



# SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item# 9.1

**Meeting Date:** September 26, 2019

**Subject:** African American Achievement Task Force

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

**Division:** Continuous Improvement and Accountability

**Recommendation:** N/A

**Background/Rationale:** The goal of this presentation is provide an update to the Board of Education regarding work to implement the board adopted African American Achievement Task Force recommendations.

**Financial Considerations:** There is \$150,000 budgeted for the 2019-2020 school year. There are ongoing efforts to secure grant funding.

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

**Documents Attached:**

1. Executive Summary

<p><b>Estimated Time of Presentation:</b> 15 minutes <b>Submitted by:</b> Vincent Harris, Chief Continuous Improvement and Accountability Officer and Task Force Members <b>Approved by:</b> Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent</p>
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# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Continuous Improvement and Accountability

Update on African American Achievement Task Force

Recommendations

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### 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/Black, 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 African-American/Black students and their peers graduate high school ready for whatever they aspire to do next in life, and 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 African-American/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, African-American/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

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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 from high school in four years
- complete a 4-year college degree

These troubling conclusions are born out in SCUSD data on African American/Black 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 African-American/Black students, parents/guardians, and community leaders.

At its May 16, 2019 board meeting, the SCUSD Board of Education accepted the recommendations of the African American Achievement Task Force and charged the Task Force with creating an implementation framework.

#### **III. Budget:**

An initial budget of \$150,000 has been established to start the work of the Task Force. Funding from grants and other external sources will also be investigated and pursued. It is important to note that some recommendations will require almost no direct investment of financial resources.

#### **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.

#### **V. Major Initiatives:**

The task force has met approximately 35 times since September 27, 2018 to study and create the recommendations. The 16-member Task Force included a distinguished set of educators, community leaders, students and other important partners. Since May 2016, a combination of Task Force members, community representatives and district staff have been benchmarking the Recommendations and identifying early implementation strategies.

Below is a brief recap of the actual recommendations. The shading color scheme is:

**green**=implementation is underway; **yellow**=implementation is being studied; no color=implementation has not started.

#### **Academic Achievement (By June 30, 2020)**

- Increase 3<sup>rd</sup> grade SBAC proficiency for Black or African American students:

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- 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 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**
  - *Hosted several meetings to define the actual committee structure. Key milestones have included:*
    - *Held benchmark meetings with other similar organizations*
    - *Explored the establishment of governing principles, membership criteria, meeting structure and initial meeting timing*
    - *Reviewed membership structure and governance principles of the Community Advisory Committee and the District English Learner Advisory Committee*
- **Divest from future funding for school resource officers and reinvest in alternative supports**
  - *Board of Education decided to end the current SRO contract*
  - *Board of Education and District staff are designing the revised safety and security plan going forward*
- Establish a Black/African American Student Achievement Task Force Implementation/Accountability Steering Committee
- Provide professional development addressing inequitable disciplinary practices and mandate 100% faculty and staff attendance
- **Eliminate willful defiance suspensions (Senate Bill 419 – signed by the Governor in September 2019)**

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- Eliminate Pre K – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade suspensions
- **Require sites with over 5% variance on suspension rate disproportionality to develop and implement a plan to reduce suspensions to at least the District average.**
  - *Preliminary outcomes for this recommendation were shared at August 1<sup>st</sup> principal meeting*
  - *Social Emotional Learning and IASs have been meeting with identified sites to start conversations on strategies to reduce suspensions*
- Create a District-wide study team tasked to review, and monitor K-12 special education referral practices

With the May 16<sup>th</sup> board adoption of the recommendations, the nature of the Task Force work has shifted from brainstorming to actual recommendation implementation. To this end, there have been several organizational meetings facilitated by Dr. Robyn Fisher. We are grateful for the support of the GEAR UP organization for its continued funding of Dr. Fisher's invaluable facilitation to ensure that the Task Force continues to make progress. Below is a summary of meeting dates and milestones.

- June 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Decide on implementation approach
- June 18<sup>th</sup>
  - Benchmark session with African American Regional Educational Alliances (AAREA) to identify implementation best practices and challenges
- July 9<sup>th</sup>
  - Focus on development of infrastructure and governing principles
- July 16<sup>th</sup>
  - Focus on development of infrastructure and governing principles
- July 29<sup>th</sup>
  - Benchmark session with Hayward Unified's African American Student Achievement Initiative (AASAI) to identify implementation best practices and challenges
- August 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Update on District work on recommendations
    - Mai Xi Lee, Director of Social Emotional Learning presented preliminary work on 5% suspension recommendation
    - Dr. Ed Eldridge, Director of Strategy and Continuous Improvement presented preliminary data on African American student achievement trends and bright spots
    - Carrie Rose, former Executive Director of Parent Teacher Home Visit
- August 22<sup>nd</sup>
  - Focus on development of infrastructure and governing principles
- September 9<sup>th</sup>
  - Focus on development of infrastructure and governing principles

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- September 26th
  - Board of Education Update

#### Recommendation Spotlight

#### VI. Results:

At this stage, there are several process milestones associated with the work of Task Force. The expectation is that African-American/Black student outcomes will start to demonstrate an improving trend based on the work of the Task Force. It is important to continue to be reminded of the long-term challenges our African American students face.

Results for SCUSD's Black/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/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/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 Black/African 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, families 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. Key next steps include:

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- October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to frame the transition group which will finalize the launch of the district wide African American Advisory Committee
  - Ongoing meetings to scope out the infrastructure of the districtwide committee
- District staff will continue to review, analyze and start the implementation of the recommendations with regular reports to the transition and the districtwide committee
- Once the districtwide advisory committee is fully launched, the committee will request similar status as other districtwide committees such as the Community Advisory Committee and District English Learner Advisory Committee.