



## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 25, 2017    CONTACT: William Diepenbrock    PHONE: 909-206-5304

### North Park Continuation High Principal Honored as Educator of the Month

Lakers honor H. Vincent Pratt for building relationships with students and families

**BALDWIN PARK** – North Park Continuation High School Principal H. Vincent Pratt has been honored as a January Educator of the Month by the Los Angeles Lakers for his dedication to his students.

Pratt, who has been with Baldwin Park Unified for eight years, is a 20-year educator who focuses on building relationships with students and collaborations with the community to help students achieve their potential. Pratt was nominated by North Park health clerk Jeremiah I. Urista.

Urista praised Pratt's ability to connect with students, noting how the principal greets every student with a handshake each morning and never ceases his efforts to create a fun, inspiring environment for learning.

"I'm just blessed to be able to serve," said Pratt, 45. "If people see any good in me, it's just a reflection of the great students we have, this great community and the amazing support I get from our awesome staff, parents and District. It's really an honor for the community."

North Park, an alternative school for juniors and seniors who face significant life challenges, has been designated a Model Continuation School by California. The school provides a host of special services, including teen parent support program Cal-SAFE, anger management and substance counseling.

Still, North Park boasts a superior graduation rate, has slashed suspensions and has strong attendance, Pratt said.

"Our students are motivated and passionate about their future," Pratt said. "It all centers around relationships."

Pratt has forged partnerships with community counseling programs and helped launch a fatherhood program. Pratt's monthly coffee meetings regularly draw up to 40 parents. Parent education classes also offer guidance on social media and recognizing substance abuse, and offer steps parents can take to help their children.

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“We have to meet the students where they are. If I’m homeless, hungry and I just got to school late, that’s not a reason I should be punished. It’s our goal to connect. We’ve got to meet the physical needs, the social-emotional needs; that way we can make sure we get them with the academics,” he said.

In addition, North Park has created leadership programs, such as an Associated Student Body, and clubs to keep students engaged. In 2014, the school held its first prom, now an annual tradition.

“We’re an alternative environment, but we don’t have to feel like that,” Pratt said. “Our goal is to connect our students to the opportunities the world has for them, to get them career and college ready.”

Counselor Jim Orick said Pratt’s leadership is responsible for inspiring success.

“During the 34 years I have been working with students, I have never had the pleasure of working with a more caring and hard-working principal. He will jump in to help anyone, with any task, and he treats all of our students as if they were his own children,” Orick said. “Last year, we posted the highest graduation rate in the school’s history, 93.4 percent, under his leadership.”

Pratt was honored by the Lakers at the team’s Jan. 17 home game. Lakers staff gave Pratt and his family a tour during the second quarter – and Pratt got a chance to take a photo of Laker great Magic Johnson. The team then honored Pratt, two other Los Angeles area educators and three students during halftime.

That’s when he received another surprise.

“When they brought me out on the floor and called my name, there was a huge crowd screaming,” Pratt said.

He learned that members of his staff, district Superintendent Froilan N. Mendoza and members of the Board of Education arranged to attend the game so they could help celebrate his award.

“I was at a loss for words,” Pratt said. “It was truly an honor.”

### PHOTOS

**BPUSD\_PRATT\_1:** North Park High School Principal H. Vincent Pratt acknowledges a cheering section of colleagues at the Jan. 17 Lakers game where he was honored as an Educator of the Month.

**BPUSD\_PRATT\_2:** The Los Angeles Lakers highlighted North Park High School Principal H. Vincent Pratt on Jan. 17 as an Educator of the Month.

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