



Pendergast Selects New Superintendent to Lead District

Dr. Jennifer Cruz will be the new district superintendent and will continue the tradition of excellence

Phoenix, Az. – February 10, 2021 — The [Pendergast](#) board accepted the retirement of Dr. Lily Matos DeBlieux at its February 9, 2021 board meeting and has unanimously selected Dr. Jennifer Cruz as the new superintendent beginning July 1, 2021. Dr. DeBlieux has been with the district for seven years and shares, “I am proud of all the accomplishments of the Pendergast District during my tenure and I know Dr. Cruz will do an excellent job. She embodies our mission of Empowering Excellence and Success in all she does and is highly respected by students, staff, families and the communities we serve. I am proud to be a Pendergast believer! ”

Dr. Cruz has served as the Chief Academic Officer in Pendergast for the past two years and prior to being in the district, she has served in numerous administrative and educational roles in Pendergast and other districts as an assistant superintendent for human resources and administrative leadership, director of innovative academic initiatives, director of systemic partnerships & coach, university professor, manager of federal programs, elementary school principal and teacher.

PESD Board President Jete White describes Dr. Cruz as a, “Growth-oriented, magnetic leader with more than a decade of administrative experience building collaborative teams that excel in achieving organizational strategic goals. This award-winning, educational leader is experienced in the implementation and scaling of challenging instructional innovations at the school and district level. She possesses a clear track record of successfully aligning resources to support the academic success of all students. Furthermore, she is dedicated to creating systems that support employees in reaching their maximum potential to support student growth and achievement. We are excited for the future with Dr. Cruz at the helm.”

Cruz has collaborated with stakeholders to create a Profile of a Graduate based on the districts’ vision of Empowering Excellence and Success. She tasked participants to dream big so the graduates would be ready, willing and able to forge a pathway to life-long learning. As a communicator, she clearly expresses her ideas and engages everyone in feeling valued and worthy through a positive work culture.

-more-

Her character traits of integrity, empathy and perseverance have shown others that no task is insurmountable, especially when working through a pandemic and transitioning to nationally recognized virtual learning platforms. Most impressive is Dr. Cruz's focus on equity in the district, providing training in culturally relevant teaching and learning showing how diversity is a strength.

During her time in PESD, Dr. Cruz' major accomplishments have included department restructuring, reviewing all educational services systems and practices for equity issues, adopting Reading and Math materials for 6th-8th grade students, implementing robust maker space learning opportunities at every school for every student, co-authoring grants including METAL math/engineering STEAM grant, INTEL First Book Grant, grants for internet connectivity and PPE and expanding STEAM academies to all 12 Title I schools. She is a champion for excellence in educational service to the students, staff, families and communities in Pendergast District.