



# 50 Films.

## A Day in the Life of an American School District.



On May 8, 2012, fifty small camera crews followed a wide-ranging group of individuals who participate, attend, support and work in the Pasadena Unified School District. Teachers, students, principals, volunteers and many others revealed their unique involvement in what makes a public school district function. These films are the story of public school at the moment things happen. No voice-over narrative and no expert commentaries. By filming over one complete day, GO PUBLIC had access to the struggles and resolutions that often occur many times in an average day.

Snapshots of each of these personal stories were first crafted into "50 Films," short videos providing a glimpse into the experiences of navigating a typical day in public school. The videos were made available online to provide a window into a typical American school district and to contribute to the national dialog about public education.

The hundreds of hours of raw footage are now being edited into the GO PUBLIC feature-length documentary, a true-to-life narrative of a single day in a public school district.

The following pages contain brief profiles of each of the "50 Films" subjects. We invite you to learn more about them by viewing their stories on [gopublicproject.org](http://gopublicproject.org).

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**GUSTAVO ALONSO** is in the sixth grade at Eliot Middle School. He likes building robots, reads aloud from his writing journal about why money alone won't make you happy, and plays catch with his friends at the park.  
SCHOOL: ELIOT MIDDLE SCHOOL

**ANGEL BALCAZAR** is a 3rd grade student at Roosevelt Elementary. He is in a wheelchair and has a condition that affects his muscle control, but he is a bright and eager child who likes art and playing with his toy cars.  
SCHOOL: ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY

If you want to get on principal **GILBERT BARRAZA's** good side, put away your cell phone! Living by Malcom X's mantra of "Everything I do today is urgent," Mr. Barraza is actively involved with his students at Pasadena High School, and strives to lead them towards pursuing a college education.  
SCHOOL: PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL

**KATHLEEN BAUTISTA** teaches kindergarten through 2nd grade students with special needs at Don Benito elementary school. She is proud of her students as they progress from barely verbal to engaged and capable.  
SCHOOL: DON BENITO ELEMENTARY

**ELIZABETH "BESS" BRANDOW** is a very busy fifth grader at Webster Elementary School. Along with keeping up with her schoolwork, Bess plays the guitar and is a Girl Scout.  
SCHOOL: WEBSTER ELEMENTARY

**ESMERALDA CEREZO** is a single mother of four. She volunteers every day at the Healthy Start center at Madison Elementary, where her youngest two children go to school. Though Esmeralda is tattooed and tough-looking, she is a kind, involved mom who hopes to inspire her children to go further with their education.  
SCHOOL: MADISON ELEMENTARY

**ESTHER CHUN** is a third-grade teacher at Franklin Elementary School. Her sweet personality and emphasis on character make her popular with the kids, but as a first-year teacher, she is in danger of being laid off due to budget cuts.  
SCHOOL: FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY

**FRANCES COLLINS-MOORE** is a guidance counselor at Marshall Fundamental High School. She recognizes the importance of educating and guiding young students, but fears that budget cuts and overcrowded classrooms are keeping kids from realizing their full potential.  
SCHOOL: MARSHALL FUNDAMENTAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

**CONNIE DELATORRE** is a community assistant at Jefferson Elementary School. From making coffee to managing money to speaking at board meetings, "the woman with a thousand jobs" makes everyone's life a little bit less stressful.  
SCHOOL: JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY

**ROXANNE DUBOUCHERON** is a music teacher who works with several schools in Pasadena. She teaches kids how to play all sorts of instruments - from violin and cello to brass and woodwinds to the drums. Ms. DuBoucheron knows that music can be an outlet for students who may not be the best at math or reading.  
SCHOOL: JEFFERSON AND WILLARD ELEMENTARY & WASHINGTON MIDDLE

**GABRIEL ESTRADA** is a student at Muir High School's Business and Entrepreneurship Academy. His class projects range from creating a business portfolio to hammering nails into a running shoe to represent "irony."  
SCHOOL: MUIR HIGH SCHOOL

PHS junior **SAMANTHA GALE** wakes up for school at 5:30 every morning. She works hard in her classes, volunteers as a tutor at Altadena Elementary (where her mother works), and is very involved in the Army JROTC program. As a Cadet, Samantha learns leadership and life skills and cultivates a network of close friends.  
SCHOOL: PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL

English and history teacher **ALISON GARFINKEL** loves theatre, and shares her passion with her students by directing McKinley School's production of *Cinderella*. A typical day for Ms. Garfinkel involves teaching Shakespeare to middle schoolers, practicing improvisation with kindergartners, choreographing dance numbers, and finding a glass slipper.  
SCHOOL: MCKINLEY K-8

**ERIC GOTHOLD** is a musician, theatre guy, and former art teacher. For the last 20 years, "Mr. G" has also been the assistant principal at Washington Middle School, where he works hard to synthesize his administrative responsibilities and artistic inclinations.  
SCHOOL: WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

**BENJAMIN GRAVES** is a junior at Rose City High School, Pasadena's alternative high school. At Rose City, Benjamin is involved with the student leadership board and he hopes to return to Blair High School next year.  
SCHOOL: ROSE CITY HIGH SCHOOL

**ABIGAIL "ABBY" GRIFFITH** and her twin are 2nd graders in San Rafael Elementary School's Dual Language Spanish Immersion Program. She is learning how to read and write (and sing) in two languages.  
SCHOOL: SAN RAFAEL ELEMENTARY

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**JOHN GUNDRY** is the Superintendent in Pasadena. Running the district is a challenging job, and Superintendent Gundry's day involves not only supervising the schools, but also dealing with dissent amongst employees and criticism from the community.

PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**SAMANTHA HARRIS** is a fifth grade student at Longfellow Elementary School. Throughout the day she practices Karate at school, plays the violin, and explains everything about Archie comics.

SCHOOL: LONGFELLOW ELEMENTARY

**MARVIN HATCHETT** works as the Security Guard at Wilson Middle School during the day and switches hats after school to become the volunteer choir and instrumental music instructor. He has been working and volunteering at in the district for over 20 years.

SCHOOL: WILSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

**BENJAMIN LAMBERT**, chemistry teacher, believes that the key to being an effective teacher is recognizing that all students have potential. He's popular amongst his students at Pasadena High School and their families because he has the ability to make science fun and interesting.

SCHOOL: PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL

Librarian **MAURA LARGE** teaches students at Eliot Middle School how to use the computers and library resources. This experience is invaluable to the kids, but she, and all secondary school librarians in Pasadena, face possible layoffs.

SCHOOL: ELIOT MIDDLE SCHOOL

**ADRIENNE LETT** is the president of the athletic booster club at Muir High School, where her children attend and her teen-aged daughter plays softball. Ms. Lett realizes the importance of being involved in her children's lives, and hopes to convince other parents to support the team as well.

SCHOOL: MUIR HIGH SCHOOL

Custodian **FELIX LOPEZ** is the hardest working guy at Washington Middle School. As a child, poverty kept Mr. Lopez from finishing school. Now, he's a mentor to the students at Washington, and attempts to give his 10th grade daughter the opportunities he never had.

SCHOOL: WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

**JOEL LOPEZ** is the high school band director at Marshall Secondary School. He educates his class of aspiring rock stars and jazz musicians by day, then takes care of his baby daughter by night.

SCHOOL: MARSHALL SECONDARY SCHOOL

Sixteen-year-old **KENIA LOYOLA** is an outstanding student who attends Muir High School's Engineering and Environmental Science Academy. At Muir, she has the chance to work on a student-run farm, where she learns about growing crops and running a business. She is involved in many clubs and leadership programs on campus as well.

SCHOOL: MUIR HIGH SCHOOL

New principal **SHANNON MALONE** believes she can truly make a difference at Cleveland Elementary, where she connects with the students and community, with a focus on personal growth.

SCHOOL: CLEVELAND ELEMENTARY

Outspoken **RAMON MIRAMONTES** is the only Latino on the Pasadena Board of Education, in a district where 60% of the students are Latino. His native Spanish-speaking skills make him popular with parents, but his blunt, confrontational nature has made him enemies as well.

PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**MICHELLE MORENO** is a feisty, athletic Mexican-American 10th grader. She attends Blair High School's Health Careers Academy, and is committed to joining the US Army upon graduation. Michelle is inspired by the memory of her late father, who taught her to always stand up for herself.

SCHOOL: BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL

**COACH PARISI** loves his job - coaching baseball at Pasadena High School. He leads his boys to a victory at home against Glendale High, and prepares for the game against their rival team, Muir.

SCHOOL: PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL

Ninth grader **DEVIN PERRY** attends Muir High School's Arts, Entertainment, and Media Academy. Devin's goal is to be the first in her family to graduate from college, and to set a good example for her younger siblings.

SCHOOL: ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA ACADEMY

**WHITNEY REESE** teaches second grade at Jackson Elementary. She lives across the street and, as a child, attended the school. Not surprisingly, Jackson is like a second home to Ms. Reese. She shares her love of yoga with her students, and teaches them about herbs and gardening.

SCHOOL: JACKSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**GLORIA REYNOLDS**, a volunteer at Altadena Elementary, proves that there is no age limit for helping to make your community a better place. A retired teacher, she knows that public education is essential to democracy and learning is a lifelong process.

SCHOOL: ALTADENA ELEMENTARY

**ANA RODRIGUEZ** is the ceramics teacher at Norma Coombs Elementary. She helps her students turn brown clay into hand-built pots and other creations.

SCHOOL: NORMA COOMBS ELEMENTARY

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**EILEEN ROTH** is a veteran librarian who has been at PUSD for over 40 years. Her library is designed to feel like a castle or a magical place (dragon included), and Ms. Roth allows students and their parents to check out books whenever they like.  
SCHOOL: LONGFELLOW ELEMENTARY

**ROSIE RUTT** is a happy-go-lucky redhead who loves drawing with chalk, playing with her friends, and spending time with her family. She attends Sierra Madre Elementary's K/1st Inclusion Program, where children with special needs are fully integrated into a regular classroom.  
SCHOOL: SIERRA MADRE ELEMENTARY

**ALEX SCHULTZ** is an art teacher at Pasadena High School's Creative Arts Media and Design Academy (CAMAD). His students' assignments include "paint your fears," designing posters, and painting murals.  
SCHOOL: PASADENA HIGH SCHOOL

**GARETH SEIGEL** teaches high school English and Math to students most other teachers have given up on. By forging a personal relationship with these high-risk teenagers, Mr. Seigel inspires them to strive for a brighter future.  
SCHOOL: CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT STUDENT (CIS) ACADEMY

**MERISSA SHNORHOKIAN** is a 6th grader at Wilson Middle School. She enjoys school, her friends and her robotics class. Merisa believes that public school is helping prepare her for the real world.  
SCHOOL: WILSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

**IAN SHORT** is an active 7th grade student who deals with the challenge of being autistic. He likes playing catch, video games, and hanging out with his classmates.  
SCHOOL: SIERRA MADRE MIDDLE SCHOOL

**AMY TAYLOR** is an early childhood school psychologist at the Hodges Early Intervention Center. She assesses preschool-aged children for autism and other developmental disorders.  
SCHOOL: HODGES EARLY INTERVENTION CENTER

**JOANNA TING**, a third grader at Field Elementary School, is enrolled in the Dual Language Mandarin Immersion Program. She can read and write in two languages, and talk to her Chinese grandmother in Mandarin on the phone.  
SCHOOL: FIELD ELEMENTARY

**MARY TING** is a 7th grade student enrolled in Blair Middle School's International Baccalaureate (IB) program.  
SCHOOL: BLAIR MIDDLE SCHOOL

**TERESA TORTARO** teaches 2nd grade at McKinley K-8 school. Her son **DAVID GIESELMAN** attends McKinley — and is in the 2nd grade.  
SCHOOL: MCKINLEY K-8

Twelfth grade twins **MARILYN AND JACKELYN TRAVIS** and their eighth grade sister **CAROLYN** all attend Marshall Secondary School. The girls, who spent a portion of their childhood in foster care, run the Buddy Club - a program that pairs young Marshall students with older student mentors.  
SCHOOL: MARSHALL SECONDARY SCHOOL

**ANGELICA VARGAS** is a hard-working eleventh grader enrolled in Blair High School's International Baccalaureate program. Angelica is an honors student who plays the piano and swims competitively, but her mother worries about her because she often studies late into the night.  
SCHOOL: BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL

**DONNETHA WALLACE** is a culinary arts teacher and the program chair of the Culinary and Hospitality Pathway at Blair High School. She loves to cook, and enjoys sharing her passion with her students.  
SCHOOL: BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL

**FRANCES WEISENBERGER**, a former teacher, is the principal of Hamilton Elementary School. Ms. Weisenberger knows that once she walks through the doors of her school, anything can happen, and the day she planned on having is rarely ever the day she gets.  
SCHOOL: HAMILTON ELEMENTARY

**JODIE WEST** teaches science to Kindergarten through 5th grade at Washington Accelerated Elementary School. She is a self-proclaimed "bit of a nerd" and considers all her students budding engineers. Jodie is also a mom to twin 5 year old boys who attend Washington and an 18 month old boy.  
SCHOOL: WASHINGTON ACCELERATED ELEMENTARY

**LINDA WITTRY** is the International Baccalaureate Primary Years coordinator at Willard Elementary School. She likes to spend most of her time in the classroom, where she teaches everything from science and writing to line dancing and guitar.  
SCHOOL: WILLARD ELEMENTARY

**AMY ZERONIAN** is an 11th grade student at Marshall Fundamental High School who plays softball and volleyball. A gifted scholar and athlete, she has already accepted a scholarship to play softball in college. Amy is also involved in drama, and is running for ASB representative.  
SCHOOL: MARSHALL SECONDARY SCHOOL