

The Placerita Prospector



Placerita Junior High School
Santa Clarita, CA 91321

Visit us on the Web
Home Page: www.hartdistrict.org/placerita

25015 N. Newhall Avenue
(661) 259-1551

Volume 36, Issue 1

August 2009

Inside This

Issue:

- Welcome Back!
- PAC News on page 2

Did you know...?

The *Placerita Prospector* is available on the school website by the 1st of each month at

www.hartdistrict.org/placerita

Printing and bulk mail delivery delays may cause your newsletter to be delayed up to ten days from the time of mailing. Get it first by going online!

Follow Placerita Jr. High School on Twitter at www.twitter.com/placeritajhs

A periodic publication of the Placerita Junior High School PAC

- Principal:
Mr. Michael Kuhlman
mkuhlma@hartdistrict.org
- President:
Ms. Stephanie Linn
the4linns@ca.rr.com
- Editor:
Ms. Wendy Altman
scvwendy@yahoo.com

Principal's Perspective

BY MICHAEL KUHLMAN, PRINCIPAL

Greetings Placerita Families:

Welcome to the new school year. While I'm sure that many are sad to see the summer go, we are excited to launch a new start for Placerita Junior High School! Because the date for the start of classes is almost upon us, I'd like to take a few moments to update some information about the coming school year.

Starting on a High Note

Plan for traffic during the first two weeks of school as you drop off and pick up your child. Traffic usually diminishes as parents learn options for how and where to pick up their children most efficiently. The City of Santa Clarita has completed a summer renovation of 16th Street, which includes new striping and a modified crosswalk area. These changes will enhance the safety of our pedestrian students. However, carpoolers should be aware that the changes may result in some temporary congestion, especially at the end of the school day.

Cafeteria lines are long for the first couple weeks of school as students learn how the system works. Consider having your child bring his/her lunch to school the first few days until the lines go down.

Use of the student planner is a key component to your child's success at Placerita. Consider checking it on a nightly basis to ensure that your child is regularly recording assignments and completing homework in a timely fashion.

Log on to *Snapgrades* on a regular basis to check on your child's progress. Have regular conversations with your children about their academic progress.

Encourage your child to get involved! Join a club, learn to play an instrument or participate on an athletic team. In a similar way, consider getting involved yourself by volunteering with our Parent Advisory Council. Learn more about these opportunities by going to our website and exploring the link labeled "Parent info/PAC."

Modernization

This past school year, Placerita underwent a \$9.3 million dollar modernization of our school's facili-

ties. Beginning in the summer of 2008, extensive work was begun to update the school's infrastructure. Returning 8th grade families will recall that much of our campus was dug up as new water, data, electrical, and sewage lines were run throughout campus.

In the fall, four of the buildings on the east side of our campus were completely renovated. Improvements included the installation of new flooring, cabinetry, furniture, paint, and updated classroom technology. These classrooms, now offer students the opportunity to explore dance, music, drama, and the industrial arts in beautiful, new, modern amenities. Among the many exciting changes to celebrate about this phase of the project, we are especially proud of: our new state-of-the-art computer lab; a new dance room; a modern home arts classroom; and a new music room to house our award-winning Orchestra, Band, and Choral programs.

Over winter break, work began on the modernization of our gymnasium, the locker rooms, and the administration building. Our new gym features two completely renovated locker rooms, a new ventilation system, a refurbished gym floor, and some eye-popping graphics that celebrate Miner Pride. Our administration building features a revised layout that should enhance our ability to serve students, parents, and the community. We now have an actual *front entrance* to the school adjacent to the flag pole. Visitors will no longer have to park in the east lot and walk across the campus in order to access the main office.

There are many additional improvements, including a new library/media center, three new science classrooms, a new Miner Morning TV Studio, fire alarm upgrades, and upgraded technology classrooms across our campus. Parents will be pleased to see announcements projected daily on our new electronic marquee at the front of the school. All of it adds up to a beautiful new school with facilities to match the changes and improvements we have been making to our instructional programs. We know that these changes will only support our efforts to help all students succeed at Placerita Junior High. If you haven't been by the school

(Continued from page 1)

lately, you will be impressed with the changes. It truly is a new start for Placerita Junior High School!

Wardrobe Policy

At the beginning of each school year, I often meet with parents with questions about Placerita’s wardrobe policy. Here are a few of the most frequently asked questions:

“Why should parents support the Wardrobe Policy?”

Our wardrobe policy enhances campus security. Unwanted visitors are obvious to campus security and, as a result, our campus supervisors and administrators are assisted in their efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment for all students.

The wardrobe policy helps children develop the healthy perspective that *who you are* is more important than *what you look like*. Our wardrobe policy deemphasizes the fixation on outward appearance and helps us cultivate character development and academic achievement.

The wardrobe policy reinforces the healthy message that children should respect rules and authority, both at school and at home. Opting children out of one of the school’s policies subtly communicates that the rules are negotiable. We continue to make revisions to the policy as we respond to the concerns of supportive parents. This year, students will be allowed to wear *jeans* in any of the school’s accepted colors, provided that they not excessively baggy, faded, or worn. Cut-offs, jeans with holes, or jeans with torn hems are not permitted.

“My child is a good student. What difference does it make for one more opt-out?”

Last year, over 97% of our students adhered to the school

wardrobe policy. However, each new child that is opted out from the policy erodes our effectiveness and undermines those of us responsible for maintaining a safe and productive campus environment. Each new request for an opt-out prompts additional students to lobby their parents to be exempted from school rules. Ultimately, the wardrobe policy requires *your* participation to be effective.

On occasion we talk with parents with the best of intentions who have made deals with their children – promising to opt them out if they improve grades, behavior or attendance. While we wholeheartedly support a positive incentive plan, we respectfully request that parents explore alternative incentives that do not reward students with the option of abridging school rules.

“Why is the wardrobe such a big deal?”

We know the wardrobe works! Staff members who have worked at Placerita since before the implementation of the policy can attest to its very real benefits – helping to maintain a campus environment that is safe, orderly, and productive. Thank you for supporting our efforts to keep Placerita a great place for all students to learn and grow.

Open Communication

I encourage you to check the website for up-to-date information on what to expect for the start of the school year. In addition, a campus map has been included in your registration packet which includes new classroom locations and some changed classroom numbering. Please review this information with your child prior to the start of classes on the 13th of August.

There are many exciting things in store for the Placerita community in the coming months. We look forward to the start of a great year!

Placerita PAC Meeting Schedule for the 2009-2010 School Year:
Tuesdays from Noon-1:30 p.m. — Tanner Hall

Whether you are new to Placerita Junior High School or a returning Placerita family, I would like to welcome you to the 2009-2010 school year on behalf of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). PAC meetings are a great way to stay informed about what is going on at Placerita, and they give parents an opportunity to hear from our administrators, teachers, and community leaders about important issues regarding our children’s education. We know that, as our children transition to junior high, there can be a feeling of “being out of the loop,” and PAC meetings provide a chance to connect with other parents

and to see what opportunities there are to get involved and stay informed at Placerita! The meetings are generally held the second Tuesday of the month and begin at noon, with the exception of our January meeting. Lunch is served at each meeting and younger siblings are always welcome. We are looking forward to seeing you at our first meeting on Tuesday, September 15th!

Stephanie Linn
PAC President

PAC Meetings 2009-2010:

- Tuesday, September 15
- Tuesday, October 13
- Tuesday, November 17
- December—NO Meeting
- THURSDAY, January 28—6:30 pm—8:00 pm Evening Meeting
- Tuesday, February 9
- Tuesday, March 9
- Tuesday, April 13
- May—NO Meeting
- June—NO Meeting