

Sacramento City Unified School District

Media Release



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Jorge Aguilar selected as finalist in Sacramento City Unified School District superintendent search

SACRAMENTO, CA – In its search for a new Superintendent, the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education has selected Mr. Jorge Aguilar as its finalist. Mr. Aguilar currently serves as the Associate Superintendent for Equity and Access at Fresno Unified School District and is recognized as a state and national education leader.

He brings over twenty years of K-12 and higher education experience to the district, with a strong focus and background on issues of equity and student achievement. During his career Mr. Aguilar also taught Spanish at South Gate High School, worked as a legislative fellow in the State Capitol, and served as an Associate Vice Chancellor for Educational and Community Partnerships and Special Assistant to the Chancellor at the University of California, Merced. In 2015, Mr. Aguilar's work earned him an invitation by then First Lady Michelle Obama, to present on education equity and access best practices at an annual White House convening hosted by the National Consortium for School Counseling and Postsecondary Success.

"I want to thank the Sacramento City Unified School District board of trustees and community leaders that I met during this extensive search process," said Aguilar. "I am deeply inspired by their demonstration of commitment to urgently improve the academic achievement of the district's 43,000 students. The longstanding partnership between the University of California, Merced and Fresno Unified School District has proven that this is possible. I am encouraged to be entering the next phase of this process in partnership with the board."

The board began its search for a new Superintendent in February. As part of its process, it sought community input on the desired qualities in a new leader. After hosting eight public town hall meetings and receiving hundreds of online surveys, the priorities of the community

were clear. Parents, teachers, students and community members indicated they want a leader for the district who can bring the community together toward a strong vision of student achievement. They also want a leader with a proven track record of strong academic achievement for all students, particularly English language learners, special needs students and children living in poverty.

As Associate Superintendent for Equity and Access at Fresno Unified School District, Mr. Aguilar established a unique partnership with UC Merced and developed a strong track record of improving student achievement. Among his many accomplishments, he developed a data-based system that identified the academic, social, and emotional site practices and district policies that inhibited the realization of student potential, as well as informed administrative decisions about actions needed to reach more equitable educational outcomes. As a result of his work, Fresno Unified saw significant improvement in student achievement including:

- Raising graduation rates from 69.2 percent to 85.4 percent between the 2009-10 and 2015-16 school years.
- Cutting dropout rates almost in half from 20.1 percent down to 10.6 percent between the 2009-10 and 2015-16 school years.
- Raising the “A-G” completion rates from 25.8 percent in 2008 to 49.02 percent in 2016.

“Mr. Aguilar has proven experience in successfully addressing the needs of students like ours,” said Jay Hansen, President of the Sacramento City Unified School Board. “I believe the work Mr. Aguilar has done in Fresno and his background working on equity and achievement gap issues make him the ideal candidate for our district. He also recognizes our district has students at many levels of achievement and each is deserving of being pushed to their full potential.”

Mr. Aguilar graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a degree in Latin American Studies and Spanish and Portuguese. He also earned a Juris Doctor degree from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. He is the recipient of the Winston Doby Impact Award, which is awarded to exceptional professionals who are chosen by their colleagues to be recognized for individual commitment to improving educational opportunities for California students. In 2015 State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson appointed Mr. Aguilar to the Advisory Task Force on Accountability and Continuous Improvement, which advises Torlakson on his recommendations for a new California system of public education accountability and continuous improvement to the State Board of Education and the state legislature. Mr. Aguilar is married with four kids. He plans on enrolling his kids in SCUSD schools once a final contract with the district is approved by the board.

Mr. Aguilar's start date and a contract with the district will be announced, reviewed and approved at a future board meeting. Current Superintendent José L. Banda will remain as the full-time Superintendent until his contract expires on June 30, 2017.

Established in 1854, Sacramento City Unified has over 43,000 students at 80 schools and is one of the largest employers in the Sacramento region. For more information visit: www.scusd.edu.

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