



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 2014

Chromebooks Latest Example Technology Gains Across PSUSD

There is an air of anticipation as another pallet of chromebooks are delivered to the Palm Springs Unified School District Educational Technology building awaiting configuration and delivery. The chromebooks – devices that facilitate the use of a web browser — are to be used by high school students that need access to a computer to participate in the PSUSD Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) pilot program. Since September, Palm Springs Unified School District has rolled out 1,744 chromebooks on 45 chromebook carts to high school classrooms across the District. To date, two middle school programs are being included in the pilot. But this June, 16 sixteen middle school classes and 320 chromebooks will be added to the program.

Elementary schools are also in the 1:1 roll-out, with iPads primarily the devices being used. The goal, over the next few years, is for every student in PSUSD to have access to technology either through a device provided by the District or one brought from home.



Students in Jessica Pack's class at James Workman Middle School work on assignments using their Chromebooks—laptop computers provided by PSUSD.

"iPads were chosen after multiple pilot tests were run involving multiple technologies, iPads overwhelmingly fit the needs of our elementary students," said Director of Technology Will Carr. "During Phase I of the elementary iPad pilot, 475 iPads have been placed in the hands of students in 18 classrooms across the District."

In addition to the deployment of chromebooks, iPads and other equipment, teacher training has been a crucial program component.

"Every method we can use to ensure teachers are trained and receive the support they need to create rich learning environments for our students is in place and being used," Carr said. "Teachers are receiving training from our in-house Educational Technology Specialists, consultants, and through online certification programs. Our approach is multifaceted and designed to meet the diverse needs of our instructional staff while building educational technology leadership across the district."

"Having chromebooks in the classroom has changed the way I teach," said Ruby Rivera, a Rancho Mirage High BYOD pilot teacher. "With the level of engagement my students have with my teaching material using the chromebooks, they are able to do almost everything that can be done on paper and so much more."

Michael Cloutier, a James Workman Middle School BYOD pilot teacher, said, "BYOD is effective because it allows students to take authorship of work on devices they are familiar with."

Ensuring all students can apply new technologies to achieve learning goals and prepare for the tomorrow's careers is a fundamental goal at Palm Springs USD.

Recess More than Just Play

Recess looks very different at Cathedral City and Julius Corsini Elementary Schools this year. Students are safer and engaging in inclusive play, exhibit better behavior and pay better attention. When recess is over, the transition back to the classroom is faster, and bullying has been reduced on the campuses.

It may be taken for granted that kids know how to play, but principals say recess is not what it used to be. Many children spend much of the time on the playground just standing around, while others play free-for-all games that get out of control.

To counter these issues along with the general problem of a lack of exercise, this year the Fogelson Family Foundation has funded "Playworks," an evidence-based and nationally recognized comprehensive recess model.

It begins with the formation of a Recess Team at each site comprised of the principal, at least one teacher from each primary and intermediate grade level and the supervision aides. While a Recess Coach is not required, the Fogelson Family Foundation has provided funding for such a coach

at the two schools, with each working 4.5 hours each day to lead recess activities for all students. The coach sets up the playground with equipment and game stations and leads the various games, moving be-



Fogelson

tween student groups. There are usually about 10 game activities going on at one time. Kids are thriving on the 40 minutes of physical activity they are getting each day.

"The program gives students something they need—an opportunity to play," said Dave Hart, a fifth grade teacher at Cathedral City Elementary. "Students have voice and choice. In a natural way, they learn how to cooperate and solve problems. They use their imagination to think of new ways to play a game."

Following team training last summer, the Recess Teams played many of the core recess games together (i.e. four square, tag, dodge ball). The goal of well-organized re-

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Staffers Receive County Honors

Six Palm Springs Unified School District administrators have been named Administrators of the Year by Region XIX of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and are now vying for state honors.

Supt. of Schools Dr. Christine Anderson, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Dr. Mike Swize, Director of Student Services Jane Mills, Director of Career Technical Education Dr. Diana Lamar, Raymond Cree

Middle School Principal Dr. Tracy Piper and Cielo Vista Charter Elementary Principal Lynda Lake were nominated by members of the Palm Springs Leadership Association (PSLA) and named region winners in their respective categories by ACSA Region XIX.

The six winners will be recognized at the ACSA Region XIX recognition dinner on April 30 at the Palm Springs Hilton. State winners will be announced in May.

District Digest



EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDING: The Palm Springs Leadership Association, comprised of PSUSD administrators and managers, recently honored a student from each District elementary, middle and high school, at its annual "Every Student Succeeding" ceremony. One student was nominated by their principal for success on one or more significant obstacles or challenges. Desert Hot Springs High School student Christopher Granados, center with plaque, was chosen by PSLA officers to compete for a scholarship to be awarded by the Region XIX Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). Pictured in the back row with the students are, from left, PSLA President Dr. Denise Ellis, Board of Education President Richard Clapp, PSLA President-Elect Ryan Saunders, PSLA Vice President of Legislative Action Dr. Tracy Piper and Supt. of Schools Dr. Christine Anderson.



SPELLING BEE CHAMP IS FOUR-TIME WINNER: Jenna-May Ingal, a seventh grader at James Workman Middle School, right, won the PSUSD Spelling Bee for the fourth consecutive year and will represent PSUSD at the county bee next month. Runner-up was Alondra Campos, an eighth grader at Painted Hills MS, who will be the District's alternate at the County Bee.



CHAMBER HONORS TEACHERS OF YEAR: The Cathedral City Chamber of Commerce recently honored the site Teachers of the Year from Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage and Thousand Palms schools with its "Red Apple Award." In addition to a gift from the chamber and proclamations from state and local officials, the teachers also received a gift basket with office supplies from Aristotle McDaniel, of Office Depot, rear, center. Honorees, included, from left, Shanna Smith, Landau Elementary; Adrian Alvarado, Agua Caliente Elementary; Tara Baldwin, Rancho Mirage Elementary; Jessica Pack, James Workman Middle; Geoff Benson, Rio Vista Elementary; Rebecca Gutierrez, Nellie N. Coffman Middle; Marisa Blau, Della S. Lindley Elementary; Michele Zahariades, Sunny Sands Elementary; Matt Riley, Cathedral City High; and Nancy Dunn, Cathedral City Elementary.

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE DONATES BOOKS TO AC: Members of the Assistance League of Palm Springs Desert area presented more than 100 books to the Agua Caliente Elementary Library as part of the nationwide Make A Difference Day this past fall. Accepting the books along with the students are, from left, AC Librarian Julia Diliberto and Principal Dr. Lucy Hansen. Assistance League members making the presentation include, from left, Tina Regan, Gladys Richardson, Tracy Moss, President Roberta Grubb and Jill Beighley.



SES PROGRAM RECOGNIZED: Janie Bark, a program director of the After School Education and Safety Program for the Family YMCA of the Desert, was among 10 individuals and organizations honored by the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission for promoting universal human rights locally. Pictured with Bark are, from left, Raymond Cree Middle School students Mad-die Barton and Sunny Rolfs, and Palm Springs City Councilman Paul Lewin. Susan Francis, executive director of the Healthy Families Foundation, was also honored for bringing the Ophelia Project mentoring program for at-risk girls to Palm Springs High and Raymond Cree Middle School.



CLAPP IS NEW PRESIDENT: Richard Clapp, center, was recently sworn in as the new President of the Board of Education, and Gary Jeandron, took the oath of officer of Board Clerk, for the second consecutive year. Swearing in the officers is Supt. of Schools Dr. Christine Anderson. Following the recent resignation of board member Justin Blake, the Board named applicant and former Board member Donald T. Aikens to fill the remainder of Blake's term, through November, 2014.



GIFT OF READING: The Palm Springs Noon Rotary club presented each student at Cahuilla Elementary School with two books each just in time for the holidays as they have done for the past several years. Pictured with some of the school's Interact students are, from left, Rotary President Anita Gray, Great American Book Giveaway Chair Milt Levinson, Supt. of Schools Dr. Christine Anderson and Cahuilla Elementary Principal and Rotarian Dr. Denise Ellis.

CHAMBER HONORS EDUCATOR, YOUTH OF YEAR: Cathedral City High School senior Connor Erb, left, below left, received Youth of the Year honor from Andy Jessup of Jessup Auto Plaza, along with a \$500 scholarship from the Chamber at its recent Orion Awards. Each of four other nominees (A.J. Peterson, Sara Lopez, Marlett Galitto and Samantha Sukhram) received \$100 from the Chamber. Below right, James Workman MS teacher Jessica Pack, receives the Educator of the Year award from Blair Merrihew, of Rabobank, and Chamber of Commerce treasurer. It has been a busy time for Pack, who was recently named one of five California Teachers of the Year. She was also surprised with the re-naming of the corner of 30th Avenue and San Eljay as "Jessica Pack" in her honor by the city of Cathedral City.



STAFF MEMBERS OF YEAR: The Board of Education recently honored PSUSD Staff Members of the Year. Congratulating the winners are Board of Education President Richard Clapp, left, and Supt. of Schools Dr. Christine Anderson. Honorees included, from left, Site Support Staff Member of Year Deborah Applebaum, DATA coordinator at Cathedral City High; Classified Manager of the Year JM Evosevich, mental health program manager; Classified Staff Member of the Year Paula Clark, Desert Hot Springs High security officer; Certificated Administrator of the Year Dr. Mike Swize, assistant superintendent of Educational Services; and Confidential Staff Member of the Year Elaine Robertson, administrative assistant to the Superintendent. Missing from photo is Principal of the Year Dr. Anne Kalisek, Desert Hot Springs High School.

BULLYING INTERVENTION TOP PRIORITY: Raymond Cree Middle School is taking pro-active steps to stop and prevent bullying by adopting the OLEWEUS Bullying Prevention Program, a research-based school-wide "systems-change" program which includes weekly class meetings where students talk about the effects of bullying, what they can do about it and how they can work with adults to put a stop to it, even as bystanders. The program recently kicked off with an interactive assembly (including public service announcement videos made by eighth graders) led by members of the LINK Crew at Cathedral City High School, including, from left, Oscar Garcia, Aaron Jones, and Alejandra Munoz.



PSUSD Board of Education

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Recess Affects Classroom

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cess games is to help students put into practice all the physical, cognitive and social/emotional skills necessary to be successful in school. While playing, the students are practicing taking turns, losing gracefully, solving conflicts and cheering for their teammates.

"It sounds like such a simple concept to teach kids how to play games, but there is much more to it," said Pete Johnson, who teaches fifth grade at CCE. "Before the Playworks program, we had unorganized chaos on our playgrounds. Balls were flying everywhere. Most girls did not compete in games because the boys played too rough and did not follow the rules or made them up. Our playground is now a much safer place, and the students are more involved than before."



Students at Cathedral City Elementary not only have fun at recess, they learn valuable lessons about involving everyone in the play, taking turns and cheering for teammates. It's all through a new program called Playworks.

"As an educator for nearly 30 years, I have never witnessed such a dramatic change in children's behavior and activity level in such a short period of time," said CCE First Grade teacher Nancy Dunn. "Our primary grade students are involved in a wide variety of games at recess, learning not just the rules but also how to share, cooperate and resolve conflicts. The children are releasing energy, becoming more self-confident, building motor skills and becoming more physically fit. Best of all, problems on the playground and in the classroom have clearly diminished as a result of Playworks."

'Pinnacle Fund Going into Overdrive'...Executive Director PSUSD Foundation on the Move

In November, PSUSD's foundation, The Pinnacle Fund, held 99 meetings in 99 days with principals, teachers, team members, stakeholders and the community.

"The purpose of the meetings was to get a better understanding of the classroom and community challenges that The Pinnacle Fund will be facing so we can better meet our goals of impact, growth and sustainability," said Ellen Goodman, executive director of the Fund.

"Our approach is to build ambitious goals, advance our commitment to education in the desert, play a significant role in our community, and meet challenges head on," she added.

Goodman said The Pinnacle Fund has "rolled up its sleeves and is going into overdrive, fueled by the commitment to raise much-needed funding for the children of the Palm Springs School District, which includes 30 schools, 685 classrooms and 24,000 children.

"We are doing our best to bolster grassroots fundraising efforts, attract major investors,

and secure critical legacy gifts to advance key funding areas, including arts, media and technologies and career academies such as performing arts, culinary, sports medicine, health and



Goodman

sciences, digital arts, business, alternative energy and public safety," said Goodman. "What excites me the most," she said, "is the success of this year's Classroom Grant Program, the opening of the amazing Helene Galen Performing Arts Center at Rancho Mirage High School, state and national recognition our high school bands are receiving, and our growing partnerships with Digicom, Musical Theater University, Playworks and other organizations."

To make a tax deductible donation to The Pinnacle Fund, visit www.pinnaclefund.org and click DONATE NOW! For more information, email pinnacle@psusd.us or call 760-416-8455.

Message from the Superintendent

Stakeholder Input Wanted On New Funding Plan

As part of the state's new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which is a new way to fund schools, all districts are required to prepare a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), which describes how we intend to meet annual goals for pupils, with specific activities to address state and local priorities identified. As we prepare that plan, Palm Springs Unified School District is seeking input from our stakeholders, including staff members, parents, students, business and community members regarding areas of focus, outcomes and strategies.

Your input and feedback are very important to us. If you go to the home page



of our website, www.psusd.us, you will find several documents that will walk you through our process. First, you will see a PowerPoint presentation (both in English and Spanish) that explains LCFF and LCAP and outlines our draft areas of focus and outcomes. You will also find attachments with input forms that provide space for you to rank order the listed outcomes and then provide additional outcomes along with strategies for getting us to these outcomes. Simply download the attachment(s) to your computer, fill them

out, save them and then attach them to an e-mail and send to LCAPinput@psusd.us. You can provide your input on any or all of the four areas of focus.

We have already held two of three community input sessions for those who would like to give their feedback in person. The final meeting will be held tonight, Feb. 26, at 5:30 p.m. at James Workman Middle School. You are invited to attend that meeting if you would like more information or want to fill out feedback forms on site. You can also stop by our District Office or any of our school sites and ask for these forms to be printed out, and you can hand them back in to a staff member

at that site. We will be accepting input both online and at our offices at least through the end of February.

Thank you so much for your continued support as we move through this very important and exciting process. We feel that LCFF and LCAP are thoughtful and necessary tools that provide us with the guides we need to assist all of us in accomplishing our goal of designing appropriate programs and developing budget priorities in order to improve student achievement.

Christine J. Anderson

Christine J. Anderson, Ed. D.

Superintendent of Schools