



*A Supplement from the...*

# **Palm Springs Unified School District**

**Serving Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage & Thousand Palms August/September 2017**

## **2017-18 School Year Begins August 9**

Palm Springs Unified School District opens the 2016-17 school year on Wednesday, Aug. 10. All students are expected to report to classes on that day.

Bus schedules and bell schedules for each school are posted on the District's website at [www.psusd.us](http://www.psusd.us).

Parents are urged to fill out the application for free and reduced lunch when they receive it at the start of the school year. The district receives federal funds based upon the number of students who qualify for the program, regardless

of whether students choose to use the services.

All Palm Springs Unified School District students entering the 7th grade this school year, and all new PSUSD students entering 7th through 12th grade, must show proof of an adolescent whooping cough booster (called "Tdap") to attend school. District officials are asking that students be immunized as soon as possible and present proof of immunization at their school site immediately.

We also want to remind parents that the state Legislature

passed a law that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2016, that all students, other than those with a medical waiver signed by a physician, are required to be fully immunized in order to attend school. Students who are not in compliance are required to enroll in an independent study or home schooling program in order to receive a public school education.

For more information on immunization requirements, contact your individual school site or the District Office at (760) 416-6000.

## **Two Desert Hot Springs Educators Named County Teachers of Year**

Two Palm Springs Unified teachers were surprised with a visit from Riverside County Supt. of Schools Dr. Judy White in late May to bring them the news that they had been selected as two of Riverside County's four Teachers of the Year.

Michelle Beyronneau, who teaches geometry at Desert Hot Springs High; and Dr. Brian McDaniel, director of bands at Painted Hills Middle School, are now vying for California Teacher of the Year honors.

Rancho Mirage Elementary's Rhonda Fort was a semi-finalist in the County Teacher of the Year competition. Beyronneau and McDaniel join Coachella Valley Unified's Edwin Detoya (Bobby Duke Middle School) and Jurupa Unified's Martha Rodriguez (Sunnyslope Elementary) as the County's 2018 Teachers of the Year.

McDaniel was raised in Desert Hot Springs, attended the public schools in the Palm Springs Unified School District, and is now in his second stint leading a music program in the district. Formerly the

band director at Desert Hot Springs High School from 2006 to 2015, McDaniel has now sparked a new energy into the band and choir program at Painted Hills Middle School, named The Regiment. When he arrived in 2014, there were 75 students. Now, the tune is different with 250 students involved in the program.



**Dr. Brian McDaniel with some of his students.**

McDaniel earned a bachelor's degree in music from California State University, Long Beach. He proceeded to receive a master's degree in education from California State University, San Bernardino. In 2011, he completed his doctorate of educational leadership from the University of Redlands.

It was the high school math teacher of Beyronneau's mother that convinced

her that she could actually go to college. Two generations later, her students are on the receiving end of her belief in their potential to succeed in school and in life. When applying for a teaching position within the district, Beyronneau researched the schools with the highest performing students, and promptly avoided them—focusing instead on positions where she could teach students with the greatest socio-economic and academic needs.

Beyronneau graduated with a degree in mathematics from Creighton University in Nebraska. She earned a master's degree in educational administration from the University of Redlands.



**From left, Board of Education President John Gerard; Desert Hot Springs High Assistant Principals Mike Grein, Erica Watson and Manuel Bayardo; County Teacher of the Year Michelle Beyronneau; Riverside County Supt. of Schools Dr. Judy White; PSUSD Supt. of Schools Dr. Sandy Lyon; and Desert Hot Springs High Principal George Bullis.**

## **District Launches New Website, Mobile App, Notification System**

Palm Springs Unified launches the 2017-18 school year with a brand new website, automated notification system and mobile application all aimed at improving and increasing communications between the District and its parents, students and community members.

The new website at [www.psusd.us](http://www.psusd.us) is expected to have its home page and some other components up and running prior to the start of the new school year on Aug. 9 with revisions and additions being made within the few weeks of August. The new site is much easier to navigate than the previous site and also contains additional information and resources not found on the previous site. The new website will also interact with PSUSD social media (twitter

and Facebook) with links on the home page along with an upcoming events calendar and District news and photos.

Following the website launch, PSUSD parents, students and community members can also download the PSUSD web app through the Google Playstore or iTunes. The app will allow users to subscribe to the portions of the site from which they would like to receive alerts on new postings (i.e. schools, departments and/or district). The launch of the new app will be announced on the website, through school-site communications and through social media within the next few weeks. Parents will also be able to access posted electronic flyers from Peachjar through the mobile app.

The District also has a new auto dialer communications system that allows parents to choose their preferred method of site and District alert individual messaging communications (phone, text and/or e-mail). Parents should make sure their emergency information is updated with their school site to ensure that the proper information is inputted into the system. When you receive your communications via chosen methods, you are provided with options to revise the preferred methods through a response mechanism.

Finally, after many years, PSUSD will soon be unveiling a brand new District logo. Watch for the innovative new logo in the very near future.

# District Digest



### Streets Named for Graduating Seniors:

Streets were named near Cathedral City High, Mount San Jacinto High and Desert Hot Springs High in honor of outstanding graduating seniors as has become the traditions in those two cities over the past several years. At top, Cathedral City High senior Mark Vogt, with, from left, his parents, Supt. Of Schools Dr. Sandra Lyon, Cathedral City Councilman Mark Carnevale and Principal Guillermo Chavez. In center, Mount San Jacinto's Benjamin Godinez with, from left, MSJ Retiring Principal Dr. Milton Jones, Lyon and Carnevale. At bottom, Desert Hot Springs High's Betsy Briones Sanchez with, from left, Board of Education President John Gerardi, Desert Hot Springs Councilwoman Yvonne Parks, Lyon and Principal George



**DIGICOM Festivals Big Success:** DIGICOM's three student film festivals were all great successes. It started with Della S. Lindley Elementary's festival at Rancho Mirage High School and was followed by the large film festival and awards showcase at the Richards Center for the Arts (with DIGICOM staffers shown at top). The festivals concluded with the high school DIGICOM X, also held at the Richards Center. At right DIGICOM President and Founder David Vogel, left, and Palm Springs City Councilman Geoff Kors, right, welcome attendees.



**Pilot Mom Addresses RME Students:** Pilot and Rancho Mirage Elementary parent Kristen Lehn spoke with students during the school's Career Week held toward the end of last school year.



**Honoring Outgoing Student Board Members:** The Board of Education honored its 2016-17 student board members just prior to graduation ceremonies with appreciation plaques and graduation sashes. Pictured are student board members, front, left to right, Kylie Davenport, Rancho Mirage High; Hannah Wright, Palm Springs High; Stephanie Vargas, Desert Hot Springs High; Faithen Stalling, Cathedral City High; and Alondra Franco, Mount San Jacinto High. Back row, from left, Board of Education members James Williamson, Richard Clapp, Madonna Gerrell, Karen Cornett and President John Gerardi.

**Honoring Youngest Cadet:** Assistant Supt. of Business Dr. Brian Murray, below right, presented the first piece of cake to the youngest cadet, Jaeylynne Gutierrez, at Palm Springs High AFJROTC Military Ball held at the Palm Springs Hilton in May.

PSUSD Board of Education		
John Gerardi <i>President</i>	James Williamson <i>Clerk</i>	
Richard Clapp	Karen Cornett	Madonna Gerrell
PSUSD Administration		
Sandra Lyon, Ed.D., <i>Superintendent</i>		
Mauricio Arellano, <i>Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources</i>		
Brian Murray, Ed.D., <i>Assistant Superintendent, Business Services</i>		
Mike Swize, Ed.D., <i>Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services</i>		
This Palm Springs Unified School District report to the community is published bimonthly by the Palm Springs Unified School District, 980 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite 101, Palm Springs, CA 92262 Editor: Joan L. Boiko • Phone: 760-416-6010 • Email: jboiko@psusd.us • Website: www.psusd.us		



**MTU Senior Competes in The Big Apple:** Musical Theatre University (MTU) senior William Webster, right, took Leading Man honors at the recent first annual Lucie Arnaz Awards for outstanding high school musical theatre at the Purple Room in Palm Springs. Webster and Shadow Hills High Schools Laurel Bollard, left, pictured with Arnaz, represented the Coachella Valley in the National High School Musical Theatre Awards and got the opportunity to perform in the Big Apple.



**Opera Power:** Representatives of the Palm Springs Opera Guild visited schools throughout the District toward the end of the last school year as part of their annual Opera Outreach and education tour. Pictured with students from Landau Elementary are members lead Nathan Van Arsdale, Erin Gonzalez, Michelle Drever, Ben Lowe and CCHS graduate Johar Hernandez-Carr.

## PSUSD Announces New, Changed Administrative Posts

As the 2017-18 school year begins, some PSUSD administrators have changed roles either during the last school year or over the summer and some new administrators have joined the District family.

Our new Special Education Director is **Dr. Vikki Parkinson**. Parkinson joins PSUSD from Cicero School District #99 in Illinois where she served as Director of Special Education and then Assistant Superintendent for Student Services.

**Amber Gascoigne**, former Assistant Principal at Cabot Yerxa Elementary, became that school's principal in the middle of the last school year. Gascoigne replaced **Mark Arnold**, who is now the District's Director of State and Federal Programs. Gascoigne also served as a teacher at Katherine Finchy Elementary, and Arnold previously served as Finchy's principal.

Also earlier this year, Agua Caliente Elementary Principal **Dr. Lucy Hansen** became the District's new Coordinator of Supplemental Educational Services. Former Parent Coordinator **Dr. Ingrid Lin** took over as Principal at

Agua Caliente. Former Rancho Mirage High teacher **Ruby Rivera** is PSUSD's new Parent Coordinator.

Former Rancho Mirage Elementary Principal **Marsha Boring** became the District's first Principal on Special Assignment earlier this year in her role as a coach and support for principals. Former Bubbling Wells Elementary Assistant Principal **Dr. LaTrice Johnson** is now Principal at Rancho Mirage Elementary.

Former Palm Springs High School Assistant Principal **Brian Hendra** was recently named Principal of Alternative Education, replacing **Dr. Milt Jones**, who retired at the end of last school year.

**Dr. Denise Ellis**, who has served as a District teacher, assistant principal, principal, Director of State and Federal Program and, most recently, Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction, is PSUSD's new Director of Certificated Human Resources. **Dr. Simone Kovats**, who served as Principal of Della S. Lindley Elementary for seven years, has been named Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction.

Former Vista del Monte Elementary Assistant Principal **Denise Fenton** was recently named as Della S. Lindley's new Principal.

Recently appointed Assistant Principals include: Cabot Yerxa Elementary's **Jody Diaz**, who previously served as a teacher, dean of students and Teacher on Special Assignment; Bubbling Wells Elementary's **Mark Acker**, a former teacher and Palm Springs Teachers Association President; Palm Springs High School's **Joddi DeMarco**, who previously served as Assistant Principal at Edward Wenzlaff Alternative Center; Edward Wenzlaff Alternative Center's **Brad Bryeans**, who previously served as Assistant Principal at Cathedral City High and Mount San Jacinto; Landau Elementary's **Gail Troncoso**, who joined PSUSD in 2014 as a teacher at Cabot Yerxa Elementary; Raymond Cree's **Shane Hagar**, who previously served as Assistant Principal at Desert Springs Middle School; and Desert Springs Middle's **Steven Jimenez**, who previously served as Assistant Principal at Raymond Cree.

### Message from the Superintendent

## 'Equity' Will be Key Focus in 2017-18 School Year

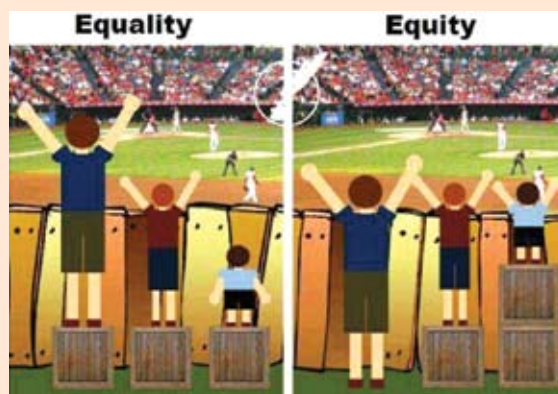


It is an honor and a pleasure to welcome our parents and community members to Palm Springs Unified School District's 2017-18 school year. Our administrators, teachers and staff members are ready for a new school year sure to be filled with new and innovative challenges as we continue to raise the bar on our quest for academic excellence for each of our more than 22,000 students.

A term that you are likely going to hear, and our students will experience, is "equity" in all of our programs and instruction delivery. Notice that I did not say "equality," as you might be more accustomed to seeing and hearing. Yes, "equality" is the term that most of us think of when we think of education and our students. We typically think and believe that every child should be receiving the "same" or "equal" services.

However, each of our students is different, and the needs of each of our students are different. Our goal is to provide each and every one of our students with what they need to be successful. That doesn't always mean that it is "equal" to what another student needs. All of us as school administrators, teachers and staff members must embrace the concept and delivery of programs and services to our students based

on what they need rather than on what others are getting. While we certainly will not leave anyone behind, we are focused on providing extra supports for our students who need those extra supports whether it be in the areas of English acquisition; additional help in English, math or other subject areas; counseling; or mental, emotional or social services.



While the concept of "equity" versus "equality" is not necessarily new, it is one that takes some time and training to implement across all areas, and this is a major focus for PSUSD in the 2017-18 school year and beyond. Adopting and implementing this philosophy does

not mean that anything remains stagnant, with new and innovative programs and enhanced teaching practices continuing throughout our schools. Nor is it a zero sum game, where one group of students receives less as a result. An equity approach is truly about identifying student needs and meeting them where they are so they can flourish and grow.

We hope you will join us in this effort by understanding that sometimes what might not seem "fair" is really not that way. In reality, there are times and situations where some students need something that others do not and vice versa. Ultimately, all of our students, our community and our future, benefit from an equity approach.

Thank you, as always, for your support of our students and staff. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your school principals, teachers and/or administrators should you have any questions or need assistance for your child(ren). I wish each of you a wonderful, productive and successful school year!

Sincerely,

Sandra Lyon, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools