

2017 - Lou Ella Kleinz Excellence In Governance Award - Nomination Form : Entry # 12334

District:

Pendergast Elementary

Select One:

ESD

District Address:

3802 N. 91st Avenue
 Phoenix, Arizona 85037
 United States
[Map It](#)

Student Enrollment:

10,200

Number of Schools in District:

Twelve

Names of Board Members:

First:	Last:	Title:
Jose	Arenas	President
Senator Martin	Quezada	Vice-president
Hilda	Ortega-Rosales	Member
Ruben	Gutierrez	Member
Susan	Serin	Member

Describe how the school board fosters an environment in which the student, as a whole person, can flourish.

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In 1885, the Pendergast School District was established in a farming community serving 100 students in one school. The educational philosophy was firmly rooted in the belief that the school board, community, staff and parents must act as a "family," providing the academic, social and emotional support necessary to nurture capable, independent young minds. Now, the District provides excellent educational opportunities for approximately 10,200 preschool through eighth grade students on twelve campuses. Each school has its own unique and innovative programs designed to meet individual needs of the whole child and ensure student success. PESD has seventy-nine percent free and reduced lunch and eighty-eight percent diversity so; the Board works collaboratively with the Administration to focus on strong academic achievement and focused schools. All schools all are committed to safe, secure and bully-free campuses and the district has instituted the Boys Town Well Managed Schools program and the Be Kind Character Education Program that is taught in each grade daily. The focus of the programs is on citizenship, character, and creating campuses that are kind, respectful and positive. The programs encourage students to be responsible for their own actions and rewards the efforts of a well-managed campus for all students.

The District is keenly focused on educating the "whole child" through research-based academics, fine arts, physical education, technology, extra-curricular programs and a full-time counselor on each campus. Leadership opportunities are encouraged for students at each grade level that include clubs, organizations, student government and community service. The district motto is Pendergast "BEE"-lieves in you with the bee as the symbol of "You can bee anything you set your mind to bee." According to PESD Board member Hilda Ortega-Rosales, "At the end of the day there are two things that are most important as far as the expectations of the Board and that is to revolve around students and their success. Collaboration among the Board is critical, so as a team, we are setting the standards of buying into our mission, goals and objectives and being aligned and committed to those we serve. Every effort is made to give the District's leader empowerment to lead the organization through its strategies and initiatives to realize the mission of the District of "empowering excellence and success." To this end, achievement has increased, along with parent and student satisfaction and the goal for every school to be an "A" label from the Arizona Department of Education. The Board not only sets policy, it also is responsible for setting the standards for how a district works in conjunction with the staff, students, families and the communities it serves. Pendergast has become an award-winning, premier district in the West Valley for its commitment, expectations and excellence in programs.

Describe how your school board demonstrates the value of continuous improvement through district goal setting and monitoring.

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The Board and Administration set forth a collaborative goal with the superintendent with a new vision, mission, beliefs and goals to focus how vital continuous improvement is to student success. Through board action, a committee made up of over 250 students, parents, community members, governing board members, administrators, educators and support staff met throughout the first year to map out the future of PESD with their thinking, planning and believing. The process was designed to ensure everyone's voice was heard. Parents were able to give their feedback through surveys and many participated in the strategic meetings to gather and formulate the strategic plan for the school district.

With the months of planning, the board, administration, staff families and the community are proud of new vision, vision, beliefs and goals that are now embedded and aligned in every area and updated each year as part of the three year plan. The Governing Board approved the plan in its entirety at the May 5, 2015 meeting and everyone is seeing what the future holds for the students, staff, families, businesses and communities in PESD. Each school and department has aligned their goals to those of the strategic plan, there are measurements, and accountability throughout the year and the plans are updated annually or as needed. The outline of the plan is below, most important is the accountability and evaluation measures that occur quarterly with weekly reports to the Board and Administration stressing the benchmarks and milestones that have been achieved. The Strategic Plan consists of the following:

Pendergast Vision:

Empowering Excellence and Success

Mission Statement:

Pendergast School District provides a quality education for all students so they can compete globally in their future endeavors and aspirations.

Belief Statement:

Pendergast sets high expectations! We provide diverse educational experiences for all students to have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities that prepare them for the future.

"We Have High Expectations For All"

Goals:

1. All schools will achieve the "A" label. Pendergast will improve student achievement:
2. Provide differentiated and targeted communication to all stakeholders.
3. Ensure a positive climate and culture for student learning.
4. Utilize financial resources effectively
5. Sustain and enrich technological resources (Hardware, Software, and Infrastructure)
6. Identify and mentor future leaders

Some highlights of the board's focus on continuous improvement in the district with the leadership team includes:

- Community cabinet monthly breakfasts with timely topics, student displaying in the arts, and teaching and learning with an average of 80 - 100 people participating and learning about PESD programs and its partners
- Community forums and Bee-liever Roadshow presentations highlighting school and district improvement efforts
- Budget meetings in each community
- Teacher councils with representation and shared decision-making
- Parent councils, PTO/PTA councils, classified councils
- Parent meetings/luncheons monthly in Spanish and English timely topics with 80-100 parents attending
- Reorganization of departments putting emphasis on classrooms to increase student achievement
- Weekly professional development organized by staff members through Professional Learning Communities

Describe how the school board fosters increased family involvement:

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The Pendergast Elementary School Board promotes family involvement by supporting and engaging the families in many activities at the schools and at the district level. Currently, "Coffee Time" is held each month at each of the schools in Spanish and English. Parents are invited to participate in these get-togethers to meet with the principal, superintendent and board members. The meetings are held to see what the topics of concerns are as well as to update the parents on what is going on at the schools. The coffee time (Cafecito) is a good way for parents to get to know the administrators and school board members.

Each month a free parent luncheon sponsored by community partners takes place at the Pendergast Community Center to discuss topics of interest. Parents have input as to what subjects will be discussed at the luncheon. Several topics discussed at these luncheons have been college preparedness for students and the importance of voting and are presented by community partners such as Expect More Arizona.

The Pendergast District holds a Community Cabinet breakfast monthly. Parents and partners involved in the district are invited to attend. Updates on what is going on at the schools and in the district are presented at the breakfasts that are sponsored by community partners. Additionally topics of concern are also presented to the parents, community and business partners. The district has a Faith community breakfast held quarterly where Faith partners come together to share common goals and investments in the schools. The District school fully participates annually in the Love Our Schools event sponsored by School connect AZ along with Faith partners to focus on school based needs and staff appreciation.

The Pendergast School District Community Education Department as well as the Pendergast Community Center provide education, social and family support through resources and quality programs. These programs are available to meet the diverse needs of the Pendergast District Community. Through the Community Education Department, the Pendergast School District provides a variety of services, which include Early Childhood Education Family Resources, and after school programs as well as extracurricular programs for students. Additionally, PESD is engaging in many opportunities for families to become involved in their children's education including site councils, PTA/PTO's, District Communications Committee, PESD Community Foundation, and family events at the school sites and district including a Color Run this year. Schools are beginning to work on the new concept, with Dr. Maria Paredes from WestEd on Academic Parent/Teacher Teams where parents are trained to work with their students on academic standards as they learn alongside them. All classes, services, meetings and communications are offered in both Spanish and English.

The belief of the Pendergast School District is setting high expectations. "The district provides a diverse education experience for all students to have the knowledge, skills and opportunities that prepare them for the future." The Pendergast School Board knows that promoting, supporting and encouraging parental involvement is an important factor in making sure all children receive a quality education to make them successful, productive adults.

Describe how the school board collaborates with other organizations, such as social agencies and/or community groups to reach its goals:

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The Board believed that PESD needed to look at ways to serve the needs of the West Valley community determined to be a highly underserved population. Supporting the creation of a Pendergast Community Center featuring a Family Resource Center, Family Health Center, Community Education classes for families and afterschool, summer and school break childcare programs. The Pendergast Community Center is a state-of-the-art resource center that is part of the Pendergast Elementary School District and serves families throughout the West Valley. This inclusive facility brings together health and wellness, fitness, social services and educational organizations focused on meeting the comprehensive needs of families.

The center creates a safe and welcoming environment for the community to thrive. The Pendergast School District Community Education Department and the Pendergast Community Center provide education, family and support services by extending the school experience with quality programs and resources to meet the diverse needs of the community. The Pendergast Elementary School District, through a partnership with First Things First, have developed the Pendergast Family Resource Center providing quality, comprehensive, diverse and streamlined services centered on a holistic view of early childhood education with neighborhood outreach as a core component. The Pendergast Family Resource Center is a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high quality outreach program that supports the development, health and education of all Pendergast Elementary School District families and the surrounding community with a focus on families with children birth to age five with resources and assistance all at no cost.

PESD is proud to collaborate with over 50 businesses, agencies and organizations to support students, staff, families and the communities it serves. Partners contribute time, money, in-kind services and specific items for programs for students. At the Staff Kick-off in August this year, partners provided t-shirts for each employee, door prizes, refreshments and a host of on-going support to promote health, wellness. In highlighting a vital partnership in PESD in addition to the Family Resource Center in partnership with First Things First, PESD also partners with the Maricopa Integrated Health System's (MIHS) Pendergast Family Health Center which provides comprehensive preventive and primary care for the entire family. MIHS delivers high quality medical and pediatric dental services at the Family Health Center, located within the Pendergast Community Center. The MIHS Pendergast Family Health Center includes medical and dental exam rooms, laboratory services and a patient waiting area. The center also offers a MIHS financial eligibility specialist to help families connect with health insurance programs.

The Pendergast Family Health Center provides on-site medical services that include immunizations, physicals, dental examinations and treatment of illnesses and injuries. The Health Center's goals are to:

- Keep students well and in school
- Provide affordable healthcare
- Improve family healthcare

The board, administration and community have supported this model of inclusive partnerships. The facility is open for any community group to use and offers classes, fitness and wellness activities, lectures and parent monthly lunches. Additionally, the Board has supported and encouraged the concept of Signature Academies sponsored by businesses and organizations including a Medical Academy sponsored by Maricopa Integrated health Systems, an Architecture Academy sponsored by Orcutt-Winslow Architects, a Sustainable Energy Academy sponsored by the University of Arizona, an Apple Connect School through an Apple grant and a Construction and Building Academy sponsored by GCON, Inc. These businesses and organizations have truly helped the students, staff, families and the community to be invested in the schools and district.

Describe how the school board creates a school community which supports and promotes innovation and high expectations for all:

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This extraordinary Governing Board sees the vision of the district and makes each decision in the best interest of the students. The PESD Board shows how meetings can be teaching and learning opportunities for all. Each member does their homework to come fully prepared and ready to help the district move forward in its initiatives. The Board felt that communication needed to be strategic and varied to meet the needs of the diverse communities. To this end, PESD has revamped its website, and is using social media to communicate with students, staff, families and the communities it serves. A strategic Communications and Marketing plan was created and implemented with a Communications Committee to assist in evaluating this research-based endeavor. Money Talks Budget Resource Guide was created to reinforce transparency and explain where financial resources are used. School and district newsletters are shared internal and externally with business partners paying the costs for printing and mailing in order to keep the community involved and informed. Each board member is active in the community and makes connections to benefit the district and its 10,200 students. Below are highlights of accomplishments in innovations and the leadership on each campus to make them a reality.

- Initiated the College Corps program with student leaders from the Superintendent's Eighth Grade Advisory Council who mentor students in order to be college bound.
- The Spanish/English Dual Language Programs beginning in Preschool through Second Grade.
- The Leader in Me program as teachers integrate 21st Century Career and Leadership skills and an SRP School of Energy on one of the campuses. This program is intended to evaluate, measure, and monitor Energy Usage; and to encourage the implementation of Energy Efficiency behaviors.
- New, innovative programs Preliminary Academic Life Skills (PALS), self-contained program-serving students with multiple disabilities that provides educational support skills so students will become productive members in their community. In addition, Kohl's and Phoenix Children's Hospital are supporting Fit, a running club for students focused on giving kids a chance to be more active.
- Implemented the newly designed Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Academies in Architecture and Design for 6th Grade, Energy and the Environment for 7th grade and Medical and Health Services for eighth Grade students.
- Partnered with Aguila Youth, a program dedicated to the success of each student by providing the best, most complete and up-to-date information, resources and activities that contribute to the overall success of students.
- Featuring the Technology Integration model school through a partnership with Apple and the ConnectED grant to implement a 1:1 technology integration program.
- Offering a Developmental Academic Program, a self-contained, K-8th grade program to meet the needs of special education students within the district.
- Partnering with AARP to bring Experience Corps, an award-winning literacy program utilizing highly trained volunteers age 50-plus, to mentor and tutor students in first through third grade.

The district is focused on continuous improvement and investment in the future of its youth. Leadership and mentoring is present through the BEES Institute (Becoming Extraordinary Effective Stewards) meeting monthly to train a new generation of leaders from PESD and other local school districts. Board members present and share their expertise with the future leaders. Lastly, the District and Board, seeing a need, offered the first and only one of its kind in the West Valley, Speak Up, Stand Up, Save a Life conference for 1,200 people last year at ASU West and this year for 5,000 in partnership with GCU to eradicate bullying, and focus on issue such as suicide prevention, depression and other issues plaguing youth today. All district leaders are involved in this monumental and vital effort.

By checking this box, the school board understands that images of the award-winning board will be used in an audio-visual presentation during the ASBA-ASA Annual Conference.

- Yes!

Name of Submitter:

Nedda Shafir

Title of Submitter: