November 10, 2011

**Teaching and Learning**

*Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning*

SCUSD has been selected as one of five finalists for a national initiative to make social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of every student’s educational experience. As part of the selection process, SCUSD will host a team of six educational leaders in the field of social and emotional learning next week during a three-day site visit from the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

CASEL will work long-term with six to eight large school districts that are committed to systemic, comprehensive implementation of SEL. The selected districts will join with CASEL to:

- Build knowledge about how to organize high-quality, systemic, district-wide implementation of SEL.
- Create tools and resources that districts can use to achieve systemic SEL implementation.
- Document the short- and long-term effects of such systemic efforts.
- Serve as demonstration sites that others can visit to observe systemic SEL in action.

Participating districts will receive ongoing, intensive technical assistance, and financial support from the NoVo Foundation. Top leaders from each district will also have regular opportunities to meet with their counterparts in other districts with the goal of creating a national learning community on SEL.

*Differentiated Instruction*

Teachers and principals gathered this week to participate in ongoing professional development in Differentiated Instruction. This was the second session in the series for the 2011-2012 school year which focuses on providing teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the individual needs of every child in SCUSD. The varied learning needs of children will be addressed through a range of instructional and management strategies and modification of curriculum through content, thinking processes and multiple ways students
can demonstrate their knowledge. There are three cohorts of teachers as well as a leadership component.

Cohort I is continuing in their second year of differentiation and focused on designing tasks which incorporate a variety of instructional strategies to support differentiation. Cohort II and III focused on effective instruction and methods of differentiating content, process and products. All teachers continue to grow their skills and knowledge in the design of differentiated assignments based on: Good curriculum, respectful tasks, challenging work, flexible grouping and ongoing assessment. Further sessions will enable teachers to continue to expand learning opportunities for all students by offering varied learning experiences. Participants will add new instructional strategies to their “tool kits.”

**Transitional Kindergarten Implementation Summit**

A team from SCUSD participated in Tuesday’s Transitional Kindergarten Implementation Summit, which was sponsored by a collection of educational organizations, including the California Teachers Association, the California Federation of Teachers, Preschool California and the California School Board Association. More than 100 school districts from throughout California sent representatives. The summit was structured as a forum for educators to share promising practices, strategies and resources. SCUSD, which launched its Early Kinder program in the fall of 2010, is a leader statewide in the development of transitional kindergarten curriculum, standards and assessments. At the summit, Superintendent Raymond served on a local implementation panel and discussed the district’s parent outreach plan for Early Kinder, which has led to the expansion of the program to five sites. Across the district, 98 children are enrolled in Early Kinder.

**Linked Learning Residency**

Educators from throughout the region, and specifically other implementing school districts in California, attended a Linked Learning Residency hosted by SCUSD and sponsored by the California Center for College and Career (ConnectEd).

At the Residency, which included time spent at SCUSD’s various Linked Learning schools and academies, visiting district teams were able to:

- Articulate how a district Linked Learning system supports all students in progressing toward college and career readiness;
- Identify strategies that support high-quality career and college pathways, including data-based inquiry, authentic performance-based assessment and continuous improvement of teaching and learning; and
- Develop an explicit plan for supporting pathways.

As hosts of the Residency, SCUSD helped provide context including how the district integrates pathway efforts with other district initiatives, including leading work on the Common Core Standards, Data Inquiry, our focus on literacy.
The visit also enabled educators to provide valuable feedback to SCUSD on how to improve our college and career pathways. An update on our work in this area will come to the Board in December.

Community Engagement

Community Meetings Scheduled

The district has scheduled four community meetings to gather feedback from the community on closure and consolidation recommendations from the advisory 7-11 Committee and from staff. Parents have been notified through phone calls in all languages and through written letters, also translated into all languages.

The following is the schedule of community meetings:

Wednesday, November 16 (6:30 pm) – A.M. Winn
Monday, November 28 (6:30 pm) – C.P. Huntington
Tuesday, November 29 (6:30 pm) – Freeport
Thursday, December 1 (6:30 pm) – Edward Kemble/Cesar Chavez

In addition, the schools recommended for the Design Team process are moving forward with assembling collaborative work groups with broad community representation.