September 23, 2011

Teaching and Learning

Data Inquiry Support

The SCUSD Academic Office hosted the first Data Inquiry Support professional development session on Monday. This is SCUSD’s second year of implementing the data inquiry process district-wide as a strategy for continuous instructional improvement to impact student achievement. The professional development series is designed to differentiate support for teachers and school leaders to strengthen their implementation of the data inquiry process.

At the sessions, participants focus on learning how to engage in the various stages of the data inquiry process such as creating a data overview, identifying the learner-centered problem and problem of practice and designing an action plan. Participants examine multiple data points such as student work samples from classwork and homework assignments, standardized test scores and other classroom data to identify a learner-centered problem. They also identify the problem of practice to improve student learning and engage in conversations that will enhance their schools’ ability to foster collaboration, identify and address obstacles to student learning and strengthen instructional practice.

In future meetings, participants will be afforded the opportunity to collaborate with their peers and will meet by grade level in grades K-6 and by department in grades 7-12.

Back-to-School Nights

Schools throughout the district have held — and are holding — Back-to-School Nights for their communities, many with record turnouts of family members. Many schools, too, are trying out new models for Back-to-School Night to engage more of their community. For example, at Woodbine Elementary, grade-level teachers created informational booths on the playground in a trade show-like format that made it easier for parents with multiple children to gather information and make one-on-one connections. At Edward Kemble, second-grade teachers held a Back-to-School Morning for parents who could not attend the more traditional nighttime program. Mark Hopkins offered on-the-spot fingerprinting for potential parent volunteers. Other schools highlighted their Parent Resource Centers and solicited PTA and PTO sign ups.
Parcel Tax and Bond Polling to Begin

Tramutola, the Oakland-based firm working with the district to gauge public sentiment about a parcel tax or bond measure to support schools, will begin its polling today. The telephone interviews will be conducted in the evenings between 5:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekends. Once the interviewing is complete, the data will be processed, which involves checking for inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses and preparing frequency analyses. The polling is being conducted in English, Spanish and Hmong. Results should be available around October 14.

Tdap Update

A second SCUSD school – John Still Middle School – has reached 100 percent compliance with the state’s Tdap requirement. At seven others, more than 90 percent of students are compliant. At Luther Burbank High School, less than 100 students remain out of compliance. As of today, 78.6 percent of all SCUSD middle and high school students have provided the district with either documentation to prove they have had the whooping cough booster or signed waivers. The district continues to press for higher compliance rates and provide clinics for our community, including one tomorrow in conjunction with Hmong Women’s Heritage. Upcoming site-based clinics include:

- Rosemont: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, September 27
- Capitol City: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, September 28
- C.K. McClatchy: 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 29
- Capitol City: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, September 30

Burbank Sports Complex Ribbon-Cutting

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held this morning to open the new $9.3 million Luther Burbank Sports Complex, allowing the Titans to plan their first home game since 2008. (The Titans football team plays the Hiram Johnson Warriors tonight.) The complex, built with funding from Measure I, a facilities bond passed by district voters in 2002, features state-of-the-art artificial turf, a new all-season track, a new scoreboard and bleachers for 2,500. The complex also includes classrooms, restrooms and a concession stand.

This sports complex was designed in compliance with the Grimes/Kennedy Green & Grid Neutral Model Schools Policy Initiative. Green aspects include:

- All-weather track made of 120,000 pounds of recycled rubber, which is the equivalent of 4,285 passenger car tires.
- The synthetic turf on the field will save millions of gallons of water a year.
- Rain that falls on the complex will be recycled to irrigate landscaping.
- Fences constructed of more than 15 tons of recycled steel.

Go Titans!
Community Advisory Committee Kick-Off Event

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC), an advisory body of parents for the SCUSD Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), hosted a first-ever kick-off event on Tuesday at the Serna Center. Working with district staff and community groups, CAC organized a “meet and greet” opportunity for parents of students with special needs followed by a resource fair.

Approximately 95 people attended the event. Parents had the opportunity to put a “face to a name” for district Special Education staff and to gather information from a variety of partners, including Warm Line, Challenger Little League, PTA, SCUSD Connect Center and Sacramento Public Library. It is anticipated that this will become an annual event for the CAC. Kudos to our parent leadership for organizing and executing this event!

Building Healthy Communities

On Wednesday, a group of SCUSD principals and Youth and Family Resource Center coordinators met to discuss Building Healthy Communities (BHC), a 10-year initiative funded by the California Endowment. The South Sacramento boundary area identified by BHC is one of 14 communities throughout California selected to receive these community improvement services.

The goal of the BHC initiative is to create neighborhoods that support health and the prevention of disease by improving the systems and policies contributing to the poor health of Californians in low-income communities. Services include: health insurance enrollment; education and advocacy; dental screenings; legal services; school gardens and more.

Under the leadership of Integrated Support Services Director Barbara Kronick, sites will be linked with community partners who will provide specific services identified by the sites. A BHC committee will be established to assess the ongoing progress of the programs and activities and identify additional health and wellness needs for their students and families.