March 2, 2012

Teaching and Learning

High School Task Force

The High School Task Force is charged with aligning SCUSD’s current graduation requirements with contemporary post-secondary entrance requirements and entry-level career expectations of industry. Strategic Plan 2010-2014: Putting Children First calls for all graduates to be ready for college and careers. We expect our students to be ready for post-secondary degree pursuit without remediation.

The High School Task Force is composed of parents, students, industry partners, post-secondary partners, teachers, counselors, site administrators and district staff. The task force is utilizing a research-based transcript analysis protocol to understand 9-12 course-taking patterns of our graduates and vetting those patterns and achievement levels with post-secondary and industry partners. Gaps in preparation are identified and recommendations for graduation requirement adjustment will be recommended.

The recommendations will be vetted by larger SCUSD community groups and feedback will be collected and utilized to adjust recommendations. The final recommendations will be presented to the Board by early summer.

Girl Inspired 2012: ‘Girls of Today, Women of Tomorrow’

More than 250 SCUSD middle school girls attended the third annual ‘Girl Inspired’ student leadership conference at UC Davis on February 24. This year’s conference, titled “Girls of Today, Women of Tomorrow,” focused on equipping students to plan for their futures, make healthy life choices and increase their emotional and physical well-being.

Students toured the UC Davis campus, participated in educational, interactive workshops, learned techniques for staying physically active through dance and yoga and enjoyed healthy, nutritious foods throughout the day. In addition, students were exposed to modern technology and the arts through inspirational video, were entertained by a performance from an all-female drum line (featuring girls from Fern Bacon Middle School) and studied spoken word poetry. Each student received a wellness pack including health and hygiene products, informational materials, community resource information cards, a family pass to Crocker Art Museum, books and more. Backpacks loaded with school supplies were raffled off, along with Sacramento Kings tickets.
SCUSD staff and community volunteers who chaperoned for the day were treated to an educators workshop presented by Dr. Vajra Watson.

Youth Weigh In

The Alliance for Education Solutions (AES) brought together nearly 100 students from three universities and 12 high schools and alternative education programs from throughout the region for “Youth Weigh In,” held on Wednesday at the California State University, Sacramento, Alumni Center. SCUSD had 22 students with representation from Luther Burbank, Hiram Johnson, John F. Kennedy and West Campus high schools. Participants represented a spectrum of students, including school leaders and teens who are not traditionally involved in such activities.

A representative from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson’s office addressed the students, who were challenged to return to their schools and advocate for authentic youth representation during state budget planning.

Read Across America Day

Schools throughout SCUSD celebrated Dr. Seuss’ birthday today – also Read Across America Day – with fun-filled literacy-related events. Guest speakers who read to children in SCUSD classrooms today included Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, California Teachers Association President Dean Vogel, Sacramento Fire Department Chief Ray Jones and Superintendent Raymond.

Operations

West Campus Selected for Revitalization Project

West Campus High School has been selected for a one-day revitalization project that comes with $10,000 and a volunteer force of 400. The makeover is courtesy of three organizations: State of Being, Rebuilding Together and Starbucks. The date for the project is Saturday, May 19. Congratulations to our Green School Fellow Farah McDill and SCUSD’s grounds specialist Tommy Greer for working hard to make this happen!

Community Engagement

Freeport Elementary Parent Transition Conferences

Three Parent Transition Conferences (February 25, 28 and 29) have been held for families of Freeport Elementary School. The purpose of these conferences is to ensure that students and families understand their options for the 2012-13 school year and to address individual needs. As families entered the multi-purpose room, there were refreshments, informational brochures and a seating area, where parents and their children waited briefly before being ushered to one of 14 stations manned by teachers, staff, principals and community members. This one-on-one counsel with individual families was designed to help them make informed decisions and answer questions.
The next step is to reach out to families that did not attend these conferences. Staff is now working out a plan to best connect with these families. Principal Amy Whitten and her staff are to be commended for their sensitivity and for the organization and planning that created a smooth transition process.

**Governor Meets with Superintendents to Discuss Funding Issues**

Governor Brown invited several K-12 superintendents – including Superintendent Raymond, LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy and Long Beach Unified Superintendent Chris Steinhauser – to the Capitol on Wednesday to discuss education budget issues. Specifically, the Governor sought input on his tax initiative headed for the ballot in November. The initiative is one of three revenue-generating propositions now being circulated for signatures.