

Fall 2014

PJUSD Spotlight on Excellence



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Message from the Superintendent

Fall Events

October 20, 2014
Special Board Meeting
D/O Board Room, 7pm

November 3, 2014
Regular Board Meeting
D/O Board Room, 7pm

November 17, 2014
Special Board Meeting
D/O Board Room, 7pm

Board of Trustees:

Bruce Kelly
President



Jose Reynoso
Vice President



Grace McCord
Clerk



Michele Bays



Amy Hussar



Kay Johnson



Janie Quiroba



Our new year is an exciting one, as we opened the school year with an inspiring “Back to School Block Party,” and welcomed Doug Curry from Amarillo, Texas to speak with our staff and community about the importance of continuing education past high school. We were pleased to learn that Patterson High School received a “Silver” ranking from U.S. News and World Report, which places us among the **top 9% of high schools in the country**, and the top 20% in Northern California.

Our graduation rate is 87.7%; 7.5% **above the state average**. But to prepare our students to be competitive for high-wage jobs in the global economy of the 21st Century, we need to do more. **All of our students need to have a post-secondary plan!** A high school diploma will not be enough. To support this effort, we have hired two more counselors at the high school to help students navigate the process of applying for college or technical schools and to leverage the financial resources available to help make this dream a reality.

We are reaching out to our community partners and implementing the “No Excuses University” model at all of our schools, so that students learn from an early age that they must begin developing a plan for post-secondary education and educate themselves about the institutions that support their career interests. Additionally, we have added Naviance software which will allow students and parents to access critical college planning information from home and work with their high school counselors to determine the best

post-secondary path.

Preparing students for success in the global economy of the 21st Century also requires ongoing training and professional development for our teaching staff. The Patterson Unified School District implemented a new professional development structure and opened a facility to provide training and community workforce development locally. Over the next few years, we will be transitioning to a “one-to-one” student to computer ratio, and have already begun piloting digital textbooks. This monumental shift will require a commitment to maintaining our technology infrastructure and providing the technical and training assistance needed for success.

Finally, as we look forward to the future, the 2014-15 school year affords us the opportunity to reflect on our history as we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Patterson High School and the beginning of our unified school district. There will be Centennial events throughout the year, culminating with a weekend celebration, all-class reunion, and football game during Labor Day 2015.

We’re looking forward to a wonderful year, and invite our friends in Patterson and our surrounding communities to join us for these celebratory festivities.



School Security & Student Attendance —By Shawn Posey

Beginning in July of 2014, Patterson Joint Unified School District employed three full time security officers. One of the officers is stationed at Creekside Middle School; one officer is stationed at Patterson High School and a Supervisor of Security works out of Del Puerto High School. The Security Supervisor is also mobile and may respond to calls from businesses, accompany administration on home visits, and patrol neighboring parks and neighborhoods to monitor student attendance. The primary role of the Patterson Security Department is to be proactive in providing a safe and secure campus that promotes a quality educational experience for our students.

Additionally, the Patterson security team provides assistance to the businesses of Patterson on minimum days by patrolling the businesses and assisting with any issues arising from student behavior. The security team has worked tirelessly to make contact with each business leader and provide a direct line of communication with each business.

In the matter of student attendance, Patterson Unified School District is proud of its 96% attendance rate. Through the Student Attendance Review process, students who have “at-risk” attendance are identified by the school site’s attendance clerk and receive intervention designed to correct their behavior. Through our partnership with the Center for

Human Services Department, the District Attorney’s Office, and other agencies, Patterson Unified School District has seen an increase in attendance days for 72 percent of the students who were identified through this process.



PJUSD Security Team

Human Resources— By Shawn Posey

One hundred percent of Patterson Teachers are fully credentialed and meet Highly Qualified Status under No Child Left Behind. As of publishing of this document, Patterson Joint Unified School District hired 43 new teachers for the 2014-2015 school year. These new teachers, in combination with a new curriculum and common core standards, have created an exciting time for education in the City of Patterson. With the opening of our professional development center, the school district is now positioned to become a county leader in professional development. The two room training facility will provide the district, and the community, access to a state-of-the-art facility located inside the City of Patterson.

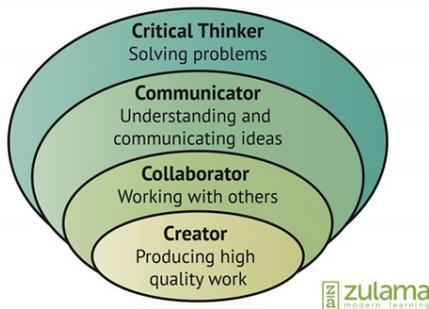
Business and Finance —by Steve Menge

The start of this year also brings a second year of positive funding for schools. We are putting those funds to good use. We have hired additional teachers to reduce class sizes, expanded the number of counselors and coaches, and added security officers district-wide. Our technology continues to expand and evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of our staff and students. We continue to seek quality applicants to provide additional yard supervision at all of our schools. We look forward to providing students with additional expanded learning opportunities throughout the school year. In the process of developing our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), we heard from community stakeholders that there are many student needs. These additional funds will allow us to enhance learning opportunities for all students.

21st Century Learning and the Four C's—by Veronica Miranda

21st Century Learning, what does that really mean? We have new standards, new assessments and new curriculum. So what does that transfer to? It transfers to change, plain and simple. We need to prepare our students for the future and we need to embrace the rapid rate of change. Many jobs that exist in 2012 did not exist in 2002. Preparing students for the 21st century isn't just about technology or about skills for the global economy. Our classrooms need to change to meet this need. At Patterson Unified we are embracing a framework for 21st Century Learning. We are building upon support systems to deliver ongoing Professional Development to our teachers that align with the new standards, curriculum, assessments and learning environments.

The Four Cs of 21st Century Skills



Alongside our teachers we are embracing the mindset that we must address the 4 C's of 21st Century Learning. The 4 C's consist of Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity. **Critical thinking** can be defined as being a problem solver. We need to provide opportunities for our students to grapple with infor-

mation and learn to solve interesting problems. We need to encourage them to come up with different solutions to the same problem. **Communication** is the ability to share ideas and information with one another. This skill is vital to every organization, team and relationship. We are paying attention to how we can create stronger communicators in the classroom, specifically through writing. **Collaboration** is the ability to work effectively and respectfully with different teams. It also includes sharing responsibilities for collaborative work and valuing the contributions made by each team member. **Creativity** can be described as creating new and worthwhile ideas. Creativity encompasses thinking creatively, working creatively with others and implementing innovations. The combination of these skills will lead to success in our students. Research indicates that today's students will go through 10 jobs by the time they are 38. So the question is no longer what will you be when you grow up but rather what are you really good at?

In the past year, our teachers, students and parents have seen many changes in classroom instruction. As you walk our classrooms you will see the 4 C's in action. Teachers are moving towards facilitating learning and students are collaborating like they never have in the past. You will see the creativity of your child explode in the coming years. Technology is a tool that is making that easier to share. We have added over 800 devices to our schools this past year and plan to continue

strengthening learning through digital media in the years to come.

The reality...change is inevitable but students will continue to learn and teachers will continue to teach. It's up to us to set up a climate of success and ensure that all students achieve their potential. No Excuses!

Facilities—by Steve Menge

The District completed Modernization of five schools last year. The projects took a year and half to complete but time invested was worth it when you see the final outcome. The new classrooms and upgrades have made a tremendous difference in the learning environment for our students.

We again will be taking on an exciting addition to our high school as we begin construc-

tion of a new Career Tech building.

This building will house our logistics program that will help prepare our students for the job skills they will need for the type of warehousing jobs that continue to develop in Patterson. The project is funded by both state bond funds and district facility funds.

K-5 Report Cards - by Veronica Miranda



Report Cards!! It's that yellow or white envelope that holds the summary of your child's hard work. Well, report cards are not going anywhere and they are changing for our K – 5 students. Common Core standards are here and our report cards need to reflect the change. The format of the report card is very similar, but the content was revised to address the new Common Core standards. A committee of teachers representing every school at every grade level met last spring and over the summer to recommend revisions. The report card shows your child's ability to demonstrate progress toward college and career readiness. One of the major changes of the report cards is letter grades for grades 1st – 5th grade. The decision was made relative to the fact

that our secondary level already has this scale in place, and parents, students, and staff understand the meaning behind these familiar marks. Students' grades will be based on their knowledge, skills and processes toward meeting the standards Kindergarten will continue to use +,- or a check to express meeting standards, not meeting standards and making progress. We have developed a report card insert to further explain the areas being assessed and provide a more detailed explanation of the standards. Teachers will be reviewing report cards with parents at Parent Conferences as well as providing the report card detail. All school sites will post information on their website, Facebook and in their newsletter. Another change will be the

move to semesters instead of trimesters. Trimesters had been put into place to ease the transition of year round school. This is no longer the case, and for consistency, we are moving to semester grading terms across all grade levels. Teachers will provide progress reports at the end of Quarter 1 and Quarter 3. Report cards will be provided at the end of Semester 1 and Semester 2. Refer to your district wide calendar for exact dates. As we use this report card, we welcome feedback. Please talk to your child's teacher, email the school or provide feedback at the end of the year survey. Thank you.

Writing Matters!! - by Veronica Miranda

Writing Matters in Every Classroom; this is the title of the book read by our administrative team and our District Lead Teachers last year. As a district, we agree that strengthening the writing of our students is one of the areas of academic focus in our schools.

“The research is undeniable: Using writing to learn strategies as instructional tools to process content in any academic area deepens students’ understanding, brings to the surface confusion and misunderstanding, and informs future instruction.”
- Deborah Murasso

One of the steps taken in addressing our writing focus was to create a writers handbook for our students. This began last year with a committee of teachers and administrators. This handbook came to life with help of many of our teachers and is a work in progress as we implement and refine the process. The Secondary Writing Handbook was published in June 2014. K -12 teachers were introduced and provided with an overview of the Secondary Writing Handbook district wide on September 10th. Secondary students were introduced to the Secondary Writing Handbook shortly after. The Elementary Writing Handbook is in production and will be published by the end of October. Both of these Writing Handbooks will be available to you on the district website under the Educational Services tab.

The Writing Handbook was created with a vision statement that is included in its beginning pages and explains our purpose:

“Students from the Patterson Joint Unified School District will graduate from high school proficient in writing, reading, speaking and listening skills. They will develop 21st century skills and use academic language to communicate effectively and concisely across all subjects and genres.”

The introduction and importance of the Writing Process is explained as follows:

“Every writer goes through a process; writing does not just come instantly to people. It is an experience that is practiced over and over. It takes time and guidance to learn to write proficiently, actually it is a process that never ends, and it is constantly evolving. Writing is expected in every part of our lives and as writers we are often judged by the way we present ourselves through writing. This is why we must learn the process, so we can practice, refine and continually grow in our ability to write.”

With the focus on writing comes assessments to measure the growth of our students. Many assessments in all subject areas have already begun to include quick write responses. It is no longer the simple answer but an explanation of why or how did you arrive at your answer that is required. This is modeled after our new state assessment titled the CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress). There are sample questions you can view at <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/ca/practice-test-ca/>. You will be prompted to be

logged in as a student. We have implemented additional on-demand assessments for our students K – 12. These assessments will be scored with newly adopted rubrics that match the state rubrics adopted by California. Our teachers are currently going through a calibration process to review the use of rubrics and to gain consistency in scoring. An opportunity for community training and participation will be offered in May 2015.