



Board Update

From the Desk of Jonathan P. Raymond, Superintendent

September 6, 2013

Teaching and Learning

Guide to Success

As the first week of school comes to a close, the Guide to Success is gearing up. Over the last two months, a group of 20 principals, teachers, stakeholders and district representatives met weekly to outline a draft of initial indicators for school and district performance. For school sites, these indicators range from Common Core to Culture and Climate Surveys to Student Portfolios. For the district, the indicators focus on customer service, quality and cost efficiency. Throughout the fall, we will be taking these initial indicators out to the community to collect and refine the tool using stakeholder feedback.

This community engagement process will be an innovative step for SCUSD, utilizing social media as well as community stakeholders to own and discuss the work within their networks. Look for more details on the progress of this tool, which will provide more comprehensive and targeted information and supports to **all** of our SCUSD team members.

Social and Emotional Learning

During July and August, SCUSD's Social and Emotional Leadership Team was busy at work developing plans to introduce the CASEL SchoolKit to the McClatchy Network (Cohort I), as well as to the second wave of 15 new SEL schools for 2013-14 (Cohort II). Major themes the district focused on during July included assessment tools and strategies for SEL competency, planning a September meeting for cross-walking SEL with CCSS, working with the Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) to increase consultation with new initiatives and changes, budget issues for the coming year, and how to train and support receiving school sites on SEL (Cohort II) that are being impacted by school closures.

The SEL Leadership Team also began planning the first of four community forums on SEL, working with the district PTA and other community partners to raise awareness about SEL, report on progress to date, identify the role of parents in supporting SEL, and explain the implementation of SEL district-wide. The forum will take place in October, with 150 people expected to attend.

In July, there was a very productive meeting with Area Assistant Superintendents on the logistics for a district rollout of the CASEL SchoolKit, enhancing communications and

providing training for principals and schools. New to the SEL team is Hueling Lee, a Harvard intern assigned to SCUSD, who is doing her doctoral work on SEL, adult learning and adult behavior. She will be working closely with the superintendent and Interim SEL Director Carrie Rose on the SEL implementation process. In addition to CASEL's activities, a group of 21 SCUSD staff attended Peter Senge's Systems Thinking Camp Snowball in North Carolina. They reported that Senge was very supportive of SEL and concluded that school districts cannot do systems thinking without the combination of the five SEL core competencies and 21st century skills.

In August, SCUSD was introduced to the CASEL SchoolKit during five days of one- to six-hour workshops and meetings with the faculty and staff of 13 Cohort I and II schools. The Cohort I staff development day included more than 200 faculty and staff from the McClatchy Network, Central Office staff and Superintendent Raymond. These workshops were fast-paced, highly interactive and intensive. Feedback on the workshops has been quite positive.

On August 23, American Institutes for Research Vice President David Osher met with the key SEL district support staff to discuss the draft AIR report and progress of the implementation process. The district is now ready to do a more formal evaluation and to integrate the SEL work with other district initiatives.

Common Core Summer Training/Stakeholder Engagement

As we move ahead with implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) on the state's timetable, which calls for students to be tested on the standards in 2014-15, several professional development sessions were held over the summer for teachers who work with students in kindergarten through eighth-grade classrooms. Three CCSS Summer Institutes on CCSS math standards – two five-day sessions and one three-day session – were held in June and July. More than 250 teachers and administrators attended the sessions.

In August, eight CCSS orientation sessions were held on English Language Arts to familiarize teachers with the standards. More than 400 teachers in grades K-8 attended the three-hour sessions. In addition, staff has begun gathering feedback from various stakeholder groups that will aid in the development of a plan for using state Common Core funding. The plan will be presented to the Board for approval later this fall.

Operations

Transition Update

The final phases of the transition process have been accomplished with the receiving sites holding orientation and welcoming activities for all of their families during the week of August 26. Final preparations for students were completed, and district office staff was assigned to assist in the offices of each of the 12 receiving sites for the first day of school. In

addition, after-school staff was deployed on the first day of school to each of the 41 bus stops so that families were greeted as they arrived at the pick-up location.

The newly assigned Walking Attendants were at the designated pick-ups for walkers from Pacific, Ethel I. Baker and Earl Warren. The Walking Attendants participated in a two-hour training with personnel from Walk Sacramento prior to the first day (see below). They are also equipped with cell phones, vests and walking flags so that the attendants are visible to walkers and traffic. While most parents chose to drive their students to school during the first week, it is anticipated families will access the service as the year progresses.

The transition has not been without challenges. A few isolated incidents of misplaced or mislabeled equipment were noted and have been recovered and were delivered to the appropriate location prior to the start of school. In addition, our Community Ambassadors out at sites the first week were able to alert staff to specific site needs (more desks at one site, more traffic cones at another) so that those needs were met as quickly as possible. Principals worked extremely hard in anticipation of the first day and all but a handful of students were in classes and engaging in instruction within the first 15 minutes of the first bell. The few remaining were generally new students to the school and/or district working with school staff to register.

District staff are monitoring enrollments at all sites, granting permits as space becomes available. Enrollments and staffing will continue to be monitored until enrollments stabilize within the next two weeks.

The Community Partners' Transition Committee met to review the transition process. Members were asked to reflect on the major topics of concern that they had generated from the first meeting, reflect upon their role in supporting the transition, and reflect on the value of the meeting structure and topics covered. Members expressed general appreciation for the opportunity to be heard in the venue created and felt as though they were able to respond to the needs of the community through their individual and collective participation. The group felt very strongly that the district continue its support to the families at the receiving sites in a meaningful way.

We will be preparing a detailed enrollment report and a report on the costs of facility maintenance and upgrades at receiving schools next week.

Summer Facilities Projects

SCUSD's Facilities Support Services division was busy this summer working to complete construction and renovation projects necessary to open schools this year, including:

- The repurposing and "greening" of four portable classrooms and a restroom building at Alice Birney

- Modernization work at receiving school sites that included roofing repairs/replacement, parking lot and playground improvements, painting, landscaping and flooring replacements
- Complete renovation of the multipurpose room at John Morse including a new garden and shade canopy for outdoor dining/seating area (still in progress)
- Asphalt and parking lot improvements throughout the district
- Deep cleaning at all school sites
- The conversion of six smaller classrooms into four larger classrooms at Ethel I. Baker
- The conversion of one large room into two regular classrooms at Rosa Parks
- Conversion of two classrooms and common learning area at Rosa Parks to accommodate kindergarten and preschool (still in progress)
- Installation of two new playgrounds at Rosa Parks to accommodate expansion to a K-8 facility (still in progress)
- Quick Strike projects throughout the district including new or replacement security cameras, lighting upgrades, plumbing upgrades, painting, landscaping, new marquees (in progress), fencing and gates, playground and parking lot enhancements
- Began designs for athletic field and gym enhancements at Rosemont, Hiram Johnson, C.K. McClatchy, John F. Kennedy and California Middle School
- **Over 2,100 work orders were completed between June 17 and September 3**

Project Green

- New native-plant, low-water landscaping at O.W. Erlewine and John Sloat
- Irrigation and field improvements at Maple
- Plumbing upgrades at McClaskey and Sutterville
- Flooring and painting upgrades in the cafeteria at Theodore Judah
- Window replacements at Will C. Wood
- HVAC control upgrade at Rosemont
- New energy efficient windows and flooring replacement in the library at O.W. Erlewine
- Day lighting installation at Alice Birney in three portables and the multipurpose room
- Day lighting installation at Isador Cohen
- Day lighting installation at A.M. Winn in the front office and multipurpose room

Transportation Services Reports First Week Success with New Routes

With few exceptions, school buses were generally on time for the first week of school. Last year, there were 107 Special Education routes. That number has dropped to 104 routes this school year even with increased Special Education enrollment.

Last year, there were 14 Safety, Concap and Program Improvement routes. This year, with the new home-to-school routes servicing the students affected by school closures – along with the other routes – the district has scheduled 23 routes. Overall, this is an increase of

nine regular education routes and a reduction of three Special Education routes. The Transportation Department continues efforts to maximize bus routes as much as possible.

Nutrition Services Implements Changes

Nutrition Services implemented changes to cafeteria service this fall that comply with new USDA Breakfast Regulations. The changes include utilizing the lunch salad bars at breakfast to help students learn to select more fruits at breakfast, preparing them for next school year when the new regulations require one-half cup fruit at breakfast.

In addition, upgrades were made to the computerized meal accountability system that will more quickly qualify family meal applications through www.scusd.edu/applyformeals.com. Online prepayments for meals were also transitioned to a new system: www.EZSchoolpay.com.

Tdap Compliancy

As the first week of school draws to a close, 84 percent of incoming SCUSD seventh graders are compliant with the state's Tdap documentation requirement. Currently 508 students are noncompliant. Health Services will provide free vaccination service to students who are uninsured or have Medi-Cal during regular Immunization Clinic hours every Thursday from 3 to 6 p.m. to assist families having difficulty obtaining appointments with their primary care provider. School-based service may be added contingent on vaccine availability.

Safe Schools Office Works with Walk Sacramento

On Tuesday, August 27, Walk Sacramento provided Walking School Bus Training for our SCUSD Walking Attendants. Items covered included basic pedestrian safety as well as methods to safely cross children and the role of the Walking Attendant at crosswalks. Training ended with a demonstration walk around the Serna Center neighborhood. Training lasted about 2.5 hours.

On Wednesday, August 28, the Safe Schools Office, along with Walk Sacramento attended the welcoming event held at Pacific Elementary School. Walk Sacramento and Safe Schools partnered at a table to talk with families about the recommended walking routes and answer questions. The team also provided pedestrian safety information and information on partnering with the community to reduce crime around our schools.

On August 28 and 29, the Safe Schools Office provided training to school site Office Managers on Violent Intruder Strategies. Our district has used the A.L.I.C.E. model to provide this information to many of our employees. Thus far we have provided training to principals, campus safety personnel, plant managers, custodians and some teachers.

New Teacher Support

The New Teacher Support staff worked throughout the summer to prepare for the upcoming 2013-14 BTSA Induction school year. Participant feedback gathered during the 2012-13 school year was used for reflection and creation of streamlined changes to the work teachers engage in to meet BTSA Induction requirements. Four support provider orientations were conducted during July and August. Seventeen support providers attended and four more will attend the make-up orientation in September. The training focused on the updates to the FACT Curriculum used in BTSA Induction, Portfolio Rubric review modifications, learning centered conversations and new procedures, such as going all digital, being implementing this year. We are excited to be moving in the direction of e-portfolios and possibly using the Atomic Learning Site as a platform for our Participating Teachers documentation. The effective support of our novice teachers is among the most important components of the work being completed.

Community Engagement

Group Kicks Off Fundraising for Arson-Damaged Playgrounds

Sacramento Unified Education Foundation – SCUSD’s official nonprofit organization – kicked off fundraising for two arson-damaged playgrounds on Tuesday at Caroline Wenzel Elementary School.

The group received a total of \$4,000 in donations and pledges at the morning event:

- \$1,000 from City Councilman Steve Cohn on behalf of Rebuild McKinley – the group that raised money to fund construction of a new playground at McKinley Park following an arson fire there on July 28, 2012
- \$1,000 from SCUSD Board of Education Vice President Darrel Woo
- \$1,000 from City Councilwoman Bonnie Pannell
- \$1,000 from Caroline Wenzel’s PTA

As of today, the fund has climbed to \$5,700.

Earlier this summer, playground structures at Wenzel and John Sloat Elementary School were set ablaze. Damage was extensive and both structures were removed for safety reasons. Although SCUSD is moving swiftly to replace the structures, the schools opened on Tuesday without them.

The district’s insurance deductible is \$25,000 for each incident. Without donations, that \$50,000 will come out of the general fund budget, further hampering the district’s work to rebound from recessionary budget cuts. Community members can donate to the Sacramento Unified Education Foundation by visiting the organization’s Facebook page – www.facebook.com/SCUSDfoundation.

Connect Center Reaches Out to Pacific, Edward Kemble Families

In preparation for implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACT), SCUSD's Connect Center has already begun participating in school site health fairs to inform uninsured students and parents of their upcoming health care options. This past week, Connect Center staff conducted health insurance outreach to parents at Pacific Elementary School and Edward Kemble K-3. Health insurance enrollment services are available at the Connect Center for all of the district's uninsured students.

American Indian Education Program

The SCUSD American Indian Education Program (AIEP) hosted a Back-to-School Celebration for American Indian students on August 28. The celebration took place at Caroline Wenzel, home of the AIEP Resource Center. More than 50 students, parents and community members came to celebrate with our youth.

The AIEP Parent Committee was able to fundraise and secure donations to provide school supplies to each of the K-12 students that attended the event. Some of the organizations that were present and provided additional resources included: The Sacramento Native American Health Center, California Indian Manpower Consortium, Sacramento State, Native Dads Network and Youth Engagement Services Expanded Learning Programs. The event started with a blessing and the Fatherhood is Sacred drum group was present to offer songs for students and their families.

Sacramento Youth Leadership Program

SCUSD's Youth Engagement Services, City Councilmember Jay Schenirer's WayUp Sacramento and the Youth Development Network collaborated to host and sponsor approximately 350 SCUSD high school students to attend the Sacramento Youth Leadership Program at Sacramento State University from July 30 through August 1. Youth from Rosemont, McClatchy, Kennedy, School of Engineering and Sciences, West Campus, Hiram Johnson, Burbank, Health Professions and Sacramento Charter High School participated in a host of activities that:

- Exposed students to higher education opportunities
- Assessed and interpreted individual student strengths
- Created opportunities for positive student centered dialogue
- Promoted positive team building
- Developed student leadership capacities
- Created opportunities for action planning

The opportunity was an extension of the SCUSD's Summer of Service program, targeting students transitioning into the 9th grade for the 2013-14 academic year.

Three New Youth and Family Resource Centers Open

Three new Youth and Family Resource Centers (YFRC) are being launched this fall at Elder Creek, Isador Cohen and Ethel Phillips elementary schools. The district currently operates 19 school-based YFRCs where social workers, counselors, family advocates, interns and community partners work directly with students, family members and school staff to address issues of concern. The YFRCs address critical student needs that pose barriers to learning by providing a wide range of support in the areas of health, mental health, youth development, family services and academic enrichment. SCUSD's YFRCs began in 1992 with support from the California Healthy Start program, but have since been sustained through a variety of grants and funding sources. In 2010, SCUSD's YFRCs received a Golden Bell Award from the California School Boards Association to recognize them as models of exemplary educational practice.

Geek Squad Technology Camp

SCUSD Youth Engagement Services and the Magic Johnson Foundation co-sponsored the third annual Geek Squad Technology Camp hosted by Best Buy on August 28-29. The camp was held at Bowling Green Elementary school and involved approximately 160 students from the Bowling Green and Phoenix Park communities. The third- through sixth-grade participants were engaged in hands-on workshops that included an array of technological devices, tools and computer software and were given the opportunity to create their own mini movies.

On the last day of camp, a graduation ceremony was held for the students that allowed parents and families to participate in the technological experience as well. Overall, the student participants, families, staff and volunteers thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were pleased with the outcome of the camp.