

Sesquicentennial Times



Los Nietos School District Celebrating a "Rich Past and Promising Future"

Los Nietos School District Celebrates 150th Anniversary!

Dear Los Nietos Parents/Community,

This year the Los Nietos School District will be celebrating a tremendous milestone as the District marks its 150th Anniversary. The Los Nietos School District which was established in 1861 is considered to be the oldest continuously run school district in the state of California.

The Sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary will be celebrated throughout the school year as each of our four school sites will host events that will showcase their school community. Aeolian, Nelson, Rancho, and the Los Nietos Middle School will all be holding Saturday events that will raise money for their school. All parents and students from each of the four schools will be invited to attend. Aeolian School will host the first Saturday event on November 6, 2010.

In order to appropriately acknowledge such a historic milestone in the history of the Los Nietos School District, we will be sending home a quarterly newsletter to highlight current events as well as historical information that I have been able to compile about our district.

In this first issue of the "Sesquicentennial Times" we talk about the progress our schools have made since 1999, which was the first year of the State Academic Performance Index (A.P.I.) measure. We are very proud of the progress our students have made in the Los Nietos School District and we are committed to further strengthening the instructional program in our district.

Please celebrate our 150th anniversary with us this year and share our pride not only for our longevity but for our increased student achievement.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Vasquez and the Los Nietos Governing Board of Trustees



Do You Have Los Nietos History?

One of the goals that the Los Nietos School Board set this year was to try and archive history and information about the Los Nietos School District. Much of the history and information about the district has been found in storage rooms at the four school sites and at the

district office. However, members of the community have also come forward to provide valuable pictures, newspaper articles, and important information that details the history of Los Nietos. As I collect information I will be scanning pic-

tures and articles to place on the Los Nietos District website. Do you have any articles, pictures, or yearbooks that detail some history of the Los Nietos School District? If you do, please e-mail me at jonathan_vasquez@lnsd.net.

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Los Nietos Facts

- In 1784 retired Spanish soldier, Jose Manuel Nieto was given a 300,000 acre cattle ranch from the Spanish government.
- Upon Nieto's death In 1804, the original land grant was split up into 5 separate land grants which went to his heirs.
- Nieto's son, Antonio Marie Nieto, received 17,600 acres called Rancho Santa Gertrudes, which contained the town of Los Nietos.
- In 1834 the deed went to Antonio Maria Nieto's widow, Dona Jose Cota.
- Continued next edition.....

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Los Nietos Middle School Meets All Federal and State Targets!

The Los Nietos School District is proud to announce that the Los Nietos Middle School has met or exceeded all Federal and State achievement targets for 2010! The Los Nietos Middle School's 37 point State API growth was the largest growth of any middle school in the Whittier or Santa Fe Springs area. Additionally, the Los Nietos Middle School has the highest 3-year State API growth total (+75) of any middle school in the Whittier, Santa Fe Springs, or Pico Rivera area.

Last year the Los Nietos Governing Board of Trustees placed an emphasis on getting the Middle School out of Federal Program Improvement Status, after it had made all of its AYP targets in 2009. Last year the School Board and Superintendent Vasquez

made a pledge to the community of Los Nietos to improve the academic achievement of our middle school the way we had improved the achievement at all of our elementary schools. We are proud to announce to the Los Nietos Community that the Los Nietos Middle School exited Program Improvement Status while middle schools in the surrounding area did not.

Our middle school scores indicate that not only are we academically competitive with surrounding middle schools, but in many instances our students' test scores were higher. Our middle school is safe, offers many student electives, and parents can feel confident that their children are in a caring learning environment every day.



Jacqueline Cardenas, Principal

Los Nietos School District Reaches 770 API, -Grows 22 points

The Los Nietos School District's 22 points of API growth was the second largest growth of any District in the Whittier, Santa Fe Springs, and Pico Rivera area. Over the past 3 years, the Los Nietos School District has grown a total of 83 API points which is the **highest growth total** of any school district in the Whittier, Pico Rivera, and Santa Fe Springs area. Currently at an API of 770, the Los Nietos School District is also the **only elementary school district** in the

Whittier, Pico Rivera, and Santa Fe Springs area that has **none of their schools identified as Program Improvement Schools**. The keys to Los Nietos' academic growth has been to align the K-8 curriculum to the State standards, break the subjects into units that are taught and assessed every 4-5 weeks, and then to analyze the common assessments to determine which students need to be retaught or provided help with understanding the material.

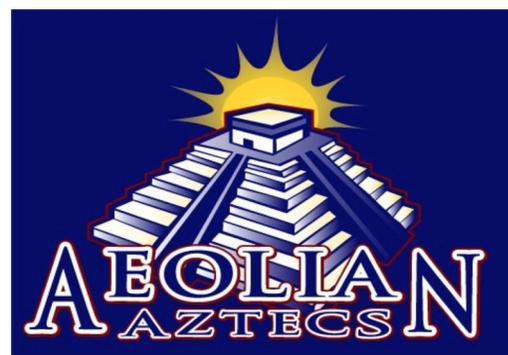
"Over the past 3 years, the Los Nietos School District has grown a total of 83 API points which is the highest growth total of any school district in the Whittier, Pico Rivera, and Santa Fe Springs area."

Aeolian School Reaches 803 API!

When Aeolian School received an API score of 803 this year, they became the first school in the Los Nietos School District to reach and surpass the State target of 800! For the past three years, under the outstanding leadership of Principal Amber Lee-Ruiz, the Aeolian staff has seen the school's API Score grow 165 API points!

What has been the key to Aeolian's meteoric success? Like all of the schools in the Los Nietos School District, Aeolian aligned the curriculum to the State Standards, fo-

cused on student assessment data, and worked tirelessly to insure all students had multiple opportunities to learn the material. Additionally, when Aeolian was the lowest performing elementary school three years ago it received a QEIA Grant that provided additional funding for teacher training, reducing class size, and for hiring additional instructional support for the school. Congratulations to the Aeolian Community for their outstanding accomplishments!



Amber Lee Ruiz, Principal

Rancho School Reflects on Past Looks Forward to the Future!

Rancho Santa Gertrudes School was recognized as a California Distinguished School and a Federal Title I High Achieving School in 2004 when it received an API score of 730. Building upon those accomplishments has been a priority for the staff and community of Rancho. Currently with an API of 773, Rancho School has grown a total of 43 API points since they were originally honored with California Distinguished School status.

When Rancho received its first API score in 1999, its API score was 496, which was the lowest API score in the district. In 2001, Rancho applied for and received a state grant that provided \$222,000 over a two-year period to help transform the instruc-

tional practices of the school. Rancho was the first school in the district to implement what would become the blueprint for turning around all of the schools in the district: aligning the State standards to the curriculum, breaking-up the curriculum into teachable units, grade level teams meeting to discuss common student unit assessment results, and staff providing additional instructional help to those students who did not score proficient on unit assessments.

The Rancho staff congratulates the Aeolian staff for their hard work and accomplishments, but looks forward this year to joining their colleagues at Aeolian School as the next school to reach an API score of 800!



Octavio Perez, Principal

Los Nietos School District Improves English Learner Scores!

This year the Los Nietos School District successfully exited out of the Federal Title III requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) by meeting all Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO's) for the second year in a row. Under NCLB, all school districts that have English Learners (EL's are students whose first language is not English) must meet 3 AMAO's: Percent of EL's making progress in learning English; Percent of EL's attaining the English proficient level on the CELDT (California

English Language Learner Development Test); and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the English Learner subgroup at the district level. With a 43% English Learner population in the district, meeting the academic and language needs of our English Learners has been a priority at all four of our schools. We are pleased to announce to the Los Nietos Community that we are meeting the needs of **all** of our students in our schools.

"We are pleased to announce to the Los Nietos Community that we are meeting the needs of all of our students in our schools."

Ada S. Nelson School Does More with Less!

Ada S. Nelson Elementary has successfully improved student achievement without ever receiving any additional Federal or State money to do so. The Nelson staff through hard work, collaboration, and following the "curriculum alignment" principles of the other schools in the Los Nietos District has increased their API Score from a score of 500 in 1999, to a current API score of 780. Additionally, Nelson School has been the recipient of the California Business for Excellence Honor Roll award

for three years in a row. The award is given to schools that show significant improvement in closing the achievement gap with minority students.

Schools don't often get recognized for doing their job of increasing student achievement, but in the Los Nietos School District Nelson School deserves this recognition. Congratulations Nelson Staff for demonstrating what hard work, dedication, and team work can accomplish.



Marla Duncan, Principal

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Would you like to be on the 150th Planning or Fundraising Committee?

As you can imagine planning a 150th Anniversary celebration will be a challenging endeavor and will require a lot of coordination with the four schools as well as the Los Nietos community. If you would like to help in the planning of the events or the coordination of some of the articles that go into the "Sesquicentennial Times", please contact Superintendent Vasquez.

Additionally, we will be focusing on fundraising opportunities that will benefit the four schools in our district. School carnivals, pancake breakfasts, or student art

sales were some fundraising suggestions that were made. Another idea that was proposed was to have each student/family at the four schools participate in a "150 A-Day dime, quarter, or fifty cent drive" as a way to raise money for the schools.

We currently have 2000 students in the Los Nietos School District and if each student were to bring a dime, quarter, or fifty cents a day the total amount to be split among the schools would break down like this: dime a day for 150 days (\$15.00) x 2000 students = \$30,000.00; quarter a day

for 150 days (\$37.50) x 2000 students = \$75,000.00; fifty cents a day for 150 days (\$75.00) x 2000 = \$150,000.00.

There have been many good ideas about how to use our 150th anniversary celebration as a way to raise money or gain corporate sponsorships for our schools. The district will be working with the Parent Teacher Club in each school, to determine the best way to coordinate things. However, if you would like to participate or help please email me so I can invite you to our next planning meeting.



Recognizing an Important Instructional Collaboration



PRINCIPAL'S
exchange
balance & clarity

As this first issue of the Sesquicentennial Times deals with highlighting the academic accomplishments of the Los Nietos School District and its schools, it is important to recognize an instructional partnership that has lasted for over a decade. Dr. Robin Avelar-LaSalle and Estella Ramirez are the co-founders of an educational consulting agency that specializes in providing school district instructional audits, teacher/administrator staff development, and analyzing student assessment data.

In 1999, the first year the State gave schools API's, the Los Nietos School District

was struggling with how best to train the teachers to meet the needs of all students in a new standards-based environment. Dr. LaSalle was able to synthesize the latest research and instructional practices into easily comprehensible information that was then taught to the district's teachers. Although aligning the curriculum to the State standards and teachers working together to analyze student work is the norm in Los Nietos, at one time it was very new and controversial. Many teachers at that time did not work together in teams to look at student work, instead they worked in isolation. As such, teachers had difficulty learning from each other and students did

not have the benefit of teachers sharing the best instructional strategies to teach struggling students a new concept.

Working with Dr. La Salle and Principal's Exchange, Los Nietos principals and teachers learned and implemented the best ways to teach and monitor the way students learned and mastered the complex California State Standards. On the eve of our Sesquicentennial Celebration we recognize Dr. LaSalle's expertise and the role that she and Principal's Exchange has played in increasing student achievement in the Los Nietos School District.

