December 2, 2011

Teaching and Learning

Superintendents’ Roundtable on Summer Learning

Superintendent Raymond participated in a panel discussion of summer learning opportunities at the California School Board Association’s Annual Education Conference in San Diego on Thursday. The Superintendent talked about SCUSD’s “Summer of Service,” a unique program that introduces incoming seventh, eighth and ninth graders to community service – with a theme of social justice – and helps at-risk students make a successful transition to a new school. Last year, nearly 1,000 SCUSD students participated in Summer of Service, which was funded through grants and partnerships.

Data Inquiry

Staff development on the Data Wise data inquiry process continued this week with cohorts of school teams receiving training to ready them for the Instructional Rounds phase of work. This form of professional learning is similar to the model used by physicians. Through this process, our administrators and teachers will deepen their understanding of high-quality instruction and work collaboratively to improve classroom practice by making “rounds” or observing classes together.

Operations

Budget Update

The district continues to monitor information about the possibility of mid-year “trigger cuts.” The state Department of Finance (DOF) will forecast revised revenues for 2011-12, as required by AB 114, on December 15. If the forecast predicts that revenue will fall short of expectations, as did a recent report by the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO), then, under current law, the triggers are to be pulled, creating a new round of mid-year cuts to public education. The state budget signed into law last summer identified $2.5 billion in new spending cuts if revenue predictions dropped by more than $2 billion. The LAO has predicted revenue will miss the mark by $3.7 billion.

Education advocates are pressing for new legislative action to avoid the triggers. However, Assembly Speaker John Perez told reporters this week: “The only way to avoid those
triggers is to get revenue and that’s not going to happen because none of the members of the minority party have shown a willingness to engage in that kind of conversation.”

Mid-year trigger cuts would reduce SCUSD’s revenue by about $12 million. The budget shortfall for 2012-13 is expected to be about $25.26 million if funding remains flat, due to rising costs (health benefits chief among them), the exhaustion of one-time funds and declining enrollment.

The district has scheduled a Sacramento City Unified/Labor Partner Budget Summit for next Wednesday. The purpose of the summit is to engage and provide information to our labor partners regarding the status of the state, county and SCUSD budget. School Services of California will provide information regarding California’s budget and its impact on education funding. Sacramento County Office of Education Superintendent David Gordon will provide information on SCOE’s role as it relates to local districts’ budgets. SCUSD Chief Business Officer Patty Hagemeyer will speak to the specifics of our budget. The presentations will be followed by time for questions and answers.

**District Bargaining Proposals (Sunshining)**

The district will publicly present its bargaining proposals/interests for public comment and adoption at the December 8 Board meeting. The Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA), Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021, Teamsters Local 150 and Classified Supervisors Association (CSA), all have multi-year agreements with contract reopeners in the “out” years of their respective collective bargaining agreements. As you know, we have not reached agreement with United Professional Educators (UPE) for the 2011-12 school year. Therefore, we are unable to sunshine their collective bargaining agreement at this time.

**Community Engagement**

**School Closures and Consolidations**

Under the direction of the Board, staff held community meetings this week at CP Huntington, Freeport and Cesar Chavez/Edward Kemble. At CP Huntington and Freeport, concerns were raised about transportation/safe walking routes for kids, safety concerns with vacant campuses and the moving of preschool and after-school programs. At Chavez/Kemble, parents and staff said they opposed consolidation and would like Chavez expanded to be a 4-8. Questions and comments were recorded. Staff is in the process of transcribing the comments, answering the questions and translating both the transcriptions and answers for posting on the district’s website.

In addition, the Design Team process is moving forward at eight sites recommended for programmatic expansion, consolidation, grade reconfiguration and/or other changes. The following is a summary of progress to date:
Kit Carson Middle School (exploring programmatic design and configuration options): The Design Team held its first meeting on Monday, where members set norms and brainstormed ideas for a “dream school” using six focus questions. The meeting proceeded smoothly with much engagement. Minutes from this meeting are posted on the district’s website.

Caleb Greenwood K-8 (exploring programmatic design and configuration options): Minutes from team’s initial meeting on November 15 are posted on the district’s website. A second meeting was held Tuesday, at which members focused on honing the “dream school” brainstorming list down to five to seven “non-negotiables,” or “headline statements” about Caleb Greenwood. The team also discussed the positives and concerns of a K-6 configuration vs. a K-8 configuration.

School of Engineering and Sciences (exploring programmatic design and configuration options): The Design Team continues to meet. The team is developing an online survey to gauge community opinion on such issues as a grade-level reconfiguration, programmatic redesign and possible community partnerships.

John Still Elementary/John Still Middle/Freeport (exploring becoming one K-8 school and programmatic options): The first meeting of the Design Team is scheduled for Monday.

West Campus (exploring a co-location with Sacramento Charter High School on the Sacramento High campus or moving to Sacramento High and relocating Sacramento Charter to the current West Campus facility): Beginning Monday, facilitators from Sacramento State’s Center for Collaborative Policy will meet with each member of the Design Team to engage in a conversation around their views and expectations. The facilitator, as a third-party neutral, will prepare a written or oral report for the participants based on the conversations. This Assessment Report will not identify individuals but will discuss the results in terms of interest. The first meeting of the Design Team has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 7.

Leonardo da Vinci/Hollywood Park (exploring consolidation and programmatic expansion): The Design Team held its first meeting on Thursday. Members discussed the positive aspects of a possible consolidation and concerns about such a move. The team decided that, because they had more questions and desired more discussion, to schedule a second meeting for Thursday, December 8.

Input and community feedback gathered at meetings will be brought to the Board at its meeting next week.

Health Insurance Fair

The SCUSD Connect Center sponsored a Health Insurance Enrollment and Resource Fair with several local social service agencies (The HUB/Building Health Communities/The California Endowment and Cover the Kids) on November 19. The fair was advertised to children and their families throughout Sacramento County, and it is estimated that more than 1,600 people turned out for the event. Parents in attendance received free food, were given resources to save money in the community, and were able to enroll their children in free/low cost health insurance programs by Cover the Kids Application Assistants. At the end of the day, 17 SCUSD
families (39 children), were enrolled in health insurance plans. This is one more way that we are working with our partners to ensure the health and wellness of SCUSD students, increase attendance and provide students the opportunity to maximize their academic potential.