

# 100 DAY PLAN

## Summary Evaluation

LEARNING

LISTENING

LEADING THE  
TRANSFORMATION

COMMUNICATING



Interim  
Superintendent  
Dr. Elizabeth J. Blanco



**PASADENA**  
Unified School District



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# LETTER FROM THE INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT



Dear Pasadena Unified School District Community,

When I stepped into the role of Interim Superintendent last summer, my purpose was – and still is – to ensure the best possible education and opportunities for our students. Along with outstanding PUSD employees, caring families, and committed community partners, we are all working to realize the goals outlined in *Imagine PUSD 2028*. It is our strategic plan that defines why we do what we do, where we want to go, and how we believe we will get there.

We hit the ground running! We visited schools and met with students, faculty, and staff at every school as part of my 100-day plan. The goal was to get a first-hand look at PUSD's incredible accomplishments and to better understand the unique challenges each school is currently facing. We truly weathered some storms together, beginning with a hurricane/earthquake followed by a heat wave and then one of the largest rainfalls in the history of Pasadena Unified.

Maintaining that open dialogue with students, staff, and families is critical to building a "culture of with" and can only be achieved by looking through a lens of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. I'm proud of our work together to launch the Black Student & Family Task Force, a partnership between PUSD, the African American Parent Council, and Equation2Success.

- We continue to explore ways to celebrate the reclassification of our English Learners.
- We are committed to opening more doors for students with disabilities to be educated with typical peers.
- We strive to create stable environments for our foster youth and families in transition.
- We will support global citizenship for all students through signature and magnet programs such as Dual Immersion, World Language, International Bachelorette, STEM, STEAM, Arts, and premier college and career pathways.

We must ensure that all students are prepared to thrive in a fast-changing world and all students can become productive members of their community, providing choices to attend college, enter apprenticeships, join the workforce, or pursue other paths.

Thank you for accompanying me on this journey. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your Interim Superintendent and to partner with you to move PUSD forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth J. Blanco".

Elizabeth J. Blanco, Ed.D.  
Interim Superintendent

1

## MISSION

Pasadena Unified School District prepares students for success in an ever-evolving world. We are committed to cultural responsiveness and academic excellence.

2

## VISION

We will transform education to empower students to succeed.

3

## VALUES

Our students come first. Our decisions are driven by what is best for them. Our policies, programs, and behaviors are based on:

### CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Our behaviors, policies, and programs affirm the worth and personal dignity of all students, employees, and community members. We foster a climate of civility, collegiality, tolerance, and reasoned debate, embracing our diversity as a strength that adds vibrancy and creativity to our perspectives, deliberations, and decisions.

### EQUITY

We believe that every child is equally entitled to high-quality education and that different needs require different levels of resources to enable all children to achieve their full potential.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our actions, decisions, and outcomes. We are committed to continuous improvement and use evidence-based approaches to identify improvements that support student success. We make information accessible and our decisions openly.

### COLLABORATION

We value the participation of parents, students, and the community in all aspects of PUSD. We actively seek mutually-beneficial partnerships with people and organizations. We encourage diverse input and differing opinions.

### FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

We maintain public trust by providing high-quality services and by using our resources prudently, efficiently, and equitably. Preserving the longer-term financial viability of the district is always a key factor in our decisions.

# PUTTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN INTO ACTION



IMAGINE

PUSD 2028 STRATEGIC PLAN

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# ALIGNED MEASURES OF SUCCESS



## Strategic Plan Pillar 5

Purposeful Collaboration with Families and Communities to Increase Trust

**Goal:** Listening to the community and learning about strengths, challenges, and strategies for improvement

Status: **COMPLETED**

### What We Did

#### *Listening, Learning & Promoting a Culture of "With"*

The 100-Day Plan launched July 1, 2023 with a "Listening & Learning Tour." The tour, which concluded October 11, 2023, launched the new school year with a twofold purpose:

- to promote a culture "with" so that the students, staff, families, and communities of Pasadena, Altadena, and Sierra Madre feel included and valued and part of PUSD; and
- to get a first-hand understanding of their experiences at schools and in our District.

Between July 1, 2023, and October 11, 2023, we were privileged to meet with hundreds of students, families/caregivers, certificated and classified employees, school and district administrators, labor partner leaders, parent leaders and groups, other educational partners, elected and appointed officials, civic leaders, clergy, volunteers, and neighbors. To hear their thoughts, experiences, and hopes for the children of PUSD was genuinely moving.

Every meeting was grounded in the belief that every person's voice matters. Each gathering was centered on our district's commitment to including and engaging every group represented in our schools and community.

We convened student focus groups and had coffee and doughnuts with the faculty and staff of every school, along with central office departments. We attended parent group meetings, held community town halls, one-on-one interviews with civic leaders, and a series of workshops for the Special Education community, and intentionally heightened the participation of district leaders in school and community events and celebrations.



At each meeting, we shared the district's newly adopted mission, vision, and values. We also created the means for individuals to provide comments during, before, and after each session. Everyone was asked to consider PUSD's strengths, challenges, and strategies for improvement. Data on feedback was collected and has informed our decision-making.

Participating in honest and thoughtful conversations about public education is never easy, and I want to especially thank students, employees, parents, and educational partners for participating in this journey of learning.

Thanks to you, we have greater insight into what you value in PUSD and what will benefit from our continuous improvement. Your participation highlighted the collective impact we can have on our students.

A special thanks to:

#### **PUSD Parent Groups**

- African American Parent Council (AAPC)
- Community Advisory Council (CAC)
- District English Language Advisory Council (DELAC)
- Foster Youth Council (FY Council)
- Local Control and Accountability Plan Parent Advisory Committee (LCAP PAC)
- Parent Leader Network
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

#### **Elected Officials**

- Elected Officials from the Federal, County, and City governments that represent and support the cities that encompass PUSD

And many others in the PUSD community who attended town halls and completed the survey.

#### **Community Partners**

- Boys and Girls Club
- Clergy Community Coalition (CCC)
- Charter School Leaders
- Collaborate PASadena
- College Access Plan (CAP)
- Day One
- Families Forward
- Local University and Colleges Partners: Cal-State Los Angeles, Pacific Oaks, Pasadena City College
- Pasadena/Altadena Coalition of Transformative Leaders (PACTL)
- Pasadena Community Foundation
- Pasadena Educational Foundation (PEF)
- Pasadena Educational Network (PEN)
- Tournament of Roses
- Western Justice Center

#### **Labor Partners**

- California School Employees Association, Pasadena Chapter 434 (CSEA)
- United Teachers of Pasadena (UTP)
- Teamsters Local 911
- Pasadena Association of College and Career Technical Educators (PACTE)
- Pasadena School Administrators Association (APSA)





# A SNAPSHOT: BY THE NUMBERS

- 95 **Listening & Learning sessions**
- 23 School visits/coffee & doughnuts with teachers & staff
- 20 Division/department visits
- 25 Meetings with district parent leaders, community & parent network, non-profit organizations, university and college leaders and charter school partners
- 5 Student focus groups including ASB, alternative education, Student Think Tank
- 4 Labor partner meetings
- 5 Town halls and community events
- 13 Meetings with federal, state, county and city officials
- 650 Individuals attended listening sessions at schools & gave verbal feedback
- 149 Survey/feedback responses
  - 21% Students
  - 38% Certificated Employees
  - 17% Classified Employees
  - 12% Families/Caregivers
  - 12% Administrators

# WHAT WE LEARNED

Our community shared their perceptions of the strengths, challenges, and strategies for improvement. PUSD leaders are utilizing this data to develop the implementation plans for the newly adopted strategic plan Imagine PUSD 2028.

## Major Themes

- Promoting a culture of “with” for the communities of Pasadena, Altadena & Sierra Madre and among all PUSD employees results in working together towards shared goals
- Appreciation for the visibility of the Superintendent and the Superintendent’s Leadership Team (SLT)
- Building trusting relationships provides meaningful connections to meet parent and family needs
- Importance of accessible communication and conversations about the plans and decisions that impact children and schools
- School facilities impact student learning
- Employees deserve competitive wages. 52% of employees live outside of PUSD because of housing costs
- Renewed focus on services for students with disabilities and students furthest from opportunity
- Enrollment is impacted by housing crisis, cost of living, and declining birth rates
- PUSD is a proud family of educators and community members. Attending or working in PUSD is a multigenerational tradition, with many counting grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren among the students and employees of the district
- Appreciation of new strategies to address Academic and Social Emotional Learning for students (Professional Development, Professional Learning Communities, new curriculum for English Language Development and English Language Arts; Wellness Teachers)
- Operational efficiency impacts morale and the operation of school campuses

# WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

- Amplify the culture of “with” through the implementation of new engagement structures
- Foster a culture of collaboration that embraces the power of “with”

## **New Engagement Structures**

**Strategic Plan Roadmap Advisory Committee:** A committee dedicated to shaping the roadmap of PUSD’s new Strategic Plan, that ensuring a diverse range of perspectives contribute to our future direction

### **Superintendent Leadership Team Meetings at School Sites:**

Weekly leadership discussions happen at the heart of our work: on school campuses. This fosters a close and immediate connection between policy and realities on the ground.

### **Increase Central Office Presence at School Sites (Starting in 2024):**

Beginning in January 2024, central office departments will have an increased presence at school sites, promoting accessibility and open communication.

### **New Parent Leaders Network:**

A dynamic network for parents and community members eager to delve into our plans for student achievement, providing valuable insights and fostering stronger partnerships.

### **Inclusive Development of Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) Development:**

District leaders are committed to involving parents, staff, and students in the evaluation and development of the new LCAP, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach with focus on academics, student wellness and operational efficiency.

### **Diverse Communication Channels:**

Expansion of communication opportunities and formats with staff, labor partners, and community.

### **Empowering the Student Voice:**

Building on our commitment to elevate the voice of students, PUSD has established student representation on the Board of Education that intentionally includes the student voice in crucial decision-making.

# WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

## Foster a culture of collaboration: the power of "with"

To ensure that implementing the Strategic Plan is equitable, inclusive, and transparent, and builds on the best practices and lessons learned during the Plan's development, we formed a Roadmap Navigation Team (RNT) to help guide and align the process.

We also convened a Roadmap Advisory Committee (RAC) that includes labor partners to help communicate and inform planning in the 2023-2024 school year.

Together, we embarked on a journey of collaboration, transparency, and inclusivity.

The culture of "with" is not just a philosophy but a way of life in our educational community.

## Year 1 Actions

- Training for community assistants and community advocates on sustainable community school models to support district-wide practices in the long term
- Establishment of multilingual and multimodal parent leadership training and an education calendar to promote increased awareness of PUSD services and shared decision-making between parents/caregivers and school staff
- Promotion of varied and ongoing events that honor primary languages and cultures and draw engagement among PUSD's diverse communities
- Improve and deepen communication and outreach with current and prospective students, employees, families, and communities

## Strategic Plan Pillar 5

*Purposeful  
Collaboration with  
Families and  
Communities to  
Increase Trust*

## Strategic Plan

### PILLAR 1

#### Learner-focused Instruction

*Instruction that meets the needs of our diverse learners and prepares them to be ready for college, career, and life as contributing members of their community*

**Goal:** Collaborate with school and department leaders to use data to inform decisions and conduct internal evaluations.

**Status:** Completed

#### What We Did

In preparation for the launch of the new year, the Interim Superintendent and central office academic team leaders completed an initial review and analysis of PUSD data. We examined a variety of data sources, noting trends, patterns, and areas for celebration and improvement.

#### Data Dive

Before the start of the new school year, we convened principals, department administrators, and the Superintendent's Team Leadership for a three-day "Data Dive" into the most currently available data on student and school performance. This included the preliminary results of the 2022-2023 California Assessment Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).

The dive into data included:

**Street Data:** The convening kicked off with a presentation on the street data method that looks at data "from the student up—with classrooms, schools, and systems built around students' brilliance, cultural wealth, and intellectual potential." Participants each received the book *Street Data*, by Shane Safir and Jamila Dugan. The street data model considers three levels:

- Satellite data: State test scores, graduation rates, suspensions, attendance
- Map data: student and family surveys, common assessments, running records
- Street data: 1-1 student interviews, focus groups/panels, classroom observations, student work

**Equity Analysis:** including PUSD's Litmus Test; the formation of the PUSD Black Student Family Task Force; anti-racist training; and hiring practices

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

**LCAP, Department and School Plans:** A review through the lenses of both continuous improvement and compliance

**Fiscal Analysis:** Reviewed unaudited actuals and multi-year projections and the persistent structural deficit in the budget.

## What We Learned

### Achievement trends as reported by PUSD’s data team

- District student groups with SED and Language Fluency status generally trend the same as California year-to-year
- Rising district averages also raise student group averages, yet do not close the performance gap between groups
- A-G completion rates for SED students were trending upward until 2021 – and then stalled. There were similar results among program groups. Hispanic/Latino students’ A-G completion rates have persistently remained below the overall district average while Black/African American students’ A-G completion rates have begun to trend higher than the district average beginning in 2022-2023.
- Grade 3 outperforms both the state and L.A. County on English Language Arts (ELA). The percentage of students in the Exceed (27.6%) and Met (20.7%) categories are higher than the county and state. (SBAC)
- Grade 3 outperforms the county and state on math. The most pronounced difference is in the “Met Standard” (27.4% vs 24.4% vs 24.3%). PUSD has lower percentages of students in the “nearly met” and “not met” categories (52% vs 55.4% vs 56.6%). (SBAC)
- Grade 4 proficiency rates in math (38.8%) & ELA (44.3%) are comparable to the state and county. (SBAC)

## GLOSSARY

### SED

Socio-Economically Disadvantaged

### SBAC

Smarter Balanced Assessment System

### A-G

Courses required for state universities

### ELA

English Language Arts

### SWD

Students with Disabilities

### CAASPP

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

### LACOE

Los Angeles County Office of Education

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

- Of Grade 4 students who are not meeting or exceeding standards, a smaller percentage are in the lowest performance level (“standard not met”) when compared to the county and state (34.6% vs 35.9% vs 35.9%). (SBAC)
- Grade 5 math proficiency rates for “exceed standard” are higher than the county (17.1% vs 16.9%). (SBAC)
- In Grade 5, there is significant “tilting.” The percentage of Grade 5 students in “Standard Not Met” (47.28%) is almost 4% higher than the county and 4.2% higher than the state. Results were similar in ELA. (SBAC)
- In nearly every grade from grades 6-8, the percentage of students in “Exceeding Standard” is consistently higher than the percentage of students in L.A. County for both math and ELA.

Meanwhile, the inflation of the percentage of students who are “standard not met,” the lowest performance level on SBAC, as they rise through grade levels suggests two things:

1. Students who were most impacted by unfinished learning are still showing effects despite the return to in-person learning; and
2. The overall instructional model tends to generate students who are “exceeding standard” at rates above L.A. County, although this is not the outcome for the vast majority of students.

## Climate and Engagement

- Suspension rates for 2021-2022 (3.4%) are lower than trend-level data between 2015-16 and 2018-19, when the suspension rate was about 4.6%.
- African American students experience a suspension rate of 8.4%. Among non-African-American students, the rate is 2.7%;
- Among Foster Youth, the suspension rate was 20.4%. The rate was 2.9% for students not living in foster care;
- Among Students with Disabilities (SWD), 7.0% were suspended at least once versus 2.6% of non-SWD students

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

## Attendance

While chronic absentee rates are expected to improve in 2022-2023:

- According to trend data leading up to the 2021-2022 school year, chronic absenteeism rates for SED students was double that of non-SED students (41.3% vs 19.1%)
- This "gap" was second only to Foster Youth (64.3%) versus non-Foster Youth (33.8%)
- Gaps among race/ethnicity groups indicate that the biggest gap is between Hispanic/Latino students and other groups in 2021-2022 (a gap of 3.5% to 14.2%)

## Enrollment Trends

From a review of enrollment trends based on DataQuest from the California Department of Education, we observed the following:

- The average decline (year-over-year across seven years) was 2.6%
- African American student enrollment year-to-year average enrollment is declining even faster
- White student enrollment was fairly stable - and then saw a sudden shift in the last three years "above district average decline"
- The Two or More Races student group was the only one with a consistent "average increase" year-to-year
- The Hispanic/Latino student group has a slightly higher year-to-year average decline but is not significantly different (2.61% district vs 3.17% Hispanic/Latino)
- It is difficult to forecast enrollment after a significant event like the pandemic.
- Enrollment trends become discernible and predictable after over 3-4 years

PUSD's census day reports show a decline of 2.3% in enrollment. This decline in enrollment is much lower than projected by Davis Demographics.

## Equity Analysis

PUSD is building on its work of ensuring growth for students with the greatest needs, particularly those from historically marginalized groups (African American, Latino, and Emergent multilingual learners).

- While student achievement after the pandemic has slumped both nationwide and in California, results are encouraging in PUSD, according to results from the two most recent CAASPP English Language Arts and Math assessments. ELA and Math proficiency rates remained relatively stable across PUSD, in contrast to a decline at the state level and across multiple school districts.



# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

- There is a strong appreciation by educators and the community for PUSD's focus on addressing disparities in student achievement, particularly for students with special needs, Black Students, English learners, Foster Youth, and LGBTQ+ students and their families.
- Gathering street data requires deep listening, keen observation, and trust. Street-level data helps us determine the root causes of our equity challenges and shape our next moves in a thoughtful, intentional way.

## Fiscal Analysis

- The First Interim financial report was developed with a commitment from the Superintendent's Leadership Team to ensure that PUSD remains fiscally stable. This report was presented to the Board of Education and public with a positive certification for PUSD. With Board approval, the report was submitted to the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) in December 2023.
- The First Interim report covers the period from July 1 through October 31 each fiscal year, is approved by the Board, and submitted to the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) for review. The report is a snapshot in time of the District's revenue and expenditure forecasts for the current fiscal year as well as a projection of the two subsequent fiscal years.
- Analysis of the data provided to LACOE indicated that the District will be able to meet its financial obligations for the current fiscal year and the subsequent two fiscal years. PUSD was granted a positive certification, with recommendations to address the district's ongoing structural budget deficit.
- During the review of the 2023-24 First Interim, the COE noted that the District is taking proactive measures to address deficit spending that Districts across the State are facing as a result of increased costs for services and programs and declining enrollment compounded with the loss of one time Federal COVID funds.

## What We Will Do Next

- Based on feedback from participants, we will continue to provide opportunities for structured Data Dives with Principals and the District Leadership Network to review student performance data: Interim benchmarks Achievement, Graduation, Enrollment, College and Careers, CAASPP, Attendance, SchoolClimate, Social-Emotional Learning, California Healthy Kids Survey, Teacher Assignment, School Accountability Report Cards, and Facilities Inspection Tool Reports.

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

- The relationship between the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), Department Plans, and School Plans for Student Achievement (SPSA) has been strengthened through the work of the Strategic Plan Roadmap Advisory Committee, District Leadership Network, and monthly reviews of School Plans.
- These three channels provide opportunities for educational partners and District staff to review the Strategic Plan, department programs, and school-level activities; engage with each other as critical thought partners to revise, refine, and monitor impacts on student outcomes; and inform interactive cycles of continuous improvement and accountability.
- We are continuing the work of the Superintendent's Enrollment Committee and implementing recommendations such as a new website, an aggressive marketing campaign, hosting public conversations, increasing the district's presence at community events, and focusing on recruiting families to the district's early education programs.
- We recognize the importance of reviewing and analyzing enrollment trends for impact across all the facets of our district.
- How we communicate with our constituencies and how we plan - from staffing projections, fiscal analysis, to how we develop, implement, and evaluate the LCAP, Department Plans, and SPSAs - has an impact on enrollment.

## Strategic Plan

### PILLAR 1

#### **Learner-focused Instruction**

*Instruction that meets the needs of our diverse learners and prepares them to be ready for college, career, and life as contributing members of their community*

**Goal:** Establish plans for internal and external monitoring and evaluation of instructional support and intervention systems.

**Status:** Completed and ongoing

#### **What We Did**

##### **Ensured targeted, data-driven support to increase student achievement for students furthest from opportunity**

- Expanded school support with Behavior & Wellness Coaches and English Language Development Resource Coaches to influence student outcomes and provide coordinated support for students
- Collaborative work between the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) team, district-level departments, LEARNs staff, schools' Instructional Leadership Teams, and teachers identifies students who would benefit from targeted after school support

##### **Monitored Literacy and Math implementation aligned to curriculum audits**

- Focused on students furthest from opportunity through work done with TNTP as part of the Middle Grades Math Implementation study which has already influenced the district's approach to revising its early literacy instruction and curriculum implementation
- Simultaneous implementation of strategies for professional development on welcoming and inclusive learning spaces as part of tier 1 actions to support positive student behaviors

##### **Evaluated the status of inclusive practices**

- Early Childhood Education and Special Education departments launched the **Embedded Instruction Pilot Program** in August 2023
- Special Education enlisted the support of Stetson & Associates to advance opportunities for inclusive practices at two sites

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

## **Monitored implementation Multi-Tiered System of Supports - Intentional Intervention**

- Implemented the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) to provide academic and behavioral strategies and support for students with varying needs

## **Monitored implementation of the Educational Master Plan**

- Engaging in actual education specifications in the Measure O bond program and educational strategies through the development of the Strategic Plan Roadmap

## **What We Learned**

Implementing strong instructional practices paired with intense classroom culture-building habits that establish welcoming environments for all students lead to increased gains in student learning ensure equitable access to the curriculum for all students, and motivate students to fully engage in school activities every day

These promising outcomes can be attributed in part to the targeted work done by district and school staff. Some examples of this work include:

- Implementing shifts in middle school math instruction with our partners at TNTP
- Building professional learning communities of practices within the school day; and,
- Improving reading skills in the early grades through a focus on phonics and phonemic awareness

## **Attendance**

We have also made significant inroads to reduce chronic student absenteeism, especially among students of color. Our goal is to continue using these strategies and focus on increasing students' sense of belonging and engagement at school.

## **Attendance Matters for R.E.A.L. Campaign**

In September 2023, the Board approved PUSD's first attendance awareness resolution, which included the launch of the Home Visit Toolkit for schools and the Attendance Matters for R.E.A.L. campaign.

## **Results:**

- October 2023 district-wide attendance rate was 94%, less than 1% higher than October 2022 (93.43%)
- PUSD's chronic absenteeism rate is currently 16.84%, approximately 4.5% lower than the same time last year (21.30%). However, it continues to be above its pre-pandemic levels.

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

Schools with the most significant increases in attendance:

- Rose City High School, +3.32%
- Madison Elementary School, +3.19%
- John Muir Early College Magnet High School, +1.97%
- Don Benito Fundamental Elementary School, +1.89%

*Source: PUSD Suspension and Attendance Data Report, Nov 17, 2023*

## Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

MTSS provides academic and behavioral strategies and support for students with varying needs.

- The MTSS framework was added to Clever and Canvas platforms in August 2023
- The Alternatives to Suspension Resource Guide was developed for use by staff
- Central office convened two district-wide MTSS Action Team meetings

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) team works collaboratively with district-level departments, LEARNs staff, the schools' Instructional Leadership Team, and teachers to identify students who would benefit from targeted after-school support.

Designing a targeted curriculum includes a review of iReady data and recommendations from teachers and youth leaders to provide content that addresses individual student needs. Data collected throughout the year from iReady benchmarks will be used to gauge whether students are mastering the skills they need to grow in math and reading skills.

## Embedded Instruction Program

Embedded instruction is an evidence-based approach to instruction in early education for children with individualized education programs (IEP). Children are in an inclusive classroom, with early childhood education teacher and special education specialist co-teaching and collaborating to provide instruction to students, students with and without an IEP.

The embedded instruction program is designed to meet the specialized needs of students in the classroom while providing integrated foundational language development, fine motor, and social skills to all students in the classroom. Students are supported by speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and behavior specialists.

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

## What We Will Do Next

### Pillar 1: Learner Focused Instruction

#### Year 1 Actions:

- Continued Literacy Training series on best practices in reading development, with a particular focus in early grades levels for foundations, and in upper grades/secondary on bridging reading gaps. It includes training on indicators of dyslexia and providing instructional support
- Strengthened math instruction through expansion of “Effective Implementation” series on best practices in math instruction, with a particular focus on access points for all learners, and increased discourse and student talk
- Targeted support of emergent multilingual students’ progress and reclassification, including support staff, tools for instruction, data analysis, and communication
- Expanded opportunities to complete graduation and/or college readiness credits through accessible instructional materials and additional credit recovery options year-round
- Developing cultural empathy and relevance through the expansion of Ethnic Studies course options. This includes semester-long Social Studies electives and the integration of Ethnic Studies principles into partner subject areas such as English Language Arts.

### Pillar 3: Quality Learning Environment

#### Year 1 Actions

- Sites are participating in a campus evaluation to ensure that facilities and grounds are in optimal condition
- All PUSD sites have Response to Intervention (RTI) Wellness RTI Behavior Teachers and/or coaches
- Expanding STARS rooms in secondary schools to serve Youth in Foster Care (YIFC). These spaces are supported by the YIFC team as well as Foster Youth Advocates throughout the district
- Based on the number of referrals in 2022-2023, mental health services is being expanded to meet the needs of more students
- Student training on peer mediation training and restorative practices will be provided to all secondary schools starting in 2025-2029, then expanding to all schools within the next five years
- Embedded instruction in preschool programs and two pilot Transitional Kindergarten classes
- Inclusion programs expanded at select sites

## Strategic Plan PILLAR 2

### Outstanding and Respected Employees

*Employees are supported to be culturally competent, inclusive, and thrive within a culture of excellence.*

**Goal:** Increase operational effectiveness and efficiency to ensure systems & operations in Human Resources, Innovative Technology Services, Maintenance and Operations, and Business Services demonstrate excellence in customer service and support student achievement.

**Status:** In progress

### What We Did

The 2023-28 Strategic Plan adopted by the Board of Education in June 2023 provided an initial five-year framework for the District's strategic directions, focus areas and outcomes.

In August, we convened a Roadmap Advisory Committee (RAC) to examine, align with the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), and provide a public perspective to the District Leadership Network (DLN) for implementation.

- **RAC** will provide input on the roadmap presentational artifacts (both digital and in print) from a public perspective and help communicate its work.
- **DLN** will develop actions influenced by input from the RAC that will be part of the Strategic Plan Roadmap, as well as actions for each goal in the LCAP. Starting in November, student representatives began to serve on both the RAC and LCAP Parent Advisory Committee (PAC).

We found that participation in shared leadership structures like the RAC, Community Schools Advisory Council, and the new Career Technical Education (CTE) union are crucial in retaining high-quality, culturally competent employees who feel valued. We are working to address unconscious biases by restructuring the District's teacher induction program and embedding protocols in the interview process in collaboration with PUSD's Office of Institutional Equity.

**On-Site, On Hand:** In the initial 100-days, we reorganized the Executive Leadership Team into the Superintendent Leadership Team (SLT), flattening the structure of the team to bring in essential voices and to be more responsive and accountable in leading the district's academic and operational functions. To ensure listening from "from the student up" approach of street data, SLT as a group visits schools, meets with the school principals and leadership teams, and conducts job-alike "walkabouts". This pairs the Facilities Director with the head custodian, for example, and the Chief Academic Officer with instructional coaches and the principal.

After reviewing and analyzing recent audit reports on the Human Resources and Business Services departments, we are instituting a new system to monitor goals and actions - in alignment with and made transparent through the LCAP and strategic planning processes. The SLT will work cohesively to achieve, attract, and retain culturally competent and talented employees; plan for the anticipated major shifts in revenue; and create accountable and transparent operational systems.

# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

## What We Learned

- Responses to the 100-Day Plan survey pointed to the need for the District to “provide standard operating procedures for employees that are organized, written, and shared consistently with employees” as well as more opportunities to collaborate across departments and create more of a culture of customer service.
- Increased collaboration between Human Resources and Fiscal Service will produce more current and accurate staffing and budget reports, and training and deployment of new Position Control systems for Human Resources and payroll.
- To capitalize on the momentum created by the ITS Department’s ability to rise to the challenges of COVID-19, we must implement recommendations of the 2021 audit. It is essential that we strengthen the District’s technology infrastructure, cybersecurity, and data reporting. We must also develop a strategic plan for technology implementation, funding, and evaluation that provides direction for decision-making on administrative and instructional technology and is informed by our educational partners.
- The Board of Education’s survey to prioritize schools to draft the five-year Bond Program informed the next steps for both the implementation of the District’s Facilities Master Plan and the management of PUSD’s assets.

## What We Will Do Next

- Continue the Strategic Plan roadmapping process aligned to the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). Communicate the ongoing work. Include student representation on both RAC and LCAP PAC.
- Implement strategies to attract, train, and retain culturally competent and talented employees.
- Implement the Facilities Master Plan. Build capacity through an Asset Management Plan that thoroughly researches district property, conducts a cost/benefit analysis for joint occupancy, considers property exchanges, workforce housing, waivers, and other revenue-generating activities.
- Implement monitoring systems to include the realignment of LCAP metrics to the Strategic Plan and the Educational Master Plan.
- Implement standardized documentation of standard operating procedures with a plan for engagement/input by practitioners, dissemination, training, and online access.
- Transition of Educational Technology functions to the Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development (CIPD) department for a tighter through-line between Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA) and school tech leads (supplemental) that supports good instruction. This focuses the ITS Department on operational issues, including the accuracy of Aries data and the SST documentation process.



# LEADING THE TRANSFORMATION

## What We Will Do Next

### Pillar 4: Effective, Responsive, and Accountable Organization

#### Year 1 Actions:

- Establish a consistent method of developing and posting information and budget reports that are understandable by the Board, families, and broader community
- Establish systems to monitor initiatives in PUSD to ensure that each has a clear objective, outcomes, and ongoing implementation and summative evaluations
- Define processes to embed family engagement in every department plan, with a focus on engaging families with diverse needs, regular opportunities for two-way communication, and promoting shared decision-making
- Formalize the Continuous Improvement system in PUSD using the Community School Model and the development of the District's MTSS plan as a foundational component

### Pillar 2: Outstanding and Respected Employees

#### Year 1 Actions

- Continue anti-racist training to build critical conscientiousness and culturally responsive teaching and pedagogy
- Integrate training on positive behavior intervention and support and restorative justice practices into teacher induction and mentoring programs. Include the same in intentional recruitment, hiring, and onboarding of new employees
- Continue creating a collaborative working environment with the resources to support this work

# COMMUNICATING

## Strategic Plan PILLAR 5

### **Purposeful Collaboration with Families and Communities to Increase Trust**

*The District values and works with our partners on behalf of our students*

**Goal:** Engage positively with the Board, staff, students, parents/caregivers, and community leaders.

**Status:** Completed

### **What We Did**

The Listening and Learning tour underscored the importance of communication in its many facets.

We cultivated a welcoming open-door policy for all employees and student voices. I attended Board Committee meetings and fostered positive relationships with the Board of Education, including regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings with individual members.

To ensure that we are hearing from families with the greatest needs, we created more avenues and tested new strategies for reciprocal communication, including Parent Cafés for hard-to-reach families, two Town Halls, and a series of Appreciative Inquiry sessions for parents/caregivers of students with special needs.

### **Through an established meeting structure, we also**

- Created conditions for collaborative communication with the Board, labor partners, and elected and appointed officials
- Developed a heat operations and communications plan to standardize rapid response to rising temperatures
- Conducted a Superintendent Leadership Team retreat using Gallup Strengthsfinder to build connections and strengthen the team approach

### **Activities to engage and inform the District's diverse communities**

- Community-building events such as the annual staff school year kick off event that recognized employees of the year; town halls, and planning for a public engagement event on Altadena schools
- Support goals and sponsor the Enrollment Committee
- Internal communications, the importance of developing positive, respectful, professional, and collaborative relationships - with the Board of Education, labor partners, employees, parents/families/caregivers, and students at the forefront
- Expanded a crisis communication plan that was developed in collaboration with district departments.
- Intentionally produced content in English and Spanish, with capacity to translate into other languages. Held a press conference with ASL interpretation.

# COMMUNICATING

- Expanded external and internal communication with weekly multimedia newsletters in English and Spanish, with capacity for translation to multiple languages
- Increased social media content, media relations (press releases), and outreach
- Expanded campaigns and public outreach for PreK, TK, and expanded learning through purchased media and direct mail, along with earned media placements
- Created visual and editorial style guides to serve as a reference for district employees and build brand awareness and, with time, trust
- Increased PUSD representation in community meetings, events, festivals, and celebrations
- Established a system to audit and update district and school websites regularly
- Designed new district and school websites with the engagement of students, parents/caregivers, teachers, administrators, community and following industry practices. Launch March 2024
- Amplified communication with hard-to-reach families to ensure that they receive and understand important information from PUSD
- Developing a multi-year plan to repair and upgrade equipment for the District's television channel
- Invested in industry-grade media management to catalog video, photos, and other content to increase, ensure statutory compliance, and improve quality

## What We Will Do Next

- Complete and implement a comprehensive district communication plan that integrates the pillars, goals, and actions of Imagine 2023-2028, PUSD's Strategic Plan.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

The development of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) for the next three years - 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28 - will be guided by pillars, goals, and vision of Imagine 2023-2028, PUSD's strategic plan.

## Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)

Part of California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), the LCAP is a three-year, district-level plan updated annually. The plan describes the district's key goals for students as well as the specific actions (with expenditures) the district will take to achieve the goals and the means (metrics) used to measure progress.

The LCAP addresses the needs of all students, including specific student groups, and all California school districts must specifically address English learners, foster youth, and low-income students. In addition, the LCAP must address the state's eight priority areas which include student academic achievement, school climate, student access to a broad curriculum, and parent engagement. School districts may also identify their local priorities.

The state advises a continuous improvement approach with **root cause analyses** and the **engagement of educational partners** to develop a spending plan that aligns with these academic priorities.

"Educational partners" are groups that school districts are required to engage in developing the LCAP, and must include teachers, principals, administrators, other school personnel, local labor bargaining units, parents/guardians, and students.

We value your voice. Please join us!

# ELIZABETH J. BLANCO, ED.D

## INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Elizabeth J. Blanco takes immense pride in her family, celebrating 31 years of marriage and cherishing the roles of mother to six children, grandmother to thirteen, and great-grandmother to seven. Her lifelong passion for social justice has been nurtured by her personal experiences and those of her children.

With over 30 years of dedicated service in public education, Dr. Blanco’s leadership embodies the principles of a servant leader. Prior to her appointment as Interim Superintendent. She was the Deputy Superintendent for the Pasadena Unified School District, holding a prominent position on the Superintendent’s Cabinet, where she spearheaded systemic change to foster equity, access, and enhanced student achievement. As a trailblazer, Dr. Blanco oversaw the Academics Division, encompassing Pre-K-12 instruction, special education, multilingual programs, arts, gifted education, and college and career initiatives.

Dr. Blanco’s accomplishments have earned her recognition, being named Educator of the Year by the esteemed Association of California School Administrators. An ardent mentor, she generously shares her expertise to nurture aspiring administrators.

Her academic achievements are equally impressive, holding an Ed.D. in Urban Educational Leadership from the prestigious University of Southern California. She further earned Master’s degrees in Educational Administration and Special Education from California State University, Los Angeles, along with a Bachelor’s degree in Child Development from the same institution.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Dr. Blanco actively contributes to her community as an officer on the Board of Directors at Moreton Place. Drawing on her diverse experiences as a wife, mother, civic leader, and public educator, she strives to ensure equitable decision-making, financial stability, and a safe environment for all homeowners.

Dr. Blanco’s commitment to equity extends to her engagement with the Pacific Oaks College Advisory Board, where she plays a vital role in the Transformation Grant work alongside Branch Education Alliance. She remains resolute in her mission to create equal opportunities for students and her community, driven by her unwavering dedication to a just and inclusive society.

