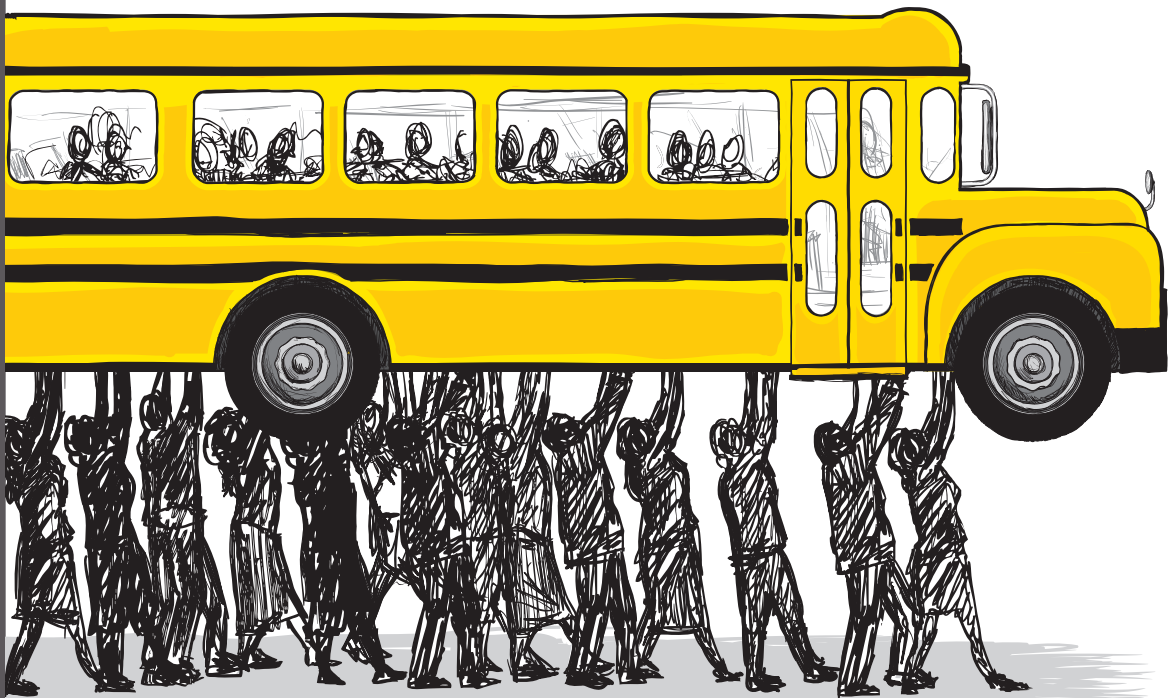


# Discussion Guide

## for College Screenings



# GO PUBLIC

A Day in the Life of an American School District

BLUE FIELD  
PRODUCTIONS

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Community Discussion Guide prepared by  
Sean Graham O’Keeffe and Stephen T. Schroth, PhD

GO PUBLIC: A Day in the Life of an American School District  
produced by Dawn and Jim O’Keeffe

# Message from the Filmmakers

**WE ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST PARENTS** of four children who intentionally chose public school and became intimately involved with our district. It has made us very aware of the challenges facing public education and the criticism it has been enduring for many years. There was a disconnect between this “crisis of confidence” and the reality of the experience we were having.

In the fall of 2010, a parcel tax of \$120 per year (that’s \$10 per month or 33 cents per day) was initiated to offset years of budget cuts to education from the state of California. We joined 800 volunteers who walked the streets and worked the phone bank to alert our city of the financial crisis that was eliminating administrators, teachers, librarians, music specialists, and support staff and of how much this measure would help. We were shocked and dismayed when it did not pass. We discovered many in our community had a perception of our schools that was shaped by negative press, slanted documentaries, word of mouth, fear, and prejudice. Most importantly, these perceptions were formed in a vacuum of personal experience with our public schools. An alarming percentage had not stepped foot onto a local campus in years, if at all.

It occurred to us that maybe it was just a matter of exposing members of our community to our school district and taking them inside the doors for just one typical day. The idea was as simple as that. We believed they would see what we saw: the richness of a diverse student body, the dedication and quality of the teachers and staff, the focus and commitment to academic achievement, the challenges of limited funding, and overall, the value of public education.

We chose to follow 50 subjects spread throughout the 28 campuses and the district headquarters in order to capture a district at work. We brought in 50 different directors (ten being middle and high school students) and crews to present 50 different perspectives. We felt confident that with these 50 stories, we would reveal an authentic picture of a typical day in the life of our school district.

Early on we realized our film would have relevance to communities across our nation who were also dealing with a “crisis of confidence” in their local public schools. We hope this film stimulates meaningful discussions that help shift the conversation to one of understanding, engagement and advocacy.

# About the GO PUBLIC Project

**THE GO PUBLIC** film portrays a day in the life of one American school district. The GO PUBLIC Project is so much more. Built as a response to the continuous negative dialogue surrounding public education, the GO PUBLIC Project seeks to show the nation



and the world that despite the fearful rumors and damning rhetoric, great things are happening in America's public schools. While there are holes to be patched, there are accomplishments to be celebrated. While there are challenging realities to "the system," "the system" as a whole is still effectively educating millions of American students.

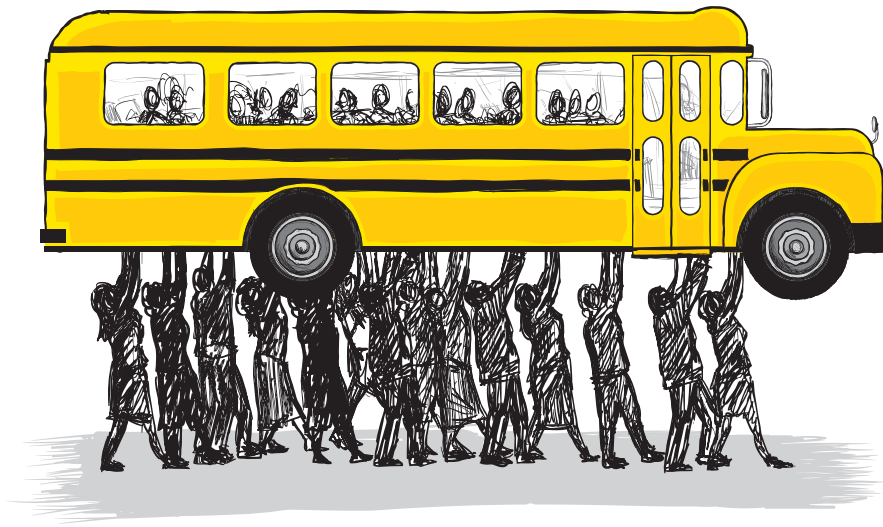
Dismayed by the negative perception of public schools perpetuated by the media and rumor, GO PUBLIC producers and public school parents Jim and Dawn O'Keeffe set out to bring a day in the Pasadena Unified School District to the broader community. On May 8, 2012, fifty directors and film crews followed fifty subjects from sun up to sundown. Edited from over 350 hours of footage, the film knits these stories together. What we see is not a crumbling educational system but a complex and layered portrait that culminates in nothing more or less than a real day inside public schools.

In addition to the feature film, the GO PUBLIC Project produced 50 short films and a series of interview clips. The short films were directed and shot by people ranging from PUSD students to professional directors and camera-persons. These short films and interviews provide a more in-depth look into each subject and their thoughts on education. When considering the immense amount of information, wisdom and experience represented in the lives of the individuals shown in the GO PUBLIC feature film, these extra resources provide invaluable insight. Our hope is that they are utilized along with the feature.

This film is not about the Pasadena Unified School District alone. We hope viewers reconsider their relationships with their local public schools and public education in general. We hope people ask themselves, "What is happening in my district?" And when there are shortcomings, instead of condemning public education, we hope people ask, "What can we do to support our public schools?" Engagement in public education is engagement in your community and its future. As teacher Gareth Siegel suggests in the film, "We can't expect our future to be a whole lot better than the effort we put into our present."

Thank you for engaging in the conversation.

# Purpose of This Discussion Guide



**THIS GUIDE IS INTENDED** to create and foster conversation within the setting of higher education, in particular with students who are going into the field of education. The GO PUBLIC film was made to raise awareness and increase understanding about the reality, not the perception, of public education and to give voice to those actually living the public school experience.

The film is a window into one typical day in the life of a school district. It was made to capture an authentic look at the time, energy, expertise, care and complexity that is involved in molding and transforming students' lives. It was made to inspire communities to support and advocate for their local public schools.

Our hope is that the film will create discussion on many levels about the crucial role of public education within our communities as well as an exploration of the ways in which the system is challenged. Hopefully, these discussions will not only allow students to see public education in a new way but create an environment for solution-based thinking among future educators and others who are involved with public education.

# Reflections on Education

“An enlightened citizenry is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic. Self-government is not possible unless the citizens are educated sufficiently to enable them to exercise oversight. It is therefore imperative that the nation see to it that a suitable education be provided for all its citizens.” – **THOMAS JEFFERSON**

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” – **NELSON MANDELA**

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”  
– **WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS**

“What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must we want for all the children of the community. Anything less is unlovely, and left unchecked, destroys our democracy.” – **JOHN DEWEY**

“Children need all school workers. A person is not ‘just’ a janitor, not ‘just’ a custodian. Janitors can see children when [teachers] don’t see them, and bus drivers recognize that children who are disruptive on the bus are likely to be disorderly in the classroom. They’re partners in education. We need each other to make this work.” – **REV. JESSE JACKSON**

“He who opens a school door, closes a prison.” – **VICTOR HUGO**

“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom”  
– **GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER**

“The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people and be willing to bear the expenses of it. There should not be a district of one mile square without a school in it, not founded by a charitable individual, but maintained at the public expense of the people themselves.” – **JOHN ADAMS**



# Educational Landscape

**IN 1989, PRESIDENT GEORGE H. W. BUSH** called a national education summit, held in the Rotunda at the University of Virginia and attended by the governors from most states. The summit sought to establish academic achievement goals for American schools, and led to the National Educational Goals Panel (NEGP) and the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST). The NEGP and NCEST set guidelines for school curricula, the types of testing that should occur to assess that learning, and the student performance standards that should allow evaluation of this. These initiatives have led to the standards movement, which was further supported by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. As a result of the standards movement, at least 50 different state content standards existed, each with a separate means of aligning curriculum, assessment, and evaluation. In addition to state content standards, a variety of organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the National Research Council (NRC) promulgated standards covering a myriad of topics, including mathematics and science.

The Common Core Standards Initiative, an effort to develop aligned curricula for all states, creates a single set of educational expectations for reading/language arts and mathematics. The reading/language arts standards have been adopted by 46 states; the mathematics standards have been adopted by 45.

The 2008 recession severely affected funding for public education, with cuts in school budgets common across the country. Funding for public schools was further diminished by calls in many constituencies for increased funding for charter schools and vouchers (referred to in many states as “opportunity scholarships”). While schools remain under the control of local school boards, recent state and national policy initiatives have reduced the ability of many school districts to forge their own way.

In 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the United States Department of Education (USDoEd) introduced the Race to the Top program, a \$4.35 billion opportunity for states to compete for funds if criteria are met. Specifically, Race to the Top awards points to states that embrace a set of educational policies and programs, including: adopting the Common Core State Standards Initiative; teacher and administrator reviews using performance-based standards; implementation of data systems; removal of caps on charter schools; prioritization of science, technology, engineering, and math; and improvement in the lowest-performing schools. Although California was not granted Race to the Top funds, it applied and was eligible for an award of up to \$700 million.

In its attempt to qualify for Race to the Top funds, California revised educational policies to evaluate teachers and administrators based on student performance on standardized tests. Because test results are now used in a teacher-specific manner, many educators feel tremendous pressure to further focus efforts on test performance. Emboldened by these shifts in USDoEd and state policies, many charter schools have increased recruitment efforts to attract students otherwise served by the public schools.

# Public Education Fact Sheet

## United States

For a comprehensive look at educational spending by state, please visit:

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/index.aspx>

## State of California

In 2010-11, 6.1 million students attended public schools in California, more than any other state. In contrast, 4.5 million students attended Texas' public schools in the same year.

43.6% of California children come from families with incomes at or below twice the federal poverty line (\$35,136 for a single parent with two children in 2010).

38% of California children have parents who do not speak English fluently.

California schools have endured \$18 billion of funding reductions, lost purchasing power, and deferrals over the past three years (2009-2011).

In 2012, K-12 education (which makes up 40% of the state budget) took 55% of the budget cuts.

California is 47th out of 50 states in per pupil spending – 32% less per student than the national average..

Polls show that most Californians believe that schools should be a top priority, but the state's political gridlock hinders progress.

In 2009, before the latest funding drop, 4.4% of Californians' personal income was spent on public schools. By comparison, it was 5.6% in 1972 when Ronald Reagan was governor. That 1.2% difference is the equivalent of \$22 billion less for public schools.

During the period 2010-2012, more than 30,000 teachers and 10,000 other educators have been laid off.

## Pasadena Unified School District

Pasadena public schools closely mirror the state in terms of demographics, poverty and funding challenges.

Over the last three years (2009-2011), Pasadena Unified School District increased class size in Kindergarten to 3rd grade by 50%, cut central office administration by 33%, eliminated summer school, drastically reduced support staff and increased class size across all grade levels.

PUSD instituted furlough days and benefit caps to share the pain across employee groups.

*See page 21 for sources of above information.*



# Topics to Discuss

## Purpose of Public Education

Public education is foundational to a healthy democracy and developing our humanity. It should help students to not only engage in the public decision-making and economic systems, but transform these systems to work for the entire society.

**"Welcome to your life, there's no turning back!"**

– SIGN ON THE WALL OF CREATIVE ARTS MEDIA AND DESIGN CLASS @ 14:29

Public education expands knowledge and understanding.

**"So what we are going to be doing today is simulate a regular artery and a clogged artery and you have to be engineers. So what is your job going to be?"**

– TEACHER JODIE WEST @ 14:45

Public education helps prepare students for future employment.

**"More students are jumping on board. They want to be pastry chefs, they want to be sous chefs and executive chefs, they want to learn the basic techniques and skills that it takes."**

– CULINARY ARTS  
TEACHER DONNETHA WALLACE @ 6:15



Public education develops an informed citizenry.

**"I just think education is the most crucial thing in life. It equalizes opportunity for everyone."**

– COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER GLORIA REYNOLDS @ 28:27

Public education cultivates a sense of identity as individuals, states and nation.

**"Today I will work hard to learn all that I can learn. I am intelligent. I am wonderful. I know I am very special. I am a winner! A champion!"**

– TEACHER WHITNEY REESE'S 2ND GRADE CLASS (IN UNISON) @ 11:21

**Is public education imperative for freedom and democracy?**

**Is it critical to our culture sustaining itself?**

**"I wanna be the first person in my family to go to college... And if I succeed in doing that I don't have anything to worry about."**

– 9TH GRADE STUDENT DEVIN PERRY @ 22:50



## Positive Impact of Public Education

Public education provides an opportunity for students to be part of a diverse student body.

11TH GRADE JROTC STUDENT SAMANTHA GALE, "PRAISE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION":  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/samantha-gale-11th-grade-jrotc-student-pasadena-high-school/#1>

### What are some of the benefits that come with having a diverse student body?

Public education provides opportunities for all students regardless of background, ethnicity, economic standing, and disabilities.

**"The public schools are the places where we don't turn down people, because of class, because of religion, because of learning disabilities, because of physical handicaps - we don't."**

– SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RAMON MIRAMONTES @ 5:36

### What are some examples from the film of the variety of student needs served?

#### Why is this a critically important part of public education?

Public education provides students with a broad curriculum that prepares them for future academic and work opportunities.

**"This program is completely different. It's a two-way immersion. So they're learning both languages, they aren't stopping one language for the sake of the other. They are thinking about language, they are negotiating meaning!"**

– DUAL LANGUAGE SPANISH IMMERSION TEACHER PRISCILLA LEON @ 16:42

**"Mr. Hines teaches us how to build, work and write programs for the robots."**

– 6TH GRADE STUDENT MERRISSA SHNORHOKIAN @ 15:37

### What are some of the programs captured in the film?

LIST OF PROGRAMS OFFERED IN PUSD

<http://pasadenausd.org/modules/cms/pages.phtml?pageid=297952>

WE SEE ANGEL, IN A WHEELCHAIR, ON A FIELD TRIP TO THE ARMORY CENTER FOR THE ARTS, WHICH IS PART OF AN AWARD-WINNING PUSD PROGRAM CALLED MY MASTERPIECES.  
<http://pasadenausd.org/modules/cms/pages.phtml?&pageid=169838>

Public education provides alternative programs for students who have not been successful in more traditional public school settings.

### **What are some examples of alternative education?**

ALT. ED TEACHER GARETH SIEGEL ON IMPORTANCE OF "ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION," CLIP #1:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/gareth-seigel-teacher-for-at-risk-students-cis-academy/#1>

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT STUDENT (CIS ACADEMY)  
<http://cis.pasadenausd.org/modules/cms/pages.phtml?pageid=162115&SID>

### **What is the long term price to society if we do not provide options and second chances for these students?**

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR CAMILLE PIERCE-TRUJILLO TALKS ABOUT "DIFFERENT STUDENT BACKGROUNDS," CLIP #1:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/camille-pierce-trujillo-guidance-counselor-rose-city-high-school/#1>

ROSE CITY ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL  
<http://rosecity.pasadenausd.org/modules/cms/pages.phtml?pageid=245447>

Public education provides a safe and nurturing environment for all students.

### **What are some examples from the film of teachers and staff creating a nurturing environment?**

**"I'm so proud of you all. Go tell daddy how proud I am of you. OK?"**  
– GUIDANCE COUNSELOR MS. COLLINS MOORE HELPS TWO SISTERS SCHEDULE THEIR CLASSES @ 57:42

**"See, it's says that you returned it today. It's not overdue so you don't have to get an overdue notice, right. You don't want an overdue notice."**  
– LIBRARY COORDINATOR EILEEN ROTH REASSURES A STUDENT CHECKING IN HER BOOK @ 26:53

### **The perception of public schools is often one of a being impersonal and lacking in individual attention. How does this film dispel those stereotypes?**

### **Why is it critically important that the public have a more accurate perception of public education?**



## Challenges in Public Education

**List some of the problems in the public education system today.**

SENIOR MARILYN TRAVIS ON "PERSONAL STRUGGLES WITH SCHOOL," CLIP #4:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/06/marilyn-travis-12th-grader-marshall-school/#4>

**Discuss the impact of budget cuts and inconsistent school funding.**

**"On today's agenda is resolution 2202, the adoption of the decision of the administrative law judge and the non re-employment of certificated employees and if approved will trigger the final lay-off notices to 29 classroom teachers, 20 elementary resource teachers, 9 special education teachers, 7 librarians, 3 music teachers, 1 high school math coach, 1 high school literacy coach and 1 instructional services teacher."**

– UNITED TEACHERS OF PASADENA (UTP) UNION SPOKESMAN AT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING LISTING PENDING BUDGET CUTS @ 1:18:03

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL GARRET NEWSOM ON IMPACT OF "BUDGET CUTS," CLIP #2:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/garrett-newsom-principal-sierra-madre-middle-school/#2>

At the end of the film we discover that middle school librarian Maura Large lost her job, all middle school libraries are now closed and only 2 elementary schools out of 18 have a full time library coordinator.

**How important do you think it is for students to have a library on campus?**

**What are some ways schools can cultivate other funding sources to compensate for a shortage of supplies?**

**"PTA gives us \$100 to spend pretty much every year. And so I used my \$100 to buy the plants so the children could have a planting experience."**

– 2ND GRADE TEACHER WHITNEY REESE @ 50:49

Due to projected budget shortfalls, teachers and staff are routinely pink slipped each year, which creates constant uncertainty within the public school work force.

## **What are the destabilizing effects on schools of teacher and staff “churn”?**

3RD GRADE TEACHER ESTHER CHUN, “BUDGET CUTS AND PINK SLIPS,” CLIP #4:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/esther-chun-3rd-grade-teacher-franklin-elementary-school/#4>

## **How does the constant threat of pink slips impact teacher morale and effectiveness?**

CAROLINE BERMUDEZ ON “BUDGET CUTS IMPACTING GOOD TEACHERS,” CLIP #1:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/caroline-bermudez-principal-franklin-elementary-school/#1>

PUSD is a high poverty district, with 68% of the students participating in free and reduced lunch programs.

## **Discuss the impact of family poverty on public education.**

## **What are some of the ways schools and districts can help students be successful in school despite their economic circumstances?**

## **What are some of the hindrances to achieving this success?**

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SERRANO DISCUSSES “BENEFITS OF THE FAMILY CENTER,” CLIP #1:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/carmen-serrano-principal-madison-elementary-school/>

## **What is the impact of disengaged and unmotivated students on schools?**

**“Girl you gotta start coming to class! Cause we gon lose points! This your second day you missed.”** – 9TH GRADE STUDENT DEVON PERRY @ 22:35

## **How would you describe the students you observed in the film (i.e. happy or bored, engaged or disengaged, responsive or unresponsive, disruptive or obedient)?**

## **What are the most important elements involved in creating a school environment where students are engaged, connected and happy?**

## **How do you engage the parent community and the larger community in support of public education?**

PARENT VOLUNTEER ESMERALDA CEREZO ON “WHY SHE LOVES VOLUNTEERING,” CLIP #6:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/esmeralda-cerezo-parent-volunteer-madison-elementary-school/#6>

PRINCIPAL SERRANO TALKS ABOUT “IMPORTANCE OF PARENT VOLUNTEERS,” CLIP #3:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/carmen-serrano-principal-madison-elementary-school/#3>





## Special Education and Its Role in Public Education

**List the range of student needs being addressed in the film.**

GARRETT NEWSOM ON "PUBLIC SCHOOL INCLUSIVITY," CLIP #3:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/garrett-newsom-principal-sierra-madre-middle-school/#3>

**Is it possible for public education to address all the different educational and emotional needs of students?**

**Are we, as a society, willing to bear the financial costs of providing these important services?**

**What is the effect on society of not providing these services?**

**What are the long term benefits to communities for providing these services?**

## Addressing Diverse Communities

**Describe the various home environments captured in the film.**

**Should schools serve low-income families by providing on-site umbrella services, i.e. the community schools concept?**

**"The goal of the family center is to bridge the community to school and provide avenues for parents to explore educational systems here in the United States."** –

PRINCIPAL SERRANO TALKING ABOUT THE FAMILY CENTER AT MADISON @ 21:33

**Should schools take a more active role in developing community?**

ROXANNE DUBOUCHERON ON THE "WONDERFUL SCHOOL COMMUNITY," CLIP #4:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/roxanne-duboucheron-music-specialist-jefferson-elementary-school/#4>

PUSD PARENT TERI GRIFFITH DISCUSSES "PERSONAL BELIEFS ABOUT PUBLIC SCHOOL," CLIP #4:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/teri-griffith-parent-of-spanish-immersion-student-san-rafael-elementary-school/#4>





## Who is Holding Up the Bus?

The film shows different ways various stakeholders interact with schools.

**Describe their roles and how they are part of making the system work.**

### Parents

HS PRINCIPAL GLIBERT BARRAZA STRESSES THE "IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT," CLIP #1:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/glibert-barraza-principal-pasadena-high-school/#1>

**How important is parent involvement in creating successful schools?**

"Having parents like Esmeralda who come in, who are interested in finding out what is going on with their child, what is going on at school and what can I do to support that, what can I give back to the school is crucial to any school site."

– ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL CARMEN SERRANO @21:38

**How can schools encourage parent engagement?**

### Teachers

ESTHER CHUN SHARES ABOUT "WORTHWHILE TEACHING MOMENTS," CLIP #1:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/esther-chun-3rd-grade-teacher-franklin-elementary-school/#1>

**What is your main impression of the teachers you witnessed in the film?**

### Support Staff

"I opened up a mentorship program years ago and what I did was I had all the kids that were in my program would always come back to help the other kids so when they get to high school they would always come back, so you had a filtering when they go to high school. So when they come back to mentor they say they miss it and there is not a program like it when they go to high school."

– SECURITY GUARD & VOLUNTEER MUSIC DIRECTOR MARVIN HATCHET @ 58:00

**What are some examples from the film of the important role that support staff plays in helping create a successful school environment?**

## **Administrators**

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SHANNON MALONE EMPHASIZES "IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING STUDENTS' NAMES," CLIP #3:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/05/shannon-malone-principal-cleveland-elementary-school/>

**What are examples from the film of effective or ineffective administrative leadership?**

**How critical is an effective principal to running a successful school?**

## **School Board Members**

RAMON MIRAMONTES SHARES ABOUT HIS ROLE AS THE ONLY HISPANIC BOARD MEMBER IN CLIP #1:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/ramon-miramontes-school-board-member-pasadena-unified-school-district/#1>

**Why school boards? Discuss the benefits of local control of public education.**

## **Volunteers**

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER GLORIA REYNOLDS ON "WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS," CLIP #5:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/gloria-reynolds-community-volunteer-altadena-elementary-school/#5>

**Are volunteers important to the success of public education? Why or why not?**

## **Non-Profit Organizations**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIRECTOR LAURA DIAZ DESCRIBES THE "PASADENA EDUCATION NETWORK," CLIP #1:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/laura-diaz-pen-worker-pasadena-education-network/>

**Identify some ways that non-profits support public education.**

**Is there any other stakeholder group supporting public education that has not been listed? Explain their role in "holding up the bus."**

**Does income level correlate to how much parent and community support a particular school receives?**

**How does the concept of "social capital" impact equity in public education?**

**Do you think that supporting public education is a shared responsibility of every person, in every community, everywhere? Why or why not?**

## What Constitutes a Successful Teacher?

TEACHER ALISON GARFINKEL SHARES THAT “KIDS MAKE TEACHING WORTHWHILE,” CLIP #1:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/alison-garfinkel-8th-grade-historyenglish-teacher-mckinley-k-8-school/#1>

Throughout the film we see many different examples of classroom life, classroom management, and teaching styles. We witness many interactions between students and teachers inside and outside the classroom—greetings, farewells, questions, discussions, discipline, etc.

**List examples from the film of teachers demonstrating effective teaching styles.**

**Can we judge teachers based simply on how many students pass their classes?**

**Is it fair to judge teacher quality based on student test scores? Why or why not?**

**How do you measure the growth of students in non-academic areas such as emotional maturity?**

“I have a plan in my head now that I want to go to college. Back then I didn’t have that mentality to go to college. My head was thinking when I get older I’m gonna end up in prison.” – CIS ACADEMY STUDENT JULIO VELASQUEZ @ 43:16

## Impact of Classroom Environment

**Describe the variety of classroom environments captured in the film.**

**Is there an ideal classroom environment? If so, describe it.**

**What aspects of the classrooms shown were ones you would like to see in every classroom?**

**Does the condition of a school convey a message to the students as to whether they are a priority for the community?**

FELIX LOPEZ SHARES HIS BELIEF IN THE “IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN FACILITIES,” CLIP #8:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/felix-lopez-custodian-washington-middle-school/#8>

**Does it matter what shape the physical building is in when it comes to learning?**

**How can schools overcome the lack of funding to maintain facilities?**

“We are going through reductions across the board, in our sites...Knowing that there is a shortfall in the budget. There is a 20% shortfall. So we have to now proportionately cut those plans 20% across the board.”  
– SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RAMON MIRAMONTES @ 17:17



## Nurturing and Respectful Culture in Schools

**What is meant by the concept of creating a family environment in schools?**

**"That way they can feel part of a family because Madison, that's what it is, it's a family."** – PARENT VOLUNTEER ESMERALDA CEREZO @ 36:18

**Where in the film did you see evidence of a family environment?**

**How can public schools provide a sense of security, on multiple levels, so that students can thrive?**

2ND GRADE TEACHER WHITNEY REESE DISCUSSES "FREE LUNCH PLAN," CLIP #2:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/whitney-reese-2nd-grade-teacher-jackson-elementary-school/>

**How do you instill confidence in students without creating a sense of entitlement?**

ELEM. PRINCIPAL WEISSENBERGER SHARES THE "IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING STUDENTS," CLIP #3:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/frances-weissenberger-principal-hamilton-elementary-school/#3>

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL BARRAZA TALKS ABOUT "RAISING UP OF STUDENTS," CLIP #2:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/glibert-barraza-principal-pasadena-high-school/#2>

**We are a litigious society. Should teachers be worried about hugging children?**

SCIENCE TEACHER JODIE WEST GETS A HUG FROM STUDENTS @ 8:28

ROSIE RUTT'S TEACHER GIVES HER A HUG @ 14:00

MUSIC TEACHER DUBOUCHERON PUTS ARM AROUND HER STUDENT'S SHOULDER @ 1:01:21

COMMUNITY ASSISTANT CONNIE DELATORRE HUGS AND KISSES A LITTLE GIRL @ 1:01:45

**How do you show real caring and concern without physical expression?**

## Discipline in Schools

FRANCES WEISSENBERGER TALKS ABOUT "DISCIPLINE TACTICS," CLIP #1:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/frances-weissenberger-principal-hamilton-elementary-school/>

### What examples of discipline did the film capture?

PRINCIPAL WEISSENBERGER TALKING TO GIRL ABOUT LISTENING TO THE TEACHER @ 46:50

PRINCIPAL WEISSENBERGER DISCUSSING BATHROOM FAUCET ISSUE WITH BOYS @ 48:31

**"Did you hear what I said? OK. No more, Carlos."**

– SECURITY GUARD MARVIN HATCHET IN HALLWAY WITH CARLOS @ 32:37

**"Erin, you're not going in my room like this. Bring it down. 'Cause I can't manage you."**

– MUSIC TEACHER ROXANNE DUBOUCHERON OUTSIDE HER CLASSROOM WITH ERIN @ 32:47

**"I saw you making faces. That's exactly what it looked like. I know I am not cuckoo. I just need you to turn around and do your work."**

– ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL SHANNON MALONE TALKS WITH STUDENT IN CLASS @ 27:06

**"No cell phones. You need to put it away, because I'm going to take it away."**

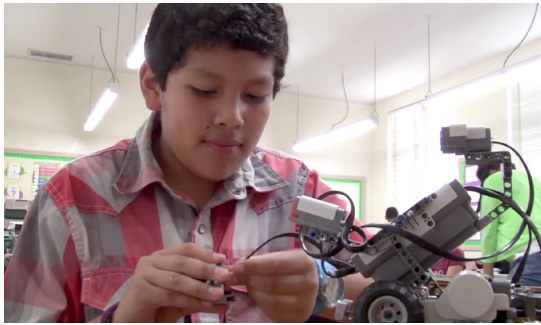
– HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL GLIBERT BARAZZA TALKING TO A GROUP OF STUDENTS @ 8:48

### Were the examples of discipline portrayed in the movie effective or not? Explain.

Share examples of effective and ineffective discipline from your personal experience.

What affects the ability to have consistent discipline oversight on campus and in classrooms?

How much power should schools (especially teachers) have to discipline?



## Curriculum Development and Innovation

**How do we quantify learning?**

**“How do you know kids are learning? How are students achieving? How do you know?”**

– HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL BARRAZA IN HIS OFFICE  
@ 23:50

**Does standardized testing provide anything of value?**

**Does it set students and schools up to fail or feel like they have failed?**

**Can students be successful outside of the high school-to-college model?**

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER MIRAMONTES ON “UNIVERSITY VS. TRADE SCHOOL,” CLIP #2:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/ramon-miramontes-school-board-member-pasadena-unified-school-district/#2>

**Is vocational training in public education viable or not?**

SUPERINTENDENT JON GUNDRY ON “HIGH SCHOOL CAREER ACADEMIES,” CLIP #2:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/john-gundry-superintendent-pasadena-unified-school-district/#2>

**List examples of various curricula shown in the film.**

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR FRANCES COLLINS MOORE LEARNS ABOUT NEW AP CLASSES BEING OFFERED AT HER SCHOOL @ 24:07

**Who should develop curriculum in public schools?**

JON GUNDRY ADVOCATES FOR “LESS FEDERAL CONTROL EDUCATION,” CLIP #3:

<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/john-gundry-superintendent-pasadena-unified-school-district/#3>

**Should curriculum be standardized nationally or developed on a local level?**

**Should corporations and foundations have any say in curriculum development?**

Charters were first proposed as a way to incubate innovative ideas without the constraints of the traditional public school bureaucracy.

**What does the film show in terms of innovative approaches to learning?**

**How do these programs, by virtue of their existence, counter the criticism that public education is too bureaucratic to be innovative?**

**How has the “too bureaucratic to innovate” argument been used to fuel the growth of the charter school movement?**





## Extracurricular Activities

**What in the film would you classify as extracurricular activities?**

**What are the benefits of these activities?**

MUSIC TEACHER ROXANNE DUBOUCHERON ON "PASSION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION," CLIP #7:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/roxanne-duboucheron-music-specialist-jefferson-elementary-school/#7>

**Can schools accomplish all their goals without providing a robust program of extra-curricular activities? Explain.**

**What are the negative affects of reducing or cutting extracurricular programs?**

ROXANNE DUBOUCHERON TALKS ABOUT "BUDGET CUTS," CLIP #5:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/roxanne-duboucheron-music-specialist-jefferson-elementary-school/#5>

**What are some of the challenges public schools face in being able to consistently and effectively provide these types of enrichment activities?**

ROXANNE DUBOUCHERON DISCUSSES "TEACHING DIFFICULTIES," CLIP #8:  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/roxanne-duboucheron-music-specialist-jefferson-elementary-school/#8>

**How do middle class and affluent public schools support extracurricular programs compared with low-income urban and rural schools?**

**How can we equalize opportunities between affluent and poor schools?**

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL CARMEN SERRANO "PRAISES PUBLIC EDUCATION," CLIP #4  
<http://gopublicproject.org/2013/02/carmen-serrano-principal-madison-elementary-school/#4>

Extracurricular activities are often the first programs reduced or eliminated when budgets are cut.

**How does the reduction or unavailability of these programs affect student motivation and engagement in academic achievement?**

## **Privatization vs. Truly Public Education**

**Discuss the ongoing controversy surrounding privatizing public education.**

**Is education a commodity or a public good? Explain.**

**Discuss the differences between models for private businesses and public sector services.**

**How would a business define success regarding schooling and allocation of monies spent?**

**List the various educational options now available to families and how these choices are impacting public education?**

(For example, home schooling, public and private charters, vouchers or “opportunity scholarships” for private school, pay to attend non-resident public school, choice within a district, traditional neighborhood school, etc.)

**Discuss the charter school movement. What are the positives? What are the negatives?**

**Do these options hurt or help the less fortunate of our country? Explain.**

# Additional Resources

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[http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2013/state\\_report\\_cards.html](http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2013/state_report_cards.html)

<http://www.kidsdata.org/resources/>

<http://www.edsource.org/today/2013/california-drops-to-49th-in-school-spending-in-annual-ed-week-report/25379#.Uh7xjBzQuld>

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# The 50 Subjects



## **GUSTAVO ALONSO**

Gustavo Alonso is in the sixth grade at Eliot Middle School. He likes building robots, reads aloud from his writing journal about why money alone won't make you happy, and plays catch with his friends at the park.



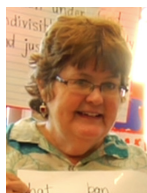
## **ANGEL BALCAZAR**

Angel Balcazar is a 3rd grade student at Roosevelt Elementary. He is in a wheelchair and has a condition that affects his muscle control, but he is a bright and eager child who likes art and playing with his toy cars.



## **GILBERT BARRAZA**

If you want to get on principal Gilbert Barraza's good side, put away your cell phone! Living by Malcom X's mantra of "Everything I do today is urgent," Mr. Barraza is actively involved with his students at Pasadena High School, and strives to lead them towards pursuing a college education.



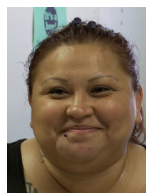
## **KATHLEEN BAUTISTA**

Kathleen Bautista teaches kindergarten through 2nd grade students with special needs at Don Benito elementary school. She is proud of her students as they progress from barely verbal to engaged and capable.



## **ELIZABETH "BESS" BRANDOW**

Bess Brandow is a very busy fifth grader at Webster Elementary School. Along with keeping up with her schoolwork, Bess plays the guitar and is a Girl Scout.



## **ESMERALDA CEREZO**

Esmeralda Cerezo is a single mother of four. She volunteers every day at the Healthy Start center at Madison Elementary, where her youngest two children go to school. Though Esmeralda is tattooed and tough-looking, she is a kind, involved mom who hopes to inspire her children to go further with their education.



## **ESTHER CHUN**

Esther Chun is a third-grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School. Her sweet personality and emphasis on character make her popular with the kids, but as a relatively new teacher, she is in danger of being laid off due to budget cuts.



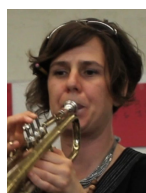
## **FRANCES COLLINS-MOORE**

Frances Collins-Moore is a guidance counselor at Marshall Fundamental High School. She recognizes the importance of educating and guiding young students, but fears that budget cuts and overcrowded classrooms are keeping kids from realizing their full potential.



## **CONNIE DE LA TORRE**

Connie DeLaTorre is a community assistant at Jefferson Elementary School. From making coffee to managing money to speaking at board meetings, "the woman with a thousand jobs" makes everyone's life a little bit less stressful.



## **ROXANNE DUBOUCHERON**

Roxanne DuBoucheron is a music teacher who works with several schools in Pasadena. She teaches kids how to play all sorts of instruments - from violin and cello to brass and woodwinds to the drums. Ms. DuBoucheron knows that music can be an outlet for students who may not be the best at math or reading.

**GABRIEL ESTRADA**

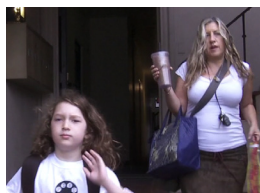
Gabriel Estrada is a student at Muir High School's Business and Entrepreneurship Academy. His class projects range from creating a business portfolio to hammering nails into a running shoe to represent "irony."

**SAMANTHA GALE**

PHS junior Samantha Gale wakes up for school at 5:30 every morning. She works hard in her classes, volunteers as a tutor at Altadena Elementary (where her mother works), and is very involved in the Navy JROTC program. As a Cadet, Samantha learns leadership and life skills and cultivates a network of close friends.

**ALISON GARFINKEL**

English and history teacher Alison Garfinkel loves theatre, and shares her passion with her students by volunteering to direct McKinley School's production of Cinderella. A typical day for Ms. Garfinkel involves teaching Shakespeare to middle-schoolers, practicing improvisation with kindergarteners, and choreographing dance numbers.

**DAVID GIESELMAN and TERESA TOTARO**

Teresa Totaro teaches 2nd grade at McKinley K-8 school. Her son, David Gieselman, also attends McKinley and is in the second grade.

**ERIC GOTHOLD**

Eric Gothold is a musician, theatre guy, and former art teacher. For the last 20 years, "Mr. G" has also been the assistant principal at Washington Middle School, where he works hard to synthesize his administrative responsibilities and artistic inclinations.

**BENJAMIN GRAVES**

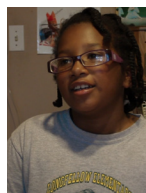
Benjamin Graves is a junior at Rose City High School, Pasadena's alternative high school. At Rose City, Benjamin is involved with the student leadership board. He hopes to return to Blair High School next year.

**ABIGAIL "ABBY" GRIFFITH**

Abby Griffith and her twin are 2nd graders in San Rafael Elementary School's Dual Language Spanish Immersion Program. She is learning how to read and write (and sing) in two languages.

**JON GUNDRY**

Jon Gundry is the Superintendent in Pasadena. Running the district is a challenging job, and Superintendent Gundry's day involves not only supervising the schools, but also dealing with dissent amongst employees and criticism from the community.

**SAMANTHA HARRIS**

Samantha Harris is a fifth grade student at Longfellow Elementary School. Throughout the day she practices karate at school, plays the violin, and explains everything about Archie comics.

**MARVIN HATCHETT**

Marvin Hatchett works as the Security Guard at Wilson Middle School during the day and switches hats after school to become the volunteer choir and instrumental music instructor. He has been working and volunteering in the district for over 20 years.

**BENJAMIN LAMBERT**

Chemistry teacher Benjamin Lambert believes that the key to being an effective teacher is recognizing that all students have potential. He's popular among his students at Pasadena High School and their families because he has the ability to make science fun and interesting.



**MAURA LARGE**

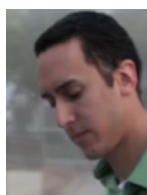
Middle school librarian Maura Large teaches students at Eliot Middle School how to use the computers and library resources. This experience is invaluable to the kids, but she, and all secondary school librarians in Pasadena, were laid off at the end of the year due to budget cuts.

**ADRIENNE D. LETT**

Adrienne Lett is the president of the athletic booster club at Muir High School, where her children attend and her teen-aged daughter plays softball. Ms. Lett realizes the importance of being involved in her childrens' lives, and hopes to convince other parents to support the team as well.

**FELIX LOPEZ**

Custodian Felix Lopez is the hardest working guy at Washington Middle School. As a child, poverty kept Mr. Lopez from finishing school. Now, he's a mentor to the students at Washington, and attempts to give his 10th grade daughter the opportunities he never had.

**JOEL LOPEZ**

Joel Lopez is the high school band director at Marshall Secondary School. He educates his class of aspiring rock stars and jazz musicians by day, then takes care of his baby daughter by night.

**KENIA LOYOLA**

Sixteen-year-old Kenia is an outstanding student who attends Muir High School's Engineering and Environmental Science Academy, where she has the chance to work on a student-run farm and learn about growing crops and running a business. She is also involved in many campus clubs and leadership programs.

**SHANNON MALONE**

New principal Shannon Malone believes she can truly make a difference at Cleveland Elementary, where she connects with the students and community, with a focus on personal growth.

**RAMON MIRAMONTES**

Outspoken Ramon Miramontes is the only Latino on the Pasadena Board of Education. In a district where 60% of the students are Latino, his native Spanish-speaking skills make him popular with parents. But his blunt, confrontational nature has earned Mr. Miramontes enemies as well.

**MICHELLE MORENO**

Michelle Moreno is a feisty, athletic Mexican-American 11th grader. She attends Blair High School's Health Careers Academy, and is committed to joining the US Army upon graduation. Michelle is inspired by the memory of her late father, who taught her to always stand up for herself.

**MIKE PARISI**

Mike Parisi loves his job coaching baseball at Pasadena High School. He leads his boys to a victory at home against Glendale High, and prepares for the game against their rival team, Muir.

**DEVIN PERRY**

Ninth grader Devin Perry attends Muir High School's Arts, Entertainment, and Media Academy. Devin's goal is to be the first in her family to graduate from college, and to set a good example for her younger siblings.

**WHITNEY REESE**

Whitney Reese teaches second grade at Jackson Elementary. She lives across the street and, as a child, attended the school. Not surprisingly, Jackson is like a second home to Ms. Reese. She shares her love of yoga with her students, and teaches them about herbs and gardening.

**GLORIA REYNOLDS**

Gloria Reynolds, a volunteer at Altadena Elementary, proves that there is no age limit for helping to make your community a better place. A retired teacher, she knows that public education is essential to democracy and learning is a lifelong process.



**ANA RODRIGUEZ**

Ana Rodriguez is the ceramics teacher at Norma Coombs Elementary. She is passionate about giving children an opportunity to express themselves creatively. Her students learn to paint ceramic tiles and create coil pots.

**EILEEN ROTH**

Eileen Roth is a veteran librarian who has been at PUSD for over 40 years. Her library is designed to feel like a castle or a magical place, complete with dragon! Ms. Roth allows students and their parents to check out books whenever they like.

**ROSIE RUTT**

Little Rosie is a happy-go-lucky redhead who loves drawing with chalk, playing with her friends, and spending time with her family. She attends Sierra Madre Elementary's K/1st Inclusion Program, where children with special needs are fully integrated into a regular classroom.

**ALEX SCHULTZ**

Alex Schultz is an art teacher at Pasadena High School's Creative Arts Media and Design Academy (CAMAD). His students' assignments include "paint your fears," designing posters, and painting murals.

**GARETH SEIGEL**

High school English and Math teacher Gareth Seigel works with students that most other teachers have given up on. By forging a personal relationship with these at-risk teenagers, Mr. Seigel inspires them to strive for a brighter future.

**MERISSA SHNORHOKIAN**

Merissa Shnorhokian is a 6th grader at Wilson Middle School. She enjoys school, her friends and her robotics class. Merissa believes that public school is helping prepare her for the real world.

**IAN SHORT**

Ian Short is an active 7th grade student who deals with the challenge of having autism. He likes playing catch, video games, and hanging out with his classmates.

**AMY TAYLOR**

Amy Taylor is an early childhood school psychologist at the Hodges Early Intervention Center. She assesses preschool-aged children for autism and other developmental disorders.

**JOANNA TING**

Joanna Ting, a third grader at Field Elementary School, is enrolled in the Dual Language Mandarin Immersion Program. She can read and write in two languages, and talk to her Chinese grandmother in Mandarin on the phone.

**MARY TING**

Mary Ting is a 7th grade student enrolled in Blair Middle School's International Baccalaureate (IB) program.

**CAROLYN, JACKELYN, and MARILYN TRAVIS**

Twelfth grade twins Marilyn and Jackelyn and their eighth grade sister Carolyn attend Marshall Secondary School. The girls, who spent a portion of their childhood in foster care, run the Buddy Club - a program that pairs young Marshall students with older student mentors.

**ANGELICA VARGAS**

Angelica Vargas is a hard-working eleventh grader enrolled in Blair High School's International Baccalaureate program. Angelica is an honors student who plays the piano and swims competitively, but her mother worries about her because she often studies late into the night.



### **DONNETHA WALLACE**

Donnetha Wallace is a culinary arts teacher and the program chair of the Culinary and Hospitality Pathway at Blair High School. She loves to cook, and enjoys sharing her passion with

her students.



### **FRANCES WEISSENBERGER**

Frances Weissenberger, a former teacher, is the principal of Hamilton Elementary School. Ms.

Weissenberger knows that once she walks through the doors of her school, anything can happen, and the day she planned on having is rarely ever the day she gets.



### **JODIE WEST**

Jodie teaches science to Kindergarten through 5th grade at Washington Accelerated Elementary School. She is a self-proclaimed

“bit of a nerd” and considers all her students budding engineers. Jodie is also a mom to twin 5 year old boys who attend Washington and an 18 month old boy.



### **LINDA WITTRY**

Linda Wittry is the International Baccalaureate Primary Years coordinator at Willard Elementary School. She likes to spend most of her time in the classroom, where she

teaches everything from science and writing to line dancing and guitar.



### **AMY ZERONIAN**

Amy Zeronian is an 11th grade student at Marshall Fundamental High School who plays softball and volleyball. A gifted scholar and athlete, she has already accepted

a scholarship to play softball in college. Amy is also involved in drama, and is running for ASB representative.

## **OTHERS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE GUIDE:**

### **CARMEN SERRANO**

Principal, Madison Elementary School