

A Message from Superintendent Edwin Diaz

Welcome to the premiere issue of *PUSD Parent*, our new monthly newsletter for the parents, guardians and families of Pasadena Unified School District students. This newsletter is one way that we are enhancing communications with families and unifying our efforts to help all students excel.



The Excellent Middle Schools program continues to move forward as we prepare for the next phase of reforms: realigning grade configurations to better meet the learning needs of our students in settings that are more developmentally

appropriate. Earlier this month, we held a series of community forums to update families on the progress of the new block schedules, advisory periods and other reforms at our middle schools. We also sought input from families and community members on the next phase of the program. We will compile responses from the forums and prepare a recommendation for the Board of Education to reconfigure most schools to K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 starting in the 2010-2011 school year. We hope to complete decisions on all grade reconfiguration in the next two months.

Choices for high quality public education in PUSD are expanding with the addition of programs designed to help our children flourish on a global scale.

* An acclaimed dual language immersion program will launch this Fall at San Rafael Elementary. Students can learn and become fluent in English and Spanish or Mandarin. Kindergarten and first grade classes begin in September 2009

* The Early College High School begins September on the campus of Pasadena Community College. PUSD students can graduate with a high school diploma *and* an A.A. degree. Enrollment in the first year is limited to 40 ninth graders who have demonstrated academic promise but are not currently achieving at full potential. More information will be available soon.

* Plans are underway to bring Multiple Pathways in our schools. The programs prepare high school students for college and careers in thematic academies aligned with specific sectors of California industries such as science, engineering and the arts. Pending approval of a grant, Multiple Pathways will be in PUSD schools in 2010-11.

Difficult budget decisions will be made by the Board of Education this month as we struggle to meet a budget shortfall of \$10 million this year and \$3.8 million in 2009-10. We will continue to keep you updated as the budget process moves forward. For more information about the PUSD budget, visit www.pusdbudget.org.

NEWS FROM PUSD SCHOOLS

PARENTS REACH OUT

To build consistent avenues of communication between PUSD and families, the Superintendent's Advisory Council (SAC), which includes parent representatives from every school, meets monthly for updates that they in turn share with all families at their schools. Parents use weekly newsletters, e-mail, phone blasts, monthly coffee klatches, websites, posters/banners, mail to the homes and bulletin boards.

PUSD Parent asked SAC parent representatives how they partner with schools. Here's what they said:

** Longfellow Elementary's PTA serves up coffee and information for parents on the blacktop on the second Friday of every month. Longfellow also offers an annual Family Math Night where families are invited to a hands-on workshop where they can learn games that make math easy and fun.

** Don Benito's PTA produces the weekly *Bobcat Bulletin* that is chock-full of information about policy, school fundraisers, summer math clubs, grandparents' day and reminders of important school days.

CRUCIAL TESTS JUST WEEKS AWAY

PUSD students will take the California Standards Tests in early May, just a few weeks away. CST's are crucial to determine what and how well our children are learning. The tests help identify areas where your child may be excelling and where he or she may need extra help reaching grade level standards.

Help your child do well on the tests by scheduling medical appointments after the tests; ensuring that he or she gets plenty of rest the night before; eats a healthy breakfast and arrives at school on time.

PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN ROUND UP IS HERE!

Early registration for next Fall's Pre-K and Kindergarten begins March 16 at all PUSD elementary schools. Schools invite families and students to visit campuses, tour classrooms to find out more about PUSD's early childhood programs. Registration is available through September, but early registration is recommended to allow school staff to better plan for your child's first day of school.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY BEE WINNERS

More than 150 third through eighth grade students competed in PUSD's annual African American History Bee held February 26 at Eliot Middle School. Student teams answered questions about the accomplishments of our nation's African Americans.

The McKinley team (center in green shirts) took first place in the third and fourth grade division *and* the fifth and sixth grade division. The Sierra Madre team won the middle school division.

