September 28, 2012

Teaching and Learning

SCUSD’s School Quality Review Recognized by California Policy Leaders

Superintendent Raymond was a featured speaker on Tuesday at a meeting of senior California legislative aides and foundation representatives organized by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). The meeting focused on three main themes: School accountability systems in other states; California’s current accountability system; and local innovation in California school accountability policy. Superintendent Raymond was invited to speak on this third item, focusing on SCUSD’s School Quality Review program and its school visitation component. On Tuesday, Governor Brown signed Senate pro Tem Darrell Steinberg’s Senate Bill 1458, which changes the way school accomplishments will be measured and allows School Quality Reviews to be part of a new accountability index.

Media Panel on Common Core

On Friday, Superintendent Raymond spoke to a panel of 25 journalists – members of the Education Writers Association (EWA) – about SCUSD’s work as early implementers of the Common Core Standards. The event was co-sponsored by New Journalism on Latino Children (a joint effort of the EWA and UC Berkeley), Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) and Stanford Professor Kenji Hakuta. Reporters present represented a spectrum of publications, from the Arizona Republic to Mother Jones to Univision. Pia Lopez and Diana Lambert of the Sacramento Bee also attended.

PE Update

Physical Education Coordinator Heather Deckard has visited the following 12 schools since the beginning of the year: C.P. Huntington and Maple elementary schools; Rosa Parks Middle School; John Morse and Caleb Greenwood K-8s; and Luther Burbank, Rosemont, John F. Kennedy, George Washington Carver, Hiram Johnson and C.K. McClatchy high schools. During these visits, she saw the Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC) being used even among veteran teachers. Teachers at the sites commented that the implementation of EPEC, and the RESPECT model in EPEC, was going smoothly.
In addition, at least four schools have filled out the PE mandated report form showing how they are meeting the mandated PE minutes. Several schools have started fitness times that include the teachers, allowing both the students and teachers to engage in healthy activities, as well as take a “brain break.” Other schools have started “JAMmin’ Minutes,” which are one-minute brain breaks done in the classroom. The JAMmin’ Minutes are done two times a day, every day, in order to meet state mandated minute requirement.

In addition, Deckard worked closely with Kit Carson Middle School last year to implement quality procedures/processes adapted by Hiram Johnson High School in 2010-11 school year. Due to this work, Hiram Johnson PE teachers have reported that their freshmen are doing extraordinarily well. The students are prepared, and understand the procedures/processes, which in turn allowed Hiram Johnson PE teachers to focus on content, as opposed to classroom management. This same vertical articulation among programs is showing up in other PE programs throughout the district as well.

**Operations**

**Health Services**

In the last two weeks, Health Services has screened 286 people (staff and volunteers) for tuberculosis. The screenings were conducted with minimal wait time by shifting the schedules of nurses and clerks. The immunization clinic staffing and hours have also been increased in these first few weeks, with 57 kinder and 68 middle/high school immunization profiles provided. Credentialed school nurses have provided trainings on support of students with medical conditions to SCUSD staff, created and distributed emergency care plans and traveled throughout the district providing care and support to students with complex medical needs. Health Services is collaborating with other departments such as Special Education, Nutrition Services and Youth Development to meet the increased service needs during this time of year.

**Nutrition Services Improves Staff Training**

Nutrition Services is meeting one of its priority goals this year to improve staff training. With funding from The California Endowment, the department brought staff in before school and rolled out a series of menu focus groups and trainings on: New menu regulations, the required menu and process changes. Much of the training also focused on the department’s mission to reach a new level of nutrition and customer service called “Destination 10!” On August 28, 30 and 31, all Nutrition Services supervisors and site leads were trained. On September 10 and 11, all Food Service Assistants were trained.

Also, on September 17, Nutrition Services “graduated” 16 Food Service Assistant I’s that completed a several weeks-long training, where they received practical experience qualifying them to serve as Food Service Assistant III’s. These dedicated students devoted
their time and completed course work to learn how to lead a kitchen. This prepares them for placement in schools when regular leads needs to be away. Their dedication and achievement is exemplary and adds greatly to the value and strength of the entire Nutrition Services team.

**Community Engagement**

*School Site Council: The Essentials*

The first of three trainings on the workings of a School Site Council (SSC) was presented on Tuesday at C.K. McClatchy High School by representatives of the Academic Office, Accountability Office and Family and Community Engagement Office. Attendees included parents, administrators and community members.

The training was conducted by Chief Family and Community Engagement Officer Koua Franz, Area Assistant Superintendent Lisa Allen and Susan B. Anthony Elementary School Principal Lee Yang. District Advisory Committee (DAC) chair Mali Currington also presented. Participants learned essential functions of the SSC; what funding sources are pertinent and how they may be used; how to prepare and monitor the School Development and Improvement Plan (SDIP); and supports that the district provides. Participants were reminded that each school should designate one person to attend DAC meetings because important district information is funneled to that group. In conclusion, Ms. Franz advised all that future trainings for site council leaders will include understanding the Standard Accounting Code Structure (SACS) and conducting effective meetings.

*‘Green Apple Day’*

On Saturday, September 22, more than 90 volunteers worked to revitalize the spaces surrounding two West Campus High School classroom wings to celebrate the first-ever Green Apple Day of Service sponsored by the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council. Most of the volunteers were West Campus students driven to make the project a success. The team was not able to fully complete the project Saturday, so a group of about 15 students showed up again on Sunday to apply the finishing touches.

Tomorrow, volunteers will tackle clean ups at Bret Harte Elementary and Will C. Wood Middle School and install a garden at McClaskey Adult Center.

*Coordinated School Health Committee (CSHC)*

Heather Deckard, Physical Education Coordinator and Coordinated School Health Committee (CSHC) chair, has partnered with Elk Grove Unified School District's CSHC Chair on ways to improve the work of both committees. So far, ideas about saving money and helping staff become healthier have been generated.
On Tuesday, Superintendent Raymond and Ms. Deckard were requested to present at a training for Sacramento-area school district representatives on “Local School Wellness: Moving From Policy to Action,” held at the Sacramento County Office of Education. Health Services Coordinator Pam Whipple was also in attendance. Superintendent Raymond spoke on Effective Executive Leadership in our district. Ms. Deckard spoke on our Coordinated School Health Committee's model, which was new this year. Through a model employing two working groups (district and collaborative), SCUSD has been able to revise the wellness policy and get our collaborative partners into more schools to help educate our students and families.

Comments we heard at the training included: "I'm so inspired by all the work you are doing in Sac City. I can't wait to go back to my district and get back to work!"; "You have renewed my passion for helping our kids. Thank you!"; "We have just begun to revise our wellness policy. Thank you for being a leader. We will be following your lead with our revisions."; and "It is so nice to see a Superintendent and Board that actually cares about the health and well-being of their students and understands that if your kids are healthy then they will do better in school."

Community Advisory Committee Resource Fair

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) hosted its second annual Community Resource Fair on Tuesday at the Serna Center. The event was a huge success! There were more than 30 different district and community services represented giving families the opportunity to gather information at a single location. Most of the community agencies represented provide advocacy, information and services specifically for people with special needs. More than 150 people were in attendance throughout the evening. Kudos to our fabulous CAC for a wonderful event!