

## **PVPUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION NAMES DR. ALEX CHERNISS AS SUPERINTENDENT**



**PALOS VERDES ESTATES (August 24, 2018)**—The Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District (PVPUSD) Board of Education has named Dr. Alex Cherniss, the superintendent of the San Marino Unified School District (SMUSD) for the last five years, as its next superintendent pending Board approval, PVPUSD Board President Dr. Anthony Collatos announced today. The board will vote on approving Dr. Cherniss’ contract at its regular meeting on August 29.

Following a national search conducted by Ray and Associates this summer, the Board identified Dr. Cherniss as its clear top candidate through a highly competitive process, for his familiarity with and success in like districts; his demeanor and ethics; knowledge of school business and funding and achievement in high performing districts; and his commitment to the Palos Verdes Peninsula for the long term. In the 3,000-student San Marino district, Cherniss has overseen the state’s #1 academic achieving school district throughout his tenure. In 2018, he was a nominee for the Superintendent of the Year in LA County.

Cherniss came to SMUSD from the Los Angeles County Office of Education, where he served as chief financial officer, certifying the budgets of 80 school districts in LA County, totaling over \$14 billion of budgetary oversight, and managing the office’s internal operations. Prior to LACOE, he rose through the ranks in the Beverly Hills Unified School District, from middle school math teacher to K-8 principal at Hawthorne School, to human resources director and assistant superintendent of business services. Cherniss is a graduate of UC Santa Barbara and earned his Ed.D. degree from USC Rossier School of Education, where he has served as an adjunct professor teaching a doctoral class in school economics. He and his wife, Liz, have three young children, Finn, Leo, and Harper.

“As a Southern California native and a longtime educator, I have always had the dream to one day work in Palos Verdes and lead this incredible district,” Cherniss said. “It is an honor to join this team, to meet our amazing educators, and to get to know our students, parents, and community members. I am committed to many meetings with parents, staff, and community groups throughout my first few months.”

Dr. Cherniss intends to begin working in PVPUSD as soon as possible. Dr. Ira Toibin, former PVPUSD superintendent, has been serving in an interim role this summer and will assist Dr. Cherniss with the transition. Dr. Cherniss joins PVPUSD in a time of facilities modernization and student safety needs; budget challenges necessitated by low levels of state funding; and strong support from parent groups and the Peninsula Education Foundation.

“Dr. Cherniss is the ideal superintendent for our District,” said Collatos. “Alex values teachers and teaching, and his successful experience in high performing districts in California, his collaborative approach and his school business acumen perfectly fit the profile that both the Board and the community sought in our next superintendent. We paid great attention to the community feedback, and I would like to thank the many community members who took the survey and the countless others who attended our focus groups, PTA and Board meetings to share their thoughts about our next leader.”

The PVPUSD Board engaged in a rigorous and transparent superintendent search process, collecting information from over 1,000 community members through an online survey to provide extensive input on the desired qualities of the next superintendent and regularly updating the community through its website. Ray & Associates conducted multiple community meetings and the online survey, as well as organized the candidate vetting. The firm received 47 applications for the position. PVPUSD enrolls 11,400 students in grades K-12 and includes ten elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools. For more information on PVPUSD, go to [www.pvpusd.net](http://www.pvpusd.net) or follow the district on Twitter [@PVPSchools](https://twitter.com/PVPSchools).