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Partnership for  
Los Angeles Schools

May 2010

## *In This Issue*

[\\*Court Ruling Prevents Layoffs at Gompers and Markham](#)

[\\*School District to Expand Partnership's GATE testing Strategy](#)

[\\*Bridging the Digital Divide at Stevenson](#)

[\\*Earth Day Celebration with Avatar Director James Cameron](#)

[\\*Milka Duno Races to Inspire Partnership Youth](#)

[\\*Partnership and UCLA-Center X Announce Formal Collaboration](#)

[\\*Santee Brings Student Art Show, by Bike, to City Hall](#)

[\\*Student OpEd: Teachers Should Stop Giving a Lot of Homework](#)

[\\*Student Poem: Mellow of My Mind](#)

## *Grant Opportunities*

### **Scholastic Essay Contest**

Write an essay about how you would use a \$5,000 grant to improve achievement, attentiveness, and attendance in your classroom – starting with breakfast, the most important meal of any student's day. Essays should be between 300-500 words, and will also include details about your plan, budget and timeline as well as evidence of faculty

### **Court Ruling Prevents Layoffs at Gompers and Markham**

On May 12, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge William F. Highberger issued a preliminary injunction barring budget based lay offs at Gompers, Markham and Leichthy Middle Schools.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) had filed a lawsuit against the State of California and LAUSD on February 24, alleging teacher layoffs due to the budget crisis deprive low-income and minority students their legal right to an education consistent with statewide standards. Specifically, the lawsuit challenged the equity of last year's teacher layoffs at Gompers, Markham and Leichthy.

"Today the students and teachers of three of the most challenged schools in Los Angeles won a major victory. The preliminary ruling in favor of an immediate injunction acknowledges what we have always known– the students attending these schools have a right to a quality education and the current system has violated their rights," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa at a press conference on the Courthouse steps.

"Today was a good day for all our children," said teacher Markham teacher Nick Melvoin. Mr. Melvoin, one of the lead organizers behind the suit. Mr. Melvoin and principal Tim Sullivan have served as public advocates for the suit. Both are profiled in the [LA Weekly](#) and Mr. Melvoin was featured on [KTLA](#) this past week. To read the injunction, please go [here](#). The Partnership statement is available [here](#).



### **School District to Expand Partnership's GATE Testing Strategy**

Superintendent Ray Cortines has announced the Los Angeles Unified School District will begin testing all second graders to see if they qualify as 'academically gifted,' following on a policy initiated by the Partnership last year. The Partnership's policy of testing all second graders uncovered many more low income and minority students who qualify as academically gifted than did district policy. Students identified as academically gifted are placed in the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. This breakthrough for low income and minority kids across the city was featured in the [Los Angeles Times](#) May 9.

### **Bridging the Digital Divide at Stevenson**

The entire 6th grade at Stevenson Middle School, or nearly 700 students, are receiving new laptops thanks to a new program called School2Home. Each 6th grader gets not only a new computer, but their families receive training in how to use them, and help



approval. Entry Due Date:  
**May 17, 2010.** For more  
information, [visit](#)

in acquiring broadband in their homes. The program was launched at a press conference on  
May 4 at Stevenson. [Continue here](#)





## Teachers Should Stop Giving a Lot of Homework

*Salvador Farjardo, Markham Middle School*

I think teachers give too much homework to the students. Students have to wake up early to go to school and they work all day in school. Then they go home thinking they could rest but then they dig in their backpack and then they see they have to do homework. Students do not have time to play videos games or play sports. I'm not saying that sports or

videos are more important than homework but I think we should have time to have fun.

I also know that teachers have to go to their homes and correct papers but that is their jobs they wanted. Kids want to live their lives as little kids because then when they have kids, their children are going to ask them what they did as a little kid and they will have to say that the only thing they did was do homework all day.

I think that if teachers give easy homework that students would do the homework. And if they are going to give out packets they must be due in three days because some teachers want them the next day. And that is why they don't do the homework.



### Mellow of My Mind

My ears are open  
My eyes are blind  
it calms me down  
to mellow my mind  
My poems may go  
line to line  
to follow the mellow  
of my mind

The poems and me somehow  
combine

They are the things that  
mellow my mind  
when my brain is dead  
things like that  
can rattle my head

Why I cry, I laugh, I sigh  
those things mellow my mind  
I have a lot to write  
I am a lot to be  
those that keep me  
in the mellow of me

I can overcome all obstacles  
no matter how high  
it keeps me mellow  
to the sounds of, I

*Delvonte Newburn, 6th Grade  
Gompers Middle School*

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