December 9, 2011

Teaching and Learning

*Rosa Parks Students Help ‘Bring Back the Arts’*

California Alliance for Arts Education kicked off a statewide campaign to “Bring Back the Arts” with an event at Rosa Parks Middle School on Wednesday. The Alliance is a leading advocate on the need for visual and performing arts as a core part of every child’s education in California. The group focuses on state policy, coalition building and public advocacy. At the event, Rosa Parks’ students discussed the importance of the arts in their lives. The Rosa Parks band also performed. The Alliance selected Rosa Parks because it is building and growing a music program.

Operations

*Budget Update*

The District and the labor leaders from all five bargaining units participated in a Budget Summit on Wednesday, December 7, at the Serna Center. John Gray, Vice President, School Services of California, presented an overview of the state budget and the potential for mid-year cuts and its impact on K-12 funding. Patty Hagemeyer, Chief Business Officer, provided information regarding the status of the district’s budget, and finally Dave Gordon, Sacramento County Office of Education Superintendent, discussed the county’s role of fiscal oversight and the need for transparency and working collectively to resolve our fiscal problems. Many of our labor leaders stated that they believed the summit was helpful in understanding our fiscal condition, and were hopeful that we could work collaboratively to resolve our problems.

*School Closures and Consolidations*

At the Board’s direction, CP Huntington, Freeport and AM Winn are no longer being considered for closure. In addition, the Cesar Chavez/Edward Kemble consolidation has been tabled and the Design Team examining the co-location or swap of West Campus and Sacramento Charter High has been dissolved. The Design Team process is still moving forward at other sites where there is the potential for programmatic or grade configuration changes.
**Community Engagement**

*Parent Information Exchange (PIE)*

The Parent Information Exchange (PIE) held its second luncheon meeting of the 2011-12 school year on November 28 at the Serna Center. Information that will assist families during the upcoming winter months was presented by the following organizations: Sacramento Food Bank; Sacramento Council PTA Clothes Closet; South Sacramento Emergency Food Closet; and Parker Family Resource Center Homeless Services.

The Parent Information Exchange has expanded through the outreach efforts of active parent “ambassadors” at the school site level. PIE is funded by SMUD, Schools Financial Credit Union and SEIU Local 1021. The PIE meeting on December 19 will feature a presentation by the Parent /Teacher Home Visit Project.

*SCUSD’s Connect Center Hosts Public Benefits 101 Training*

SCUSD’s Connect Center hosted a workshop on December 6 for district administrators, district staff, interns and community partners (e.g. Anthem Blue Cross and Health Net) in order to better understand government entitlement programs. This training was presented by Stacey Whitorff, staff attorney from Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC), and covered the basics of public benefits such as Medi-Cal, Social Security, Cal Works, Cal Fresh, General Assistance (GA) and Unemployment benefits. Those in attendance commented that the information that was presented helped them better understand the confusing maze of programs, deadlines and eligibility criteria that many of the families with whom they work face. The Connect Center plans to host a second Public Benefits 101 Training in spring, 2012.

*Leadership Academy Grant*

The District has been awarded a $10,000 grant from the Teichert Foundation to support our Leadership Academy, a nine-session training course designed for parents and community members who want to acquire additional leadership skills. Participants are offered training on how to work for school improvement and impact education policies and practices. Topics range from “understanding what a child needs to learn” to “how the school system operates.” Graduates from the Academy will be better equipped to take on leadership roles in their community.