



# PARAMOUNT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

ENSURE LEARNING AND SUCCESS FOR EACH STUDENT BY PROVIDING A QUALITY EDUCATION

15110 CALIFORNIA AVE. | PARAMOUNT, CA 90723 | TEL: (562) 602-6000 | [www.paramount.k12.ca.us](http://www.paramount.k12.ca.us)

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

August 6, 2018

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## Paramount Unified Christens New STEM High School During Ceremony

**Paramount, CA** – Five incoming freshmen joined Paramount Unified Board members and community leaders in cutting a ceremonial red ribbon on Aug. 1 to launch the District’s new science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) high school as nearly 100 attendees cheered in celebration.

Odyssey Principal Keith Nuthall and Academic Dean Becky Perez welcomed Superintendent Ruth Pérez, Paramount Mayor Diane Martinez and others to Odyssey STEM Academy, which will open its doors to a freshman class of 144 students on Aug. 22. The school will add a grade level each year until all grades are fully enrolled.

“We are so excited to be launching Odyssey and instilling a new group of students with ‘Strong Mind, Strong Heart and Strong Will,’ ” Nuthall said. “As we start the Odyssey journey today, I am reminded of all the students we encounter through the years who leave such an impact on our lives.”

Nuthall encouraged the audience to share their memories of special students.

Incoming freshman Blue Phillips spoke about his journey to Odyssey as a student who nearly failed third grade but learned to give his best effort through the encouragement of educators.

“Life is a lot like a backflip – sometimes you try things and fall on your face,” Phillips said. “But you have to give your all. Odyssey is great for me and my family and gives me the chance to be the best I can.”

Elliot Washor, co-founder of Big Picture Learning, gave a keynote speech that advised educators to listen to the passions of their students. Lakewood City Councilmember Jeff Wood presented the school with a certificate of recognition.

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Nuthall and Perez led a tour of the remodeled campus in Lakewood, which will empower students to pursue science and technology. The campus features a video conference production room, labs, 3-D printers and is planning to add a greenhouse.

“We have created an environment that we feel will challenge our students and allow them to flourish in a growing technological society,” Paramount Superintendent Ruth Pérez said. “I cannot wait to open the doors and begin inspiring our young people.”

Odyssey is the culmination of a three-year District project to create an innovative, new learning environment for students. The school’s name was selected in fall 2017 after a community and Board of Education vote. A lottery was held for prospective students in February.

The new high school will offer engineering and biomedical pathways through Project Lead The Way (PLTW), the nation’s leading provider of STEM curriculum, and use project-based learning to teach students to identify and solve real-world problems.

“Odyssey STEM Academy is the result of our District’s vision to nurture exceptional scholars and our commitment to seeing it through,” Board of Education President Vivian Hansen said. “Today is a landmark day for Paramount that will blaze a trail of success for future generations.”

### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**080618\_PARAMOUNT\_ODYSSEY1:** Odyssey STEM Academy incoming students and Paramount community leaders celebrate the school with a ribbon-cutting on Aug. 1.

**080618\_PARAMOUNT\_ODYSSEY2:** Odyssey STEM Academy incoming student Blue Phillips is interviewed by Lakewood CityTV channel 31 following the school’s ribbon-cutting ceremony on Aug. 1.

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