



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 9.2

Meeting Date: November 15, 2018

Subject: African American Achievement 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 and Accountability

Recommendation: None

Background/Rationale: This presentation reflects an update to the board of education, community and staff concerns regarding the district's efforts to support its most at risk student populations which includes African American, Special Education and Foster Youth. The goal of this presentation is to share the current reality for the most at-risk student populations across multiple measures with the goal of creating action plans to change conditions for these students.

Financial Considerations: None

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

Documents Attached:

1. Executive Summary

Estimated Time of Presentation: 5 minutes

Submitted by: Vincent Harris, Chief, Continuous Improvement and Accountability

Approved by: Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent

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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, 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 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 Black students and their peers graduate high school ready for whatever they aspire to do next in life 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*.

From an inequity perspective, there is a comprehensive body of research that documents the factors contributing to the underperformance of 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, Black students are more likely to:

- Be suspended or expelled,
- Be taught by ineffective teachers,
- Be identified for special education, and

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- Take remedial or non-credit bearing course work as college students

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 high school in four years
- complete a college degree

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

III. Budget:

The budget for this item is still to be determined and will take into consideration the district's current fiscal condition. Funding from grants and other external sources will be investigated and pursued.

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 district is currently pursuing a number of initiatives focused on closing opportunity and achievement gaps and addressing the needs of African American as well as other underperforming student groups. These include:

Superintendent Meetings with Community Leaders – During the 2017-18 school year Superintendent Aguilar convened two meetings with a group of Black leaders to listen to concerns and proposed strategies for addressing the needs of African American students. These leaders expressed overwhelming support and commitment and are ready to partner with the district to change the educational trajectory for SCUSD's African American students.

Graduation Task Force and Recommendations – Superintendent Aguilar convened a Graduation Taskforce during the 2017 -18 school year comprised of an array of stakeholders including students, site leaders, community members, and district staff. The taskforce met from

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September -June and completed the task of developing a set of rigorous 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. It is important to note that the graduation taskforce called out the need for additional supports for a few at-risk student groups including African American, English Learner, Foster and Students with Disabilities.

Expanded Learning Summer Program (ELSP) – SCUSD hosted its first Expanded Learning Summer Program, a five to six-week summer program that targeted underperforming students in key grade levels (1st, 3rd, 6th, 8th and 9th -12th). The program also included enrichment opportunities for students in grades 7-8.

Development of Data Infrastructure – The district has developed a strong data infrastructure that will allow staff to monitor the progress of student groups disaggregated by race/ethnicity as well as program groups (i.e. Special Education, English Learner, Foster Youth, etc.).

Work Teams - Superintendent Aguilar has tasked staff with analyzing the district's current infrastructure and systems and to research best practice and identify an initial set of clear impact indicators in key areas impacting outcomes for African American students. These work teams will expand to include other stakeholder groups once initial analyses are complete.

- Grade Level Readiness
- Special Education
- SPSA (Site Planning Process)
- School Climate/Suspensions/Chronic Absenteeism
- Multi-Tiered System of Support

The focus of this presentation will be on the African American Achievement Task Force which kicked off on Thursday, September 27th. This taskforce is charged with recommending best practices to improve student learning outcomes for all African American students. The task force has been meeting weekly with a goal of presenting final recommendations to the board sometime during the Winter of 2019. Key task force actions have included:

- Review of SCUSD student outcome data
- Review of comparative district student outcome data
- Discuss long-term barriers to success and possible solutions
- Sponsor focus groups of:
 - Principals
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Parents

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The task force will be meeting throughout December to develop and finalize recommendations with the goal of receiving as much broad input as possible.

VI. Results:

Results for SCUSD's Black or 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 or 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 or 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 these 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 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. Next steps towards this end include the following:

- Research training opportunities focused on implicit bias and trauma informed practice to begin with the governance team in order to set the direction for scaling across the district.
- Continue meaningful engagement with African American community leaders and convene a rapid-cycle task force to develop/review/prioritize a set of recommendations for improving outcomes
- Strengthen and improve district initiatives and monitor them intentionally for impact on African American students and their peers.