



# Board Update

From the Desk of Jonathan P. Raymond, Superintendent

October 25, 2013

## Teaching and Learning

### *Chronic Absence/Attendance Improvement*

SCUSD is partnering with organizations on an effort to help improve attendance at schools and to encourage students at risk for being chronically absent – missing 10 percent of the school year – to come to school every day.

The Get Schooled Attendance Challenge is sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The primary focus is on increasing school attendance in the middle school and high school age groups. The program utilizes a variety of engaging activities that allow students to show their commitment to education -- and have fun in the process. By participating in the activities, students earn points for their school. An on-line leaderboard tracks progress for all to see. Winners will receive cash prizes for their schools and a DJ dance party. Schools participating are: American Legion, C.K. McClatchy, Health Professions, Hiram Johnson, John F. Kennedy, Rosemont, Albert Einstein, Kit Carson, Sam Brannan and Will C. Wood.

“I Got Caught Attending School” is a program primarily focused on our elementary schools. The goal is to increase school attendance and reduce truancy and chronic absence. SCUSD and KSFM 102.5 have partnered to catch worthy students in school. Four schools will be visited each month with three winning students chosen at each site. District staff will surprise the students in class awarding them a certificate, T-shirt and a group photo with a district administrator, principal, teacher and attendance coordinator. The students’ names will also be placed in a monthly drawing for a \$50 gas card to be given to the winning students’ parents or guardians. The program is targeting those students who would not normally win a “perfect attendance” certificate -- SART/SARB students and foster youth that are improving on their attendance. The program will also acknowledge students who do have perfect attendance; however, there will be no distinction of who is on a SART/SARB or foster youth shown on the certificate. Only the school principal and attendance coordinator will know.

### *Restorative Justice Collaborative*

The Restorative Justice Collaborative Planning Team reconvened on Wednesday to discuss the development of a Board policy around student discipline. The collaborative consists of

partners and representatives from the Office of the California Chief Justice, the Black Parallel School Board, SCUSD's Board of Education, the Superintendent's Office and school site principals, teachers, parents and students. A total of 25 stakeholders attended this last meeting to discuss the following areas. These areas will be incorporated into the first draft of the policy:

- Statement of Intent: Foundational understanding and shared language. The roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders
- Shared accountability for positive school climate
- Alternatives to suspensions and expulsions
- Professional development and supports
- An effective evaluation process
- Creating a stronger bond between all stakeholders: School leadership, students, families and the community

### *California Academic Partnership Program to support Hiram Johnson*

In a letter to Hiram Johnson High School, the California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) has indicated it will continue to support a CAPP facilitator for the campus through the end of the school year. The school had applied for a demonstration partnership grant. Although the school was not eligible for full funding, the organization will fund the facilitator.

### *DRIVE 4 ARTS grant*

The DRIVE 4 ARTS grant is a Professional Development (PDAE) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant's primary goal is arts resurgence and teacher sustainability. The grant supports building and expanding capacity for elementary teachers to implement and sustain arts integration; and for K-12 arts teachers to implement the Common Core Literacy Standards as part of a high quality, in depth, comprehensive education for students.

For the 2013-14 school year, the grant funds support monthly professional development sessions delivered by The California Arts Project and/or the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as well as: An online book study; online unit module review; onsite support by an arts-integration specialist; four onsite, 10-week residencies by local artists; clerical support; and a four-day Summer Institute.

On Friday, October 11, elementary school teachers attended an all-day session lead by Deb Brozka, Kennedy Center's lead presenter, on the topic of Common Core ELA, Smarter Balanced Assessment and the arts. Participants "tried on the work" by engaging in exercises that demonstrate how teachers can use the arts to deepen students understanding of CCSS. Teachers created Tableau and creative movement to depict scenes from an Appendix B text, moved collaboratively to engage in speaking and listening standards, participated in a "close read" of a visual text, lead a group through a similar exercise, worked through a sample

Smarter Balanced assessment item, and brainstormed how to take the work back to their classrooms.

On Thursday, October 15, visual and performing arts (VAPA) teachers spent time reviewing and responding to the most recent draft of the new national VAPA standards with the intention of making California educators' voices being heard with the hope that the state will adopt the new standards. The California Arts Project presenter, Armalyn De La O, is part of the national team drafting these new standards. This session was the fifth in a series that began in July during which teachers worked collaboratively to create a unit of study that integrated CCSS Literacy standards, new ELD standards and California VAPA standards. Teachers shared with their teams and then with the whole group the progress they have made in teaching the units and received feedback/suggestions from one another. Then teachers revised or added to their units which they will finish teaching before the final session in this series which will take place on November 5. At that session, they will evaluate student work resulting from the units. Teachers also discussed the first three chapters of Tony Wagner's "Creating Innovators" focusing on the implications for designing and teaching VAPA courses that support student readiness for careers and college.

### *Common Core Professional Learning Continues*

Teams of teacher leaders from SCUSD middle and high schools attended Common Core Professional Learning sessions this week. These teachers serve as a leadership cadre for their site and attended to build their content knowledge and instructional practices. As a result, they will return to their schools to teach and inform their colleagues.

Teachers learned the content and instructional strategies of the work by trying on the work themselves as learners then debriefing the experience in collaborative grade-level table groups. Through repeated practice, discussion and professional reading throughout the day, teachers constructed content knowledge and new understandings around the Common Core instructional shifts.

## **Operations**

### *Priority Schools Evaluation*

The BERC Group, Inc., an educational research and consulting firm, is conducting an evaluation to measure the effectiveness of Sacramento City Unified School District's Priority Schools Turnaround Model. All schools participated in a day long visit by the BERC team and provided an opportunity for Board members to provide their input into the process. The purpose of the BERC Group is to conduct a study at the seven Priority Schools to identify successes of this initiative for scalability and sustainability and to provide recommendations for continuous improvement. The recommendations will be used to support other schools in our district.

## *7-11 Committee*

The 7-11 Committee was formed to develop a recommendation to the Board of Education on the disposition of the seven school sites closed earlier in the year. The chair of the committee is Anna Molander; the vice-chair is Michael Minnick.

The SCUSD 7-11 Committee has now met five times – two meetings at Serna and three at closed sites (CP Huntington, CB Wire and Fruit Ridge). Next Monday's meeting will be held at Joseph Bonnheim. Every meeting provides opportunity for community members to share ideas for reuse or repurpose of the closed sites. The committee will begin meeting back at the Serna Center on December 5 so that more formal proposals can be made. The proposed schedule of meetings, site visits and public hearings are posted on the district's website (<http://www.scusd.edu/7-11-committee>). The goal is to have a recommendation to the Board of Education for its January 9, 2014 meeting.

## **Community Engagement**

### *Parents as Partners in Schools*

The School, Family and Community Partnerships office of Parent Engagement and Training is offering a full schedule of Parents as Partners in Schools workshops this fall. The workshop is offered over the course of nine weeks, and is provided at no cost to the school or the participants. The commitment from the school is merely to provide space. The facilitator will bring in all materials, child care, interpreters and a light snack.

The format of each workshop is interactive. Each session builds participants' skills in supporting their child's education. Topics such as homework, positive communication, building resilience and the importance of good attendance are included. Additionally, the workshops enable the group to build cohesion and community while they also practice leadership skills. Many of those who have completed Parents as Partners in Schools move on to take a greater role in our district, by enrolling in the Leadership Academy, or by becoming involved in decision making at school sites or at the district level. Most importantly, they feel connected to their school and equipped to support their child in a positive and constructive way.

The schools below are offering the program this fall.

Edward Kemble: Wednesdays from October 9 – December 11 (9-11 a.m.)

Ethel Phillips: Fridays from October 11 – December 13 (8:30-10:30 a.m.)

A.M. Winn: Fridays from October 11 – December 13 (9-11 a.m.)

Bowling Green Chacon: Tuesdays from October 15 – December 17 (8:30-10:30 a.m.)

Hollywood Park: Tuesdays from October 15 – December 17 (9-11 a.m.)

Earl Warren: Wednesdays from October 24 – December 18 (9-11 a.m.)

American Legion: Thursdays from October 24 – December 19 (9-11 a.m.)

### *Community Budget Forum*

On Wednesday, SCUSD hosted a “town hall”-type forum at Genevieve Didion K-8 School to present information on the 2014-15 budget and to field questions from the public. About 80 parents, teachers, principals and neighbors attended the two-hour session. Most questions focused on the spending restrictions connected with categorical funds and on the changes to funding that will come under the Local Control Funding Formula. SCUSD’s Chief Business Officer Ken Forrest and Director of Fiscal Services Gerardo Castillo presented PowerPoint slides and other materials. Mr. Forrest’s presentation can be found at <http://www.scusd.edu/2013-2014-fiscal-year>. Future meetings are scheduled from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Albert Einstein Middle School (December 4); and California Middle School (February 26).

### *SCUSD Staff Presents at Statewide Conference*

Barbara Kronick, Director of Support Services, and Pam Cajucom, Youth and Family Center Coordinator at Bidwell, Sloat and Wenzel elementary schools, presented at the Strategies statewide conference on “Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: The Power of Community Summit.” Their presentation focused on the role that Youth and Family Resource Centers, as an example of the community schools model, have on leveraging and integrating local partnerships and resources to support students and families. SCUSD is seen as one of the most successful districts in the state at sustaining Youth and Family Resource Centers through community collaboration and blended funding.

### *Common Core Parent Workshops*

SCUSD’s Common Core State Standards Parent/Guardian Workshop Series continued this week. On Tuesday, parents learned about the math standards at workshops held at Matsuyma, Cal and Burbank. Participants shared strategies for supporting children at home with meeting the expectations of the CCSS.