

## Leaders Announced for District Administrative Posts

The Palm Springs Unified School District recently approved the appointment of existing and new District staff members to Leadership Team posts.

**Michael Ventura** is the new principal of Palm Springs High, replacing Brian Hendra who is now a Director of Certificated Human Resources for the district. Ventura started his career in PSUSD in 2003 as a sports medicine teacher at Palm Springs High and developed the Palm Springs Academy for Learning Medicine (PALM). He became a PSHS assistant principal and athletic director in 2018.

Desert Hot Springs High School's new principal is **Omar Tinoco**. The principal of Desert Springs Middle School since 2019 joined PSUSD in 2012 as an assistant principal at James Workman Middle School before becoming principal at Bubbling Wells Elementary in 2016.

**Victoria Chavez** is the new principal at James Workman Middle



Mike Ventura



Omar Tinoco



Victoria Chavez



Art Sanchez



Robin Hinchcliffe



Bhavini Patel



Abdelhak Bouzroud

PSUSD's new Coordinator of English Language Learners is **Robin Hinchcliffe**, who began her career as a teacher in alternative education in Desert Hot Springs in 2013 before transferring to Rancho Mirage High in 2015 where she taught English and

was the school's Teacher of the Year in 2020. She replaces

Mandy Gonzales, who is now the principal of Della S. Lindley Elementary.

The district's new Coordinator of Educational Technology is **Bhavini Patel**. Patel joined PSUSD as an elementary teacher in 2006 and had been serving as an instructional technology Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) since 2014.

**Abdelhak Bouzroud** has joined PSUSD as its Coordinator of Transportation after serving as Transit Delivery Supervisor for Long Beach Transit since 2018. He also previously served as an operations manager over transportation for Gate Gourmet, a catering service for airlines.

School, replacing Brad Sauer who is now a Director of Certificated Human Resources for PSUSD. Chavez joins the district from Moreno Valley Unified where she served as the Coordinator of Culture and Climate. She began her career in 1996 as a teacher in San Bernardino Unified where she also served as a program specialist, vice principal and principal.

Palm Springs High's new interim assistant principal is **Art Sanchez**. Sanchez previously served as an assistant principal at Cathedral City and Desert Hot Springs High and Nellie N. Coffman Middle and has returned to PSUSD after serving as principal of Coachella Valley High. He is replacing Assistant Principal Joddi DeMarco, who is retiring the end of this month.

## Community Equity Conference Set for Feb. 5

Palm Springs Unified School District's Family Engagement Center will host the District's second Equity Community Conference "Putting Equity into Action" on Saturday, Feb. 5 from 9 a.m. to noon. Held in a virtual platform, the event will offer participants the opportunity to discuss the experiences of historically underrepresented students and ways all can work toward more equitable outcomes. Presenters will include PSUSD staff and community partners along with contributions from parents and students. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mike Swize will welcome attendees at 9 a.m. prior to the presentation by Conference keynote speaker Dr. Abdul-Malik Muhammad.

Muhammad, who has over 25 years serving both youth and adults as an educator, entrepreneur and author working with the underserved in urban and rural areas, has focused on the development of boys to men. He is the founder and CEO of Transforming Lives Inc. and author of the 2019 book *The Restorative Journey – Book One: The Theory and Application of Restorative Practices*, aimed at

providing inspiration to think and act differently in leadership, relationships, and service to others.

"Anyone interested in learning more about topics related to equity is welcome to join us (at the conference)," said Family Engagement Coordinator Ruby Rivera. "Educators, families, students and community members can all add value to the conversations that will be had during the conference and are invited to participate."

**Topics to be addressed include:**

- Colorism
- Masculinity and Black Male Engagement
- Beyond the Binary: Boost your Allyship for LGBTQ Students of Color
- Microaggressions
- Native American Visibility in Schools
- How Do We Show Up in Relationships?
- Stress Management, Social Emotional Learning, Inner Explorer
- Special Education Needs



**PSUSD**  
PALM SPRINGS  
UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Save the Date*  
*Reserva la fecha*

**EQUITY COMMUNITY CONFERENCE**  
CONFERENCIA DE LA COMUNIDAD DE EQUIDAD

REGISTER TODAY/REGISTRESE HOY:  
[bit.ly/psusdequity](https://bit.ly/psusdequity)  
760-416-1374

*Putting Equity Into Action* *Reservando la equidad en acción*

SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 5, 2022  
9 AM - 12 PM  
VIA ZOOM

SÁBADO  
5 DE FEBRERO, 2022  
9 AM - 12 PM  
POR ZOOM

*Keynote Speaker /*  
*Orador Principal:*  
Dr. Malik Muhammad, Ed.D.

To register for the event visit: [bit.ly/psusdequity](https://bit.ly/psusdequity). For more information, call (760) 416-1374 or (760) 894-4072 or email [familycenter@psusd.us](mailto:familycenter@psusd.us).

## PSUSD Staff Members Honored as Educators of Year

Seven PSUSD staff members have been selected as top staff members in their respective classifications at the district level and are now vying for honors as 2022 Riverside County Educators of the Year. They were selected from nominations submitted by district staff members by a committee comprised of the district's 2021 Educators of the Year.

- Rancho Mirage High Assistant Principal **Chris Calderwood** has been selected as PSUSD's Certificated Administrator of the Year.
- Director of Risk Management **Renee Brunelle** was named Classified Administrator of the Year.
- Bella Vista Elementary Principal **Lisa Arseo** is this year's District Principal of the Year.
- Bella Vista Elementary Counselor **Damon Bonelli** has been selected as School Counselor of the Year.
- PSUSD Teacher on Special Assignment **Ioana Robles** is this year's Site Support Educator of the Year.

- Risk Management Program Analyst **Jesse Sotelo** is the Confidential Employee of the Year.
- Mount San Jacinto High School Office Specialist **Catherine Gonzalez** is the district's Classified Employee of the Year.

The Palm Springs Leadership Association (PSLA), the district's charter of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), also recently announced its Administrators of the Year, all of whom are now vying for ACSA region honors in their respective categories. Nominees were selected and voted on by District Leadership Team Members.

- Valuing Diversity Award: Intervention Coordinator **Tanisha Taylor**
- Secondary Administrator of the Year: Rancho Mirage High Principal **Dr. Teresa Haga**
- Middle Grades Principal of the Year: Nellie N. Coffman Middle School Principal **Dr. Karen Dimick**
- Elementary Principal of the Year: Agua Caliente Elementary Principal **Eric Antuna**
- Central Office Administrators of the Year: Executive Director of Student Learning **Mark Arnold** and Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction **Dr. Deanna Keuilian**

- Elementary Co-Administrator of the Year: Two Bunch Palms Elementary Assistant Principal **Denise Fenton**
- Secondary Co-Administrator of the Year: Desert Springs Middle School Assistant Principal **Sue Drummond**
- Continuation Educational Administrator of the Year: Mount San Jacinto High Principal **Brad Seiple**
- Special Education Administrator of the Year: Coordinator of Special Education Learning & Improvement **Rob Nichols**
- Student Services Administrator of the Year: Coordinator of Student Services **Lisa Todd**
- Curriculum and Instruction Administrator of the Year: Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction **Jessica Whiteman**
- Director of Health Services **Laura Dyson** as PSLA's nominee for the state Ferd J. Kiesel Memorial Award, which is given to an administrator or other individual who has made a significant impact on public education.



**DHSHS Academies Have New Home:**

Desert Hot Springs High, Board of Education and District officials recently celebrated the dedication of the new Public Safety Academy (PSA) and Renewable Energy Academy of Learning (REAL) building at a ribbon cutting ceremony t which included remarks from Supt. of Schools Dr. Mike Swize, Board of Education member John Gerardi, DHS Mayor Scott Matas, instructors Eric Huber and Christine Becerra and REAL instructor Casey Heiser and student Faith Pridmore and REAL student Salvador Meza. The Desert Hot Springs High MCJROTC posted the colors, and the DHSHS Choir sang the National Anthem prior to the remarks. Congratulatory messages were also presented by representatives for Congressman Dr. Raul Ruiz, Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia, Senator Melissa Melendez and County Supervisor Manuel Perez. The 13,630 square foot building features a classroom and training by for the two workshop-style classrooms for REAL, various storage areas and a large outdoor work area as well as paved driveway along the northern boundary to provide access for emergency vehicles of first responders partnering with PSA.



**Language Academies Visit:** Board of Education trustees were joined by Cabinet, curriculum directors and Superintendent's office staff members on recent tours of the district's dual immersion Language Academy classes at Vista del Monte Elementary and Raymond Cree Middle School. The program's first participants are now sixth graders, and the first students to be a part of the middle school Language Academy program, which will continue to expand a grade level each year.

**PSUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

John Gerardi, President • Madonna Gerrell, Clerk  
Karen Cornett • Sergio Espericueta • Timothy S. Wood

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Mike Swize, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Simone Kovats, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services  
Brian Murray, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Business Services  
Tony Signoret, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources

This Palm Springs Unified School District report to the community is published bimonthly by the Palm Springs Unified School District.  
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# District Digest

**Vaccine Clinics in February and March:** Palm Springs Unified School District will continue COVID-19 vaccination clinics for first and second doses and boosters at high schools and the District Service Center. At right and below right, the county's "Francine the Vaccine" visits with children who received vaccinations at a previous clinic. Below left is the schedule for upcoming clinics.



**PSUSD PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics for PSUSD Students & Families**

1st Dose	Time	2nd Dose	Time	School Site	Room	Street Address	City
2/04/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	2/25/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	Cathedral City High School	Small Gym	69250 Dinah Shore Dr.	Cathedral City
2/08/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	3/01/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	District Service Center	A & B	150 District Center Dr.	Palm Springs
2/09/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	3/02/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	Palm Springs High School	Black Box Theatre	2401 E. Baristo Rd.	Palm Springs
2/15/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	3/08/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	Desert Hot Springs High School	Auxiliary Gym	65850 Pierson Blvd.	Desert Hot Springs
2/16/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	3/09/2022	2:00pm – 6:00pm	Rancho Mirage High School	402 & 403	31001 Rattler Rd.	Rancho Mirage

**Covid Vaccine Types:** Pfizer (ages 5 - 17)  
Pfizer, Moderna, J & J (ages 18+)  
Boosters (ages 5+)

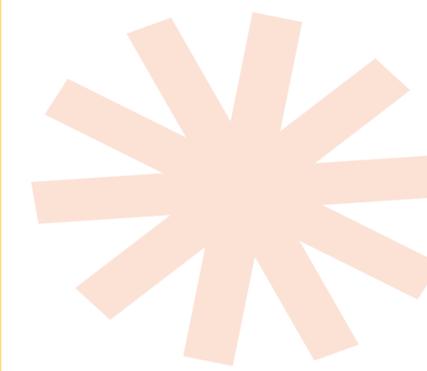
Schedule your COVID Vaccine appointment:  
Link: <https://bit.ly/psusdvaccineclinic>

- What to bring:**
- Student must be accompanied by Parent/Guardian
  - Completed consent form
  - Vaccination card required for the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose & Booster

Walk-ins are welcome (Please anticipate a wait time)



**Teams Battle it Out at Esports Finals:** The Desert Valley Esports Alliance (DVEA), which includes teams from all of PSUSD's high schools and middle schools, concluded Season 1 with the Grand Finals last month. Though spectators were not permitted in person the event was live streamed, and all who missed it can still tune in to review the competition and related interviews here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2h6q2Acys5M>. Congratulations to Rancho Mirage High School and Nellie N. Coffman Middle School for emerging as the Super Smash Brothers champions and Palm Springs High and Cielo Vista Charter for taking home the League of Legends trophies. For a full list of league standings visit: <https://sites.google.com/.../psusd-dvea-league/standings>.



**EV Chargers at CCHS:** Cathedral City High School is the first school to benefit from a state-approved \$10 million Southern California Edison pilot to provide electric vehicle charging stations, including all necessary electrical infrastructure, to K-12 schools within the utility's service area. Construction began recently to install 12 chargers at the school. The recent installation is the first step in PSUSD's plan to lower carbon emission and transition to zero-emission new fleet goals set by the state by 2035. The charging stations, expected to be completed soon, will be available to staff, students and visitors to the campus. EV chargers are planned in the future for additional schools and at the district offices.



## Teacher Recruitment Fair Slated for Feb. 26

Palm Springs Unified will host a Teacher Recruitment Fair on Feb. 26 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the District Service Center in Palm Springs. The district is seeking applicants in all subject areas who hold a valid appropriate teaching credential or will be eligible for a credential for the 2022-23 school year. On-site interviews will be conducted.

A \$10,000 incentive will be given to any fully credentialed teacher hired into a position requiring a mild to moderate special education, moderate to several special education, and speech language pathology. A \$7,000 incentive will be given to any fully credentialed teacher hired into a teaching position in the areas of Science or Mathematics.

Interested applicants should submit a job application online at [psusd.us/jobs](https://psusd.us/jobs) and register for the fair [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfg7DnjkgxpwslrxlwWAQOaZwrZkd5jwqgAKBH4iZyN\\_DDKQ/closedform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfg7DnjkgxpwslrxlwWAQOaZwrZkd5jwqgAKBH4iZyN_DDKQ/closedform).

Registrants will receive an email prior to the event with a designated arrival time. Fair participants should bring their resume, letter of introduction and three letters of recommendation. Masks will be required.

## Teachers Receive State Recognition



Carlston Family Foundation Executive Director Beverly Young, right, recently attended a Board of Education meeting to recognize Palm Springs High English teacher Erin Graham, left, who was one of only five teachers in the nation to receive a \$15,000 personal award and \$5,000 school award for being named a 2021 Outstanding Teacher of America.



Supt. of Schools Dr. Mike Swize and members of the Board of Education recently honored Cielo Vista Charter Science teacher Nichi Aviña, third from left, for being selected as one of only five California state Teachers of the Year.

## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

### Board Will Vote on Redistricting Boundaries



As we kick off 2022 and the second semester for our students and staff, I hope our community members are navigating through this most recent surge in COVID-19 cases without as many challenges as there were when the pandemic began almost two years ago. For us in the Palm Springs Unified School District, our most recent challenges have been around lower attendance both among students and staff due to the increase in the numbers of cases and exposures. While the first few weeks back from winter break were especially challenging, we are already beginning to see the number of cases and positivity rates decrease.

This in combination with the new guidelines from the state and county which allow for students and staff who are exposed but not having any symptoms to not be required to quarantine, and the quarantine period for those who have tested positive has also been reduced to five days if symptoms are no longer present. We are hopeful that things will continue to improve and that we will be able to resume some traditional activities as we get closer to spring.

I also wanted to share with everyone that our Board of Education will take action at a February board meeting on proposed changes to trustee area boundaries. Due to changes in population and demographics between the 2010 and 2020 census, the district must approve adjustments to trustee area boundaries to bring them within the maximum population variance of 10 percent or less. Following the release of the 2020 census data in September and subsequent presentation of four proposed scenarios that comply with requirements for valid trustee areas, the Board

of Education will take action on new trustee areas next month.

All district trustee areas must contain a nearly equal number of residents, comply with the regulations of the Federal Voting Rights Act (VRA), be as compact and contiguous as possible, respect communities of interest as much as possible, follow geographic features as much as possible, and respect incumbency of current board members if possible. The proposed scenarios and information about them can be found in English and Spanish.

Earlier this month, I provided an overview about the redistricting along with the scenarios during a series of live webinars. A webinar recording is available on the district's YouTube Channel. You are invited and welcomed to provide written input on the district's website <https://www.psusd.us/domain/5431>. We have been receiving some great input on the website, and I encourage all who are interested in this topic or have any suggestions on the proposed scenarios to fill out the input form.

Thank you so much for your continued partnership and support. Having a community that cares as much as ours does makes all the difference in the world to our students, staff, and Board of Education. We are extremely grateful. I wish you all a happy, healthy, and safe 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Swize".

Mike Swize, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools