



# PUSD INSIDER

Volume 1, Issue 1

November/December 2008

The newsletter  
for and by  
employees of  
the Pasadena  
Unified School  
District

## PUSD EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER DEBUTS

Welcome to the premiere issue of the *PUSD Insider*, the newsletter by and for employees of the Pasadena Unified School District. More than bricks and mortar, schools are made up of people: the teachers, custodians, office workers, community assistants and administrators whose every action affects the quality of education we provide to our students. Staying informed about the accomplishments, challenges and innovations of our colleagues is key to doing our jobs well.

During the organizational assessment completed last year, PUSD employees said that internal communications had to be improved. To facilitate communications between departments and schools, we are holding regular inter-department meetings and we will continue our ongoing efforts to increase the frequency and quality of communications. To enhance internal communications, we've created the *PUSD Insider*, and set three goals:

- To inform you about opportunities for professional development and advancement and any changes that may affect your job
- To highlight stellar employees and their accomplishments and share best practices with our colleagues
- To inform you about some of the benefits of being a PUSD employee

With the approval of Measure TT, PUSD voters demonstrated widespread support and renewed hope for our schools and students. Realizing the vision of excellence at PUSD is within our reach. The coming months will bring triumphs and challenges as we turn vision into reality, but I know that you will continue to strive to help our students excel.

Edwin Diaz  
Superintendent



Research technician Jean Matsuzawa is congratulated by Supt. Edwin Diaz for winning the October 2008 "Get It Done" Award. The award recognizes stellar employees who complete tasks promptly, meet deadlines, demonstrate a problem-solving attitude and flexibility under pressure.

P.S. *PUSD Insider* is a temporary name for this newsletter. Help name this newsletter by voting. See page 4.

## APPROACH TO EXCELLENCE II: OUR GOALS IN 2008-09

In October, the Board of Education approved the Approach to Excellence II, which will guide the work of PUSD staff in 2008-09. **PUSD's overall goal is to dramatically improve achievement so that all students are prepared for college and careers when they graduate.** To meet this goal, Approach to Excellence II focuses on three major areas, each with an interim goal to be achieved by June 2011.

- **Student Achievement:** Deploy powerful instruction, professional development and assessment to raise PUSD's Academic Performance Index (API) to 800 or higher by 2011. PUSD's 2007-08 API score is 720.
- **Rigor and Relevance:** Implement initiatives such as Excellent Middle Schools, Muir Reinvention and Multiple Pathways to accelerate student achievement. By 2011, PUSD will have successfully implemented challenging academic and technical study pathways for 12 of the 15 industry sectors.
- **Organizational Capacity:** Improve and sustain organizational effectiveness through development of stellar employees, responsive service, accountability, high quality communications and engagement, and relevant facilities, systems and technology. By 2011, PUSD will receive external certification of organizational effectiveness.

For the full *Approach to Excellence II* report, go to [www.pusd.us](http://www.pusd.us).

"Be the  
change  
you want  
to see in  
the  
world."  
- Gandhi

## STELLAR EMPLOYEES



Cleveland Elementary School fourth grade teacher Veronica Serrano was surprised with \$1,200 in school supplies from Office Max as part of the company's national "A Day Made Better" event to support teachers..

### Congratulations to:

- Dr. Merian Stewart who was promoted to principal of Washington Middle School
- Keith Derrick, who was named principal of Marshall. He joined Marshall as a Social Science teacher in 1992 and was most recently Assistant Principal in charge of instruction and curriculum.
- Gregorio Luna, who was named Assistant Principal at Washington Middle
- Charlene Tucker, named Assistant Principal at Wilson Middle School

### Welcome to:

- Joyce Yeh, new Budget Director. She joins the PUSD team from the L.A. County Office of Education.
- Anita Weems, new Director of Accounting and Payroll. She joins PUSD from the Chino Valley Rangers and Palomar College.
- Scott Forrest, new Assistant Principal at Marshall Fundamental School. He joins PUSD from the Escondido Union High School District.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As school employees, we know that learning new skills is essential to success. The more we learn, the better we are at our jobs, and the more we can benefit the students we serve.

Some Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities:

- **SB 472 Math Institute** for Grades K-6, Pre-Algebra and Algebra  
December 6, January 10 and January 31. Time: 8 a. m. – 3:30 p. m.

For more information about ongoing professional development, contact Shannon Malone at (626) 396-3600, ext. 88704.

The Pasadena Educational Foundation (PEF) offers grants for field trips and other programs. Visit [www. Pasedfoundation.org](http://www.Pasedfoundation.org) for more information.



Sierra Madre School third grade teacher Suzanne York experienced zero gravity as part of Northrup Grumman's "Weightless Flights of Discovery." Suzanne worked with scientists from Cal Tech, JPL and UC Berkeley to design in-flight experiments including how zero gravity affects density. She also participates in PUSD's Teach American History program.

## THE 411

### PUSD Organizational Chart

Still confused by all the changes in personnel and departments? Check out the 2008-09 organizational chart at [www.pusd.us](http://www.pusd.us).

### Attention Holiday Shoppers!

Macy's Pasadena on South Lake re-opens November 22 and you can shop and support PUSD students at the same time! You can get up to 20% off when you purchase a \$10 ticket from the Pasadena Educational Foundation. All proceeds of the ticket sales benefit school PTAs and PEF. Tickets are available the PEF office, Room 214 at the Ed Center or contact Phyllis Calderon at 626.396.3600 ext. 88352.

### Have you updated your TB tests?

Tuberculosis is a highly contagious respiratory disease. To

protect the health of students and employees, California law requires that all public school employees present tuberculosis screening certification every four years. You will not be allowed to work (or be paid) if you do not meet this important health requirement. Free screenings are available at the Ed Center clinic.

**Retirement Benefits:** The news in the financial markets can be alarming, but it is important to know that CalSTRS and CalPERS retirement benefits are protected by law. The pension system is designed to withstand market fluctuations. For more information, go to [www.calstrs.com](http://www.calstrs.com) or [www.calpers.ca.gov](http://www.calpers.ca.gov)

### Discounted Tickets

Are you planning a family outing to one of Southern California's amusement parks this winter? PUSD employees can get discounted tickets to movies and amusement parks through UTP or CSEA. Visit your union's website for more information.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

PUSD's top priority is to dramatically improve student achievement so that all students are prepared for college and careers when they graduate. PUSD's goal is to raise our API to 800 or higher by 2011. PUSD's 2007-08 API score was 720. In order to meet this goal, API must grow by a minimum of 31 points each year.

### Student Data as Starting Points

Real, sustainable educational excellence begins with sound data to guide what and how we teach. As PUSD moves towards a more rigorous data driven culture of excellence, PUSD school teams have begun learning to use Data Director, a new online data management system that helps administrators and teachers pinpoint individual



students' strengths and weaknesses. Data Director gathers State assessment data, demographic information and grades from SIS, District tests and daily classroom assessments so

that teachers and schools can then tailor instruction and intervention based on students' needs. The new system allows us to analyze and create custom district, school and classroom-level reports on student patterns and needs, core programs and interventions and areas that require further professional development. To learn more about Data Director or to sign up for training, contact Jean Matsuzawa at [jmatsuzawa@pusd.us](mailto:jmatsuzawa@pusd.us) or Michelle Crow at [mcrow04@pusd.us](mailto:mcrow04@pusd.us).

### Mid-Term Exams and College Applications

PUSD schools focus on the future in November and December as students take mid-term exams, complete projects and make winter holiday plans. In November, high school students took the California High School Exit Exam and completed applications to University of California, California State University campuses, community colleges or private universities. CSU and UC applications are due November 30.

### Powerful Parent Engagement

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled November 18 and 19. Teachers meet individually with parents to discuss each student's work, strengths and challenges.

## RIGOR & RELEVANCE

To help meet our goal of successfully implementing challenging academic and technical study pathways for 12 of the 15 industry sectors by 2011, PUSD has won a \$125,000 grant, awarded by ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career, with support from The James Irvine Foundation. The grant supports our efforts to establish a district-wide multiple pathways program. The program provides rigorous and relevant instruction for middle and high students, increases graduation rates, eases the transition to college and boost students' earning power after graduation.

A pathway is a program of academic and technical study centered on a California industry sector. The multiple pathways strategy offers hands-on learning opportunities to prepare students for real-world success. High school students pursue a pathway over multiple years and graduate prepared for the full range of post-graduation options, which can include two or four-year college, certification programs, apprenticeships or formal job training. By offering multiple pathways, schools encourage students to select from a variety of themed programs in any of California's 15 major industry sectors— including finance and business; health science and medical technology; building and environmental design; engineering; and arts, media, and entertainment.



## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: ACCOUNTABILITY ON THE JOB

In the public sector, we often hear the word "accountability." But what does it mean to us? What does it look like? We asked Mike Seaton, PUSD's new Executive Director of Accountability.

### Define accountability for us.

Basically, it's saying you're going to do something — and then doing it. As public school workers, it means that we have a responsibility to taxpayers to do our job well, to evaluate our work consistently, and to report the results frankly. And if something doesn't work, to correct it promptly.

### So how does accountability apply to my job?

As school workers, the quality of our work has a tremendous impact on the success of thousands of children. Whether you're a principal, teacher, custodian

or payroll clerk, you have a crucial role in the academic achievement of our students.

### ***With the amount of work that I have, how can I even think about accountability?***

Nobody ever said that work was going to be easy. But you and I are lucky to have a job with tangible results: student achievement. Simply keep our client—students—in mind as you do your job. That phone call you just sent to voicemail? It could be a parent who is calling to get homework for the child who missed school today. So answer the phone before it rings three times. That small typo in the custodian's new address? It means that his or her paycheck went to another address, causing headaches, worry — and missed time at the school site.



*Mike Seaton is PUSD's Executive Director of Accountability/ Student Achievement*



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## GREAT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SHAKEOUT DRILL

Are you prepared for a major earthquake?

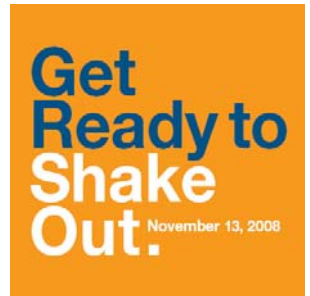
On November 13, PUSD schools and offices participated in the Great Southern California ShakeOut drill, the largest earthquake preparedness exercise in state history. The drill tested emergency procedures and prepared students, teachers and staff for future emergencies. More than four million Southern Californians participated in the drill, which simulated a magnitude 7.8 earthquake along the southern end of the San Andreas Fault.

“The drill provided a positive learning experience for all students, teachers, administrators and staff so that we can all be better prepared,” said Scott Walter, Coordinator of PUSD’s new Emergency Preparedness office.

He reminds PUSD employees to:

- Test safe “drop, cover and hold” procedures
- Test evacuation routes and procedures
- Test two-way emergency radio communications

To learn more about how to prepare for emergencies, check with your supervisor or contact Scott at swalter@pusd.us.



## PARTICIPATE!

### NAME THIS NEWSLETTER!

And you thought election season was over. Vote and help us name this newsletter!

- A. PUSD 411
- B. PUSD Insider
- C. PUSD Buzz
- D. PUSD Confidential
- E. PUSD ??? (Your suggestions here)

Send your vote to hramirez@pusd.us by December 4, 2008.

**\*SUBMIT A STORY IDEA!** Send ideas for the next issue to hramirez@pusd.us Dec. 4, 2008.

**\*EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES:** Interested in helping organize fun employee activities like PUSD night at Dodger Stadium or an evening at the Hollywood Bowl? Let us know! Contact hramirez@pusd.us.

### RECIPES & MISCELLANY

Senior Human Resources Assistant Maria Sheridan contributes this quick and easy recipe for a Thanksgiving side dish:

#### Maria’s Legendary Broccoli Salad

- 1 large head of broccoli, cut into small pieces
- ½ cup chopped red onion
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- ½ cup red onions
- ½ cup cranberries
- ½ cup crumbled bacon (optional)
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- ¼ cup sugar

Mix first six ingredients in a large bowl. In a small bowl, dissolve sugar in the vinegar, add mayonnaise and mix. Mix the salad and the dressing just before serving.

**Maria wins a \$10 gift certificate to Jamba Juice courtesy of PEF for submitting her idea.**

## CALENDAR

November 16	National Education Week	December 19	Shortened Day
November 18	Board of Education Meeting	Dec. 22 - Jan. 2	Student Winter Recess
November 25	Board of Education Recognitions	December 22-23	Schools/Ed Center closed*
November 26	Elementary & Middle School Parent/Teacher Conferences	December 23	Classified Payday* (*this date is subject to change)
	High School Staff Development	December 24- 25	Christmas Holiday
November 27-28	Thanksgiving Holiday	December 29-30	Schools/Ed Center closed*
December 2	Board of Education Special Meeting	December 31-	
December 9	Board of Education Meeting	January 1	New Year’s Holiday
December 10	Certificated Payday	January 2	Schools/Ed Center closed*
		January 5	Return from Winter Recess