Early Kinder Grant Funding

Great news this week: The Early Kinder Program (EK) will receive a $25,000 grant award to help continued efforts to pioneer and build this early education opportunity for young students. This is the second grant award for Early Kinder from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. The award funds will be used to further build a developmentally appropriate curriculum model supported by professional development, teacher training and instructional/classroom material.

Additionally, SCUSD's Early Kinder Program hosted 11 Early Kinder/Transitional Kinder Program (TK) Coordinators from the Solano County Office of Education on April 17. Visitors from Benicia, Dixon, Travis, Vacaville and Vallejo school districts traveled to Sacramento to view our EK Program and gain insights/information for program implementation for their respective school districts. Our visitors were given school tours by the site principals at Leonardo da Vinci eK-8 and Theodore Judah Elementary School and were able to observe the EK instructional program as demonstrated by the classroom teachers at each of these sites.

To further support Early Kinder throughout our state, Katherine Lehman, Early Kinder teacher at Judah, joined Preschool California to provide positive testimony at an Assembly Committee on Higher Education hearing at the State Capitol. Katherine gave testimony supporting Assembly Bill 1853, which would provide a specialized teacher training certificate for Early Kinder teachers and Transitional Kinder teachers throughout the state. The outcome was a positive vote to further advance this much-needed bill supporting professional development for EK in our state.

‘Sacramento Pathway’

Representatives of SCUSD, Los Rios Community College District and California State University, Sacramento, met on Wednesday, April 18, at John F. Kennedy High School to continue working on the “Sacramento Educational Pathway” (the group is vetting names with constituents and communications departments). The broad goals of this collaborative effort are to: Remove the obstacles to college; demystify college; build post-secondary college confidence; reduce or eliminate the need for college remediation classes; build excitement for college at the youngest ages; and align pre-K-12 programs with those at local institutes of higher learning.

The meeting provided time to collectively work on the draft agreement between institutions, to begin crafting possible names for the collaboration and to meet in the following workgroups:
ROP teacher Chef James Morgan – from the student-operated Cougar Café – provided lunch after the meeting. The lunch served as a valid Linked Learning “work-based learning activity” for the culinary students at JFK.

‘Project Green’ Showcase

Fourteen SCUSD school site “green teams” showcased projects to make their campuses more eco-friendly at the district’s first annual Project Green Showcase held at The Met Sacramento High School on Wednesday.

Viable projects are in line for $5 million in Measure I facilities bond money set aside for green school initiatives. Project Green started this year when campuses across the district formed “green teams” of students – supported by parents, teachers and staff – to conduct “green audits” of facilities. The teams then studied the results and researched recommendations for improvements ranging from replacing old windows to installing water-wise plumbing fixtures.

The students then presented their recommendations to members of a blue-ribbon panel of local experts from the fields of architecture, engineering, energy, land-use planning and water management at Wednesday’s event. The panel will judge the exhibits and award funds from the 2002 facilities bond measure. A future event to showcase the awards is being planned.

Project Green was spearheaded by Farah McDill, the district’s Center for Green Schools Fellow. SCUSD is one of only two school districts in the country to be awarded a fully-funded Green Schools Fellow by the Center for Green Schools at the US Green Building Council. You can watch a video of the event at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5veQXvSdjMU&feature=youtu.be

Child Development Grant

SCUSD’s Child Development department is the recipient of a $7,292 grant award funded by Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society Alliance. The money will be used to provide nutrition education and healthy cooking experiences for preschool parents. The grant was rather competitive; the Alliance received applications from 29 organizations. However, nine applicants received funding. Albeit small, this is the first grant award received under the leadership of the Interim Director.

SCUSD Administrators Win ACSA Awards

Three SCUSD administrators and Mark Hopkins Elementary School will be honored by the Association of California School Administrators, Region III, at an awards gala on May 16 at the Hilton Hotel. Mao Vang, director of Assessment, Research and Evaluation, will receive a “Silver
“Star.” Susan B. Anthony Elementary School Principal Candas Colen and Cancy McArn, a director in Human Resources, will both be named “Administrators of the Year.” Mark Hopkins Elementary will receive the Partners in Educational Excellence award for its “Real Men Read Program” in conjunction with 100 Black Men of Sacramento. Congratulations all!

**School Websites Update**

SCUSD Webmaster Andrea Landis began training school website administrators in preparation for the roll-out of new websites for many of our school sites. The trainings will continue through May 2. After completing the training, school staff and volunteers will work on their customized template with support from Landis. This website program will be a great marketing tool for schools and help in family and community outreach. Each website is built with an easy-to-use content management system and social media tools allowing users to add content and share it effortlessly.

**Fields First Scheduling Meeting**

To eliminate scheduling conflicts and provide better service to youth leagues, Sacramento City Unified School District is hosting its first annual Fields First Scheduling Meeting this afternoon. The meeting is an opportunity for youth sports leagues to schedule the use of SCUSD fields for summer and fall, pending availability and to learn of classification and rate changes in the works for the 2012-13 school year that will likely affect all field users.

**Community Engagement**

**Community Quality Review at Hiram Johnson and Camellia Basic**

The Office of School, Family and Community Partnerships (SFCP) completed the fifth milestone of the Welcoming Schools initiative, the Community Quality Review (CQR), at Hiram Johnson High School on Tuesday, April 10, and at Camellia Basic on Tuesday, April 17. The review team for Hiram Johnson consisted of one member from Cambridge Education, one staff member from SFCP and three parents while the review team for Camellia Basic consisted of two staff members from SFCP and three parents. The CQR process is a focus group discussion with a group comprised of school parents, leaders, teachers, community partners and students.

The review team explored in their discussions the following four domains: School Environment, Culture and Context for Learning; Family Understanding and Engagement; Community Partners and Understanding; and Leadership. From these discussions, the review team will prepare a Community Quality Review report to provide feedback to the school informing them of their areas of strengths and areas for improvement. The final milestone of the Welcoming Schools initiative is the Community Presentation. Schools going through this process have been invited to go to a Community Presentation training scheduled at Serna on May 1 and 14.
Parents as Partners in Schools

Parents as Partners in Schools (PAPS) is a program supported by Target Excellence. For this winter and spring, we have 10 school sites participating in this program. The first PAPS session was held today. The program is available for parents and community members interested in learning more about how to help their students succeed in school, form parent networks, communicate with school staff and understand the school system and structure.

‘Kiyo’s Tree’

SCUSD’s Adult Education Department partnered with the Rancho Cordova Historical Society and Edward Kelley School alumni on a tree planting ceremony at the campus today that honored award-winning author Kiyo Sato, 88. Ms. Sato attended Edward Kelley, then a one-room K-8 school, until 1942, when her family, a target of prejudice, was forced to move to an internment camp in Arizona.

Despite these struggles, Ms. Sato eventually returned to Sacramento, joined the U.S. Air Force, finished her education and became a successful SCUSD school nurse. She revealed that her most cherished assignment was caring for preschool children at Edward Kelley! At age 80, she began taking computer classes through SCUSD’s Adult Education program and eventually wrote a memoir of her childhood, “Dandelion through the Crack/Kiyo’s Story.” The book was awarded the William Saroyan Prize for International Writing (non-fiction) in 2008.

Ms. Sato also worked to preserve a rare pink-blossoming almond tree on Folsom Boulevard near the Rancho Cordova library. At today’s ceremony, a white-blossoming almond tree was planted at the school, which now houses an Adult Education Parent Participation Preschool program. The goal is to eventually graft the rare pink tree onto this one to create a lasting legacy to Ms. Sato.