



# school bulletin

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December 19, 2008

## CAMS, Poly Rank Among Best in U.S.

California Academy of Math and Science was selected as one of the top 100 high schools in the nation in the current issue of U.S. News and World Report.

CAMS is one of three schools featured on the U.S. News website with a three-minute video and a 12-item photo gallery. Both showcase the school robotics team, the "Nerd Herd," that has successfully performed in university-level competitions.

Polytechnic High School also made the prestigious national ranking as a Silver Medalist, placing among the top 604 schools in the country.

The 2009 U.S. News & World Report America's Best High Schools methodology was developed by School Evaluation Services, a K-12 education data research business run by Standard & Poor's. Its annual ranking is based on the key principles that a great high school must serve all its students well, and must produce measurable academic outcomes to show it is successfully educating its student body across a range of performance indicators.

A high school is recognized as a top school if it:

- Achieves proficiency rates on state tests for their least advantaged student groups that exceed state averages, and
- Prepares its students for college, as measured by student participation and performance on Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exams.

## Project TEAM, Male Academy Save Lives

"I thought there was no hope for me."

From neighborhoods that have been troubled by gang violence, a new generation of high school students leaders and positive role models is emerging, thanks to two innovative efforts in the Long Beach Unified School District.

Project TEAM's intensive counseling efforts and the new Male Academy's empowerment of at-risk young men are changing lives and futures. Fewer clashes and reduced tensions between races have been reported by schools this fall because of student involvement in these life-changing interventions.

"In the ninth and tenth grades, I was wild," Arnulfo Osuna, a Jordan senior told the Board of Education at a recent workshop. "I was off the wall. I was a disaster."

There was a lot of racial tension at school, he said. Then Project TEAM stepped in.

"My counselor said something to me. He grabbed me where I was standing and began working with me." Arnulfo has improved his

(Continued on next page)



**NERD HERD** — Two members of CAMS' Nerd Herd robotics team, Jenny Zhang and Max Friefeld, launch their underwater robot in the university pool on the California State University Dominguez Hills campus. CAMS now ranks 26th among the nation's 21,069 public high schools in U.S. News & World Report's America's Best High Schools.

## Robinson Named National Honor Roll Finalist

Jackie Robinson Academy is one of only 25 schools selected by the National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) as finalists for the 2009 National Excellence in Urban Education Award.

The finalists were selected from among a field of applicants that includes National Blue Ribbon School Award recipients, National Title I Distinguished Schools, and many that have been recognized among the best schools in their states.

The finalists, plus an additional 18 Honor Roll Schools, including International Elementary School, will be listed on the NCUST website.

In order to be eligible to compete for the award, applicants were required to meet 11 rigorous criteria, including proficiency rates on state assessments that exceeded state averages, high achievement, high attendance rates, low

suspension and expulsion rates for all of the demographic groups, high graduation rates, attainment of NCLB adequate yearly progress, and other indicators of academic excellence. The schools must meet low-income criteria and have non-selective admissions policies. Only 43 applicants from across the nation met these rigorous criteria. All of them are listed on NCUST's 2009 National Honor Roll.

The 25 finalists presented the strongest evidence of high levels of achievement for all of the students they serve. They will receive on-site visits that will lead to the selection of 10 winners that will be recognized at the 2009 NCUST Symposium May 7-8 in San Diego.

Winners receive \$1,000, a large banner for their school, a commemorative photo album, a profile on the NCUST website and complimentary travel and registration for two people to the national symposium.

## Districts Need Flexibility to Cope with Cuts

By Chris Steinhauser  
Superintendent of Schools

California's estimated \$11 billion budget crisis this month jumped to an estimated \$14 billion deficit, described by the Governor as Armageddon if it is not resolved soon.

If the state's current recommendations for budget reductions are implemented, the progress schools have made in closing the achievement gap between majority and minority students will stop. Our legislators must find ways to balance the state budget that do not hurt the chances of our students achieving the American dream.

If our lawmakers cannot balance the state's budget without major reductions to education funding, then the Governor and legislature must give local school districts total flexibility on how they spend state resources to educate students.

The state budget crisis provides a perfect opportunity to allow local school districts to use limited state funds where they will do the most good in our schools. One of the ways to provide that flexibility is to allow local school districts to allocate state revenue that has been tied up in restricted categorical funds to offset the inevitable education cuts this year.

In some respects, categorical requirements have restricted school districts to do less with more. We now urgently need to have wise local discretion in order to do more with less.

The 71 categorical programs in California have been expanding over the years because legislators have been unwilling or unable to resist the temptation to identify some need and carve out a portion of the education budget exclusively for it. We cannot afford a feast for some categoricals and famine for other excellent proven programs that work for thousands of our students.

# LB Students More Fit Than County, State

If recent physical performance tests are a valid indication, high school students in the Long Beach Unified School District are getting more fit. They have improved their performance on California physical fitness tests and have surpassed students throughout Los Angeles County and statewide.

## % Meeting Healthy Fitness Zone

	Grade 5	Grade 7	Grade 9
<b>LBUSD</b>	63.5	58.4	69.6
<b>L.A. County</b>	52.4	54.3	59.9
<b>California</b>	55.1	59.3	62.7

Test results released this month show large gains for local ninth graders. Three years ago, just over half of those tested here — 55.6 percent — met 5 of 6 state fitness standards, which is generally considered the benchmark for healthy fitness. Last year, during the most recent tests, seven out of 10 LBUSD ninth graders — 69.6 percent — met the standards.

Physical fitness areas tested include aerobic capacity, body composition, abdominal strength, tensile extensor strength, upper body strength and flexibility. In comparison, only 59.9 percent of the students in L.A. County met the same standards. Statewide, 62.7 percent of California's students met the standards.

In local elementary schools, students here also surpassed both L.A. County and California results on fifth grade physical performance tests. In middle schools, students here outperformed L.A. County but were about one point below statewide results. By ninth grade, that gap was eliminated with local students significantly outpacing their counterparts countywide by nearly 10 points and statewide by approximately seven points.

# Dates to Remember

January	
1	New Year's Day
1	Emancipation Proclamation Anniversary
1-3	Japanese New Year Festivities
5	Dr. George Washington Carver Day
6	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "Preventing Conflicts and Violence," Grades 6-12, ed.tv 8
7	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00 — "Martin Luther King, Jr./Black History Month," Grades K-5, ed.tv 8
8	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "Everyday Creativity," Grades 4-12, ed.tv 8
9	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "The Boyhood of Martin Luther King, Jr.," Grades 4-6, ed.tv 8
13	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "I Have a Dream: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," Grades 9-12, ed.tv 8
14	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00; 15 - 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "Adventures in Poetry: Writing Poetry," Grades 3-6, ed.tv 8
16	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "What Liberty and Justice Mean," Grades 3-4, ed.tv 8
18	World Religion Day
19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
20	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "I Have a Dream: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," Grades 6-8, ed.tv 8
21	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00 — "The Wright Brothers," Grades 3-8, ed.tv 8
22	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "Dare to Dream," Grade 9, ed.tv 8
23	10:00, 11:20, 12:20 — "First Moon, Celebration of the Chinese New Year," Grades 6-12, ed.tv 8
26	Chinese New Year
26	Fall Semester Ends
27	Spring Semester Begins
27	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "Silversmith of Williamsburg," Grade 5, ed.tv 8
28	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00 — "Thomas Edison," Grades 2-8, ed.tv 8
29	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "School Bus Safety," Grades 3-5, ed.tv 8
30	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 — "The Klan: A Legacy of Hate in America," Grades 9-12, ed.tv 8

# Grant Helps High Schools Plan Pathways

No one-size-fits-all approach has worked well in education, not even the separate tracks of academic versus career and technical education. Students need to be prepared for both college and careers. Multiple pathways now offer a promising approach to improving high schools while also connecting with the job needs of the state's struggling economy.

To give students access to education that is rigorous, relevant and inspires them to learn, pathways make learning real for students. Whether preparing to become medical techs or M.D.'s, carpenters or architects, all students want to know, "Why do I need to learn this?"

## Nine Schools Win GEAR UP Grants

One sixth of the schools selected to receive the state's highly competitive California GEAR UP grants this year are from the Long Beach Unified School District. The nine grant-winning schools — among only 54 in California — include Burcham, Butler, Monroe and Tincher K-8 schools; DeMille, Franklin, Hill, and Hoover middle schools; and Lindsey International Studies Magnet.

"We are very fortunate to have so many schools chosen for this year's planning grant," said Frank Gutierrez, program administrator, GEAR UP. "This attests to the exemplary efforts being made by our schools to equip every student for college and careers."

Each school is deeply committed to continue to improve its college-going culture for all students. At the end of this year's planning phase, 45 schools statewide will continue on to participate in the intensive services portion of GEAR UP from 2009 to 2011.

Grant funds of up to \$7,500 per school will be available annually for professional development. GEAR UP sponsors counseling institutes for school staff who provide academic counseling to students. Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) family sessions are provided for all schools.

Each student in GEAR UP schools will receive College: Making It Happen materials and be invited to events hosted at local colleges. GEAR UP supports College Board pre-AP workshops and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) efforts. GEAR UP Educational Trust Awards are also available. Student applications are due at the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) office in March.

The answers for students in the Long Beach Unified School District may come as a result of a recently approved \$125,000 Connect Ed planning grant that could lead to annual \$250,000 implementation grants in future years funded by the James S. Irvine Foundation.

Multiple pathways combine academic and technical programs of study around major industry themes: biomedical and health services, construction and building design, agriculture and renewable resources; and arts, media and entertainment.

These planning grants will help Cabrillo, Jordan, Lakewood, Millikan and Poly high schools convene community planning committees, conduct pathway needs assessments, identify which pathways to develop, and set priorities for professional development and work-based learning.

As demands for a skilled and educated workforce increase, it is essential that high schools prepare students for both college and career, not just one or the other.

Multiple pathways combine rigorous academic instruction with demanding up-to-date technical curriculum and field-based learning. By offering at least six to eight pathways in a district, students will have more options to increase their preparedness for the demands of college and career.

## • Life Changing

(Continued from first page) attendance and grades, he began to see himself as college material and this summer joined the Male Academy.

He went to Cal State Long Beach for a symposium with at-risk minority students who were potential leaders from all Long Beach high schools.

"Right now I'm in El Camino College, attending high school and college at the same time. The Male Academy is Latinos, Hispanics, Asians, Polynesians — we're all together. We're basically the leaders. We all get along. We talk to the younger students at school. We've prevented a lot of fights. I appreciate this program. I like it. It's really helped me. It's still helping me out."

Robert Neal, Jr., a Poly junior, had a similar experience with the Male Academy.

"In the past, I had problems with all different kinds of peers, but the Male Academy brought us all together. At Camp Oakes, I met a lot of students who were really into the gang stuff. I live in an area with lots of gangs. I learned to just walk away because of the Male Academy.

"They have helped me and pretty much everybody I hang out with," he said. "They let me know that I can be a leader. In ninth and tenth grade, I had no plans to go to college, but now I know that I have a future. I didn't know I could be somebody and that I had a future. Not only could I be somebody, I could be a leader."

Male Academy events this year include team building in its Brotherhood Institute, field trips to CSULB, a UCLA football game and "I'm Going to College" program, the Museum of Tolerance, the Museum of Latin American Art, African American Museum and USC tour, a career center orientation, motivational speakers, a presentation by 100 Black Men of Los Angeles and a beach clean up to build peer relationships.

### SCHOOL BULLETIN

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