



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 8.2

Meeting Date: December 7, 2017

Subject: Graduation Task Force Update

- 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

Recommendation: This agenda item is for discussion only.

Background/Rationale: The Sacramento City Unified School District recognizes that high school graduation is a pivotal milestone in the lives of its students and works diligently to ensure all students successfully complete the required course work and courses of study to graduate from the school district with the requisite skills for college and career readiness. The district's Equity, Access, and Social Justice Guiding Principle underscores the importance of high school graduation and its significance in ensuring that all students are not just given an equal opportunity to graduate, but are able to do so with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options.

However, in recent years the SCUSD graduation rate trend has been uneven. For example, the graduation rate was 79.9% for the 2012-2013 school year, peaked at 85.3% for the 2013-2014 school but declined back to 81.4% for the 2015-2016 school year. This concerning pattern led Superintendent Aguilar to create the graduation taskforce which was announced on the first day of school, August 31st.

Over the course of eight meetings from September 20th to November 28th. Task force members reviewed district graduation related data, received presentations from student engagement and graduation content experts and created several 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.

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide the board of education an update on graduation task force process and preliminary recommendations.

Financial Considerations: To Be Determined as the preliminary recommendations are finalized.

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

Documents Attached:

1. Executive Summary
2. Preliminary Recommendations

Estimated Time of Presentation: 20 minutes

Submitted by: Iris Taylor, Chief Academic Officer

Vincent Harris, Chief of Continuous Improvement
and Accountability

Approved by: Jorge a. Aguilar, Superintendent

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office/Continuous Improvement

Graduation Task Force Update

December 7, 2017



I. Overview/History of Department or Program

The Sacramento City Unified School District recognizes that high school graduation is a pivotal milestone in the lives of its students and works diligently to ensure all students successfully complete the required course work and courses of study to graduate from the school district with the requisite skills for college and career readiness. The district's new Equity, Access, and Social Justice Guiding Principle underscores the importance of high school graduation and its significance in ensuring that all students are not just given an equal opportunity to graduate, but are able to do so with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options.

However, in recent years the SCUSD graduation rate trend has been uneven. For example, the graduation rate was 79.9% for the 2012-2013 school year, peaked at 85.3% for the 2013-2014 school but declined back to 81.4% for the 2015-2016 school year. This concerning pattern led Superintendent Aguilar to create the graduation taskforce which was announced on the first day of school, August 31st. The task force is comprised of a diverse coalition of people including SCUSD Board members, leaders of district parent advisory groups, collective bargaining partners, and members of various community-based organizations and partners.

Below is a list of the task force members.

First	Last	Agency
Darryl	White	Black Parallel School Board
Malissia	Bordeaux	Blacks Making a Difference
Michael	Minnick	SCUSD Board Member, Area 4
Mai	Vang	SCUSD Board Member, Area 5
Christina	Pritchett	SCUSD Board Member, Area 3
Alex	Visaya	Community Advocate
Theresa	Hernandez	DELAC Representative
Cha	Vang	Hmong Innovating Politics
Rachel	Rios	La Familia Counseling Center, Inc.
Matt	Canty	Legislative Director, State Assembly
Gretchen	Viglione	Parent Teacher Home Visit Project
Liz	Guillen	Public Advocates
Robbie	Abelon	Region Builders
Ashlin	Malouf	Sacramento ACT
Kim	Williams	Sacramento Building Healthy Communities, Hub Director

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office/Continuous Improvement

Graduation Task Force Update

December 7, 2017



David	Fisher	Sacramento City Teachers Association
Robert	Dugan	Sacramento Metro Chamber Senior Vice President, Public Policy & Economic Development
Angel Marie	Garcia	SCUSD's Community Advisory Committee Representative
Sarah	Nguyen	SCUSD Student Board Member
Michael	Fry	United Professional Educators
Jim	Keddy	Youth Forward

The task force convened on September 20th with the charge of developing a set of rigorous recommendations for the Superintendent by December 2017 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. To date the committee has met eight times in preparation for the December 7th board meeting.

Below is a summary of the task force meetings and key topics addressed:

Meeting Date	Topics	Speakers
August 31, 2017	Call to Action	Superintendent and Board of Education
September 20, 2017	Dropout Crisis	Russell Rumberger, Ph.D, UC Santa Barbara, California Dropout Research Project
October 3, 2017	Work Teams/Deliberations	
October 17, 2017	Data Work Teams/Deliberations	Jorge Aguilar, Superintendent
October 30, 2017	Work Teams / Data Q & A	
November 6, 2017	Students with Disabilities Student's Voices African Americans Work Teams	Susan Sawyer, California Transition Alliance Sarah Nguyen, Student Board Member & Malissia Bordeaux, Blacks Making a Difference Darryl White, Black Parallel School Board

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office/Continuous Improvement

Graduation Task Force Update

December 7, 2017



November 8, 2017	Foster Youth English Learner Students Impact of Ds and Fs Work Teams	Flojaune G. Cofer, Ph.D, MPH, Public Health Advocates Vanessa Girard, Multilingual Education Director Darryl White, Black Parallel School Board
November 14, 2017	Work Teams / Recommendations	
November 28, 2017	Work Teams / Recommendations	

The task force will continue to meet through the remainder of the 2017-2018 to further refine the recommendations accepted by the Board.

II. Driving Governance:

Per board policy 6146.1 - Because graduation from high school provides students with opportunities for postsecondary education and or employment, the Governing Board desires to prepare each student to obtain a diploma of high school graduation. High Graduation represents an important life achievement for the student, family and community. America's Promise Alliance has done extensive work on the importance of high school graduation. Below are several reasons why high school graduation matters:

- High school graduates are more likely to be employed, make higher taxable income, and aid in job generation.
- High school graduates earn a national average of \$8,000 more annually compared to high school dropouts.
- High school graduates are less likely to engage in criminal behavior or require social services.
- High school graduates have better health and longer life expectancy.
- High school graduates are more likely to vote. During the 2012 presidential election, 4 percent of people who left high school without graduating voted compared to 24 percent of youth with only a high school diploma and 37 percent with a college degree.^[28]
- High school graduates contribute to America's national security because students that leave high school without a diploma are not qualified to serve in the military.
- The nation's economy depends on skilled labor. Business leaders report difficulty in finding enough qualified employees with the skills, training and education to meet their companies' needs.

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office/Continuous Improvement

Graduation Task Force Update

December 7, 2017



The important takeaway is that high school graduation matters in multiple ways. High school graduates have a much higher chance of achieving their personal dreams than high school drop outs. The recommendations of the task force are grounded in this research and understanding and is driven by the district's Equity, Access, and Social Justice guiding principle which calls for students to have an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of choices from the widest array of options

III. Budget:

The budget for this item will be determined by the recommendations of the Graduation Taskforce.

IV. Goals, Objectives and Measures:

Improving graduation rate initiatives are outlined in the district's LCAP and includes items such as adding counselors at the secondary level, a California College Guidance Initiative pilot and College Readiness Block grant initiatives. In addition, as the Graduation Task Force completes its work, several of their recommendations will be adopted during next year's budget process and LCAP revisions.

V. Major Initiatives:

It is important to note that several initiatives are underway with district teams including principals, counselors, registrars and Serna center staff. These initiatives focus on a range of activities including graduation support (e.g. supporting students to get back on track to graduate), college exposure (e.g. targeted UC Merced homecoming trip) and additional efforts to encourage students to see the value of high school graduation. Additional activities will be identified as a part of the Graduation Task Force follow up.

The committee members utilized the framework from the research of Dr. Russel Rumberger as outlined in his seminal work, *Dropping Out: Why Students Drop Out of High School and What Can Be Done About It* and the "U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences panel that produced the *Dropout Prevention Practice Guide* (2008 and 2017). The committee organized into three groups which focused on 6 critical areas outlined in this research literature namely:

- Academics and Low Aspirations
- Attendance and Mobility
- Misbehavior and Retention

The draft recommendations are organized around these key areas and are attached with this board agenda item. Staff is continuing to review the recommendations in preparation for the December 7th board meeting and so draft recommendation language may be modified prior to the board meeting as appropriate.

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office/Continuous Improvement

Graduation Task Force Update

December 7, 2017



Key draft graduation taskforce recommendation themes include:

- Build consistent structures and routines
- Create monitoring systems
- Implement systems approach with a focus on continuously assessing what works and what does not (e.g. fidelity of implementation, student achievement outcomes)
- Foster a shared responsibility for student outcomes
- Align professional learning for adults designed to accelerate all student learning and achievement with appropriate accountability indicators and sufficient support to achieve established targets
- Build conditions of success for existing practices (e.g. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, Restorative Practices, Standards Implementation, Parent Teacher Home Visit Project)

Over the next several weeks, staff will be evaluating each draft recommendation utilizing a best practice implementation rubric. The key components of this rubric include:

- Needs Assessment
- Organizational Fit and Readiness
- Resource Requirements
- Evidence of Impact
- Capacity to Implement

VI. Results:

It is important to note that the Sacramento City Unified school district graduation rate trend data has remained inconsistent year over year and there are significant subgroup gaps. While it is important to focus on the long-term aspiration of graduating all students college and career ready, it is critical to “see” the current reality. The chart below provides an overview of the district and subgroup graduation trends. The key takeaway is that the district has an important opportunity to accelerate graduation results for almost every subgroup.

School Year	District	Hispanic	Asian	African American	White	English Learner	Special Education
2015-2016	81.4%	77.8%	91.1%	72.3%	85.6%	73.8%	57.3%
2014-2015	80.3%	76.9%	89.5%	69.0%	82.3%	72.9%	57.5%
2013-2014	85.0%	82.1%	90.8%	73.3%	90.8%	77.7%	66.5%
2012-2013	85.3%	83.1%	90.3%	76.2%	89.1%	78.3%	70.0%
2011-2012	79.9%	75.2%	89.3%	70.4%	79.3%	75.4%	63.4%

Board of Education Executive Summary

Academic Office/Continuous Improvement

Graduation Task Force Update

December 7, 2017



The Graduation Task Force's recommendations will be considered in light of these data and the Board will identify key recommendations that they will prioritize for the 2018-2019 school year, as it pertains to budget and governance, as a lever in improving the graduation outcomes the district is currently producing.

VII. Lessons Learned/Next Steps:

After the December 7th board meeting, there are several action steps to be completed by district staff and the Graduation Task Force which will be meeting regularly during the Winter/Spring.

These steps include:

- Conduct a detailed recommendation analysis and cost estimation
- Determine base vs. incremental cost implications
- Decide whether to pilot versus scale recommendations
- Complete additional research as appropriate in better understanding or costing recommendations
- Propose 2018-2019 budget considerations
- Develop and implement a communication plan with stakeholders
- Set ongoing update process with board and community

**Sacramento City Unified School District
Graduation Task Force
Preliminary Recommendations as of November 28, 2017**

Predictor	#	Recommendation
Academic Low Aspirations	1	District will identify a stakeholder task force to include all stakeholders, SCTA, UPE SEIU, Representatives from Human Resources, etc. to define a “Strong Culture of Teaching and Learning.” They will also define criteria for what a quality school looks like, identify components of excellent teaching and learning and procure models of excellent teaching and learning to serve as a baseline to develop future professional development (PD) to improve teaching and learning districtwide. See attachment A. (LCAP, SPSA)
Academic Low Aspirations	2	District will identify and implement several staff (administrators, teachers, support staff, etc.) development pathways (e.g. web-based, collaborative time, etc.) that allow school sites the ability to shape and identify training for staff to embrace the new culture. (may require negotiations)
Academic Low Aspirations	3	School Site Resource (e.g. web-based, paper, etc.) will be developed to assist sites in obtaining resources for their unique needs as they move in sync with a culture of strong teaching and learning.
Academic Low Aspirations	4	Develop new monitoring, assessment, and accountability techniques for district initiatives, goals and objectives to ensure programs and activities are being developed and implemented as promise at the site and district levels. Assess impact on adult practice as well as student learning.
Academic Low Aspirations	5	Under the cultural banner of teaching and learning, all teachers will participate in learning about race, gender, disability etc.) to include the elements of culturally responsive instruction and using the 7 tenets in their classrooms. (See number 2). Possible use of an in-house strategy that expands to all instructional staff. Use existing resources and expertise. Develop, implement, and monitor PD in the areas of: 1) integrating culturally responsive teaching into the classroom with monitoring, 2) using an asset based instructional model rather than a deficit model, 3) integrating restorative consequences in classroom discipline, and trauma informed care along with a continuous system of improvement where everyone is accountable.
Academic Low Aspirations	6	FAIR Act implementation
Academic Low Aspirations	7	District personnel will learn to use Racial Impact Statements to ensure equitable outcomes in all plan development and implementation at district offices and school sites to reduce implicit bias. (see Attachment D) (Will need a business process to ensure that it is used (Connect to #4 by including “impact statement”)
Academic Low Aspirations	8	Superintendent will create a stakeholder taskforce to redefine what effective assessment looks like in our School District, review districts grading policies to eliminate the Zero in Grading and train teachers to use alternative methods of assessment that informs instruction.
Academic Low Aspirations	9	Superintendent will reinstitute the Whole Child Resolution No: 2789 and establish a task force to develop Administrative Regulations that allows schools sites to develop their own behavior management activities unique to their schools where all stakeholders participate in plan development, assessment and accountability plans. See Attachment B.
Academic Low Aspirations	10	School sites will assess school climate annually utilizing an agreed upon assessment instrument where results are reviewed and areas needing improvement are included in the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA)

**Sacramento City Unified School District
Graduation Task Force
Preliminary Recommendations as of November 28, 2017**

Academic Low Aspirations	11	Add improved and increased PD opportunities for teachers to improve relationships with students to create mutual trust and respect where consequences are restorative rather than punitive to enhance and improve classroom instruction. SPARK does not work here because too much of it is based on a "student deficit model." See Accountability contract in Attachment C." (Classroom Management), Culturally Responsive Rituals and Routines). Agreements/Contracts such as the one Malissia shared that establish expectations for adults as well as students.
Academic Low Aspirations	12	Enable school sites to improve student scheduling through the use of block schedules and advisory so that all students receive services where career pathway advice begins in middle school. All pathways must be equitable and include modular/block scheduling, after school and summer school options. (See recommendation about transition planning in another section)
Academic Low Aspirations	13	Various pathways to graduation, relevance to life after high school (see retention 9, 10, and 12) as of 11/28/17 meeting
Academic Low Aspirations	14	Determine diploma vs certificate for students with disabilities after Middle School
Academic Low Aspirations	15	Connectivity *School climate *Relevancy *Culturally responsive instruction (Fair Education Act) *Student lounge, clothes closet, hygienic support (i.e. washing facilities and resources), school campuses *Parent support - translation services *Leadership opportunities for students - trusted adults!
Academic Low Aspirations	16	See also Climate item 1. Also Attendance 10, 11, 21,
Academic Low Aspirations	17	Integrate K-6 primary and intermediate SDC programs so that students matriculate through grade levels and stay on the same campuses rather than moving to multiple campuses. Continuity in location best meets their continuing and changing needs. (mobility)
Attendance	1	Increase Parent Teacher Home Visit (PTHV) and school sites (including Preschool) through additional funding. Increase funding for current 39 schools with PTHV by January, 2018. Begin PTHV for 5 more schools beginning September, 2018.
Attendance	2	Review and Improve Elementary School Attendance Protocols to ensure early intervention. Too much lag time between issue identification and Action! SART - SARB process takes all year *Increase number of personnel who directly deal with issue in a timely manner.
Attendance	3	Revisit scope of responsibilities AND standardize the role of key campus staff (Attendance clerks, community liaisons, counselors) to better coordinate community resources for students/families on campus. <i>(This should be right under #2)</i>
Attendance	4	Increase funding to ensure that there is a nurse at every school.
Attendance	5	Review the quality of district's pre-school programs to ensure kindergarten readiness.
Attendance	6	Look at more personal and positive ways to reach out to parents (at sites).
Attendance	7	Utilize attendance improvement programs, such as Attendance Works at Leataata Floyd, that educate school, parents, students, community and all stakeholders about the importance of attendance.
Attendance	8	Attach/provide community resources such as mental health, Food Bank, transportation to the SART attendance letters from the district.
Attendance	9	Increase mental health resources for students/community at each campus.
Attendance	10	Expand Advisory Period/Homeroom to all secondary school sites to foster positive relationships, communication and trust to increase attendance and address other issues.
Attendance	11	Research a student leadership/peer leadership program to improve attendance.
Attendance	12	Implement regular "debriefs," including staff-staff and staff-student, in the middle and high school levels which can lead to follow-up and intervention.
Attendance	13	Increase the number of quality universal pre-school sites and available seats for students.

**Sacramento City Unified School District
Graduation Task Force
Preliminary Recommendations as of November 28, 2017**

Attendance	14	Provide professional development (PD) for all teachers in state and federal Pre-School Programs
Attendance	15	Provide training to staff with respect to ACES (Adverse Childhood Experience)
Attendance	16	Newcomer Academy for newly arrived beginning English learners to become acclimated with the American educational system and attendance process.
Mobility	1	Eliminate permit process to allow students who moved to stay in their home school for the duration of the school year.
Mobility	2	Develop a strategic plan to address the needs of students and families in high mobility, low attendance feeder school pattern (elementary-middle school-high school).
Misbehavior	1	Implement Restorative Justice practices in a more defined and systematic manner across the entire system such that it is visible and transparent; Parents need information to understand it and how it will help students. Training for all teachers, properly resourced trainings with support; targeted efforts by teachers to engage students. Clear plan to target schools of greatest need in a pilot, then, roll out. Must be connected to graduation rate via data.
Misbehavior	2	Analyze suspension and behavioral data to look at data by student group (ethnic, demographic) and gender in order to focus on the schools with disproportionate representation in discipline. Research what needs arise by school, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation to focus resources.
Misbehavior	4	Communication barriers need to be addressed especially with respect to student misbehavior; translation (interpreter) need to be present. Focus on hiring at each site at least one bilingual staff member and other staff that reflect the language diversity of the school district. Suspension forms need to be in primary language.
Misbehavior	5	Stop academic punishment for misconduct (ex. 0 grade) when student is 'suspended' (Question: Are teachers required to provide work or is it optional? If so, why?)
Misbehavior	6	Train adults (staff, teachers, resource officers, parents and students) to react differently: to listen, to understand, to respect in the face of student misbehavior. Targeted toward schools with populations identified by data as "high need" by cross referencing behavioral data with sub groups.
Misbehavior	7	Train on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports before or in conjunction with Restorative Justice to ensure more effective implementation.
Misbehavior	8	Dig deeper to learn root causes of misbehavior: refer to #6.
Retention	1	Elementary level summer school to target all students with a focus on reading--all students reading at grade level by the end of grade 3 or beginning of grade 4.
Retention	2	Early identification and intervention of/for students experiencing academic issues before retention is determined to be the best option for the student.
Retention	3	Research implementation and effectiveness of Block scheduling to provide students with greater options with respect to credit recovery and course options.
Retention	4	Determine diploma vs certificate for students with disabilities after Middle School
Retention	5	Connecting classwork to life after school
Retention	6	Start transition plans for students with disabilities in Middle School
Retention	7	Reform Middle Schools
Retention	8	System-wide approach for EL's (per Vanessa G. recommendations)
Retention	9	Require PD for English Language Development (ELD) & English Learner support for all teachers