

Needless to say, when you have almost 800 twelve to fourteen year olds in and out of your house daily, there's bound to be A LOT going on! Well, such is always the case at J.L Long Middle School.

The big story this school year has been preparing for the "Sixth Grade Transition" to occur next August. If you've been by our campus recently, you've seen the construction underway. Our beautiful new wing, including 16 new classrooms, is in keeping with the design of our historic 73-year-old existing building, a Dallas Historic Landmark. The wing will be completed in time to welcome our new 6<sup>th</sup> grade Buccaneers in the Fall.

We are proud to report that, while other DISD Middle Schools find themselves scrambling to prepare for facility, curriculum, and a host of other changes needed to make ready for the new DISD mandated 6th-7th-8th grade configuration, Long's Administration/Staff, Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) and PTA have led the way within the district, steadily preparing for the past year. We'll be ready to offer an even better-rounded 6th grade experience than what these students might have had at their home elementary schools!

Welcoming and orienting those anticipated new Buccaneer families has kept us busy. On March 7, the PTA sponsored "J.L.Long Extravaganza"- and Open House and early Orientation, with performances by our Orchestra, Band, and award-winning Expectations Show Choir. A happy crowd of approximately 600 toured our halls, met current parents/students and faculty, and checked out the academic, elective and athletic programs offered at Long.

Since that evening, we've brought over each of our incoming 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes from our five feeder schools for "Belong to Long" Days, allowing them to experience a typical day at Long, firsthand. Which are the feeder elementary schools in our "cluster"? Buccaneers come from Lakewood, Eduardo Mata, Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and O.M. Roberts.

And in our ongoing effort to strengthen our Cluster Community and neighborhoods, the Woodrow Cluster Team (comprised of representatives from the schools's administrators, PTA's and SBDM's from the elementary schools, Long MS, and Woodrow Wilson HS) is now meeting quarterly to share information, ideas, and cross-support within the cluster, led by acting Chair, Patrick Luna, from J.L.Long.

Thanks to last year's generous donation made to Long by the Hollywood Heights/Santa Monica Homeowner's Association (HSMNA), the PTA was able to provide over \$13,000 toward classroom items and program enhancements on our Teachers' Wish List this past December. We also provided the popular AIM FOR SUCCESS program to all of our 7<sup>th</sup> graders. AFS is an in-school educational workshop promoting personal goal-setting and positive decision-making skills, including abstinence from smoking, drugs, alcohol, and teen sex. Long has partnered with Stonewall Jackson Elem. and Woodrow Wilson HS to

make sure that our students receive this invaluable training at the 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade levels.

Pending PTA projects include Campus Beautification and new sports team uniforms.

***Can we brag about our kids?...***

- \*Long's Science Team are the reigning STATE CHAMPS.
- \*Long's Math Team took 3<sup>rd</sup> in STATE last year.
- \*Long's Choir recently took SWEEPSTAKES at UIL competition, and consistently take Highest Honors. (After all, these kids are the future stars of Woodrow Musicals)!
- \*Several Long students placed at District Science Fair and are moving on to Regional.
- \*Several Long student entries in the DISD's "Reflections" Visual Art and Literature Contest placed and are moving on to Regional.
- \*Our Girls' Softball Team are reigning District Champs.
- \*Our Baseball Team was #2 in the City last year, and are undefeated so far this year.
- \*The Girls' Soccer team was District and Bi-District Champs last year, and our Boys' and Girls' Soccer Teams only had one loss each this year.
- \*Track Team had several qualifiers for City Finals.
- \*Girls' Volleyball Team are Zone Champs, #2 in the City!
- \*7<sup>th</sup> grade Girls' Basketball were undefeated this year! And the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Boys' Team had only one loss.

***Can we brag about our parents and volunteers?.....***

- \*Long has logged the greatest number of volunteer hours (almost 8000) of any DISD Middle School, and the second highest number overall for DISD!

*Next on the calendar...*

- \***April 28-30:** HSMNA Preview Party and Home Tour. Long is pleased to be staffing one of these beautiful homes for the Tour.
- \***May 11-13:** "**SLUG CITY**", Long's annual Musical production, under the direction of Beverly Hirsch, takes the stage. Join us to see these future Woodrow stage stars shine!

***LONG.. on Achievement. LONG.. on Diversity. LONG..on Pride!***

*Maroy Merino  
PTA President  
J.L.Long Middle School  
maroy11@sbcglobal.net*