The Pawprint

PROGRAM PLANNING HANDBOOK

For

NICK G. PARRAS MIDDLE SCHOOL
2010-2011

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Parras Middle School offers a variety of exciting courses and programs to meet the needs of all students in grades 6, 7 and 8. This program-planning book is designed to help students, parents and Parras Middle School Staff program students into courses that will challenge and motivate them during their middle school years. The remainder of this booklet describes these courses in greater detail to assist you in understanding what your student will be studying at Parras over the years.

**Special Programs**

All students have equal access to the core curriculum. Teachers utilize various grouping arrangements and instructional strategies to allow for individual learning styles. Students receive instruction in core curricular areas, and support from teachers and instructional assistants who work with classroom teachers to assist students in learning the material. Parent involvement is necessary if these students are to achieve success in the regular program.

**Middle School Reading Intervention Program**
The Middle School Reading Intervention Program is a year-long elective course offered to students to provide extra support in the area of reading. Students are chosen for this elective based on STAR scores and teacher recommendation. The goal of this program is to demonstrate measured improvement in reading comprehension, decoding skills, word analysis and secondly, improve student’s self-perception as a reader.

**Middle School Math Intervention Program**
This class is designed for students who need targeted intervention for deficits in their math skills. Once students are brought up to grade level, they are exited out of the class to participate in an elective. Students are selected for this classed based on STAR scores, teacher recommendation, or math benchmark scores.

**Middle School Writing Intervention Program**
This class is designed to support students in the area of writing. Students are selected for this elective based on STAR scores and teacher recommendation. The goal of this program is to raise the writing skills of students to grade level so they may excel in class.

**ELL Program (English Language Learners)**
6th, 7th, 8th grade students who test on a level of 3 or below on the CELDT (California English Language Development Test) are eligible to enroll in an English Language Development Class to help them with English language acquisition.

**ELD**
Students who test with a 3-4-5 on the CELDT will be enrolled in regular education classes with trained and certified teachers who may modify the curriculum to meet their needs.
Library Programs
The Parras Middle School Library is open after school from 3:00p.m.-4:00p.m. for students who need a quiet place to study. Computers are available for students to research material or type assignments. Students are expected to be picked up or walk directly home at 4:00p.m.

Algebra Support
Students will receive daily conceptual and homework support of the lessons taught in their algebra class. This class takes the place of their elective. This class is by invite only. The students are selected for this course based on STAR scores, teacher recommendation, and math benchmark scores.
Language Arts 6
The sixth grade language arts program provides a variety of opportunities to study literature. Through selected core works, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Where the Red Fern Grows* and selected works in the sixth grade textbook, *Elements of Literature, Introductory Course*, students are introduced to the literary genre such as novels, short stories, drama, myths and folk tales and works of non-fiction.

The teaching of writing is included within the context of the teaching of literature. Students will write responses to literature essays, problem-solving essays and expository writing as part of their portfolio assignment.

Social Science 6
During the sixth grade year, students will learn about and discuss the cultures and civilizations of the following peoples:

- China
- Mesopotamia
- Rome
- Egypt
- Greece

Students will assess the knowledge of the past in order to evaluate and understand the problems of the present. In addition, students will identify how the decisions of the present may affect the future. Geography and map skills are reviewed. Reading strategies, outlining and writing skills are an integral part of the program.

Mathematics 6
Mathematical concepts covered at the sixth grade level include:

- recalling basic facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
- estimation of sums and differences of whole numbers
- adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing of whole numbers, integers, decimals, and fractions
- implementing various strategies to interpret and solve word problems
- choosing appropriate units of measurement to determine length, volume, mass and weight
- geometry
- collecting and recording data by using various graphs
- introduction to algebraic equations

Pre-Algebra – Sixth grade students must meet the District placement criteria to be advanced into pre-algebra. The criteria is posted at www.parrasmiddle.org. See page 6 for a description of pre-algebra.
**Science 6**
The sixth grade science curriculum introduces students to earth science and in the study of earth science, students will learn about plate tectonics; weathering and erosion, earthquakes and volcanoes. Students also study heat and energy and ecology and resources.
The Health curriculum is integrated into the 6th grade science classes and addresses the following units of study:
- Exercise, Rest and Sleep
- Controlling Disease
- Safety and First Aid
- Taking Care of Your Health
- Your Body Grows and Changes

**Physical Education 6**
Sixth grade students will participate in a developmentally appropriate physical education program five periods per week. Students experience and practice a wide variety of movement skills and forms of physical activity. They will apply learned fitness concepts in the setting of personal goals, and work independently as well as with others to develop appropriate social behavior through physical education learning experiences.

The uniform requirement will be explained to parents and students in a letter sent home during the summer as well as the beginning of the school year.
Targeted areas of the program include the following activities:
- Locomotor movement
- Nonlocomotor movement
- Eye-Hand Coordination
- Eye-Foot Coordination
- Creative/Rhythmic Movement
- Flexibility
- Balance

**Elective Wheel Courses 6**
The sixth grade exploratory elective program exposes students to a variety of new and interesting topics. Students rotate on a regular basis through courses which may include the following:
- Intro to Spanish
- Art
- Keyboarding
- Public Speaking

**Band**
Sixth grade students may enroll in Band which is a year-long elective and takes the place of the other electives. If you wish to sign up for Advanced Band, or Jazz Band, please email Ms. Colten at mcolten@rbusd.org to set up an audition. Please see the 7th/8th elective section of this book for additional information about our music electives.


**Student Council (Application Needed – Download from www.parrasmiddle.org)** –Please see page 12 for course description.
Language Arts 7
The seventh grade Language Arts program begins with a review of grammar and paragraph building and culminates in effective essay writing. Through literature, students are exposed to a variety of genres including short stories, drama, poetry and novels which enhance comprehension and interpretive skills.

Required reading includes selections from the district adopted text, in addition to core novels, Bridge to Terabithia and The Giver. Reading for pleasure is encouraged. Seventh grade students revisit the writing process, and students continuously reflect their growth as readers and writers. Keeping a writing portfolio is an integral part of this process. Required writings are persuasive essays, summaries, research reports, stories and responses to literature. Students can expect a fun but busy year with an average of one book report or project due each quarter.

Social Science 7
Social Science classes study the histories of the following civilizations:
- Rome
- Middle East
- West Africa
- Japan
- China
- Incas
- Meso-America: Maya, Aztec
- Europe from Middle Ages to the Age of Enlightenment

Students will use various learning modalities that include cooperative learning, simulations, cross-curricular activities, interactive journals, note-taking techniques, graphic organizers, map activities, and study skills.

Mathematics 7
Pre-Algebra
- Algebraic expressions and integers,
- solving one-step equations and inequalities, decimals and equations,
- factors, fractions, and exponents, ratios, proportions, and percents solving equations and inequalities
- linear functions and graphing
- spatial thinking, right triangles in algebra,
- data analysis and probability nonlinear functions and polynomials

Pre-Algebra is designed to prepare students for Algebra 1. Concepts taught include number sense, signed numbers, mathematical reasoning, order of operations, simplifying algebraic expressions, factoring, solving equations and algebraic word problems, linear graphing. In addition, students are taught consumer problem solving and strategies for real life decision making now and in the future. Pre Algebra will help you learn to recognize mathematical relationships and general patterns. You will learn how to solve a variety of problems from a purely mathematical aspect as well as use variables and mathematical symbols to represent and solve real-world problems. Mathematics Standards from previous grades are reviewed to help with understanding of the Pre Algebra Standards. Lessons have ample skill practice so that students can master the important concepts and techniques.
Science 7
Seventh grade science incorporates hands-on and laboratory activities to introduce selected topics from the life and earth sciences. The hands-on activities provide students with an opportunity to explore their own creative abilities while applying the scientific method.

The life science unit focuses on cell biology, genetics, evolution and structure and function of living systems in plants and animals. The earth science unit, earth and life history, introduces the students to the restless nature of the earth, including species extinction and the study of the fossil record.

All seventh and eighth grade students participate in a two-year ten week program of health and family education designed to improve their health and well-being. The program addresses four unifying ideas of health literacy: acceptance of personal responsibility, respect for and promotion of the health of others, an understanding of the process of growth and development, and the informed use of health related information products and services.
8th Grade Courses

Language Arts 8
The eighth grade language arts program will emphasize reading, writing and grammar in a meaningful context which is related to the core literature. Students are engaged in reading a variety of genre including selections from the textbook, Elements of Literature, and selected eighth grade core literature.

Writing across the curriculum is a goal of our program. Writing activities include, but are not limited to, book projects, an autobiographical notebook, a career paper, a persuasive essay and a research paper. An integral component of the language arts program is the development of critical thinking skills.

Students participate in the writing process. Student work is selected by the teacher or assessed and reviewed over time through implementation of the portfolios. Student portfolios include career papers, essays, short stories, biographies and reports. Grammar usage, spelling and the mechanics of language are emphasized in the final stage of the writing process.

Social Science 8
The purpose of the 8th grade social science curriculum is to connect historical events to the present in a way that is meaningful to students’ lives. The curriculum integrates history, geography, economics, politics and the social aspects of American History with an emphasis on the time period from the American Revolution through the Industrial Revolution. The main units of study are the Constitution, the Westward Movement, the Civil War and the Industrial Revolution. Within the interdisciplinary teams, students experience thematic units and integrated curriculum enhanced by a variety of learning strategies and technologies.

Algebra Readiness
The Algebra Readiness Curriculum will cover those Standards from Grade 6 and Grade 7 necessary for Algebra 1 success while introducing a few of the Algebra 1 Standards needed for success.

Concepts covered in Algebra Readiness:
- numerical and algebraic expressions, number properties, distributive property, writing expressions
- addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of integers; absolute value, positive exponents
- basic equations (1-step and 2-step), square roots, Pythagorean Theorem
- Rational Numbers; prime factorization, GCD, equivalent fractions, fraction<->decimal conversions, comparing and ordering
- Rational Number Operations; addition, subtraction, multiplication, division of fractions, zero and negative exponents
- ratios, rates, proportions, dimensional analysis
- fraction<->decimal<->percent conversions, finding percents, percent and proportions, percent change
-graphing in the coordinate plane, graphing linear functions, slope, direct variation
-writing and solving inequalities across the 4 operations, solving 2-step inequalities
-properties of exponents, power rules, exploring roots, simplifying algebraic expressions, solving multiple-step equations

**Algebra 1**

Concepts covered in Algebra 1:

-expressions, equations, and problem solving
-properties of real numbers (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of integers)
-multiple step equations, ratios, proportions, rewriting equations and formulas
-solving inequalities, multiple step inequalities, compound inequalities, absolute value equations and inequalities
-graphing linear equations and functions
-writing linear equations, slope-intercept, point-slope, standard form, parallel and perpendicular lines using slopes
-systems of equations and inequalities rate problems mixture problems
-exponents, radicals, pythagorean theorem, fractional exponents
-operations with polynomials, factoring polynomials
-graphing quadratic equations and functions, completing the square, use the discriminant, use the quadratic formula
-simplify rational expressions; add, subtract, multiply, and divide rational expressions; solve rational equations

**Geometry**

The new T1-83 graphing calculator is introduced and used throughout the course. This college prep course includes the presentation of basic geometric concepts, postulates, axioms, formal proof, congruency, lines and angles, polygons and circles. Skills to be developed are understanding and ability to use deductive proof, logical approach to solution of practical problems, awareness and appreciation of geometry in the environment.

**Science 8**

The eighth grade science program extends the concepts and science process covered in 7th grade. Laboratory activities reinforce concepts covered in physical science units. Physical science includes units on forces, motion, machines and chemistry. The chemistry unit includes buoyancy, density, structure of matter, periodic table, chemical reactions, and the chemistry of living things.

All seventh and eighth grade students participate in a two-year program of health and family education designed to improve their health and well-being. The program is designed to encourage students to learn how to make responsible, informed decisions regarding health-related issues. Activities and laboratory experiments are used to enhance the health curriculum. Health units are the body systems, tobacco, alcohol and drug prevention, diseases, safety and emergencies and environmental health issues.
Project Alert
All 8th grade students participate in Project Alert, a Beach Cities Health district program, taught through their science classes. Project ALERT is designed to motivate adolescents against drug use and help them acquire the skills they need to resist pro-drug pressures. It does this by helping them achieve the following goals:

- Understand the consequences of using drugs
- Develop reasons not to use drugs
- Establish school-wide norms against drug use
- Understand the benefits of being drug-free
- Recognize that most people don’t use drugs
- Identify and counter pro-drug pressures
- Resist advertising appeals
- Resist internal and social pressures to use
- Work together
- Communicate with parents
- Support others in making non-use decisions
- Recognize alternatives to substance use
7th and 8th Grade
Year-Long Elective Courses

7th and 8th grade students will have the opportunity to take an elective course during the school year. Students may request one year-round course or two semester long courses.

Music classes must have a minimum of 25 students each for Parras Middle School to offer them.

Beginning Band
A yearlong course introducing students to playing and performing on concert band instruments (flute, clarinet, alto sax, trumpet, trombone, and percussion.) The band will perform three to four times per year. Students will be introduced to basic forms of music and write simple compositions.

Intermediate Band
A yearlong course for students who have played a concert band instrument for at least one year. Additional band instruments (piccolo, oboe, bassoon, tenor sax, bari sax, French horn, baritone, tuba) would be introduced to students. Students will perform in small and large ensembles. Students will study composers and music throughout history. Students in the band will perform three to four times a year.

Advanced Band
A yearlong course for students who have two or more years experience playing a concert band instrument. Students will perform in small and large ensembles, as well as solo. Students will study composers and music throughout history. Students in the band will perform three to four times per year including a performance with the high school marching band. Instructor’s approval is required to enroll.

Jazz Band
A yearlong instrumental jazz course that introduces experienced musicians to various styles of jazz music and their origins throughout the United States. Instrumentation could include flute, clarinets, alto and tenor saxophones, trumpets, trombones, electric and bass guitar, electric piano, and drum set. Students will be introduced to improvisation. This is a small ensemble and requires an audition and instructor’s approval for enrollment.

Student Council (year-long course for grades 6-8)
Students who are elected as class officers or who want to participate in Parras’ student body association (with teacher approval) may help run student programs and activities in our student council course. A description of activities are noted on page 17 of the book.
**Spanish**
Students are offered the opportunity to take the first year of high school Spanish over a two-year period. This program enables the student upon successful completion with a B or better at each semester to continue on to the next level. At the conclusion of 8th grade, students are eligible to advance to 2nd year High School Spanish.

**Spanish 1**
This class introduces the students to the Spanish language by familiarizing them with the sounds and letters of the alphabet as well as basic vocabulary used in every day situations. Students learn to read and write at the elementary level. Many games are used to learn vocabulary and grammar in this class.

Students should meet the following criteria before selecting this course: earned at least a proficient or advanced in total language on the STAR and a strong recommendation from the sixth grade language arts teacher.

**Spanish 2**
Students will expand and develop their vocabulary, reading and writing skills with an emphasis on verbal communication.

Students eligible for Spanish B should meet the following criteria: Student must have taken Spanish 1 and received a grade of C or higher and have a recommendation from their Spanish teacher.

Cultural projects requirement (CPR) are assigned twice a year and students are required to organize a portfolio, which they take with them to Redondo Union High School.

**AVID** (year-long course)
The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is an effective program that targets students in the academic middle–B, C, and even D students–who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard. AVID places academically average students in advanced classes and provides them with an elective class that prepares them to succeed in rigorous curricula, enter mainstream activities in school, and increase their opportunities to enroll in four-year colleges. Students must meet a criteria to enroll. Please email your student’s name to Mrs. Bangham at lbangham@rbusd.org.

**Teacher’s Assistant** (year-long course for 8th grade students only)
Eighth grade students, with teacher’s approval, may assist classroom, elective or physical education teachers with course activities. Students assist teachers with clerical duties and may tutor students who need help. Students chosen to serve as a teacher assistant must have satisfactory citizenship and academic grades.
Office Assistant (semester or year-long course for 8th grade students only)

Students may work in the school office during their elective time to learn office skills and procedures. Students may be asked to file, answer telephone calls, route messages, assist with attendance procedures and greet school visitors. Students must have satisfactory citizenship and academic grades, have no outstanding discipline issues and meet office support staff approval in order to work in the school office.
7th and 8th Grade
Semester Elective Courses

These semester elective classes are designed to give students an opportunity to learn about different disciplines and encourage them to explore their own interests and talents. Due to the number of students and scheduling restriction, semester classes will be assigned randomly and cannot be requested separately.

Art
Students will read and write about visual arts, as well as, participate in performance work of sculpture, puppetry create images in the style of some of the greatest modern artists, critique works of art, understand the difference between criticism and aesthetics as they relate to works of art, and relate aspects of themselves and their surrounding environment to the world of art. Students will work individually, in small groups, and in whole-class activities.

Creative Writing
This course will concern itself with the problems (and satisfactions) of writing fiction, whether it is a short story, or a play. Through analysis of pieces and each other's work, the course will explore a variety of narrative techniques and become familiar with the basic tools of the fiction writer, including methods of characterization, point of view, dialogue, clarity of expression, character, mood and scene. The fine art of revision will also be emphasized.

Video Production
Students will write, produce, direct, film, and star in informative Parras video presentations broadcast over our closed-circuit television system. Students will negotiate Mac software for editing and remote broadcast demands.

Theatre Arts
Students will develop creative expression in their body-movement and voice expression through individual experience and ensemble playing. Students will learn simple theater terminology in regards to movement, voice, and basic stage terminology. Students will learn about past cultural and historical contributions to the theater. Students will develop and understanding of works in theater by analyzing and interpreting what is presented through voice, movement and visual effects in informal and formal presentations. Theatre Arts will be partnered with the semester Stage Design class.

Stage Design
Students will be introduced to stage design and building. They will learn about woodshop safety, set design and construction. The culminating activity will be the designing and creation of a theatre set for a production by the Theatre Arts class. Stage Design will be partnered with the semester Theatre Arts class.
Woodworking
Students will be introduced to basic woodworking in this shop course. Students will pass a safety test before they can work with hand tools and machinery. Students will know the importance of measuring to the 1/16 of an inch. There will be assigned wood projects which may include a sanding block, memo pad and a wall/mirror shelf. Students will design and develop the ultimate dragster which will be powered by a CO$_2$ cartridge launched from a timed track which can travel as fast as 1,679 thousand of a second at the distance of eight feet. Students will also have time to create their own project applying experiences learned on previous projects. P.S.A.’s (Problem Solving Activities) will be assigned as homework projects.
Students participate in a developmentally appropriate physical education class five days a week; this is an integral part of the total educational program for all students. Physical education teaches students how their bodies move, how to perform a variety of physical activities, the health-related benefits of regular physical activity, and specific skills that will allow them to adopt a physically active, healthy lifestyle. Through physical education, students become confident, self-controlled, and resilient; develop positive social skill; learn to set and strive for personal achievable goals; learn to assume leadership, cooperate with others, and accept responsibility for their own behavior.

All students are expected to purchase and wear the required physical education uniform each day. Students will be assigned lockers which they secure with a combination lock that must be purchased from the Physical Education Department. Throughout the year, all students experience activities designed to prepare them for the annual physical fitness assessment. Seventh and eighth grade students also have regular opportunities to use the Panther Pit, our model fitness center. Culminating events for some units provide select eighth graders access to the facilities a Redondo Union High School.

Sports included in our program are:

1st Quarter
Flag football
Volleyball

3rd Quarter
Hockey
Lacrosse
State Fitness Testing

2nd Quarter
Team Handball
Basketball
Soccer

4th Quarter
Golf
Paddle Tennis
Over-the-Line

Tennis
Track Events
Softball

Advisement 6-8

Students will have the opportunity to participate in an advisement class during their school day at Parras Middle School. Advisement classes meet daily for a 15 minute time period. Monday and Wednesdays will be silent reading periods. Students will be responsible for producing a book report based on their SSR book every quarter. Every Friday will be devoted to agenda checks and student organization.
Extra-Curricular Activities

Intermurals Program
The intermural after school sports program at Parras Middle School is a great addition to the school’s educational program. The intramural program gives students at all ability levels a positive after school activity to be involved with. Participation in the sports program is a privilege. Because of this, a high standard of behavior and academic achievement is expected from the student athlete. Eligible students must maintain a “C” average and have satisfactory grades in citizenship. Athletes of all skill levels will learn basic and advanced skills in each sport and have the opportunity to experience a middle school athletic program. There is a fee charged to participate in this program. Parras Middle School offers the following sports:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
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<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>Flag Football</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
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Parras is part of the South Bay Middle School’s Sports League along with Adams, Manhattan Beach Middle School, Miraleste, Dana, Chadwick, Hermosa Valley, and El Segundo. There are seven games each season (one per school) with the home site alternating. Generally practices are Monday and Wednesday from 3:00 until 4:15 or 4:30. Games are held on Thursday from 3:30 until about 4:45.

Student Council
Student Council is composed of elected student members. Student Council members organize and implement activities for students at Parras Middle School. These activities, combined with dedicated leadership, motivate students to get involved in their school.

Student Council members usually organize the following activities during the school year:
- School Dances
- Monthly Spirit Days
- Lunch-time Activities
- Pep Rallies
- Student Council Meetings
- Red Ribbon Week
- Run student store
- Publicizing Activities
- Run election
- Organize awards
- Run events
- Community service
**CJSF** (California Junior Scholarship Federation)

California Junior Scholarship Federation (CJSF) is an academic club at Parras. Members must meet certain academic and citizenship grade requirements. The goal of CJSF is to complete at least four service projects a year (peer tutoring, toy drive, etc.). We also go on academic and fun field trips such as touring a college campus. This is a club that students can join in high school as well. CJSF is open to 8th grade students all year and 7th grade students after their 2nd quarter grades are posted.

**Ecology**

The Ecology Club began in 1991 to enable students to help improve the appearance of our school and to help protect life on our planet. We began with school-wide paper recycling. Over the years, in addition to recycling, we have sponsored and participated in beach clean-ups, sponsored Earth Day activities and contests, raised money to save the Rain Forest, initiated school-gardening projects, published newsletters, sponsored assemblies to inform students about our local environment, and worked on a project in partnership with Heal the Bay. Activities vary each year and reflect the interests and activity level of our members.

**Builders**

Builders Club is a service organization that provides young people at Parras Middle School with the opportunity to help others, serve their school and community, and build a positive future for themselves.

Club members develop and carry out service projects for their school and community. They may also participate in fund-raising projects and use the money earned to support a local charity or school project.

Our club holds regular meetings, and establishes committees. Projects suggested by members are conducted under the supervision and cooperation of the club advisor, school administration and sponsoring community Kiwanis Club.

**Drama Club**

The Drama Club sponsors an all school musical that rehearses after school on Tuesday and Thursday during the months of October through December culminating with an evening performance in December.

**Travel Club**

The Travel Club sponsors a trip to Washington D.C. for eighth grade students. They meet periodically throughout the year during lunch. The 5-day trip is open to all 8th graders who are good citizens! A parent-student introduction meeting is held in early October. The cost of the trip is approximately $1,100 which is payable in seven installments.

**Catalina Island Marine Institute Camp**

CIMI is an outdoor marine biology science program available to students in seventh grade. CIMI is an educational program operated by Guided Discoveries. Students participate in hands-on science experiments and activities that extend the science curriculum. The cost for the trip is approximately $200. This is a weekend activity. Students depart from Parras on Friday morning and return Sunday afternoon.
Math Counts
The Math Counts program is for students who excel in math. Higher math principals are taught, with ten homework problems assigned each time. The top 4-8 Math Counts students will be chosen each February to compete in the local math competition against other middle schools in the South Bay. This is an excellent opportunity for students to obtain advanced training in geometry, probability and higher algebra. Math Counts not only engages students in creative approaches to learning mathematics, but also helps them apply math in everyday life.

Library Programs
Exciting speakers and programs are sponsored by the Parras Library on a weekly basis. These programs include: Local authors and screenwriters speaking after school to students, and the Writer’s Café, an after-school program for students who want to expand their creative writing opportunities.