

Superintendent Dr. Marcus Funchess



PLAN OF ACTION: FIRST 100 DAYS



Dear Palm Springs Unified Community,



I am deeply honored and humbled to serve as the incoming Superintendent of the Palm Springs Unified School District. It is a privilege to partner with our Board of Education, scholars, educators, staff, families, and the broader community as we work together to fulfill the district's mission. I look forward to engaging with every member of the PSUSD community and learning how educational excellence is being achieved across our schools. This plan of action reflects my deep commitment to understanding the diverse strengths that shape PSUSD and to fostering a district-wide culture rooted in active listening, continuous learning, and transparent communication.

As a new member of the PSUSD family, I am committed to investing significant time in learning about the district's rich history, longstanding traditions, and deeply held core values. While my roots in Riverside County offer some familiarity with the heritage of the Palm Springs Unified community, I recognize the importance of engaging in a thoughtful and inclusive learning process to fully understand the unique context of PSUSD and the broader Coachella Valley. I look forward to connecting with the dedicated individuals who bring this district to life each day. At the conclusion of my first 100 school days, I will present a summary of key insights and reflections to the PSUSD Board of Education during a regularly scheduled meeting—reinforcing our commitment to transparency and a shared vision for the path ahead.

I look forward to the opportunity to listen, learn, and partner with you. Moving forward together, we will build a future of excellence for PSUSD.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M. Funchess". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Marcus Funchess, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent's Core Values & Beliefs

- Trust and integrity are the foundation of effective leadership.
- Every decision must be guided by what is best for our children.
- Including people in the decisions that impact them build organizational trust and transparency.
- Equity and access to high-quality learning opportunities are foundational.
- Schools must be safe, supportive, and inclusive environments where scholars, staff, and families feel a true sense of belonging.
- Strong partnerships with families and the community are essential to thriving schools.
- Achieving lasting success requires unwavering focus, thoughtful preparation, and strong fiscal responsibility in the present to build a sustainable future.





ACTION PLAN PURPOSE & GOALS

Palm Springs Unified is ready to build on its strengths and continue leading in educational excellence. As the new superintendent, this entry plan will guide a thoughtful, proactive transition focused on listening, learning, and connecting with the people and culture of PSUSD. It outlines five key goals—drawn from the Superintendent Leadership Profile Report—to shape my focus during the first 100 school days, in no particular order, and set the stage for the work ahead.

1

STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE THROUGH TRUST & TRANSPARENCY

Cultivate a strong foundation of trust and collaboration with the Board of Education, staff, and community to ensure effective, transparent, and exemplary leadership that serves the best interests of scholars and families.

2

ADVANCE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

Empower every scholar for future success in college, career, and life by strategically aligning resources, closing opportunity gaps, and promoting innovative, high-quality learning experiences.

3

ENSURE FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY & OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Utilize cycles of continuous improvement to streamline systems and maximize operational efficiency to support schools with exceptional services, ensuring the sustainable use of resources to drive scholar achievement and well-being.

4


PROMOTE A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE, & INCLUSIVE DISTRICT CULTURE

Foster a culture of respect, positivity, and belonging where scholars and staff experience environments of safety and well-being.

5

ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY THROUGH TRANSPARENT & MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

Build public trust and confidence by facilitating honest, consistent communication and cultivating strong, collaborative relationships with families, staff, and community partners.



LEADERSHIP ACTIONS ALIGNED WITH PSUSD LEADERSHIP PROFILE

To achieve these goals, the following actions will take place:



LISTEN

To develop a comprehensive understanding of the district, I will engage in meaningful conversations with scholars, educators, classified staff, school leaders, families, union representatives, district administrators, business and community partners, and local and state leaders. These engagements will focus on learning about what is working well, identifying pressing challenges, and understanding the values and hopes of those we serve.

LEARN

Analyze scholar achievement, well-being, and engagement data to assess how effectively PSUSD is meeting the needs of all learners. I will review current district policies, initiatives, and strategic plans to evaluate alignment with our equity-driven mission. I will also receive briefings from internal staff and educational partners to understand current strategies, operational structures, and areas for growth.

SHARE

Through clear, consistent communication, I will share my educational philosophy, leadership values, and long-term commitment to scholar success. I will work to build an inclusive culture centered on continuous improvement and mutual respect—where every voice is valued, and every stakeholder feels a sense of belonging and purpose.

BUILD

Prioritize building strong, trust-based relationships with the PSUSD Board of Education, district leadership, staff, families, and community members. These relationships will be grounded in mutual respect, shared vision, and a commitment to advancing scholar outcomes and organizational excellence.

PLAN

Present a comprehensive summary report to the Board of Education. This report will include key themes, identified strengths, challenges, and strategic recommendations for future action—serving as the foundation for our collaborative planning and progress.

PEOPLE & PROCESS: DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The data collection methods will include, but are not limited to, the following approaches:

- Individual meetings
- Focus group meetings
- Surveys and online platform for sharing feedback
- School & department visits
- Adopted budget, LCAP, & other internal document review
- Community/Neighborhood meetings



TARGET GROUPS



Internal Team Members

Board Members	Campus Staff	Parent Organizations
The Foundation	District Administrators: Certificated & Classified	District & School Support Staff
Educators	Principals & Assistant Principals	Union Leaders
Scholars	Counselors	Families

External Partners

Neighboring District Leaders	Media Representatives	Not-for-Profit Leaders	Civic Organizations
Business Leaders	Chambers of Commerce	Performing Arts Partners	Interfaith Leaders

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACTION PLAN

JULY 2025 - SEPTEMBER 2025

- **Cultivate a Strong Board-Superintendent Relationship**

Develop a shared sense of purpose that drives the work of the Board of Education, the Superintendent & the strategic direction of PSUSD.

- **Visit Every PSUSD School by September 2025**

Demonstrate visible, engaged leadership by completing visits to 100% of district schools by September 2025 to listen, learn, and celebrate the strengths of each school community while identifying areas of support.

- **Engage with at least 100 Educational Partners in the First 100 Days**

Hold scheduled meetings with at least 100 diverse educational partners—including scholars, educators, staff, families, community members, & civic leaders—during the first 100 days to build relationships, foster trust, and ensure inclusive input shapes district priorities.

OCTOBER 2025 - DECEMBER 2025

- **Present Mid-Year Summary of Key Insights and Priorities**

Deliver a mid-year report to the Board of Education summarizing findings from employee & community engagement & school visits, highlighting major themes, strengths, challenges, & initial priority actions for the 2025–2026 school year.

- **Initiate Collaborative Strategic Planning Process**

Identify emerging themes & districtwide priorities to inform the launch of a comprehensive, strategic planning process—engaging partners in the co-creation of a multi-year vision that drives innovation, scholar achievement, & organizational excellence.

- We are entering a defining moment for the Palm Springs Unified School District & the community we proudly serve. While challenges are before us, this is also a season filled with hope, possibility, & renewed purpose. Our shared commitment to the success of every scholar is more important than ever. Together, we will listen, learn, and grow, fostering trust and unity.

- ***Moving forward together**, let us use our time wisely to ensure that we are doing all that is possible to ensure every scholar realizes their full potential and gains the skills, capacities, and confidence needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world.*