



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 2018

All PSUSD Students to Receive Free Meals for 2018-19 School Year

All Palm Springs Unified School District students will be offered breakfast and lunch at no charge at all District school sites for at least the next four years beginning with the first day of school on Aug. 8. The District has amended its policy for serving meals to students under the National School Lunch/School Breakfast program.

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) -- through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) -- provides a non-pricing meal option for school districts in low-income areas -- those with a minimum-identified student percentage of more than 40 percent low-income in the prior school year. The provision allows the District to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. Districts that adopt CEP are reimbursed for the meals using a formula based on the percentage of students categorically eligible for free meals.



Board of Education and Cabinet members shared lunch time with Landau Elementary students and Principal Wendy Meka toward the end of last school year.

Though applications for free or reduced lunch are no longer necessary, the District still requires that parents complete an annual "education benefit form." This year's forms will be mailed home to parents within the next few weeks and is also available and can be completed online at <https://benefitform.psusd.us/>.

"The Board of Education is excited about expanding the school nutrition program to include ALL of our students," said President James Williamson. "A child who is hungry cannot learn. The District is committed to doing anything we can to ensure a supportive learning environment."

Since CEP became available nationwide in 2014, the program has expanded each year and served nearly 9.7 million children in 2016-17. Since CEP operates on a four-year cycle, PSUSD will be providing free lunches for at least the next four years. The District has offered Universal Free Breakfast for the past 10 years.

"We have been working diligently for the past five years to qualify for CEP," said Director of Nutritional Services Stephanie Bruce. "The 2018-19 school year will be the first year we are able to provide this important and needed program to our students. Hungry children can't learn -- that's a fact -- and we in Nutrition Services are so pleased to be able to provide a healthy and nutritious meal to every student who would like one."

For more information on the CEP program, contact Stephanie Bruce at sbruce@psusd.us or call (760) 322-4117.

PSUSD's 2018-19 School Year Begins August 8

Palm Springs Unified School District opens the 2018-19 school year on Wednesday, Aug. 8. All students are expected to report to classes on that day.

Parents of students who are eligible for bus transportation will be receiving a letter with assigned bus stops this week. If you believe that your child is eligible for transportation and do not receive a letter by Aug. 6, please call your child's school site for a bus assignment.

While applications for free or reduced lunch are no longer required since all District students will receive free meals, parents are required to complete an "education benefit form" for the District. Just one form is required per household. The form is available online at <https://benefitform.psusd.us/>. Paper forms are also available at each school site.

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.

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) 883-2703, ext.4805105.

No Unauthorized Access of Any School Campuses to Ensure Student Safety

The Palm Springs Unified School District is implementing a closed campus policy across the District beginning with the start of the 2018-19 school year on Aug. 8. Previously, campus front gates were open before the start of the school day, allowing parents to escort younger children to their classrooms. Now only students will be allowed on campus in an effort to maximize student safety, the gates will not be opened to non-students.

"As most of us are aware, the climate has changed, and now we must consider the possibility that someone could come on a school campus and potentially jeopardize the safety of our students and staff," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sandra Lyon. "While we know statistically that this is a highly unlikely event, it is still incumbent on us to take proactive steps to ensure student safety, and securing the access to campus is one of the recommended best practices."

Moving forward, all classroom doors on all campuses will be locked at all times so entry from the outside will not be automatic. Staff members or students needing to access classrooms after classes begin will need to identify themselves to the classroom teacher before entry is permitted. If a school is on lockdown due to a potential threat either on campus or in the area of a campus, no one will be given access to a locked classroom during that lockdown.

School administrators will be working with staff, students, parents and community members to communicate this change and how it will be handled at their schools.

All visitors -- including parents -- to a school site will need to check in at the front office, sign in and be issued a badge. The visitor will be announced to the classroom teacher and/or escorted by a staff member to the classroom.

"We understand that closing our campuses prior to the start of the school day may be considered inconvenient or even excessive by some of our families," said Lyon. "At the same time, we have heard from many parents and staff members who support the increased safety measures and appreciate the need to do whatever we possibly can to ensure our campuses are as safe as possible."

Elementary and middle school site staff members have been trained in the HERO (Hide, Escape, Run, Overcome) program that addresses how to respond to an intruder on campus. Many of our staff members already shared this important information with their students, and all will provide this training to their students at the beginning of the this school year. High school staff members and students will receive training this school year as well.

The District staff will monitor and evaluate the closed campuses this year and will update the Board of Education as the year progresses.

District Digest



New Solar Project at Desert Springs: The District recently celebrated the commemoration of the completed covered parking lot and ball field solar structures at Desert Springs Middle School, with a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony. The project was funded by a \$1.6 million grant from South Coast Air Quality Management District AB 1318 Mitigation Fees Fund, aimed at reducing or mitigating emissions in Valley produced by PVC Sentinel Peaker Plant. The project will save District about \$1.8 million energy costs over the next 20 years. The District owns solar arrays at three other schools and has 11 solar parking canopies at various sites acquired through a power purchase agreement projected to save \$10 to \$12 million in energy costs over next 20 years.

Three Students Honored with Street Signs: A Cathedral City, Mount San Jacinto and Desert Hot Springs High outstanding senior were recently honored with dedication of a street sign in their name. The signs, located in front of their schools, will bear their names until next spring's honorees are named. At left, CCHS' Anthony Pacheco shows off his sign with,



from left, Cathedral City Councilmen Mark Carnevale and Shelley Kaplan, CCHS Principal Guillermo Chavez and ASB Director George Howell, Mayor Pro-tem Greg Pettis and Mayor Stan Henry, Supt. of Schools Dr. Sandra Lyon and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Dr. Tony Signoret. Below, MSJ honoree Stephanie Lopez-Duardo with her mom, to her left, and, from left, Carnevale, Pettis, Henry, Board of Education member Madonna Gerrell, MSJ Outgoing Principal Brian Hendra, Lyon and Kaplan. At right, DHSHS' Esmeralda Salazar with her family and Outgoing Principal George Bullis, Mayor Scott Matas, Lyon and Board of Education member John Gerardi.



Dedication of New District Administration Center: The Palm Springs High Spirit of the Sands "Four Fedoras" quartet, at right, entertained at the recent dedication of PSUSD's new District Administration Center located at 150 District Center Drive adjacent to the Service Center, which has been at that location for about eight years. Above, members of the Board of Education and administration cut the ribbon at the dedication ceremony. The new building houses all District department offices except for Mental Health and the Foundation for PSUSD, both of which are located on the corner of Farrell and Baristo along with the Family Engagement Center's Palm Springs location.



Career Academy Expo Soaring Success: Nearly 300 attendees got the opportunity to learn about the District's high school academies while enjoying student-created food samples and choosing their favorite Academy project at the recent Second Annual Career Academy Expo at the Palm Springs Air Museum. The event was planned and executed by the 20 Career Technical Education (CTE) Student Ambassadors, most of which are pictured above with CTE Teacher on Special Assignment Erik Mickelson, third from left. At left are students from Desert Hot Springs High's Academy for Careers in Education (ACE) showing off their model "Classroom of the Future."



District Teachers of the Year: Site and District Teachers of the Year were recently honored at PSUSD's annual We Honor Our Own (WHOO) banquet at the Renaissance Marriott in Palm Springs. Pictured above are, from left, Supt. of Schools Dr. Sandra Lyon, Board of Education member Karen Cornett, District Teachers of the Year Alicia Lind, David Zemek and Doris Rodriguez and Board of Education members Richard Clapp and John Gerardi.

Mosquito Education: Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District Field Supervisor Mike Martinez and Public Information Manager Jill Oviatt recently provided an informational training session for PSUSD grounds and custodial staff members on how to reduce the potential for infected mosquitoes to threaten student and staff health and safety. Information included tips for eliminating standing water,



how and when to report potential mosquito sightings and an overview of the types of mosquitoes that are a threat to health and safety. At left, Oviatt, shows grounds and custodial staff mosquito eggs, pupae and adult mosquitos.

PSUSD Board of Education

James Williamson <i>President</i>	Richard Clapp <i>Clerk</i>
Karen Cornett	John Gerardi
	Madonna Gerrell

PSUSD Administration

Sandra Lyon, Ed.D., Superintendent
Brian Murray, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Tony Signoret, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Mike Swize, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

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Student Board Members Honored for Service:

Just before the close of the 2017-18 school year, the Board of Education members honored its Student Board of Education members with plaques and sashes. Pictured, from left are Board of Education member Richard Clapp, Desert Hot Springs High student Board member Kimberly Briones Sanchez, Board Member Karen Cornett, Board President James Williamson, Board member John Gerardi, Mount San Jacinto Student Board member Stephanie Duardo, Board Member Madonna Gerrell, Rancho Mirage High Student Board member Bridget Ferrell, Palm Springs High Student Board member Zjarvre Crawford and Cathedral City High Student Board member Anthony Pacheco.



PSUSD Announces New, Changed Administrative Posts

As the 2018-19 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 PSUSD family.

Jeanette Anderson is PSUSD's new Assistant Director of Special Education. She most recently served as Special Education Coordinator for Menifee Union School District and has served as a special education teacher, curriculum coach, administrator of special projects, program specialist and assistant principal.

Megan Peterson is the District's new Special Education Program Specialist. She began her teaching career in the San Diego Unified School District and joined PSUSD in 2010 as a teacher at Agua Caliente, where she was recognized as the school's Teacher of the Year twice and PSUSD's District Teacher of the Year in 2016. For the past two years, Peterson has been a Special Education Teacher on Special Assignment.

Caroline Cota is joining PSUSD as Desert Hot Springs High School's new Principal. Cota was most recently the Assistant Principal at Eleanor Roosevelt High School in the Corona-Norco Unified School District. During her instructional career she served as a special education and French teacher at Norco High as well as special education department chair, WASC coordinator and world language department chair. In 2011, she was Norco High's Teacher of the Year.

Brian Hendra, who most recently served as Alternative Education

Principal for PSUSD, is returning to Palm Springs High as the school's new Principal. Hendra was a former Assistant Principal at Palm Springs High.

Ryan Woll, who most recently served as Principal at Palm Springs High, is an Administrator on Special Assignment at Edward Wenzlaff Education Center, where he will be overseeing expansion of Early Childhood Education, Adult Transition Program and Desert Learning Academy on that campus.

Cahuilla Elementary, is Katherine Finchy Elementary School's new Principal. Recognized as Cahuilla's Teacher of the Year in 2013, Hammond also served as an academic coach and site coordinator at Vista Del Monte Elementary and most recently served as Assistant Principal at Bella Vista Elementary.

Jessica Simpson is the new Principal at Julius Corsini Elementary. A nationally board certified teacher since 2012, Simpson is returning

home to Corsini, having started her teaching career there in 2007. She later served as a teacher and academic coach at Desert Springs Middle School and most recently as an Assistant Principal at Jefferson Middle School in the Desert Sands Unified School District.

Amy Zink is Della S. Lindley Elementary School's new Principal. Zink joined PSUSD in 1999 as a remedial math teacher at the Ramon Academy. She has served as an English Language Facilitator, Technology Site Coach and PAR/BTSA Consulting Teacher and had been serving as the Assistant Principal at Cathedral City Elementary since 2014.

New Assistant Principal assignments and/or site relocations include:

- Denise Fenton – Two Bunch Palms Elementary
- Mardi Hagar – Bella Vista Elementary
- Brenda Santana – Cathedral City Elementary
- Manuel Bayardo – James Workman Middle
- Mark Acker – Desert Hot Springs High
- Brad Bryeans – Cathedral City High



Matt Hammond



Jessica Simpson



Eric Antuna



Karen Dimick



Caroline Cota



Brian Hendra

Dr. Karen Dimick, who most recently served as an Assistant Principal at Cathedral City High School, is the new Principal at Nellie N. Coffman Middle School. Dimick began her administrative career as Vice Principal of Testing and Attendance at Desert Hot Springs High in 2009 before transferring to CCHS as Vice Principal of Student Services. Since 2013, she has been the Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction at CCHS.

Eric Antuna is Agua Caliente Elementary School's new Principal. Antuna joined PSUSD as a teacher at Agua Caliente in 2006 and has also served as an English Language Learner Specialist, Assistant Principal and Interim Principal. Most recently he was PSUSD's Coordinator for English Learners.

Matthew Hammond, who joined PSUSD in 2001 as a teacher at

Message from the Superintendent

Welcome to the 2018-19 School Year



It is an honor and a pleasure to welcome our parents and community members to Palm Springs Unified School District's 2018-19 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 key mission of our Board of Education and administration this year is to clearly define who we are and how our work will move us forward to better serve our students. We realized this past year that the foci of the District have not always been as clearly expressed or communicated as we thought. In order to improve that communication, a broad group of stakeholders from the District staff, called the Guiding Coalition, worked to create a set of belief statements that will help us communicate our shared expectations about how we do our work in the District. At the same time

that this work was being done, our Educational Services Department drafted an instructional map for elementary schools that outlines the instructional expectations and resources for core content areas, lesson design, assessment and the learning environment. The secondary version is currently in the works. These efforts comprise the first steps in creating a coherent approach to how our District aligns its valuable resources and creates an environment that supports teachers in furthering their craft and students in furthering their learning.

During a several-hour work session, our Board of Education poured over the work of the Guiding Coalition in an effort to update mission and vision statement for PSUSD. The vision statement they arrived at is both powerful and meaningful – Lifelong Learning Starts Here – and that goes for ALL of us at PSUSD – administrators, staff and, of course, our students! The mission statement is equally relevant and on the mark: "All students graduate with the skills, capacities and confidence needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world." If each and

every one of our students graduates with those tools in hand, then I think we can all agree – we have been successful!

Our staff will be presented with the Guiding Coalition's belief statements, the instructional map and the Board of Education's vision and mission statements at our Welcome Back meetings on Monday, just prior to Wednesday's first day of instruction. The goal is to get us all on the same page, working together in a clear and positive direction for our students. We hope you will continue with us on our journey and feel free to offer your feedback and input as we move forward.

Thank you, as always, for your support and partnership.

Sincerely,


Sandra Lyon, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools