



# SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 11.2

**Meeting Date:** June 15, 2017

**Subject:** Literacy and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and English Language Arts (ELA) Implementation

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

**Division:** Curriculum and Instruction

**Recommendation:** NA

**Background/Rationale:** The Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is committed to graduating students who are prepared to thrive in a globally competitive world that is ever changing, increasingly diverse, and technology and information driven. A critical factor in a student's success in this world is being a literate adult with high levels of competency in the English Language Arts. The English Language Arts (ELA) includes skills that support a student's ability to read and critically analyze complex texts in a variety of forms such as print as well as visual forms. They also include the skills needed to effectively communicate one's ideas for academic purposes in an array of both spoken as well as written forms and for a diverse audiences and purposes.

In 2010, the state of California adopted a new set of curriculum standards for ELA, the CA Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These standards outline the expectations for what should be taught and what students should know, understand, and be able to do to be considered ready for college, career, and life after high school. SCUSD has been engaged in instituting programs, practices, and initiatives to build staff capacity and to support students in acquiring these skills and competencies and ensure their ability to navigate and contribute productively to an increasingly complex world.

**Financial Considerations:** The district utilizes a combination of funding sources to support literacy and implementation of the CCSS ELA. This includes funding from CCSS ELA, Title I, and federal grants. District funding for CCSS ELA is approximately \$8,285,000 which includes \$6,000,000 for the adoption of ELA/ELD Instructional Materials which will occur in 2017-2018 school year.

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

**Documents Attached:**

1. Executive Summary

**Estimated Time of Presentation:** 10 minutes

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Denise Leograndis, ELA Coordinator

**Approved by:** José L Banda, Superintendent



**Final due to Iris by June 2**

## **I. Overview of the Title**

The Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is committed to graduating students who are prepared to thrive in a globally competitive world that is ever changing, increasingly diverse, and technology and information driven. A critical factor in a student's success in this world is being a literate adult with high levels of competency in the English Language Arts. The English Language Arts (ELA) includes skills that support a student's ability to read and critically analyze complex texts in a variety of forms such as print as well as visual forms. They also include the skills needed to effectively communicate one's ideas for academic purposes in an array of both spoken as well as written forms and for a diverse audiences and purposes.

In 2010, the state of California adopted a new set of curriculum standards for ELA, the CA Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These standards outline the expectations for what should be taught and what students should know, understand, and be able to do to be considered ready for college, career, and life after high school. SCUSD has been engaged in instituting programs, practices, and initiatives to build staff capacity and to support students in acquiring these skills and competencies and ensure their ability to navigate and contribute productively to an increasingly complex world.

## **II. Driving Governance**

The SCUSD Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Strategic Plan Goal of College, Career and Life Ready Students requires that as a district we challenge and support all students to actively engage in rigorous and relevant curriculum that prepares them for college, career, and a fulfilling life. This preparation must be afforded to all students regardless of zip code, race/ethnicity, ability, language proficiency, and life circumstance. Our goal is for all schools to hold students to the highest academic expectations, which is also evident in the Local Control Accountability Plan's (LCAP) focus on increasing the percent of students who are on track to graduate college and career ready and the Local Educational Agency (LEA) plan which is designed to enable schools to substantially assist students to meet academic standards.

Additionally, our work in literacy is guided by the CA ELA/ELD Framework which specifically calls out that *schools are responsible for supporting all students to develop the capacities of literate*



*individuals. Included in these capacities are demonstrating independence; building strong content knowledge; responding to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline; comprehending as well as critiquing; valuing evidence; using technology and digital media strategically and capably; and understanding other perspectives and cultures. The commitment to ensuring all students leave SCUSD able to demonstrate these skills is the driving governance that underscores the district’s literacy-focused programs and initiatives.*

### III. Budget

The district utilizes a combination of funding sources to support literacy and implementation of the CCSS ELA. This includes funding from CCSS ELA, Title I, and federal grants. District funding for CCSS ELA is approximately \$8,285,000 which includes \$6,000,000 for the adoption of ELA/ELD Instructional Materials which will occur in 2017-2018 school year. The allocation of these funds includes but is not limited to the following items/services:

Item/Service	Amount	Funding Source
Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ELA Coordinator (1.0 FTE)</li> <li>● ELA/ELD Training Specialists</li> </ul>	\$560,000	Title I, Title II, Grant,
Professional Learning	\$225,000	Title I, Grant
Instructional Material and Supplemental Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ELA/ELD Instructional Materials Adoption</li> <li>● Classroom Libraries</li> <li>● Digital Resources</li> <li>● Chromebooks for 12 Growing Lifelong Reader School Sites</li> </ul>	\$7,500,000	LCFF, Grant

### IV. Goals, Objectives and Measures



SCUSD is fully committed to implementing a college- and career-ready curriculum designed to ensure students graduate with a solid post-secondary foundation. The district's goal is to empower and engage both school-based and district staffs in strengthening their understanding of the CCSS ELA as a means of yielding high levels of student learning. To this end, the district uses multiple measures to assess the quality and effectiveness of the implementation of the CCSS ELA. Student performance on the ELA Standards is measured annually through student performance on the CA Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). In addition, the district is in the process of developing/identifying local assessments to monitor student progress.

The quality and impact of the professional learning and the fidelity of implementation of the instructional materials is determined via perception data through surveys, evaluations of professional learning, observations of instruction in the classroom, and examination of student work. Information gathered is used to improve and make programmatic and process changes.

## V. Major Initiatives

SCUSD has instituted a multi-faceted approach to standards implementation and has identified five key levers for implementation and impacting student achievement. These levers are incorporated in the district's new Strategic Plan 2016-21, the LCAP and the LEA Plan and include a focus on: a) staff capacity building, b) instructional materials and pedagogy, c) assessment for learning, d) communications and stakeholder engagement, and e) technology infrastructure. Below we describe the major strategies and actions for each lever.

### Staff Capacity Building

The district recognizes that capacity building is needed for a wide range of staff members in order for the implementation of the English Language Arts CCSS to have maximum impact on student achievement. Thus, staff capacity building has included professional learning for an array of staff members including administrators, teachers, instructional aides, and district staff.

### Leadership Capacity Building

SCUSD's capacity building for principals has occurred primarily through the monthly principals' meeting structure. In the 2016-17 school year principals and teachers focused



on instructional strategies for engaging students in academic discourse and high quality tasks/texts/questions. Principals also collaborated on supporting teachers with standards implementation. This year, the Academic Office led twenty seven sets of cross-site instructional rounds, attended by principals, assistant principals, and teachers.

Monthly principal meetings are offered for administrators of thirty-nine schools, elementary and K-8, where teachers and administrators have participated in Balanced Literacy summer institutes. Through book study, classroom observations, and analyzing student work, these monthly meetings grow the participants' capacity for leading work in literacy at their school sites.

#### *Teacher Capacity Building/Professional Learning*

The Academic Office will continue to provide professional learning opportunities to support teachers with standards implementation. This includes professional learning sessions during the summer and school year and the site work of the district's training specialists. SCUSD currently employs a cadre of nine ELA/ELD training specialists. The training specialists provide coaching and feedback, conduct demonstration lessons, and work with teachers on lesson/unit and assessment planning. In addition, all teachers are provided the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues during the early release day on Thursdays called Collaborative Time. This designated period affords teachers time to learn more about the standards, design lessons, examine student work, and address implications for teaching.

With training specialists support and use of the curriculum maps and supplemental materials and resources, teachers have been working on improving ELA instruction with a focus on writing instruction through genre study, academic discourse including writing about reading, and the use of high quality texts, tasks and questions. This year, district ELA instructional support is expanding the work on Academic Discourse by adding a focus on writing about reading and foundational skills instructional practices.

Over the past four years, the district has begun shifting to a Balanced Literacy approach in literacy instruction and more than 500 teachers in grades K-8 have attended the Beginning and Advanced Balanced Literacy Summer Institutes. In addition, The ELA/ELD training specialists continue to grow in capacity to provide support for teachers in the



summer and during the school year. Teachers continue to grow in their learning journey of the instructional shifts and have increased their capacity to implement the ELA CCSS.

With the support of a federal grant for twelve of our schools called Growing Lifelong Readers (GLLR), 200 K-6 teachers have committed to two years of building their capacity to support Independent Reading that includes student choice of text to read with teacher guidance and wide and volume reading all with the intent to grow and nurture a lifelong love of reading.

SCUSD, in partnership with California State University, Sacramento and Sacramento City College, plan for and implement capacity building among our high school English teachers who are using the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) materials. The course is designed for twelfth grade students whose 11<sup>th</sup> grade CAASSPP scores indicate that they are “conditionally ready” for college. Students who pass the course with a “C” or better are exempted from CSU English course placement assessments and are able to take college-level course work without taking remediation courses.

#### *Support Staff Capacity Building*

The district recognizes the critical role of support staff and has intentionally designed professional learning sessions to build their capacity to assist in implementation of the CCSS. The Academic Office conducts a professional learning series for instructional aides which concentrate on specific strategies they can employ to assist students in meeting the demands of the CCSS.

#### Instructional Materials and Pedagogy

To support teachers with standards implementation, the district has developed CCSS-aligned curriculum maps for ELA. The curriculum maps specify supports for English Learners (ELs), Students with Disabilities (SWDs), struggling students, as well as students identified for GATE services. They also include links to digital resources such as sample tasks, lessons/units, and videos of effective instruction. This varied set of resources expands teachers’ instructional tool kit and provides a support infrastructure for standards implementation.

Starter classroom libraries of approximately 180 titles each, were distributed at the beginning



of this school year to all K-6 classrooms. Teachers were asked to prepare for best use of these classroom libraries to support independent reading (as per the CA ELA/ELD Framework, pgs 57-58) through the one hour Classroom Library Tutorial posted on the ELA website at [www.scusd.edu/ela](http://www.scusd.edu/ela).

During the 2017-2018 school year, the district will engage in a thorough process to adopt new CCSS ELA aligned instructional materials for ELA/ELD. The adoption will take place in accord with the requirements outlined in Board Policy 6161.1. Staff members have already begun the process of establishing a committee which consists of teachers, site administrators, and district staff and the committee convened for the first time on May 25, 2017. Materials will also be reviewed with parents and stakeholders. The committee will pilot materials in the fall and winter of 2017 and make recommendations to the Board in spring 2018. Once materials are selected and Board approved, professional learning will take place for teachers and site administrators in preparation for implementation at the start of the 2018-2019 school year.

### Assessment for Learning

The advent of the CCSS ELA requires that assessment practices change from a sole emphasis on multiple choice assessment items to those that allow greater insight into student thinking. Hence, another key lever is a focus on shifting the district's assessment practices. An assessment system to evaluate student achievement as well as monitor student progress is vital to attaining maximum results towards the goal of high levels of ELA and literacy achievement. Various assessments for different purposes must be implemented including short cycle formative measures such as daily classroom assignments and checks for understanding for immediate feedback to students and to inform instructional planning. Additionally the district must utilize mid-cycle common assessments administered at interim points throughout the school year to monitor student progress and standards implementation system-wide. Finally, the district's assessment system must include administering annual or long-cycle summative assessments including the CAASPP to assess student performance each year.

The district is in the process of developing this system and re-instituted a benchmark assessment process during the 2015-16 school year to monitor student progress system-wide in ELA as well as mathematics. Benchmarks were administered two times and in grades 1-12 for ELA with an optional 3rd administration in the spring. During the 2016-17 school year, an initial benchmark assessment was administered district-wide in the fall of 2017. In the winter of 2017,





the district entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) regarding assessments. The district has established an assessment committee for the purpose of identifying ELA as well as mathematics assessments to be used formatively to assess students' progress towards meeting the CCSS ELA Standards. The committee is a collaboration with the Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) and United Professional Educators (UPE) and is comprised of site administrators, teachers and district staff from the different departments including Assessment, Research, & Evaluation, Curriculum and Instruction, Multilingual, GATE, Special Education and State and Federal Programs.

### Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

The district has taken great strides to deepen stakeholder awareness and knowledge about the ELA CCSS. The Academic Office will continue to host workshops to inform parents/guardians and community partners of the educational changes resulting from the CCSS implementation. The district has also developed a user friendly parent/family web page which offers a productive flow of information to keep stakeholders abreast of district resources for teachers, leaders, and parents. Posted on the webpage are the locally developed CCSS parent guides for ELA in multiple languages that include a description of what students will learn in in each grade, activities that parents can do at home to support their child's learning, and a snapshot of the new assessments.

The GLLR grant requires special attention to family engagement with our twelve participating sites holding bimonthly family literacy nights or morning family literacy events toward supporting families' understandings of nurturing a love of reading. The Sacramento Public Library librarians are supporting these efforts by offering to host family literacy events or collaboratively plan the events.

### Technology Infrastructure

The district has made the development of its technology infrastructure another key lever in its CCSS implementation. The Academic Office is working closely with Technology Services on the integration of technology to accelerate student learning. A primary emphasis of the work has been the implementation of Google Apps for Educators (GAFE) system-wide. Through GAFE professional learning, teachers are learning how to utilize technology to engage students in Academic Discourse and collaboration. Teachers are also exploring Apps and resources to



engage students in more rigorous academic tasks involving literacy.

## VI. Results

In 2010, the California State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In 2015, the CCSS-aligned Smarter Balanced (SBAC) assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics were first administered as part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) to students in grades 3-8, and 11. With the completion of the second year of testing in 2016, this report includes a two-year comparison and the most recent results.

The 2015-16 CAASPP results indicate that our students are making progress in English Language Arts (ELA). We are encouraged by our growth from 2015 to 2016, which mirrors the growth of the County. While our LCAP goal was to increase the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards by 2%, our actual increase from 2015 - 2016 was 4%. There were increases in the percent of student who met or exceeded standards in all grade levels for ELA. In fact, all grade levels, and all student groups experienced growth. For our CAASPP results in ELA grades 3 - 8, the average distance from standard met (Distance From 3) stands at -28.4; this represents a growth of 6.7 points from the 2014-15 school year.

For our CAASPP results in ELA grade 11, the average distance from standard met (Distance From 3) stands at +1.3; this represents a growth of 11.2 points from the 2014-15 school year.

In reviewing our ELA performance relative to the County and State, we recognize that the percent of students who exceeded or met standards are not at the same levels. The achievement gap between All Students and African American and Hispanic students persisted from 2015 to 2016.

In addition to these measures, other indicators of impact include the following:

- Principal meetings and instructional rounds reveal that site leaders have greater capacity to recognize the instructional shifts that should be evidenced in classrooms
- Surveys of administrators indicate that training specialists support is highly valued and there is a need for additional support.
- Feedback from administrators and teachers indicate that they found the professional learning sessions valuable and are interested in continued CCSS professional learning. The following are representative comments of professional learning session appreciations entered



by participants on feedback surveys:

- *It [professional learning] was hands on, which allowed us to practice what we were learning.*
- *The replicable model was wonderful! It made the methods come alive, and I will remember the activities because of the content of the discussion.*
- *I plan on using some of the google doc skills we learned. I would love to incorporate a jigsaw into my informative science writing.*
- *I will implement the Socratic Circle and use the structure of segmenting the questions for a better understanding of the reading.*
- *I will apply grading rubrics to improve student writing. Provide one-on-one conference to help students think about writing content and structure to improve writing.*
- *Great workshop! This grant is making a huge difference for my students. Thank you for working to bridge the gap between low income students and students with access to resources at home.*

## VII. Lessons Learned/Next Steps

The district has learned many lessons since initial implementation of the CCSS. Key lessons learned are outlined below:

Lessons Learned:

- Models of effective practice are required to accelerate adult learning
- There are no shortcuts to deep learning and changed instructional practice.
- The shifts in instruction required by the CCSS are a major cultural change and require time, continuous learning, and collaboration.
- An infrastructure of support is vital for both students and adults.
- Bringing the CCSS to fruition is a huge undertaking that requires commitment from all layers of the system.
- Quality common assessments are an imperative to assess student progress and inform improvements to instruction

Next steps in the districts' standards implementation include the following:

- Continue to improve, and expand the professional learning for staff, including instructional coaching and support.



- Continue to expand the emphasis on the integration of instructional supports for diverse student populations into the professional learning sessions.
- Build upon the ELA curriculum maps including growing the bank of electronic resources.
- Expand instructional supports including videos of effective practice, text resources, and sample lessons/units and assessment practices.
- Expand the district's parent/stakeholders communication and engagement strategies
- Continue to engage teachers and leaders in instructional rounds.
- Continue to work with SCTA on the development of a district-wide assessment system.
- Develop a multi-tiered system of supports to provide academic supports for all learners.
- Adopt and implement CCSS aligned ELA/ELD instructional materials