School District.

Alondra and Jackson Middle Schools had a formal recognition of their accomplishment led by officials from the Department of Education and the Schools to Watch at Alondra and Jackson Middle Schools on February 21, 2014. A recognition took place in Sacramento on February 27, 2014 and there will be a later recognition in Washington DC in June 2014.

## Pirate Pride

The winter athletic programs at Paramount High School are thriving as they all transition to the second round of league play. Girls soccer, boys soccer, wrestling and boys basketball enter the 2nd round of league play with winning records and high hopes to advance to the playoffs. The varsity girls basketball team fought their way to victory over the winter break in the Firebaugh Tournament and earned a championship trophy that has made the Paramount community proud. Congratulations to senior basketball players, Tracy Shumpert and Roneisha Adamson, who were voted as Co-Most Valuable Players of the tournament. Tracy Shumpert averaged 16 points, 7 rebounds and 3 blocked shots per game; Roneisha Adamson averaged 14 points, 4 rebounds, and 4 steals per game. The girls frosh soph basketball team won a championship at the El Rancho Tournament and freshman, Cheryl Halk, captured the tournament Most Valuable Player award. Way to go girls basketball!

In girls wrestling, Marjoree Fargas and Margarita Borrayo placed 1st in their weight class in the Western Tournament and Karen Cabrejo and Chazel Becerra placed 4th in their respective weight classes. All girls placed in the top 8 at the South Hills tournament and look forward to competing in the CIFSS northern qualifier in hopes to qualify at the State level. In girls soccer, the Paramount varsity team earned 2nd place in the Lady Pirate Cup tournament hosted by San Pedro High School.

As off-season sports continue to train toward their future goals, it is a great time to reflect back on recent accomplishments. Matt Howard and his coaching staff celebrated the 2013 football season in the new Senior Campus practice gymnasium where the program hosted a celebratory banquet. Congratulations to senior football player, Joe Brown, and junior football player, Joseph Williams, who both earned Long Beach Press Telegram 2013 football dream team honors. Their teammates who have earned their 3rd consecutive league championship in the San Gabriel Valley League have been so proud of their accomplishments and contributions to the program. The Paramount Athletic department and football program congratulates Brian Fineangonof, class of 2013, for signing a full athletic scholarship to play football at Idaho State. Paramount athletics continually produces successes both in the classroom and on the p

laying field. It is no wonder that so many are proud to be pirate athletes! GO PIRATES!

## SCHOOL BOARD MEETING DATE

March 12, 2014 \* March 26, 2014

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

# Jefferson Jaguars: Claws Out Against Bullying



Jefferson Jaguars are putting their paws out and saying, "NO to bullying!" On January 10, 2014 our school was treated to an anti-bully presentation sponsored by our Parent Teacher Association. At the assembly presented by Full Spectrum, Jefferson Jaguars learned some truths and myths about bullying. The students were entertained with a game show style atmosphere and a host who chose random students to participate as "game show contestants". The entire audience was engaged as Jaguars learned strategies on how to stop bullying at our school.

## Bully...Bully: Background Information about Bullying

What is bullying? According to Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center, bullying is defined as any behavior that hurts or harms another person physically or emotionally. The targets have difficulty stopping the behavior and struggle to defend themselves. Additionally, there appears to be an "imbalance of power" described as when a student with bullying behavior has more power via physical size, higher social status, or emotional intimidation tactics.

## Throwing Sticks and Stones at Bullying

Our students learned and reviewed many great strategies to thwart bullying on campus and in their personal lives. For example, pupils learned that bullying happens at any age and can happen anywhere. They also learned that the most common form of bullying is not physical violence but verbal assaults. Our host reminded us that the old adage, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me" is not necessarily true 100% of the time. He reinforced the idea of using words to empower, not destroy, one another. Students also learned about cyber bullying and how not to misuse technology to hurt others feelings or reputation. They were made aware that cyber bullying is becoming very common especially when one considers how easy it is to access popular on line social media web sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tumblr. He also shared

a tragic, but true, tale of how social media was used as a tool for cyber bullying which, in turn, devastated the life of a bully victim, her family, and friends.

## Sharing is Caring

Our presenter also shared some of his own personal experiences with bullying. For instance, he recalled his younger years and his own personal struggles with bullies. Using his personal pain as a catalyst for positive change, our host explained to Jeffersonians that he now travels across the state visiting various elementary schools in order to help transform them into safer environments where bullying is not tolerated.

He also shared many truths about bullying. One truth is that kids that stick together are less likely to get bullied. Another truth is that many victims of bullies are afraid to tell an adult that they are being bullied. Keeping these truths in mind, the presenter then reminded the students that the only way to stop bullying is to take a stand against it. He proclaimed how important it is that bully victims get help. Our host reiterated that students must be brave, confident, and tell an adult!

At the end of the assembly every student was given the opportunity to become proactive participants in the fight against bullying. Each contestant and student received an anti-bully card to remind them that our school is a Bully Free Zone and anyone who possesses the card has a right to take a stand against bullying. Jefferson students also took the anti-bully pledge. Jaguars promised not to bully or allow bullying at their school.

We all know that bullying is wrong and no one should fall victim to it. The importance of this presentation extends far beyond our school walls. It our hope that we will transform, not only our school site, but our neighborhoods and local communities into "NO BULLY Zones. High five to Jefferson students, as they put their claws out against bullying!!!

**Albert Lopez**  
4th Grade Teacher

# Fun Family Math Night at Lincoln School A Showcase of 21st Century Learning



At our recent annual Fun Family Math Night, Lincoln students and their parents enjoyed an educational and entertaining evening. Special thanks to Mrs. Murrietta, Lincoln's Instructional Coach and her team of teachers and support staff for all of their behind-the-scenes planning and preparation.

As parents and their children signed in at the Lincoln Cafeteria, they received a schedule of events that included:

- Fun with Ipad Math Apps in our Lincoln Learning Center, led by our Learning Center staff; Mrs. Torres, Mr. Salado, and Ms. Zaragoza. Using a variety of Math Apps, students and parents enjoyed taking turns solving problems, and practicing math concepts. Parents were also shown many fun and engaging Ipad Apps that reinforce grade level specific math skills.

- A visit to our NEW Computer Lab, complete with 37 all-in-one, state-of-the-art, touch screen computers. With the assistance of Ms. Hazlewood, Lincoln 4th Grade teacher, and Ms. Jackson, Lincoln Library Technician, students and their parents went online to learn more about the SBAC – Smarter Balanced Assessment that all 3rd – 5th grade students will take in the spring. It was challenging, but Lincoln Lions persevered as they learned to click and drag, scroll down, and enter

their responses in a text box.

- Solving Math Problems can be fun! Parents and students visited both Ms. Orozco's 3rd Grade classroom and Ms. Murrietta's classroom to have some fun using Problem of the Day math strategies. Lincoln parents learned that solving math problems can be as easy as - UPSC! Understand the problem. Make a plan. Solve the problem. And Check!

- In our Cafeteria, Ms. Bowen helped parents of 1st – 3rd grade students create sets of Basic Math Facts Flashcards to take home and practice; while Mrs. Taylor engaged 4th and 5th grade students and their parents in a rousing game of Jeopardy, using an online educational website. After choosing a category and a dollar amount, students solved math problems using white boards and markers. Just like on TV, students buzzed in their answers, hoping to not only answer first, but also correctly! Lincoln parents cheered the students on from the sidelines!

At the end of the evening, parents and students reconvened in the cafeteria for cookies, punch, coffee, and of course Raffle Prizes; including gift cards to iTunes, Barnes & Noble, Target, and Starbucks!

**Pamela Williams, 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**

Editor - Isela Preciado  
Paramount Unified School District  
15110 California Ave., Paramount, CA  
(562) 602-6000 • Fax (562) 634-6029

# PHS JROTC Shines in State Competition



Congratulations are in order to Col. Guild and all of the PHS JROTC cadets for their great showing at the State Championship Drill Meet. The JROTC program at PHS maintains a strong, positive impact on campus as well as within the local community, while continuing to grow and improve on an annual basis. Recently, the PHS JROTC participated in the 2014 All Service State Championship Drill Meet against the top schools in the state, in which they competed with enthusiasm and class.

The PHS JROTC teams received high rankings in numerous individual categories. Their unarmed team was ranked 4th in drill and 5th in inspection, while the color guard was ranked 7th, whereas the Armed drill team ranked 10th in drill and 4th in inspection. "These rankings are very promising" according to Sergeant First Class (Ret) Brayboy. He further explains that given the fact there are only a few schools ahead of us in

the rankings, this competition will serve as a building block to our ultimate goal.

"I am so very proud of our drill teams" adds PHS senior, Battalion Executive Officer, Nancy Vallecillo. She explains that all of the PHS JROTC cadets looked perfect as they went through inspection and marched in unison at the expected mark of 120 beats per minute. She further adds that since being in JROTC for the past four years, I have never seen them so on-point. And just to think, two years ago, we competed in the same competition and did not place in any of the events.

In moving forward, the PHS JROTC cadets have the goal of being number one in the state and earning an invitation to compete in the national competition. On April 26th, the cadets will compete against 60 different schools in the Western Hemisphere of the United States at Golden Bear West. Keep up the good work!

## Superintendent's Message: State of the District



Recently, the Paramount Chamber of Commerce along with Paramount Petroleum's sponsorship hosted the annual State of the City on February 13, 2014. At the event it was my pleasure to share with members of the community a bit about our local public education agency, which for us is the Paramount Unified School District. Along with a few facts and figures, I was able to highlight a few examples of our

successes, and to share our on-going work. As was the case at the State of the City event, it is my pleasure to provide you with a profile of our school district.

Our mission is to ensure learning and success for each student by providing a quality education. We operate 10 Elementary, 4 middle schools, one K-8 model school, 2 high schools (the West campus for our 9th grade students and the Senior campus which serves our 10th to 12th grade students), and Buena Vista Continuation High School. We also serve students through our Community Day and Alternative Education Center. Our students are made up of a population that is 87.5% Latino, 35.2 % English Learners, 95% of our students qualify for the Free/ Reduced meal program and we currently serve 15,868 students.

Interestingly, we are the largest employer in the City of Paramount, with just under 2,000 employees. We have an excellent standing in the financial community and operate a budget of about \$131 million. We are proud to share that we have a positive budget certification with the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the agency that certifies and monitors our budget.

As the new Superintendent, I have invested much of my time getting to know our school community by talking to our teachers, administrators, support staff, community leaders, parents, and our students. In summary here are nine things that I have learned through my conversations:

1. There is a strong sense of pride in Paramount.
2. The Board of Education works well together.
3. Bond Measure AA – has been a great success.
4. Music and the arts are important.
5. Sports keep our youth engaged.
6. College is important, but people also recognize the value of the trades.
7. Collaboration, among all stakeholders is a strength in the community.
8. Schools are safe.
9. The District is on the right track – it has shown steady academic improvement.

My continuing work further validates that Paramount Unified is on the right track in advancing the progress of our students.

High School Graduation rates are up. Consider that the 2012-13 graduating class of Paramount High was our largest class to date, not only in numbers of students, but also in percentage of students. We had over 1,000 students graduate.

We have seen a significant increase in our students taking Advanced Placement exams and offer a good range of AP courses. I echo the State Superintendent who shares that, "It's important to recognize that not only are more and more students feeling equipped to tackle these college-level courses, but that more and more of them are succeeding. Along with their schools and families, they are working hard to be ready for college, and I'm glad to see the numbers continue to climb."

The Academic Performance Index has been one of the ways used by the state to measure the growth of schools in California, and the state set forth a target of 800 for all schools. Our schools have worked hard and at this moment we have 7 schools at 800 or above, with the balance poised to move into what I call the 800 plus club. My congratulations go out to our principals, support staff, students and teachers for their excellent work.

Most prominent in our recent success of Bond Measure AA is seen in the transformation of Paramount High School(PHS)...What a gem! The project continues to receive much recognition and recently we were informed that PHS is the Recipient of an Award of Excellence for 2014 C.A.S.H./ AIACC Leroy F. Greene Design + Planning Awards Program.

Other accolades for the School District are highlighted in our Gates Millennium Scholarship winners. This year's winners—Xavier Aldana, Crystal Estrada, Thalia Hernandez, Lucio Lopez, and Faviola Zuniga—bring the total number of Gates Millennium Scholarship winners coming from Paramount High School to seventeen.

This year, middle schools, Alondra and Jackson and, join Zamboni as schools that are recognized for their high quality program by way of the State and National recognition program entitled "Schools To Watch – Taking Center Stage".

Meeting the needs of our students is a calling that requires constant attention. The following are priorities for our on-going work:

- We will:
- continue providing: a safe environment; functional, clean and well-maintained facilities; and productive District services that enable student learning while also supporting the professional work of teachers and support staff
  - develop a Paramount Unified School District Strategic Plan (under Local Control Accountability Plan and Local Control Funding Formula)
  - implement our three-year plan to transition to the Common Core State Standards
  - enhance technology and library/media Services
  - develop a plan to enhance college and career readiness
  - implement programs, systems, practices to increase productivity and efficiency

I closed my presentation by sharing that deep and meaningful human endeavors are driven by the engine of inspiration. Inspiration is what moves us to give that 110%, to not give up in the face of challenges, and to commit ourselves to something greater than our individual selves.

So, I hope that you too draw inspiration from the great work that our School Board, Teachers, Administrators and Support staff in the Paramount Unified School District are engaged in on behalf of our children.

**Paramount Unified School District**

**Parent Workshops**

LOCATION: Jefferson School  
8600 Jefferson Street  
Paramount, CA 90723

**6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

Mar. 13, 2014	Road to College 101
Mar. 27, 2014	Test Anxiety vs. I Can Do Attitude
May 1, 2014	ADHD and Autism: How it can affect a child's learning
May 25, 2014	Preparing for Summer Activities: Keeping your child academically active
May 29, 2014	Understanding Bi-Polar Disorder

Spanish Translation will be available.  
Co-sponsored by Paramount Unified School District and Cerritos College (FKCE Program-Certificates for renewal hours)

Childcare available for children ages 3-12 (must be toilet trained)  
MUST pre-register for childcare one week in advance;  
MAY pre-register for individual workshops  
Call: Myra McGinnis at 562-602-6035

**Workshops Open to all PUSD Parents**

# Family Math Night At Collins School



As we shift into Common Core Standards: the focus will be in; Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking and , Communication. Although the four C's require a shift in teaching as has been the focus this school year, foundational skills still play a pivotal role in students learning as 21st century global citizens. Dr. LaShonda Zeno, 5th grade teacher at Collins School, organized an exciting evening which included multiple card games, dice games, as well as old fashion fun. Over 30 families assembled in the Colt's Café on Wednesday February 5, 2014 to learn about Basic Math Facts and how to have students practice at home.

This event coincided with Report Cards going home and



students being told to "Practice your Math Facts". All games allowed for the interaction between parents and their children in a family centered homework time. It is crucial for homework to be a reinforcement of what occurs

at school rather than a punishment. Therefore, we know the excitement was in the air as all games were raffled off at the end of the event and all students were looking to win. Mrs. Spelker-Levi, School Principal, heard



one parent say, "Who knew Basic Math Facts could be taught with cards and we would be having so much fun." Our next event will be on Wednesday, April 2nd. We will focus on Reading/Writing at Home.

A big thank you to all the staff who gave of their personal time to assist with games: G. Wilson, TK Teacher; T. Morrison, 1st grade Teacher; K. Albert, 4th grade Teacher; and W. Hunt, Counselor.

# Hollydale Fundraiser Includes Unique Celebrations!

Being the principal of a school comes with many responsibilities. It can include designing math lessons, solving problems occurring at recess, and even cleaning up spills in the cafeteria. However for Kevin Longworth, the principal of Hollydale School, this year it included students throwing pie in his face and giving up his office for a day!

Hollydale School and its Parent Teacher Association wanted to make this year's fundraiser fun for the students and successful for the school, so they really thought about what would be exciting for the students. Some of what they came up with was pretty usual as far as fundraisers go. Any student who sold an item received a prize, and prizes were given out for selling certain numbers of items. To maximize the fun for students, participants had to sell only five items to go to a DJ/Pizza Party at school. However for ambitious students whose families helped them to sell more, the reward included a limo ride to Boomers, throwing pie in the principal's face, and the opportunity to be "Principal for a Day."

The opportunities to "pie the principal" and be the principal for the day may have been a key factor in the overall success of the fundraiser, because Hollydale and their PTA brought in more than ten times the revenue for this fundraiser than they did in the previous year! Three students earned the privilege of "pieing" the principal, and five more student joined them to act as principal for the day.

**The pie throwers included:**

- Sasha Mena
- Dayana Rosales
- Alex Escalante
- Adelyn Bon



Alex Escalante takes aim at Mr. Longworth



Alex Escalante hits his target!



Mr. Longworth and his eight guest principals

**Principal for the Day:**

- (the four pie throwers plus:)
- Jaime Barragan
  - Josemaria Castro
  - Giovanni Vazquez
  - Samantha Mena

The DJ/Pizza Party ended with a "Bang" as 151 students gathered around to see the principal take it "head on" in the face from the four honorees. Students laughed, cheered, and seemed to not believe their eyes while watching the event.

When the day came for the guest principals, the students showed up dressed for the occasion. This included ties, jackets

and slacks for some of the boys, and dresses for some of the girls. The "principals" had a full day which included greeting the students in the morning, working with the staff in the office, monitoring recesses, walking classrooms, and meeting with the PTA and the Student Council. They really seemed to enjoy it, and they all did an outstanding job!

The only question that remains is, "What will they do next year!"

**Kevin Longworth, Principal**  
**Kathy Vaughn,**  
**Fifth Grade Teacher**



Jaime Barragan works with his office assistant, Ms. Ramos



Dayana Rosales checks on security



Alex Escalante learns that being a principal means, "Success for All, Whatever it Takes!"



Giovanni Vazquez contemplates third grade writing during a walk-through



Josemaria Castro attends to school business in the principal's office



Sasha Mena answering the phone in the principal's office