



## SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item# 9.5

**Meeting Date:** September 19, 2013

**Subject:** School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Waiver Update

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

**Division:** Superintendent's Office

**Recommendation:** N/A

**Background/Rationale:**

The Obama administration on August 6, 2013 approved eight California school districts (Fresno Unified, Long Beach Unified, Los Angeles Unified, Oakland Unified, Sacramento City Unified, San Francisco Unified, Sanger Unified, and Santa Ana Unified) for a one year district waiver from No Child Left Behind (NCLB), in exchange for locally developed plans to prepare all students for college and career, focus aid on the neediest students, and support effective teaching and leadership.

Earlier this year, California notified the Department that the state did not plan to request Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility for the 2013-2014 school year and instead will focus on implementing its new college- and career-ready standards. As a result, the Department considered a separate request for waivers from eight California school districts, which together serve over 1 million students – more students than most states. These districts are leading the way for their state in moving forward with higher standards for all students, particularly English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students. Since California adopted new standards in 2010, these districts have created shared plans for implementation, systems to improve instruction and promote continuous learning, and joint professional development and supports for teachers. With their new School Quality & Improvement System (SQIS), the districts will hold themselves and their schools accountable for the performance of thousands more students in underserved subgroups than under NCLB, including approximately 23,000 additional African American students, 15,000 Hispanic students,

20,000 English Learners, 10,000 low-income students, and 46,000 students with disabilities.

The SQIS will include social-emotionally culture, climate and academic metrics, allowing SCUSD to take a more holistic approach to how we educate our children. As a result of these rigorous plans, the Department is granting the eight districts flexibility from some of NCLB's restrictive mandates to allow them to better focus on key reforms to improve student achievement and increase the quality of instruction. Today staff will present on SCUSD's implementation plan.

### **Financial Considerations:**

Title I Funds 20% District Set Aside Intervention funds: \$3.7 Million

### **Documents Attached:**

1. Executive Summary

**Estimated Time of Presentation:** 20 minutes

**Submitted by:** Koua J. Franz, Chief of Staff

Teresa Cummings, Chief Accountability Officer

Olivine Roberts, Chief Academic Officer

Ken A. Forrest, Chief Business Officer

**Approved by:** Jonathan Raymond, Superintendent

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Wavier Update  
September 19, 2013



### I. OVERVIEW / HISTORY

The Obama administration on August 6, 2013 approved eight California school districts (Fresno Unified, Long Beach Unified, Los Angeles Unified, Oakland Unified, Sacramento City Unified, San Francisco Unified, Sanger Unified, and Santa Ana Unified) for a one year district waiver from No Child Left Behind (NCLB), in exchange for locally developed plans to prepare all students for college and career, focus aid on the neediest students, and support effective teaching and leadership.

Earlier this year, California notified the US Department of Education that the state did not plan to request Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility for the 2013-2014 school year and instead will focus on implementing its new college- and career-ready standards. As a result, the Department considered a separate request for waivers from eight California school districts, which together serve over 1 million students – more students than most states. These districts are leading the way for their state in moving forward with higher standards for all students, particularly English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students.

Since California adopted new standards in 2010, these districts have created shared plans for implementation, systems to improve instruction and promote continuous learning, and joint professional development and supports for teachers. With our new School Quality Improvement System (SQIS), the districts will hold ourselves and our schools accountable for the performance of thousands more students in underserved subgroups than under NCLB, including approximately 23,000 additional African American students, 15,000 Hispanic students, 20,000 English Learners, 10,000 low-income students, and 46,000 students with disabilities.

The School Quality Improvement System consists of three main principles:

1. College & Career Readiness for All Students
2. Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support
3. Supporting Effective Leadership and Instruction

The SQIS is rooted in a commitment to prepare all students for college and career, achieved through shared learning and collective responsibility for continuous improvement. It is designed to instill a new collective and individual moral imperative to prepare all students for successful futures and be responsive to the specific needs of California students, with an all-encompassing focus on eliminating disparities between subgroups. It includes social-emotional, culture- climate, and academic metrics, allowing SCUSD to take a “Whole Child” approach to how we educate our children. As a result of these plans, the US Department of Education is granting the eight districts flexibility from some of NCLB’s restrictive and punitive mandates to allow them to better focus on improving student achievement and increasing the quality of instruction.

### II. DRIVING GOVERNANCE

Strategic Plan Pillar I: Career and College Ready Students

Strategic Plan Pillar II: Family and Community Engagement

Strategic Plan Pillar III: Organizational Transformation

Results 1, 2, 3, 4

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Wavier Update  
September 19, 2013



### III. BUDGET

Title I Funds 20% District Set Aside Intervention funds: \$3.7 Million

### IV. MAJOR INITIATIVES

#### Principle 1: College & Career Readiness for All Students

At the heartbeat of Pillar One of the district's Strategic Plan 2010-14 is the charge to prepare our students for college and career readiness. This clarion call has required us to examine our current status and practice. For this reason, the district has chosen to move forward with the adoption of the Common Core Standards, which are designed to prepare students for success beyond high school. The district realizes that in order to ensure a quality implementation, it is incumbent that a new cohesive and coherent data-driven learning system, with the necessary tools and resources, be developed and implemented. As the research purports, this systemic approach is pivotal for accelerating student academic performance and closing the achievement gap.

These new standards not only provide the conceptual framework to achieve this end, but the leverage for making the cultural and pedagogical shifts warranted to transform teaching and learning. During our implementation of the ELA Common Core Standards a year-and-a-half ago, it became very apparent that for the Common Core Standards to have maximum impact, we must cultivate communities of practice as well as create safe and collaborative learning environments wherein, teachers implement a comprehensive assessment plan; use data to inform instruction; and engage in collective inquiry and dialogue with colleagues and students wholeheartedly engage in rigorous learning experiences. As a result of this generative and organic process, our theory of action materialized consisting of the following elements:

- Collaborative Inquiry: Engage collectively in professional learning, identify common challenges and test instructional approaches;
- Multi-dimensional Assessments: Embed teacher-generated classroom-based constructed response, performance tasks, etc.;
- Teacher-developed instructional modules;
- Data Inquiry: Examine student work to identify learner-centered problems; and
- Reflective Practice: Define and refine evidence-based problem of practice.

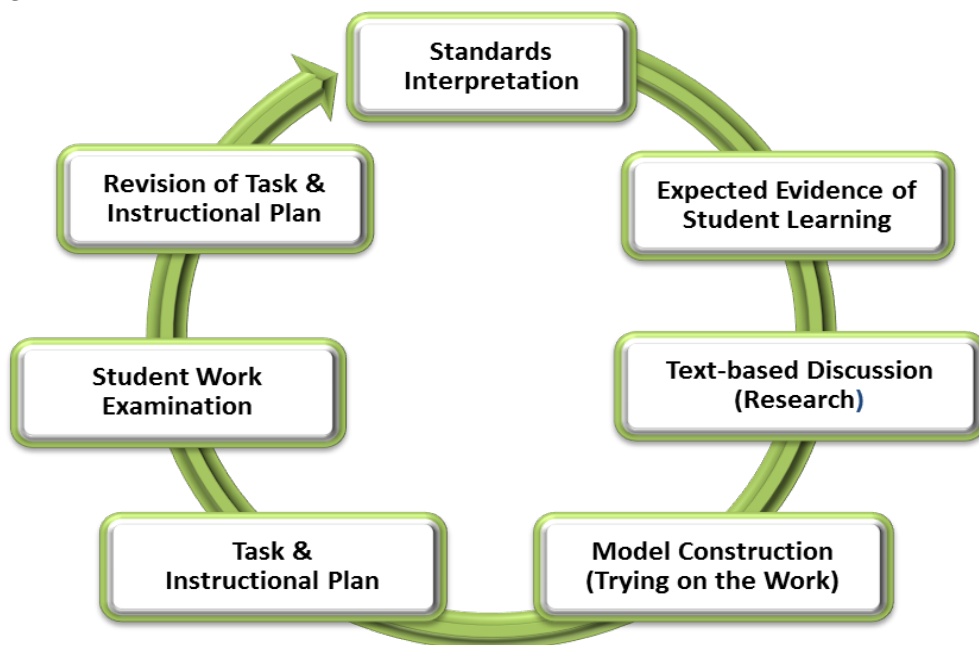
The English Language Arts and Mathematics Common Core implementation utilize an inquiry-based collaborative design methodology focusing on the development of learning modules, which consist of classroom assignments/tasks, task-specific criteria and instructional plans, plus the development of grade level interim assessments coupled with annotated student exemplars.

In ELA, emphasis is placed on the explicit inclusion of the six instructional shifts and core content teachers (with the exception of mathematics teachers) along with Career Technical Education teachers

developing modules focusing on one or two genres aligned to the ELA standards. This expansion will strengthen the content knowledge of both cadres of teachers and impact student learning.

The Mathematics Common Core implementation emphasizes the integration of Standards for Mathematical Practices as well as the inclusion of the six instructional shifts. Since deep learning and conceptual understanding are our key levers, we strategically “go slow to go fast.” Meaning, teachers focus only on one or two domains of the standards. They develop modules aligned to the math standards and practices. Like ELA, this approach will expand both teachers’ and students’ mathematics abilities.

**Figure 1:**



Utilization of the inquiry-based design methodology, as shown in Figure 1 above, is a design methodology that intentionally begins with the “unpacking” of the identified standards from which focus of learning will be determined. Beginning with the end in mind, the expected evidence that demonstrates students’ understanding of the standards embedded in the focus of learning is established along with the appropriate assessments that yield the intended results. Next, to deepen teachers’ knowledge of the content and expand their repertoire of instructional strategies, they examine research that is aligned to the focus of learning and engage in a text-based discussion. At this point, the teachers begin crafting an assessment item and “trying on the work” by assuming the role of a student and taking the developed assessment. The premise is that this will better inform the creation of the task and accompanied instructional plan.

Teachers implement the instructional plan and task and return with samples of student work. Using collectively designed criteria, they collaboratively examine the student work, calibrate their findings,

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Wavier Update  
September 19, 2013



align results to the expected evidence, engage in reflective practice, and determine if a revision of the task and/or instructional plan is warranted. If yes, the revision takes place along with a re-engagement plan. If no, a new set of standards is identified and the cycle continues. To paraphrase Dr. Richard Elmore, this approach calls for our teachers to learn the work by doing the work.

### Principle 2: Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

SCUSD is committed to holding ourselves accountable for student success on the Common Core State Standards, as measured by both absolute performance and growth over time. However significant research has found that by only focusing on academic success, the true picture of a student's college and career readiness is obscured. The School Quality Improvement System reorients schools' focus toward this 'whole-child' system of support and measures improvement in many more informative facets of college and career readiness.

It is equally important that high expectations for all students are coupled with system support to get them career and college ready. These supports include a positive school culture and climate, and assistance to help students develop additional skills beyond academic preparedness that are necessary to succeed in life. The School Quality Improvement System counts on the collective effort of the school, district, and community to value and measure multiple aspects of student success across academic, social-emotional, and culture and climate domains. It also counts on a collective ownership of success across these domains and a collective commitment to hold ourselves accountable for ensuring all students stay on track toward college and career readiness, pre-k through graduation.

The School Quality Improvement System includes annual expectations for progress across these three domains as well as absolute levels of performance and growth. The accountability calculation that is at the heart of the School Quality Improvement System is the School Quality Improvement Index, which will provide a quantitative and holistic measure of school-level performance.

When fully implemented during the 2015-16 school year, the School Quality Improvement Index (See Figure 2) will include points awarded across the following domains:

- **Academic Domain (60%):** Key indicators in this domain include: performance in Math and English Language Arts ("all students" and all subgroups), as well as all other state-administered assessments such as science ("all students" only), history ("all students only"); student growth as defined by the School Quality Improvement System ("all students" and all subgroups); high school graduation rate, with points awarded for both the federally-defined 4-year cohort graduation rate, and 5- and 6-year rates ("all students" and all subgroups); and middle school persistence rates defined as the percentage of graduated 8th graders that go on to enroll in 10th grade ("All students" and all subgroups). "All students" and all subgroups (with an N-size of at least 20) will have equal weighting within these scores.

# Board of Education Executive Summary

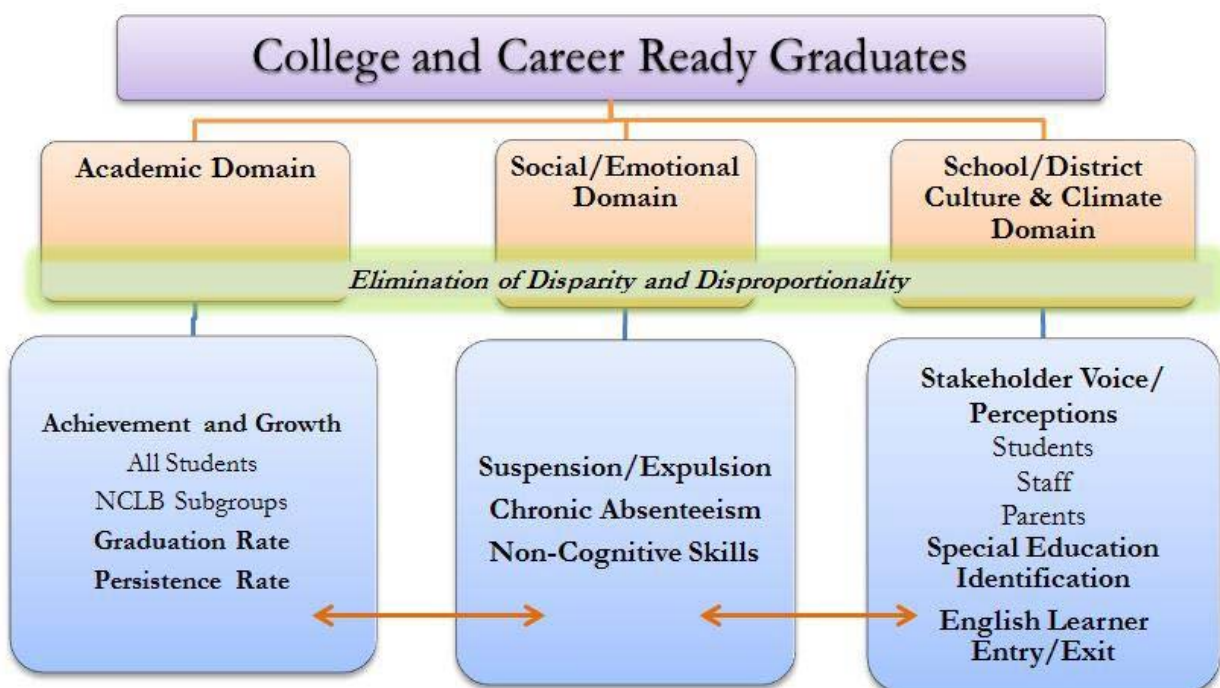
## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Wavier Update  
September 19, 2013



- **Social-Emotional Domain (20%):** Factors include: chronic absentee rate; suspension/expulsion rate for the purposes of reducing disproportionality, and non-cognitive factors (such as mindset and self-management) for the “all students” and all subgroups. Indicators will be determined during the 2013-14 school year. Full implementation will begin in 2014-15.
- **Culture-Climate Domain (20%):** Factors include: school performance on student/staff/parent surveys; English Language Learner re-designation; and Special Education identification for the purposes of reducing disproportionality. Indicators will be determined during the 2013-14 school year and piloted during the 2014-15 school year, with full implementation in 2015-16. Indicators will be determined during the 2013-14 school year. Full implementation will begin in 2014-15.

Figure 2:



In an effort to shift accountability from punitive actions towards continuous improvement, the School Quality Improvement Index (SQII) will identify schools having great success in increasing student achievement while closing achievement gaps. Those schools will be paired with schools not meeting their improvement goals (See Figure 3). In addition, intervention and supports will also be available to struggling schools and students. These resources include but are not limited to expanded learning opportunities such as summer, Saturday and before- and after-school programs.



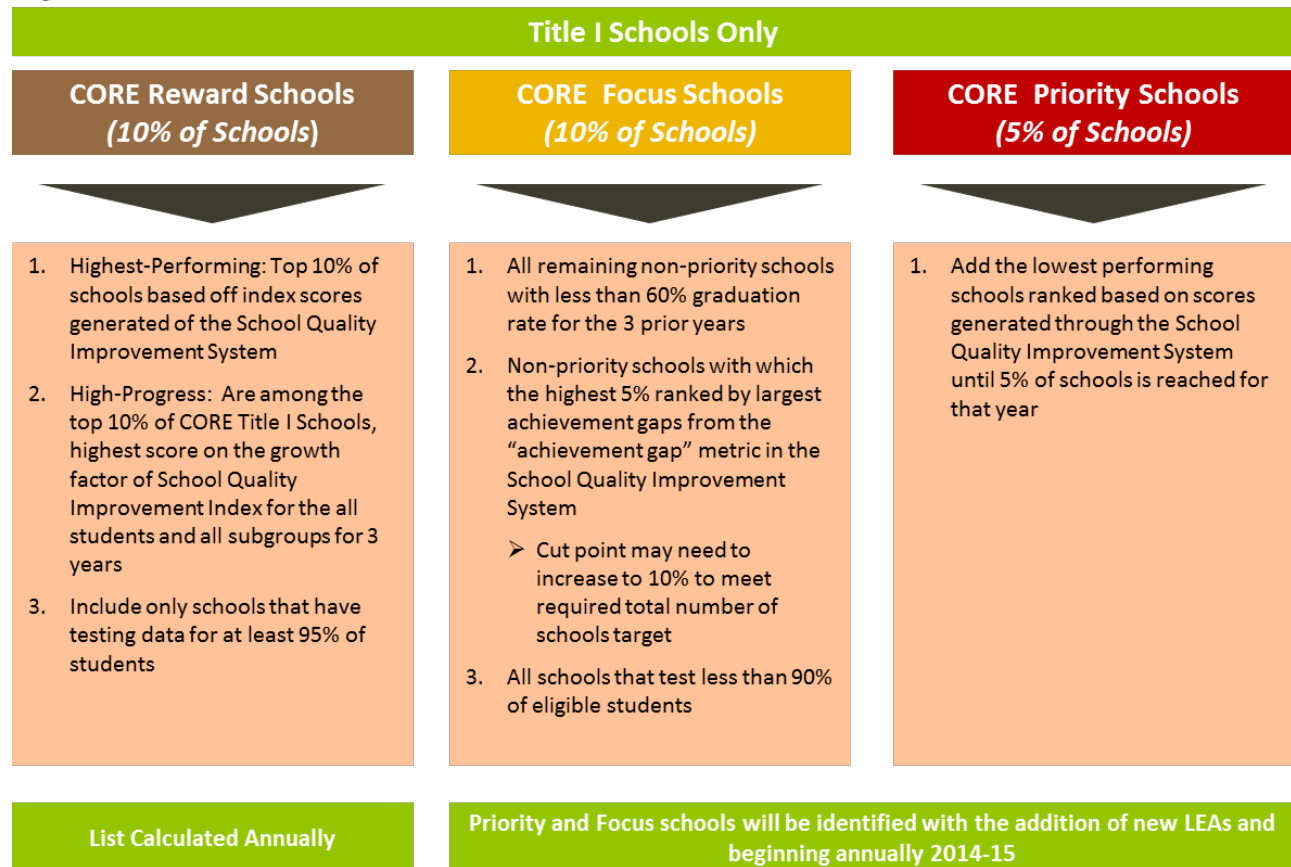
# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Wavier Update  
September 19, 2013



Figure 3:



This peer-to-peer and intervention process provides a research-based framework for building-level interventions that are tailored to the unique circumstances of CORE Priority, CORE Focus, and "other" Title I schools.

All sites will have access to:

- Networking
- Data sharing
- Professional development
- Planning and initiative development
- Collaborative needs assessment activities

Core Focus schools will:

- Be provided data analysis from Stanford Gardner Center, highlighting reasons for designation
- Complete needs self-assessment and work with school site councils (which will include key stakeholders) to develop 2-year improvement plan



# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Wavier Update  
September 19, 2013



- Join appropriate communities of practice (networks), which will convene at least quarterly to address specific needs and progress

CORE Priority Schools will:

- Be notified as to the reason for priority designation
- Be paired with highest-performing CORE Reward schools for ongoing peer coaching and collaboration
- Undergo a year-long needs assessment and planning process that includes both self-evaluation and peer-review with their partner CORE Reward school

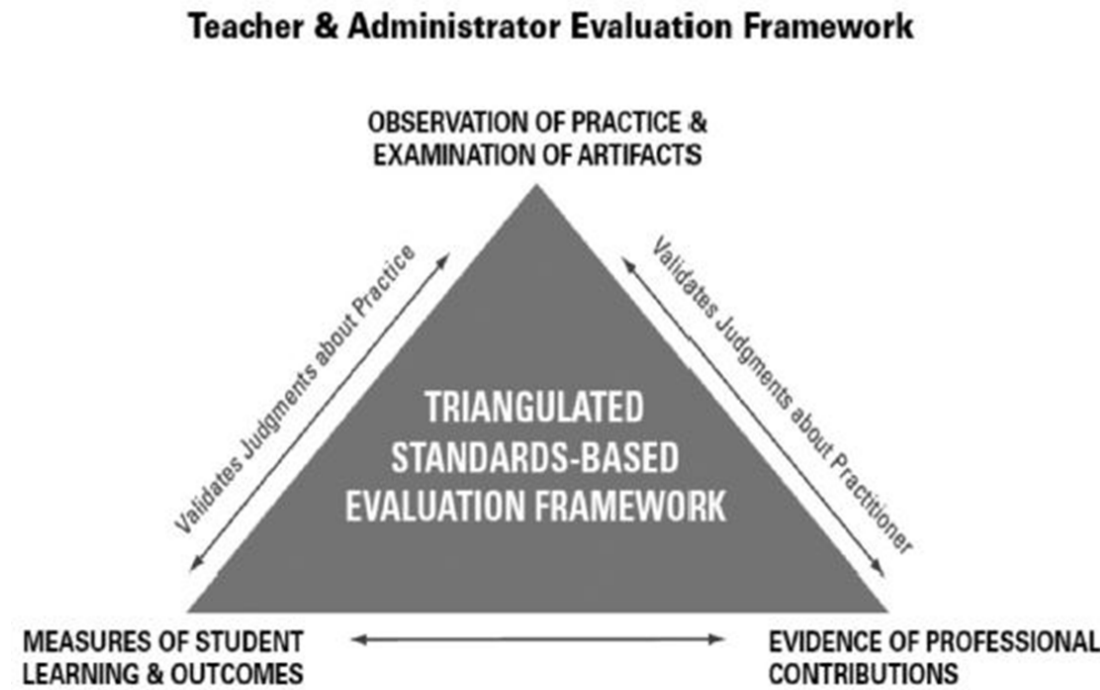
### Principle 3: Supporting Effective Leadership and Instruction

To address student achievement at SCUSD, we must first ensure all students—regardless of their family background—have great teachers and principals. Effective teachers are critical to raising achievement and closing longstanding gaps between student subgroups. In addition to the strong teaching and learning, site leadership plays a vital role in student achievement. Research conducted by the Wallace Foundation (2010) states “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school related factors” in affecting student learning. Through the SQIS our district will:

- Align our evaluation systems to SQIS evaluation requirements and common educator effectiveness evaluation guidelines that are based on California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and Danielson Frameworks
- Work with our union partners to modify our current evaluation system and pilot this system during the 2014-2015 school year

Student achievement growth is included as one of multiple measures of evaluating educator effectiveness, but it does not require a one-size-fits-all mandate. The specific way that teacher and principal effectiveness is measured will be different in each district participating in the School Quality Improvement System; yet each system will be nested in high-leverage common indicators that exemplify effectiveness, such those in California Standards for the Teaching profession and Charlotte Danielson’s framework as noted by Greatness by Design (see Figure 4).

Figure 4.



Adopted from *Greatness by Design*,  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson's Taskforce on  
Educator Excellence, September 2012

When developing guidelines that incorporate student growth as a significant factor in teacher and principal evaluation systems participating districts may choose from two options:

- Option 1 - Student growth integrated through a "trigger" system: With this option, an evaluation will be conducted using multiple measures, not including student achievement. The results will be compared to student achievement results. Any misalignment between teacher/administrator professional practice and student performance will initiate a dialogue to identify why a discrepancy between scores exists, followed by district action in the interest of professional development of the teacher.
- Option 2 - Student growth as a defined percentage: Student growth will represent a minimum of 20% of teacher and principal evaluation calculations. Student growth will be calculated using a growth model which will be developed by the CORE Board of Directors in the 2014-2015 school year. However, if a district currently uses or seeks to use another high quality student growth model, the district will have the opportunity to apply to the CORE Board for the option to use an alternative method, provided the district provides a strong research-based rationale.

Option 1 is our preferred option.

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Waiver Update  
September 19, 2013



### V. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND MEASURES

#### District Plan for Stakeholder Engagement:

Engagement with stakeholders is one of three foundational pillars of SCUSD's Strategic Plan 2010-2014: Putting Children First. Therefore, the work to engage students, families and the community in the continuous improvement of SCUSD schools is ongoing throughout the year and throughout the district. As SCUSD moves forward with planning and implementing the School Quality Improvement System, the district will utilize a variety of platforms, forums, structures, staff and partners already in place to inform, support and solicit feedback from a variety of stakeholders (students, teachers, site staff and administrators, central office staff/department leads, parents, family members, community members and business partnerships). The district is committed and is to conduct quarterly meetings with our stakeholders. More specifically the district will:

- Annually, hold at least one information/consultation/training sessions with Principals and key leadership from schools identified as receiving support, as well as other Title I schools requiring intervention
- Annually, hold information/consultation session on use of Title I set-aside funds with private school community
- Quarterly, beginning start of 2013-2014 school year, hold information/consultation sessions on waiver requirements, with teachers, staff, parents and local community
- Continually engage collective bargaining units around changes to elements of educator evaluation systems

The following plan outlines initial and ongoing engagement by each of the three principles of the CORE waiver:

#### Principle 1: College & Career Readiness for All Students

##### At the District Level:

- Continue to utilize an array of communication tools (electronic, face-to-face, web-based, print, etc.) to engage stakeholders
- Conduct Stakeholder Awareness Sessions (i.e., PTA, DAC, DELAC, CAC, GATE, Work-based Partners, Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project, Post-Secondary Partners)
- Conduct quarterly CCSS Parent Workshop Series in the three geographical regions (East, West and Central) with six workshops, 2 in ELA and 2 in Math for each of the three regions
- Equip school sites with tools and strategies to engage parents
- Continue to inform and solicit input from unions, parent advisory committees, postsecondary institutions and community organizations
- Inform the Board of Education via presentations, reports, Superintendent's Board Updates, etc.
- Revise parent guides (brochures)
- Expand parent/community web-based resource library

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Wavier Update  
September 19, 2013



### At the School Level:

#### Expectations

- Provide a minimum of one (1) site-based CCSS Math and ELA Parent Orientation/Awareness Building Meeting
- Share CCSS parent brochures with families, parent advisory committees and community organizations

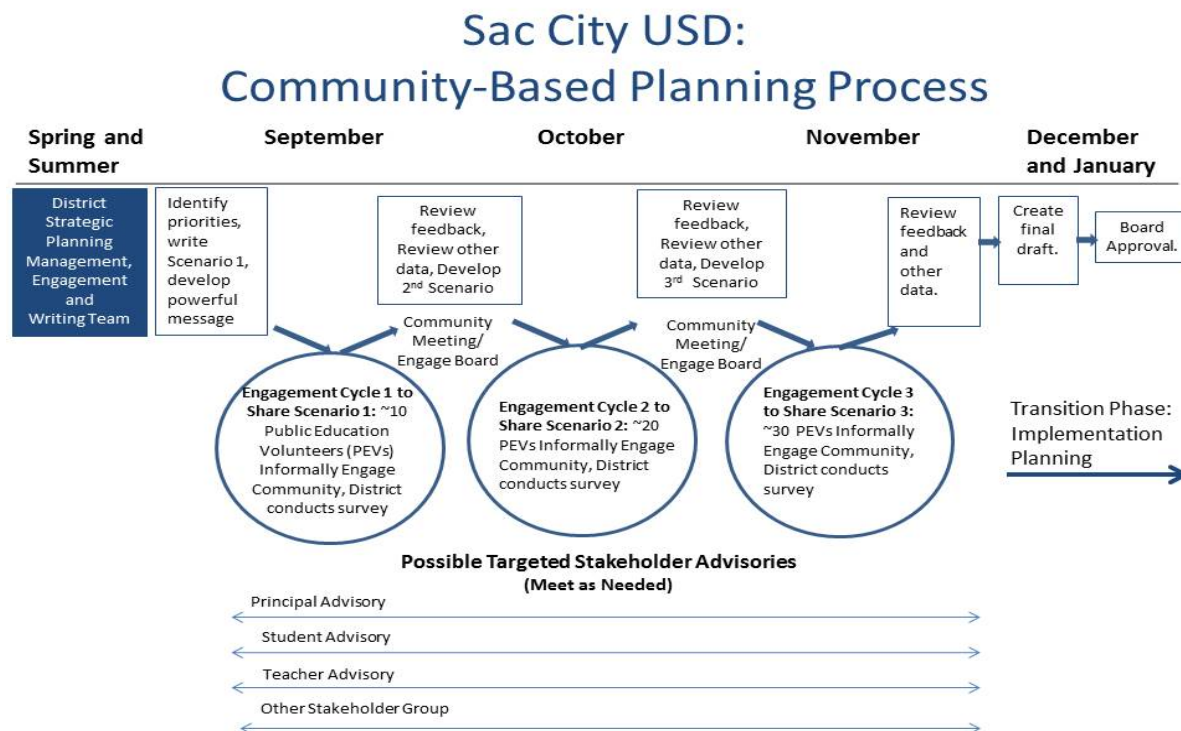
### **Principle 2: Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support**

Implementation will be in two parts: creation and implementation of a SCUSD-specific needs assessment (Guide to Success) and defining and implementing interventions and supports.

The Guide to Success (GTS) was generated from a need to give a more comprehensive picture of how SCUSD schools are doing. Currently, the only performance snapshot that we have for every school every year is the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) – this does not really capture school performance and the good work that is happening. It is compliance driven. The GTS will be simple and easy to understand and incorporate work like Social-Emotional Learning, the Graduate Student Profile, Pathways to Success and Linked Learning.

SCUSD will utilize a Community-Based Planning Process (See Figure 5) to gather input on the areas that our stakeholders would like to see reflected in the Guide to Success through a three-cycle process. Public Education Volunteers (PEVs) will informally engage the community through three cycles of engagement by hosting meetings, gathering data on a relevant scenario, and aggregating and sharing data for each scenario. At the same time, three cycles of surveys will be conducted (each survey will cover a new scenario and will be aligned with the relevant engagement cycle). Survey data will be analyzed and shared during community meetings. All activities (see goals/objectives/activities chart below for more details) will lead to the creation of a final draft which will then be presented to the Board for approval. In total, we will work to ensure that we have at least 2,000 respondents to the GTS review. This will be one of the largest and most inclusive engagement processes that the district has undertaken.

Figure 5:



All of the information on the Guide to Success (GTS) will be provided to families via a snapshot that is available online, in hard copy at the Enrollment Center, and at each school site. This will also be the tool used School Site Councils build the School Development Improvement Plan (SDIP). The SDIP will outline the supports to each designation school, as well as review the various rewards and interventions that will take place to address the gaps or strengths of sites based on the GTS.

With the SQIS, the district is no longer mandated to contract with Supplemental Education Services (SES) providers for tutoring support at struggling schools. Instead, SCUSD will be working with the community to identify the best supports to focus newly flexible resources where they can be most effective. The district will be convening a broad-based coalition of stakeholders in October to determine the types of interventions and supports most capable of producing positive outcomes for struggling students and schools. These interventions will primarily address expanded learning opportunities such as before school, after school, and summer programs. In addition, the coalition will aid the district in the developing of the criteria for student selection, as well as the scope and allocation of funds. Identified schools will begin implementing these interventions in January 2014, following the winter break. The GTS will be used to assess the effectiveness of the interventions.

# Board of Education Executive Summary

## Superintendent's Office

School Quality Improvement System (SQIS) CORE Wavier Update  
September 19, 2013



### Principle 3: Supporting Effective Leadership and Instruction

SCUSD has and will continue to engage our principals, teachers and respective union representatives as we begin the process of developing new evaluation processes and tools. The District will continue to work with SCTA to jointly update our existing evaluation system including a PAR. The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources along with other district staff meets weekly with all of our labor groups to maintain communication and begin moving the work forward.

#### VI. LESSONS LEARNED/NEXT STEPS

- Review feedback from CORE District
- Revise SCUSD Implementation Plan based on feedback
- Submitted Final Implementation Plan to CORE by October 10, 2013
- Follow-up for periodic update to the board
- Move forward with engagement plan and revise as needed
- Upload all information to the our website