

# SUPE'S ON...



## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

By Grant Bennett



May 2018 – Spring Edition

As the 2017-2018 school year comes to a close as well as the end of my 25th year in the Perris Union High School District, it is time to reflect. This year we have seen the continued growth in our graduation rate and tremendous growth in the progress of our English Learner students. We have more kids in our AVID Program than ever before, more CTE offerings, more opportunities for students to explore and experience their dreams.

Paloma Valley's Girls Soccer Team gave the school its first Team CIF Championship and Paloma Valley's NJROTC students placed second in the Nation in drill competition. We are nearing the end of the latest round of construction with a new CTE/ Cafeteria Building and Perris Agricultural Center for Excellence at Perris High School, both will open in August. Paloma Valley's new CTE Fabrication Lab will also open in August. Construction of a new 10 classroom building and additions to the football stadium will begin in early fall. Perris High, Pinacate Middle and Heritage High, in collaboration with the City of Perris, have built Community Gardens on their campuses. The California Military Institute, Heritage High and Perris High have all opened new Parent Centers. Great new things for the District!

Now looking back at the 25 years I've spent in the District. Back then there was only Perris High School covering kids from Perris, Nuevo, Romoland, and Menifee, quite a melting pot. No cell phones, no classroom phones, my classroom computer was an Apple IIe. Perris was the only area that was actually a city and the other areas were

unincorporated areas of Riverside County. Two years later, Paloma Valley opened and most of the more seasoned teachers moved south and Perris High was left with us rookies to lead the way. As the housing market boomed, the two schools grew tremendously in student population. Paloma Valley grew to more than 3,600 and Perris High was more than 3,100. The growth necessitated the building of another high school and that was when the District decided to build Heritage High School, which opened in 2007. Now we are again experiencing a growth in the student population and we are on the verge of building our fourth high school. A new high school would allow us to give more students greater opportunities. I know the Perris Union High School District has been a great place for me and I know that the student's we serve have benefitted from all our efforts. Whether you are an old-timer like me or brand new to the District, what we do for kids everyday will help to change and mold them into great scholars and citizens in our community.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Superintendent's Message
- Business Services
- Educational Services
- Human Resources
- Technology



Please access [www.puhsd.org/KeepingPace](http://www.puhsd.org/KeepingPace) for additional information about the local school bond currently being considered by the Board of Trustees.

### Graduation Dates

Perris Lake  
Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>

Pinacate Middle School  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion  
Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

Perris High  
Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

Heritage High  
Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup>

California Military Institute  
Friday June 8<sup>th</sup>

Paloma High  
Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dr. Jose Luis Araux – Edward D. Garcia Jr. – David G. Nelissen – Anthony T. Stafford, Sr. – Carolyn A. Twyman



As a long-time resident of our area, I've always known just how special each of our communities are and why they are one of the best places to live, work and raise a family. That's why it is no surprise to me to see the growth our area has experienced in the past several years. Each day we are all impacted by the growth in our communities. More houses are being built as more families move to our area resulting in many local schools facing significant overcrowding. I'm sure many of you see the effect of overcrowding every single day. For those of you who teach at or are with students at Paloma Valley, you know that we are already over capacity with many more students on the horizon. That campus was originally built for 2,200 students. It currently educates more than 3,200 and is expected to reach over 4,000 within five years.

The simple truth is, overcrowded schools affect the quality of education we can offer local students. Crowded schools reduce the amount of time teachers get to spend with students on an individual basis, making it more difficult to teach and learn effectively. Currently, there is not enough lab space to meet student demand for science, technology and engineering classes, meaning students can't get the 21st-century education that they need. Waitlists for AP Chemistry and other competitive academic programs limit educational opportunities for some students. Most importantly, crowded schools raise student safety and security concerns.

For these reasons, our District has been working in close partnership with our community to develop a local solution to the overcrowding problem facing our schools. We know that we need funding to build a new high school and expand existing schools to relieve this overcrowding. We also know that we cannot rely on the State to provide the level of funding that we need.

Last summer, we completed a comprehensive Facilities Master Plan to closely examine all facilities needs across our District and study the effect of enrollment growth on current and future generations of PUHSD students. Following the Facilities Master Plan, we've solicited feedback from parents, teachers, local businesses, our partner school districts and interested

community members to help shape the plan to solve this issue.

As a result of this process, it has become clear that a local source of funding is the only viable solution to addressing this growth. Specifically, we have been considering the possibility of a \$148 million school improvement bond measure to provide a dedicated source of locally controlled funding.

This would help us achieve the top three most pressing needs facing our schools and community. First, it would allow us to build High School 4 in Menifee to relieve overcrowding at all of our existing schools. Second, we would be able to complete the final phase of construction at Perris High School, which would include additional career technical education classrooms, a new performing arts center and a single point of entry to ensure the safety of our students. Third, it would provide CMI with the gymnasium and physical education facilities it has long needed, promoting the health, fitness and safety of all students on that campus.

Funding could also help us upgrade career training facilities that are critical in preparing our students for 21st-century careers in healthcare, biomedical science, computer science agriculture and skilled trades. Additionally, expanded schools and facilities would improve access to modern classrooms, labs and technology so that students don't have to wait to get into competitive classes in 21st-century subjects.

At this point, no final decisions have been made about if and when the Board of Trustees would place a bond measure on the ballot. We do know however, that the cost would be limited to no more than \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed value annually, which is often lower than current market value. By law, bond funding could not be taken away by the State or federal government and no funds could be spent on administrators' salaries or benefits. A mandatory project list outlining the use of all funds and an independent Citizens' Oversight Committee would ensure transparency and accountability.

In the coming months, you will continue to hear from us about this important issue. To stay up to date, visit [www.PUHSD.org/KeepingPace](http://www.PUHSD.org/KeepingPace). I also invite you to take our survey at [www.bit.ly/KeepingPaceSurvey](http://www.bit.ly/KeepingPaceSurvey) to make your voice heard.

Thank you for your continued partnership in educating current and future generations of PUHSD students!



## EDUCATIONAL SERVICES by Dr. Marilyn Saucedo, Assistant Superintendent



It has been an amazing year of growth in the Perris Union High School District (PUHSD) and there are so many things upon which to reflect and to celebrate. In particular, throughout the year students participated in activities focused on postsecondary and career options.

On the high school campuses this spring, seniors prepare for their future endeavors. Seniors have completed college applications, submitted FAFSA



applications, and are now finalizing decisions about post secondary plans. The high school campuses celebrated college signing day and FAFSA



submissions during the months of April and May. Senior students were recognized for FAFSA submissions, college acceptances, military commitments, and CTE certification pathways.



On April 30, 2018, the district hosted the 3rd Annual Parent Engagement Leadership Initiative (PELI) End of Year

Celebration honoring the hard work of all the schools Action Partnership Teams (APT). They focused on creating and sustaining parent and family engagement activities through an Action Plan identifying site specific goals. Sites reported out how they were able to lower student D/F rates, increased the number of parents participating in workshops and trainings, sent parents off on college visits and much more. Thanks to all the members of the team for a successful year!



In March, over 65 teachers, counselors, administrators, para-educators, and parent liaisons attended the California Association of Bilingual Educators conference. Representatives from each school met in May to share resources and describe their detailed plans for implementing everything they learned. Take a look at this flipgrid from Perris High School with great resources on supporting English Learners: <https://flipgrid.com/0f4463>.



End of the year festivities which have significant meaning for our students have been occurring all over the district. Of special note is the VIP Prom for our special needs students and which included teacher and student representation from all 3 high school sites. This is an event hosted by Heritage High School ASB who did an amazing job!

The dancing, food, and decorations were second to none. The joy on the faces of all that attend, from families to students, both special and general education, was amazing.



The Special Education department also conducted an open house for the Pathways for Adult Life Skills (PALS). The program will support special education students that graduated with a certificate get better prepared for independence and their futures.



As the school year winds down, we continue to look at the many ways we can meet student academic needs. This includes providing instructional programs through the comprehensive schools as well as through our alternative educational programs. In addition, the Pupil Services department is currently working on Inter and Intra District Transfers and is meeting with students to determine specific student placement needs. Placing students in the appropriate sites/programs is the focus of these meetings in order to provide each student with a clear and reachable path to success.



## HUMAN RESOURCES by Kirk Skorpanich, Assistant Superintendent



### Celebrating Our Spectacular Staff

Spring is always the busiest time of year in HR, and is also the most emotional. We get to celebration our amazing employees. We hire new employees. And, we say goodbye to retirees.

This year, our celebrations include our annual Employee Recognition Event which was held on March 14 at the Orange Empire Railway Museum. It was a great event for our honorees and our entire district. Our attendees praised the event. Our honorees included Michael Rhodes (CMI), Principal of the Year; Dian Martin (Educational Services), Certificated Administrator of the Year; Judy Miller (Risk Management), Classified Administrator of the Year; Anna Fetzner (Business Services), Confidential Employee of the Year; Tom Ashley (Paloma Valley High School), Site Support Person of the Year; Al Winters (Pinacate Middle School), Classified Employee of the Year; Cindy Ramos (Paloma Valley High School), Teacher of the Year; Xochitl Almendarez (Perris High School), Teacher of the Year; and Xavier Padilla (Perris High School), Counselor of the Year. Dian Martin was also recognized as Certificated Administrator of the Year for Riverside County.

In addition, quite a few Perris Union High School District staff were recognized by professional organizations. Scott Moore, Athletic Director at Heritage High School, was recognized by the California State Athletic Directors Association (CSADA) as the Norm McKenzie Athletic Director of the Year. Grant Bennett, Superintendent, and Candace Reines, Deputy Superintendent, were both recognized at the annual ACSA Region XIX Spring Awards. Ms. Reines was recognized as Business Services Administrator of the Year. Mr. Bennett was honored with the Marcus Foster Memorial Award for Administrator Excellence. In addition, Lee Alfred, Assistant Principal at Paloma Valley High School, was recognized as High School Co-Administrator of the Year and Cindy Barris, Director of Special Education, was honored as Certificated Manager of the Year by the Western Riverside County Association of School Administrators (WRCASM).

We also celebrated our amazing employees over the past few months. The activities varied by site and department. We recognized our Professional Assistants on April 25. The California Day of the Teacher was on May 9, which provided an opportunity to recognizing our amazing teachers. That same day, we honored our school nurses as part of National School Nurse Day. Finally, our unsung classified heroes were celebrated during May 20-26 for Classified Employees Week.

Finally, we also celebrated our retirees in May. The event was held at Menifee Lakes Country Club. At that event, there were over 300 years of experience among our retirees, who have served in all areas of our district. It was a sincere privilege to salute our amazing retirees.



**PERRIS UNION**  
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
HUMAN RESOURCES

## TECHNOLOGY by Joseph Williams, Executive Director



### Don't Let Technology Get in the Way of your Humanity

It is the time of the school year to reflect on our successes and challenges. Rather than get into the technology projects and updates that took place this year, it feels more appropriate to tell a story. The poet Muriel Rukeyser said that "the universe is made of stories, not of atoms." This is truth. Without humans and the stories of the human experience, the technology would be meaningless.

There is a saying that some students show us they need love in the most unloving ways. Both classified and certificated educators have come across students that act out negatively and intervention is needed. One story from this year revolves around a student who acted out in a very public and unloving way and it just so happens that this student acted out using technology. On some level, there could have been some easy technology solution enacted due to the student's behavior. But had the easy route been taken, we would have a student out there who desperately needed our help and did not receive it.

School staff took this student in, worked to get past the shields teenagers often have up, and allowed for some vulnerability and expression of emotions. Tears were shed. And what was discovered was just how much love, emotional and physical support our student needed. None of this would have happened if it were not for the actions of District staff who were kind in the face of ill temper, calm when met with turmoil, and realized underneath anger is often pain. Our student was in pain and through the kindness of staff, our student shared what they were going through. Our student is getting the needed help.

This story could have gone in another direction. It could have been easy to dispense consequences on the use of technology for our student without the thorough examination of the behavior. We cannot let technology get in the way of our humanity. Technology, without a doubt, is a force multiplier. The information age we live in and access to this information can change the destiny of our students. But technology cannot solve a problem that the heart needs to solve.