



A Supplement from the...

Palm Springs Unified School District

Serving Cathedral City, Desert Hot Springs, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage & Thousand Palms

February/March 2018

PSUSD Centralized Enrollment Center Opens Feb. 13

Palm Springs Unified School District will open its centralized center where parents of incoming kindergarten students or new students to the District can not only enroll their student but also take care of immunizations, transfer applications, school lunch applications and much more – all under one roof.

Through a partnership with Borrego Health, PSUSD's Student Services Department will for the second consecutive year set up its Kindergarten Enrollment Center at the Desert Hot Springs Health & Wellness Center at 11750 Cholla Drive beginning Tuesday, Feb. 13 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The center will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. through March 22 (except for March 8 and March 26 to April 6) and on Saturdays March 3, April 28, May 26 and June 9 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



Members of the Assistance League Palm Springs Desert Area will once again be on hand at next week's Enrollment Center grand opening to distribute backpacks and books to the first 400 kindergarten enrollees.

Incoming kindergarteners are those who will be five years old on or before Sept. 1, 2018. Parents can also enroll their child in Transitional Kindergarten if their child was born between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2, 2013. Required documents for enrollment include: birth certificate, proof of residency (current utility bill), kindergarten physical (dated on or before Feb. 8, 2018) and proof of immunizations. Children who have not yet had their physical or immunizations will be able to get them at the Wellness Center at the time of registration. In addition to resources for transportation, school lunches, early childhood education programs and district transfers, parents will also be able to visit information tables for each of Desert Hot Springs' elementary schools. The first 400 students enrolling will also receive a complimentary backpack and book courtesy of the Assistance League of the Palm Springs Desert Area.

Parents can find enrollment forms and other Student Support Services resources here: <https://www.psusd.us/Page/360>. For more information on kindergarten enrollment, call (760) 416-6027 or e-mail enrollment@psusd.us.

Dual Immersion Program Prepares for Fourth Year, Welcomes New Students

Palm Springs Unified School District's Language Academy at Vista Del Monte Elementary joins the cadre of innovative special programs offered to District students.

The Dual Language Immersion program was implemented three years ago following requests from parents of both English-only and English Learner students across the District. The program offers English and Spanish-speaking students enriching and challenging educational opportunities with the goal of all enrolled students being able to read, write and communicate proficiently in both languages while achieving high levels of academic success in both languages.

Enrollment is under way for incoming kindergarten students for the fourth year of the program, and information sessions are scheduled for Monday, March 5 and April 9 at 10 a.m. in the multipurpose room at Vista del Monte Elementary, 4:30 p.m. February 5 at the District Service Center and 4:30 p.m. March 5 at the Desert Hot Springs Family Engagement Center.

Students enter the program in kindergarten, and the program is currently serving students in kindergarten through second grade, with third grade being added in the 2018-19 school year. Parents of incoming kindergarten students are required to attend one of the orientation meetings and can pick



Cristina Tostado's Dual Immersion kindergarten class learning English and Spanish literacy and language skills simultaneously.

up an enrollment packet at that time. Transportation for incoming students outside of Palm Springs is provided from Julius Corsini and Two Bunch Palms in Desert Hot Springs as well as from Della S. Lindley in Thousand Palms and Sunny Sands in Cathedral City.

"As a strong supporter and advocate for second language acquisition, I feel very fortunate to be a part of the Dual Immersion Program here at Vista del Monte," said Cristina Tostado, one of the Dual Immersion kindergarten teachers. "It is my hope that the Language Academy model at VdM is the beginning and that multi-lingual learning will become a new vision and mission for our entire District. It is my humble opinion that there is no greater gift we could bestow upon our students than to prepare them to make the greatest impact on our world's future."

"I love the Dual Immersion program because my son has a chance to properly learn Spanish other than at home," noted parent Isela Vega Soto. "I have seen great progress since he has started school. I love that he will be learning Spanish and English. My son and I enjoy working together to finish the homework, although most of the time – in the beginning – it was him teaching me. I can't wait until my daughter starts school because I will most definitely be signing her up too."

For more information on the Language Academy at Vista del Monte, call (760) 416-6080.

District Office Moving Next Month

The Palm Springs Unified District Office will be moving the first week of March to a brand new building adjacent to the District's Service Center. The new address is 150 District Center Way, Palm Springs, 92264. The new phone number will be (760) 883-2700.

The nine-year journey to unite the District Administration Center (DAC) and District Service Center (DSC) began in 2009, when PSUSD purchased 20 acres of land centrally located near schools and major thoroughfares within the district's boundaries, due to the land lease expiration of its Service Center after 50 years on land owned by the City of Palm Springs. No general fund monies or bond funds were spent on the construction. The \$28 million project was funded by local redevelopment funds.

The new Service Center was built on 12 of the 20-acres and opened in January 2012. The PSUSD facilities' staff has been working since early 2013 to finalize the DAC complex design and construction adjacent to the existing

DSC. The new DAC and parking lot is constructed on the remaining eight acres of the 20-acre parcel. The existing district administrative office buildings near the Palm Springs Convention Center are on leased land, and the buildings are in the process of being sold.

The new building will be home to over 200 employees including: PSUSD's Board of Education, Superintendent, Educational Services (Special Education and Student Services), Human Resources (Benefits/Risk Management and Security and Emergency Preparedness), Business Services (Facilities Planning and Development, Fiscal Services, and Purchasing) departments and the Early Childhood, Teachers on Special Assignment, Beginning Teacher Support & Assessment Programs. Primarily constructed of energy-efficient concrete tilt-up panels, there are 235 parking spaces for the new building, and all landscape materials are low water and drought tolerant.

District Digest



GRADCON Provides Student Resources: About 120 senior (and some junior) special education high school students participated in PSUSD's Workability 2nd Annual GRADCON held at the Agua Caliente Resort. Funded by a grant from the Anderson Children's Foundation and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, the event showcased services and resources for students after high school. Workshop topics and presenters included: College of the Desert Services for Students with Disabilities, COD's PaCE program; Job Corps; Best Practices for Job Interviews, CSUSB Office of Services to Students with Disabilities, SunLine Careers in Transit Industry; and Officer Joshua Crocker from Palm Springs Police Department. Headed up by PSUSD Psychologist and WorkAbility Program Manager Sheryl Deeds, seated, the presenting team included from left; School Psychologist Jennifer Moya, Program Specialist Deb Sather, School Psychologist Miranda Cadenas; WorkAbility Transition Specialists Angie Sosa and Priscilla Arballo; and School Psychologists Lesa Lorraine, Lirio Escobar and Rick Cassar.

DHS JROTC Celebrates Marine Corp Birthday: It was a full house at the recent Marine Corps League Corporal Jason L. Dunham Medal of Honor Detachment's 242nd Birthday Celebration of the United States Marine Corps at the Miracle Springs Resort supporting the Marine Corps JROTC at Desert Hot Springs School. The celebration culminated with the cutting of the birthday cake by LtCol Carl Lewke and presentation of first pieces of cake to oldest and youngest Marines in the room. A special donation of \$20,000 to the DHSHS Marine Corps JROTC was presented to Lewke by Richard Stelk from The Stelk Charitable Fund.



Soroptimists Honor Teachers of Year: Soroptimist International of Palm Springs recently honored PSUSD's Palm Springs Teachers of the Year at a Board of Education meeting with personalized canvas bags; certificates of recognition from Palm Springs Mayor Rob Moon, Assemblyman Chad Mayes, Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia, Senator Jeff Stone and Fourth District County Supervisor Manuel Perez; and \$100 Mastercard gift cards donated by SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union. Following the presentation, honorees and their guests enjoyed a reception at Nicolino's. Pictured, from left, Soroptimist International Vice President of Ways and Means Sharon Snow, Treasurer Samantha Dewing, Vice President of Service Joan Boiko and President Gloria Hill with honorees Theresa Smith, Carol Gafney, Dena Cockrell, Jody Diaz, Sonia Burkett, Amber Moser, Joshua Otteson and Gloria Chao.



Mobile Dairy Classroom Visits Landau: Landau Elementary students enjoyed their recent visit with the California Dairy Council's Mobile Dairy Classroom, learning about cows and how the milk gets from the cow to their table and meeting cow Lucy and petting calf Ginger.



Board Honors Reflective Coaches: The Board of Education recently honored the District's eight reflective coaches who provide academic and emotional support to beginning teachers as well as experienced teachers who require or request assistance. Pictured, from left, coaches Jackie Mantz, Megan Fri, Joseph May, Shannon Aguilar and Demitrious Sinor; Board of Education members Richard Clapp and Madonna Gerrell; and coaches Kathy Surdin, Douglas Sexton and Dean Troup.



Top Spellers: The winner of PSUSD's recent 41st Annual Spelling Bee of Champions was James Workman Middle School Sixth Grader Aden Bombao, right, who will represent PSUSD in the Riverside County Bee on Feb. 28 in Moreno Valley. Runner-up was Sunny Sands Elementary Fifth Grader Francis Jeremy Go, left. Aden and Francis went head to head beginning in Round 9. The competition came to an end in Round 22 when Francis misspelled the word "langlauf" and Aden correctly spelled "troika."



Teachers Enhance Digital Storytelling Skills: About 75 PSUSD teachers spent part of their winter break enhancing their skills at DIGICOM Learning Institute's professional development workshops. The week-long institute concluded with a presentation of some of the films produced by beginners through advanced and DIGICOM Fellows. Above DIGICOM President and Founder David Vogel congratulates participants at the culminating presentation.



CCE Dons Crazy Socks for Red Ribbon Week: It was a different themed day during the recent Red Ribbon Week at PSUSD elementary schools to spread the "Say No to Drugs" message. At Cathedral City Elementary, Principal Jessica Whiteman got in the spirit of "Crazy Socks Day" with her students.

Rotary Presents Holiday Gift of Books to Cahuilla Students: As they have done for the past several years, The Palm Springs Noon Rotary Club presented age-appropriate books to every Cahuilla Elementary student during the club's Great American Book Giveaway. Each student received two books to keep or gift to siblings or friends just prior to the December holidays.



PSUSD Board of Education		
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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		

Palm Springs Unified Names Educators of Year

Palm Springs Unified School District recently named its 2018 Educators of the Year. All are being honored by the Board of Education later this month and were submitted as the

District's choices for Riverside County honors in their respective categories.

Cathedral City High School Principal Guillermo Chavez was named PSUSD's Principal of the Year and a semi-finalist for Riverside County Principal of the Year. With a bachelor's degree in behavioral science from University of Notre Dame de Namur and masters in educational administration, Chavez has been a principal for the past 17 years, the past 13 at Cathedral City High. He has a total of 27 years in education.

PSUSD's Director of Risk Management Renee Brunelle is the District's Classified Administrator of the Year and has also been chosen as a semi-finalist for Riverside County honors. With 19 years in education, Brunelle is in her seventh year at PSUSD. She holds a bachelor's degree in home economics and marketing from Cal State Long Beach and masters in organizational management from the University of Phoenix. She previously served as the vice chancellor of human resources for San Bernardino Community College



Antuna



Bartsch



Brunelle



Chavez



Ortega



Teves

District and the chief human resources officer for Copper Mountain Community College.

Cathedral City High Counselor Julia Bartsch is the District's Counselor of the Year and was also chosen as a semi-finalist for Riverside County in the counselor category. Bartsch has been a school counselor at Cathedral City High for the past six years and has spent 21 years in education. She holds a bachelor's degree in physical education and sports studies and management and masters in educational counseling and administration.

PSUSD's Certificated Administrator of the Year is English Learner Programs Coordinator Eric Antuna, a position he has held for the past four years. With 14 years in education, Antuna holds a bachelor's degree in liberal studies from Cal State San Bernardino, masters in teaching from National University and an administrative services credential. He previously served as interim principal at Painted Hills Middle School,

City High School, is PSUSD's Classified Employee of the Year. With 17 years in education, Ortega has been at CCHS for the past seven years. Prior to his current post, Ortega served as a district community liaison for four years and a resource aide for 10 years. He holds an associate's degree in early childhood development from College of the Desert.

Certificated Payroll Specialist Grayce Teves is the District's Confidential Employee of the Year. With over 21 years in education, Teves has been in her current post for 16 years. Prior to that she was a senior accounting clerk with Riverside County Office of Education for three years. Teves attended Mount San Jacinto College, Riverside Community College, University of Nebraska and York Christian College.

All of PSUSD's Educators of the Year will be honored at the Feb. 27 Board of Education meeting at 6 p.m. in the Board Room at 980 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs.

a teacher on special assignment in educational services and human resources and a classroom teacher.

Jose Ortega, who is an office specialist, bilingual, at Cathedral

Message from the Superintendent

Law Requires Corrective Measures Other than Suspensions, Expulsion



Very few people would dispute that the best place for students to be each and every day is in the classroom – learning! That has been, is and always will be the number one goal of educators everywhere, and Palm Springs Unified School District is no exception. Unfortunately, sometimes the behaviors and actions of a student will cause a school administrator to remove that student from the learning environment via a school suspension or expulsion process. The administrator must follow the law set out by California Education Code in using suspension or expulsion in a disciplinary matter, and that law changed in the past few years, giving school administrators less discretion in determining when a student should be suspended from a school campus.

With growing concerns from parents and advocates about the amount of time students were missing instruction due to suspensions, the state Legislature, in January of 2015, implemented a new law that limits the use of “willful defiance” as a reason to suspend or expel students. Willful defiance can be anything from refusing to follow the rules of the teacher or administrator, to more aggressive behaviors that disrupt the classroom environment. Additionally, under the new law, school Districts are required to implement means other than exclusion from the learning environment to correct misbehaviors, except in situations that are excluded by law or those that may pose an immediate danger on campus.

Such corrective measures could include:

- Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), which is in full implementation at four of our elementary schools and one middle school and partially in place at other sites

- Conferences between school personnel, parent or guardian and the student
- Referrals to school counselors, psychologists or other school support personnel for case management and counseling
- Teams to develop and implement individualized plans to address the behavior in partnership with the pupil and his or her parents
- Referral for a comprehensive psychosocial or psychoeducational assessment in order to create an individualized education program (IEP)
- Enrollment in a program to teach prosocial behavior or anger management
- Participation in a restorative justice program
- After-school programs that address specific behavioral issues or expose students to positive activities and behaviors

As stated above, some first-time offenses are still punishable with suspension or expulsion. These include: mutual combat fighting, battery, possession of a weapon, possession of or being under the influence of a controlled substance, sale of a controlled substance, or commitment or attempt to commit robbery or extortion.

Overall, throughout the state of California, suspensions have decreased by 46 percent from 2011-12 to 2016-17, and expulsions have decreased by 42 percent during the same time period. So, more students are in school, which is a good thing and achieves the goal the legislature sought with this new legislation.

However, at the same time, school site and District administrators are experiencing increased numbers of complaints from frustrated parents or guardians who don't understand

why a student who “bullied” their child is not removed from the classroom on the first offense. Similarly, parents question why a student who stole their child's lunch or lunch money was not suspended for his or her actions. The change in the law requires that we must, instead, make sure we have first worked to use a corrective measure to change that behavior before we use suspension as a disciplinary tool.

We understand how challenging this can be for the entire learning community when students misbehave and are disruptive to the learning environment, and our ultimate goal is to keep our campuses safe and conducive to student learning. But we are required to follow the law, which was designed to keep students in school as much as possible. We are continuing to expand our efforts to provide other corrective action measures including adding elementary counselors, implementing interventions and providing our sites with behavior support specialists. Ultimately, the goal of all disciplinary actions is to improve the student's behavior and choices so that he or she has access to a high-quality education and contributes to the learning environment for everyone.

If you have any questions about when suspension or expulsion can be used on a first offense I invite you to take a look at the Education 48900 and section 48910 (which can be found at <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes>). If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our Student Support Services Department at (760) 416-6032.



Sandra Lyon Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools