SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 9.1

Meeting Date: May 16. 2019

Subject: Approve African American Achievement Task Force Recommendations

- ☐ Information Item Only
- ☐ Approval on Consent Agenda
- ☐ Conference (for discussion only)
- ☐ Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: _____)
- ☒ Conference/Action
- ☐ Action
- ☐ Public Hearing

Division: Academic Office & Continuous Improvement and Accountability

Recommendation: Approval

Background/Rationale: The goal of this presentation is to request that the board of education adopt the recommendations of the African American Achievement Task Force. The Task Force has been meeting since September 2018 to identify strategies to accelerate achievement for African American students.

Financial Considerations: Some Task Force recommendations will potentially have an incremental financial impact to the budget. Staff is continuing to finalize the financial impact analysis and will present updates as needed.

LCAP Goal(s): College, Career and Life Ready Graduates

Documents Attached:
1. Executive Summary
2 Revised Recommendations

Estimated Time of Presentation: 10 minutes

Submitted by: Vincent Harris, Chief, Continuous Improvement and Accountability

Dr. Iris Taylor, Chief Academic Officer

African American Achievement Task Force members

Approved by: Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent

I.   Overview/History of Department or Program

Developing SCUSD's graduates who are highly prepared to pursue continued educational opportunities and achieve to their potential is an urgent issue for the District. The District's Equity Access and Social Justice Guiding Principle calls for *ALL students to be given an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options*. The distance between this goal and the current reality for far too many SCUSD's students is of grave concern.

The disparities in performance in markers such as English Language Arts and Math Achievement, Graduation, A-G and Suspensions are persistent among historically underperforming student groups including students with disabilities, English Learners, Foster Youth, and those who are homeless and socio-economically disadvantaged. This is also true when data on graduation rates are disaggregated by racial and ethnic categories and Latino/a, African American, Native American and certain Asian Pacific Islander groups, namely Hmong and Laotian are the lowest performing groups. However, among the District's diverse racial and ethnic groups, the under-performance of African American/Black students on an array of measures is particularly acute especially when viewed in relationship to their percentage in the District's general population.

The District recognizes that the outcomes it is currently producing are because of the way the system is, and has historically been, designed. Our job is to ensure that Black students and their peers graduate high school ready for whatever they aspire to do next in life this requires that we vigilantly pursue strategies and take action to change the design of the system to support greater student achievement so that all students are able to achieve their personal dreams.

II.   Driving Governance:

The overarching governance is the Equity, Access and Social Justice Guiding principle which states that *all students will have an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options*. Board policy and Administrative Regulation on Student Discipline #5144 informs this work as well.

From an inequity perspective, there is a comprehensive body of research that documents the factors contributing to the underperformance of Black youth and how it can be addressed (Ed Trust West, 2015, Council of the Great City School, 2013, Jobs for the Future, 2012). In the seminal report from The Education Trust West, *Black Minds Matter (2015)*, the authors note that among California's racially and ethnically diverse student groups, Black students are more likely to:
- Be suspended or expelled,
- Be identified for special education, and
- Take remedial or non-credit bearing course work as college students

Conversely, the report concludes that Black students are least likely to:
- be placed in gifted and talented education programs
- have access to and be given a full sequence of college preparatory classes
- graduate high school in four years
- complete a college degree

These troubling conclusions are born out in SCUSD data on African American student access to opportunities and achievement. We are committed to disrupting the predictability and persistence of these outcomes within our system through a strategic and disciplined approach drawing on research and best practice, assessing and monitoring progress, and partnering with Black students, parents/guardians, and community leaders.

III.   Budget:

The budget for this item is still to be determined and will take into consideration the District's current fiscal condition. Funding from grants and other external sources will be investigated and pursued. It is important to note that some recommendations will require almost no direct investment of financial resources and will be implemented first.

IV.   Goals, Objectives and Measures:

The District has developed and/or identified several measures to assess if its efforts to impact the academic achievement and social emotional well-being of African American and other underperforming student groups are resulting in improvements. Key indicators are comprised of both formative and summative measures and include, but are not limited to, progress towards and rates of grade level readiness, graduation, A-G completion as well as attendance, suspensions, and students sense of connectedness and safety. Recommendation details are included

V.   Major Initiatives:

The District is currently pursuing a number of initiatives focused on closing opportunity and achievement gaps and addressing the needs of African American as well as other underperforming student groups. These include:

Superintendent Meetings with Community Leaders – During the 2017-18 school year Superintendent Aguilar convened two meetings with a group of Black leaders to listen to concerns and proposed strategies for addressing the needs of African American students. These leaders expressed overwhelming support and commitment and are ready to partner with the District to change the educational trajectory for SCUSD's African American students.
Graduation Task Force and Recommendations – Superintendent Aguilar convened a Graduation Taskforce during the 2017 -18 school year comprised of an array of stakeholders including students, site leaders, community members, and district staff. The taskforce met from September -June and completed the task of developing a set of rigorous recommendations that will guide district policy and practice and lead to improvements in graduation rates where all

students are fully prepared for any postsecondary option they may choose. It is important to note that the graduation taskforce called out the need for additional supports for a few at-risk student groups including African American, English Learner, Foster and Students with Disabilities.

Expanded Learning Summer Program (ELSP) – SCUSD hosted its first Expanded Learning Summer Program, a five to six-week summer program that targeted underperforming students in key grade levels (1st, 3rd, 6th, 8th and 9th -12th). The program also included enrichment opportunities for students in grades 7-8.

Development of Data Infrastructure – The District has developed a strong data infrastructure that will allow staff to monitor the progress of student groups disaggregated by race/ethnicity as well as program groups (i.e. Special Education, English Learner, Foster Youth, etc.).

Work Teams - Superintendent Aguilar has tasked staff with analyzing the District's current infrastructure and systems and to research best practice and identify an initial set of clear impact indicators in key areas impacting outcomes for African American students. These work teams will expand to include other stakeholder groups once initial analyses are complete.
- Grade Level Readiness
- Special Education
- SPSA (Site Planning Process)
- School Climate/Suspensions/Chronic Absenteeism
- Multi-Tiered System of Support

The focus of this presentation will be on the African American Achievement Task Force which kicked off on Thursday, September 27th. The Task Force will be presenting its preliminary recommendations at this board meeting. Key task force actions included:

- Review of SCUSD student outcome data
- Review of comparative district student outcome data
- Discuss long-term barriers to success and possible solutions
- Sponsor focus groups of:
    o Principals
    o Teachers
    o Students
    o Parents

The task force met approximately 22 times over the past six months to study and create the preliminary recommendations. The 16-member Task Force included a distinguished set of educators, community leaders, students and other important partners.
Below is a brief recap of the actual recommendations. A more detailed description is attached:

Academic Achievement (By June 30, 2020)
- Increase 3rd grade SBAC proficiency for Black or African American students:
  - In Mathematics from 17% in 2017-18 to 25% in 2019-20.
  - In English Language Arts from 18% in 2017-18 to 27% in 2019-20.
- Increase 6th grade SBAC proficiency for Black or African American students:
  - In Mathematics from 15% in 2017-18 to 24% in 2019-20.
  - In English Language Arts from 19% in 2017-18 to 27% in 2019-20.
- Increase 8th grade SBAC proficiency for Black or African American students:
  - In Mathematics from 16% in 2017-18 to 24% in 2019-20.
  - In English Language Arts from 29% in 2017-18 to 36% in 2019-20.
- Increase 4-year cohort graduation rate from 74.1% in 2017-18 to 76.7% in 2019-20.
- Increase 4-year A-G course completion from 45.9% in 2017-18 to 48.6% in 2019-20.
- Adopt and implement curriculum that includes and reflects Black/African American experience.
- Partner with 7th grade Black/African American families/guardians to ensure they are equipped to monitor students' academic progress and to advocate for their students' academic success.
- Provide school-to-college and school-to-career experiences utilizing community stakeholders (career training, university shadowing, mentoring and internships, etc.)
- Increase Black/African American teachers from 109 to 150.
- Implement multiple measures to assess student progress in order to identify students in need of intervention and prioritize resources
- Implement research-based intervention and acceleration strategies to close persistent learning gaps.

Culture and Climate (By September 30, 2019)
- Establish a district-wide Black/African American Parent/Caregiver and Student Advisory Committee
- Divest from future funding for school resource officers
- Provide professional development addressing inequitable disciplinary practices and mandate 100% faculty and staff attendance
- Eliminate willful defiance suspensions
- Eliminate Pre K – 3rd grade suspensions
- Require sites with over 5% variance on suspension rate disproportionality to develop plan to reduce suspensions to at least the District average.
- Create a District wide study team tasked to review, monitor K-12 special education referral practices

Per the board's direction at the March 21st board meeting, the Task Force met several times to begin framing an implementation plan. Key considerations for the implementation plan are outlined below:

- **Complexity:** The higher the number of factors and inter-departmental/disciplinary relationships required within a recommendation, the more complex the recommendation is. Additional complexity factors include political and/or labor bargaining considerations. If a recommendation will require union negotiations, then it will be considered more complex than others that do not
    - How aligned is this recommendation to existing District initiatives/practices?
    - How many District personnel/departments would need to be consulted to determine the recommendations' need, fit, readiness and capacity for implementation?
- **Cost:** In the context of a financial crisis, assessing the new and iterative costs of a recommendation will determine how to allocate District resources efficiently and equitably.
    - What are the fiscal implications of this recommendation?
    - What are new or iterative costs?
    - What can be "absorbed" in existing programs/initiatives?
- **Impact on teaching and learning:** This refers to the intention and level of influence, minor or significant, a recommendation has to effect student achievement
    - How will this recommendation directly impact classroom instruction?
    - How will this recommendation directly impact teacher practice?
    - How will this recommendation impact academic achievement?

The finalized recommendation framework will be presented during the board meeting.

VI.   Results:

Results for SCUSD's Black or African American students reveal a troubling trend in several areas previously mentioned. The results for these students are the lowest or one of the lowest performing racial/ethnic groups when data are disaggregated for this factor. Black or African American students in SCUSD have the:

- Lowest cohort graduation rate for federal ethnic and racial groups for three consecutive years. In 2016-17, the most recent year for which data are available, the cohort graduation rate for Black or African American students was the lowest at 70.3%.

- Second lowest A-G completion rate for federal ethnic and racial groups for three consecutive years. In 2016-17, the most recent year for which data are available, the A-G completion rate for Black or African American students was second lowest at 25.5%. Pacific Islander students had the lowest rate (24.5%) of all federal ethnic and racial groups.
- Lowest percentage of students who met or exceeded ELA and Math standards on the SBAC for three consecutive years. In 2017-18, the most recent year available, 22% and 13% of these students met or exceeded standards in ELA and Math, respectively.

- Third average lowest 2017-18 SAT School Day results in ELA and lowest in Math results of all federal ethnic and racial groups. Pacific Islander and American Indian or Alaska Native students have the second lowest and lowest SAT Math results, respectively.

VII.   Lessons Learned/Next Steps:

It will take a combination of district staff, board leadership and community partners to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options.

It is important to note that the Task Force identified several key challenges during this process as well:
- Concern that District will fail to implement recommendations
- Need for differentiated recommendations to support diverse African American community
- Legacy of mistrust of District intent
- Aggressive timeline
- Worry about prioritization in the midst of fiscal crisis
- Need for community feedback particularly student engagement

Next steps include the following:
- Create measurable outcomes and milestones for each recommendation
- Calculate recommendation budget impact where appropriate
- Establish monitoring/accountability plan
- Set ongoing community communication and engagement plan and launch district wide oversight committee

**Revised African American Student Achievement Task Force
DRAFT Recommendations
As of March 5, 2019**

**Revised African American Student Achievement Task Force Recommendations
As of February 12, 2019**

Culture & Climate: School Climate

Recommendation #1: Effective immediately, SCUSD will divest from current and future funding of School Resource Officers (SROs), remove SRO's from district campuses and earmark funds from the contract to implement or expand programming and educational strategies that positively impact Black/African American students

Recommendation #2:
 	
By June 30, 2020, mandate the development of a professional development implementation strategy and the 100% attendance of all District and School site staff (certificated and classified) to said professional development that *specifically* addresses the disproportionality of Black/African American students' representation in inequitable practices and academic opportunities as referenced by AR 5144.
 	
SCUSD will track participant attendance and require attendees to complete session surveys to assess learning and application of information. SCUSD will include a summary of the professional learning evaluations in the annual progress report presented to the AAATF December 2020.
 	
The professional development planning team (?) will include a list of appropriately vetted African American content specialist(s), Black students, teachers, classified staff and area assistant superintendents. Required topics will include but not be limited to the following:
   • alternatives to exclusionary practices & conflict resolution strategies
   • student-centered restorative justice practices
   • cultural humility and competency strategies
   • implications of embedded implicit/explicit and unconscious bias and racialized microaggressions
   • how to assess and integrate cultural sensitivity and humility; growth mindset

- trauma informed practices (e.g. - racialized traumatic stress)
- mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapy strategies
- culturally responsive classroom teaching strategies and management techniques

Recommendation #3:

Beginning September 2019, SCUSD will eliminate willful defiance suspensions from all school sites.

By September 30, 2019, SCUSD will develop a strategic accountability and implementation plan outlining strategies to reduce the number of African American students in disproportionate discipline and especially exclusionary discipline practices. The current reporting mechanism of suspensions and exclusionary practices will also include training and monitoring of all staff for inputting the various forms of discipline including out of class and in class suspensions and in school and out of school suspensions, incorporating detail: is the student standing outside the classroom or standing against a wall during the class period or denied recess etc. For students with disabilities, compliance with the Behavior Intervention Plan and/or Behavior Support Plan is required prior to considering suspension (*manifestation of determination*).   This information can then be disaggregated by all categories (e.g. gender, foster youth, students receiving special education services, etc.) The report currently given to the board which details by school site can be enhanced to include details of each teacher. This will continue to be provided monthly in an information report submitted to the board*.*

Beginning September 2020, SCUSD will eliminate all suspensions for PreK-3rd grade. This recommendation is directly supported by Senate Bill 419 which eliminates willful defiance as a reason to suspend students.

Recommendation #4:
By end of September 30, 2019, SCUSD will track all forms of suspensions at each school site, by teacher, including out of school, in-school, lunch, and after school suspension activities to determine where African American students (disaggregated by all data categories) are disproportionally represented.

Revised African American Student Achievement Task Force
DRAFT Recommendations
As of March 5, 2019

Any site that is documented to have over a 5% variance on disproportionality SCUSD will require those school sites to develop a plan, consistent with the Annual plan no later than the end of the first quarter of the 2019-20 academic year to reduce their disproportionality referenced in AR 5144 for reductions that include assessing stakeholder responsibility points.

Recommendation #5:
By September 30, 2019, SCUSD will create a district wide student study team to review and monitor (special education **(HM)** referral practices and the use of subjective criteria, specifically in the category of emotional designations and referral practices of African American students. Upon review, the study team will evaluate the data and make appropriate recommendations to reduce the number of Black/African American students arbitrarily designated.

Recommendation #6:
Create a Black/African American Community Advisory Committee that will mandate that all Black/African American families receive information on the Black/African American Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will review current and existing school and district policies and practices to address areas of disproportionality.

District level staff must be assigned to support the Black/African American Community Advisory Committee. SCUSD will ensure their recommendations are developed in a timely manner so that Board Members can review them before making final decisions.

Recommendation #7:
Administer surveys and conduct Black/African American student and parent focus groups that identify African American student/parent/caregiver needs /issues/concerns. These focus groups will be held at least quarterly.

Data from focus groups will be used to select goals and identify actions to create safe and welcoming environments on campus and increase parent engagement.

Academic Achievement

Recommendation #8: *(Request Current B/AA Student Data from District Staff in Each Category)*

Sacramento City Unified School District
Est. 1854

Revised African American Student Achievement Task Force
DRAFT Recommendations
As of March 5, 2019

Early Childhood – By June 30, 2020, and each year thereafter, increase number and the percentage of Black/African American students (*from what to what)* enrolled in SCUSD Universal full-day preschool and Transitional Kindergarten programs that are culturally relevant, academically appropriate. For students with disabilities, provide required modifications and accommodations in accordance with the student's IEP.

Elementary School – By June 30, 2020, and each year thereafter, increase the 3rd grade Mathematics and literacy proficiency of Black/African American students from **(number and percentage)** to **(number and percentage)** by implementing high quality first best instruction, culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive evidence-based teaching and interventions such as intensive in-school interventions, mandatory after-school support, Saturday, and/or Summer school, and appropriate student modifications and accommodations. For students with disabilities, provide required modifications and accommodations in accordance with the student's IEP.

Middle School – By June 30, 2020, and each year thereafter, increase the total number/percentage of the African American 6th and 8th grader by **(what number and percentage)** who are ready, without remediation in 7th and 9th grades in Math and ELA (need to reference the current performance data to determine starting point).

By June 30, 2020, # of students out of # of students or x % of the current ^{X} grade Black/African American students who scored 1 on SBAC Mathematics Claim 1 will demonstrate progress towards achieving state standards by increasing their score to at least a 2 on the Spring 2020 SBAC administration.

This recommendation shall include, at a minimum, the following:
1) monitoring student progress through analysis of teacher developed common tasks and assessments;
2) analysis of District benchmark data administered twice per year in November and February
3) administering a formative interim assessment three times per year to 100% of the Black/African American 7th grade students to identify possible student mathematical gaps and misconceptions;
4) developing a comprehensive data-driven intervention plan of action that accurately identifies student needs and creates tiered support systems to

address those potential gaps and misconceptions including before, during, and after school learning opportunities, as well as, targeted teacher professional learning opportunities focused on culturally & linguistically relevant & responsive Mathematics re-engagement and re-teaching strategies; and

5) partnering with 7th grade Black/African American families/guardians to ensure they are equipped to monitor students' academic progress and to advocate for their students' academic success.

6) Schools will be required to bi-annually report on the success of Black students in the aforementioned areas. This data will be shared with the Advisory, Board and the public. For students with disabilities, provide required modifications and accommodations in accordance with the student's IEP.

7) Provide student accommodations and modifications as necessary.

High School – By June 30, 2020, and each year thereafter, SCUSD will increase graduation rates for Black/African American students by x% and A-G pathway completion by x%.

This recommendation shall include, at a minimum the following:

1) Monitoring to ensure that African American students are targeted for, have access to and necessary support to succeed in advanced courses and specialty programs:
    i. advanced placement, honors classes and dual enrollment.

2) Establishing understanding of, support for and frequent monitoring of A-G course enrollment, college applications completion, essential testing and financial aid to meet college and career training applications.

3) Increasing investment in, and create, effective programming targeted toward Black/African American students, that provide school-to-college and school-to-career experiences utilizing community stakeholders (career training, university shadowing, mentoring and internships)

4) Ensure teachers selected to teach advanced courses are culturally diverse, and include Black and non-Black teachers of color of diverse genders.

5) Schools will be required to bi-annually report on the success of Black/African American students in the aforementioned areas. This data will be shared with the Advisory, Board and the public.

6) For students with disabilities, provide required modifications and accommodations in accordance with the student's IEP.

Recommendation #9:
By June 30, 2020, and each year thereafter, SCUSD will adopt and implement curricular materials, with an emphasis on literacy and writing, that reflect African American historical traditions and contributions to the fields of Math, science, art and literature vetted by Black/African Parent Alliance.

Recommendation #10:
By June 30, 2020, and each year thereafter, SCUSD must hire xx or x% Black/African American teachers and administrators.

The recruitment process will include but not be limited to: developing a pipeline for African American classified staff to move into teaching and other certificated positions; work with local colleges and universities to recruit new teachers of color and build relationships with community organizations and national coalitions to make Sacramento a prime environment for Black teachers.

Human Resources will document recruitment efforts; analyze hiring and recruitment environment; work closely with local and statewide teachers' unions to improve hiring practices in order to attract local and nationwide talent.

Recommendation #11:
By no later than June 30, 2020, SCUSD will implement multiple tools to assess student progress. To accomplish this goal, SCUSD will renegotiate the current MOU regarding assessments that will allow for comprehensive assessment systems and the administration of assessments 3-4 times per school year in line with other districts in our area.

Recommendation #12:
Study, evaluate, and make recommendations on the effectiveness of approved intervention and acceleration strategies in order to address the pervasive, persistent underperformance of African American students.

Recommendations 13 – eliminated
Recommendation 14 and 15 –integrated in other recommendations