



State of the Schools

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Pasadena Unified School District

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Welcome to this beautiful auditorium and thank you to John Muir for hosting us. It's a privilege to serve as the President of the Board of the Pasadena Unified School District.

Before I begin, I want to thank our distinguished guests for joining us tonight

- List those present: Board members, district leaders, city council, parent leaders
- I also want to thank and acknowledge all the parent groups who work so hard to support our students:
 - DELAC and school ELACs
 - LCAP Parent Advisory Committee and School Site Councils
 - The Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
 - The District and school-level AAPC
 - The Foster Youth Council
 - The PTA Council and school PTAs and
 - PEN
- We're also supported by community partners that include
 - PEF
 - PEN
 - Collaborate Pasadena
 - PACTL

I must thank those who helped put this evening together, especially the students, teachers, and staff of John Muir, and a special thanks to Mrs. Sandy Franklin, and principal Dr. Lawton Gray, who can't be with us tonight. The Communications and KLRN teams, and the teachers and students who gave us a glimpse of the artistry and talent in PUSD... let's give them a round of applause.

The Pasadena City Charter requires that the President of the Board of Education present to the public by May of each year a State of the Schools address about the progress of the District in achieving its goals, and its plans for the future. This includes the financial state of our schools.

In just a few days, we'll see the Class of 2023 graduate from our six high schools, and fifth and eighth graders promote to middle and high school. It is a time of excitement, celebration, and the anticipation and nerves that come with change.

Our schools are giving students the skills and self-confidence to move into the world and to use communication and collaboration skills in college, the workplace, and in life.

The pandemic is now officially over, although what we learned and experienced will be with us for years to come.

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I want to tell you tonight about our District's progress in serving the children and youth of Altadena, Pasadena, and Sierra Madre.

Let's begin by looking at what we have accomplished together:

- The signature programs of PUSD are thriving, thanks in part to funds from Measure J, which directs a portion of the City of Pasadena's sales tax to PUSD. Because Measure J is used for the reserve fund, our district's financial status is stable and preserves academic programs that are serving our students so well in STEM, DLIP, IB, Arts, and High School Academies.
- We saw the impact of our long-term investment in arts education with the production of our first All-Star Musical, Into the Woods. PUSD's arts education continues to offer district-wide opportunities that showcase the artistry of our students and the skills of our teachers and administrators. These include instrumental and choral festivals, visual arts exhibits, and an All-Star Band.

This year, we have much to celebrate:

- Sierra Madre Elementary was named a California Distinguished School
- Altadena Arts Magnet was named a National Magnet Model School
- We have 5 Posse Scholars this year, including Christina Leyva, who we met earlier this evening
- PUSD student-athletes are competing at a high level, John Muir's football and boys water polo, and Blair's boys' basketball teams won CIF division championships, we're so proud of you!
- The student-led Student Think Tank is now in its third year. This cross-district student-led collective gathers to research and study district and community needs as well as social justice issues in Southern California.
- We've also made strides in implementing the equity litmus test, and are actualizing it in the District's Strategic Plan.
- We've made inroads in reducing Black student suspensions and expulsions
- In 2022-23, we invested in RTI Wellness, where teachers at elementary schools support students and address behaviors to improve their engagement. We are using alternatives to suspensions, and to date, there were fewer than 55 suspensions at eight schools. This is a significant decrease and we commend school and district staff for supporting students.

One of our proudest accomplishments this year was to be able to give our teachers a 10% salary increase, the largest single increase in our district's history. Last year, we were able to adjust salary schedules so that our teachers and employees are compensated closer to similar districts.

It's been a year of recovery as the pandemic has officially ended. This year, our focus has been on helping students recover both academically and emotionally. This has included expanded learning options such as tutoring and after-school programs as well as new wellness teachers assigned to every school.

It's also been a year of seeing the impact that a decade of work brought to PUSD. PUSD was awarded a third federal magnet grant to expand programs at our schools. It's not common for school districts to get a third grant, and it's a testament to the quality of our collective efforts that the federal government has in PUSD.

Our high schools are also earning 6-year accreditation from WASC. Getting a six-year accreditation is no easy task. So Congratulations.

Finances

And now, to the financial state of our district. In general, the financial state of PUSD is strong for the immediate future, as there have been positive developments in this area in the last couple of years, due to increased Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA's) and the COVID Relief funding PUSD received from the State and Federal governments.

The District's combined General Fund revenues come from the State, the Federal Government and local sources.. The State provides these funds through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) which has two sources of revenue: property taxes and State Aid. The District's LCFF allocation was \$191 million in 22-23. These funds come to the District in two forms, base grants, which are used for the general operations of the district; and supplemental and concentration grants which are targeted for use with specific student populations such as Foster Youth, English Learners, and students who qualify for low socio-economic status, and are also required to be used to supplement the general education program.

REPORT ON GOALS FROM LAST YEAR

The District has demonstrated that it can meet its financial obligations for this year and the two subsequent years. PUSD has received a "Positive Certification" on each of its financial reports since March of 2019. This certification is crucial because it determines the financial health of the District by the Los Angeles County Office of Education and by bond rating agencies.

The District has also continued to receive the highest possible rating for its annual outside audits of its financial statements and the facilities bond program since 2019.

STATUS & OUTLOOK

MEASURE J

We anticipate that PUSD will receive over \$10 million from Measure J this year. We can sustain our signature programs like Dual Language Immersion, STEM, and the robust Visual and Performing Arts programs because we have Measure J funds to shore up our mandated reserves.

Measure O report

We are in the process of finalizing our Facilities Master Plan. The facilities' needs data has been collected and analyzed and the Board is in the process of prioritizing future projects. In the meantime, projects related to student safety and security are at the top of the list and are not being delayed.

Goals for 2023-2024

Goals for the 23-24 school year are to

- Create a transition plan for the loss of COVID Relief funds
- Continue to increase salaries in order to retain and recruit qualified staff and to
- Complete the Facilities Master Plan and move into the planning and construction phase for Measure O

Strategic Plan

This has also been a year of planning for the future. Development of the District's new Strategic Plan has been led by Deputy Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Blanco who worked together with Scott Harden, students, district leaders, parents, and families through the process that began last summer. Through five design teams and a steering committee, we have engaged with different representatives of the community to develop a vision, mission, and roadmap for the next five years that centers on bringing PUSD to the next level.

The strategic plan will take effect in the new school year, but schools and district departments are already taking what we've learned during the process and applying it to our actions and plans.

The strategic plan also signals a new era for PUSD, where we focus on consolidating our successes and evaluating practices that no longer work. As a school system and community, we must focus on growing in excellence in everything that we do. We know that we are not always perfect, and we also know that we will never stop trying. We know that children in our schools come first, and deserve every opportunity that we can give them.

As changes happen at the leadership level, I know that there is speculation and uncertainty. But I want to say this: PUSD is a school system that stays focused on the success and well-being of our students. Our previous and current leadership have gotten us to this point. Together, we must lead through any change in unity, steadiness, and a clear vision to serve our students.

I'd like to thank you all for attending this evening. Good night and be safe!

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