

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
*Office of the Superintendent*

**Friday Memo**  
**July 27, 2018**

**Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy**

July 24: County Committee on School District Organization, DeJean, 6:30 PM

July 25: Board of Education Meeting, DeJean, 6:30 PM

July 30: CBOC Meeting, FOC, 6:00 PM

August 1: Agenda Setting, Superintendent's Office, 5:00 PM

August 8: Board of Education Meeting, DeJean, 6:30 PM

Augusts 14: New Teacher Orientation, Pinole Middle, 9:00 AM

August 16: All District Welcome, Richmond Auditorium, 8:30 – 11:30 AM

August 20: First Day of School

**Articles of Note -- Marcus Walton**

The attached news articles might be of interest. One deals with the District's settlement with Public Advocates around data provided for the LCAP. One is story about the county committee's rejection of the District's proposal to transition to trustee area elections. There is a factual error in the East Bay Times article that I am working to have corrected. Finally, a story from EdSource regarding graduation rates and the change in methodology.

**2017 Graduation Rates Released - Marcus Walton**

CDE released 2017 graduation rates on Thursday. The news release from Tom Torlakson's office is attached and you can view the District's data [here](https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohRateLevels.aspx?agglevel=district&year=2016-17&cds=0761796) (<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohRateLevels.aspx?agglevel=district&year=2016-17&cds=0761796>). The data shows that the district increased its percentage of students who completed the A-G requirements from 40% to 43% and the dropout rate fell from 8.7% to 7.7%.

The calculation for graduation rates changed, again. There are three significant changes as a result of the federal audit of the state's graduation rate calculation.

- a. Students who receive an adult education high school diploma are no longer considered regular high school graduates
- b. Students who pass the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE) are no longer considered regular high school graduates
- c. Students pass the CHSPE or who transfer to adult education programs or a community college will remain as part of the cohort.

In essence, schools and districts are penalized for students who receive their diploma through a non-traditional pathway.

This change resulted in a decrease in reported graduation rates, despite the dropout rate decreasing. Using the previous methodology, the District had a graduation of 83.1 percent for the Class of 2016.

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
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Results for individual schools:

De Anza - 90.7%

El Cerrito - 84.6%

Hercules - 95.3%

Kennedy - 76%

Middle College - 96.3%

Pinole Valley - 87.9%

Richmond - 80.2%

Greenwood - 30.5%

Vista - 64.1%

A news release will be posted to the District website this afternoon.

**Public Records Log – Marcus Walton**

Included in this week's memo is the log of public records requests received by the district. If you have any questions, please contact me.

**Public Records Request Log 2018 - 2019**  
**Week Ending July 27, 2018**

	<b>Date of Receipt</b>	<b>Requestor</b>	<b>Requested Records/Information</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
56	3/22/18	Scott Rafferty	Communications regarding CVRA allegations	3/26/18 Email sent with DOCs & Links 3/27/18 Email sent with DOCs & Links  <b>Gathering/Reviewing Documents</b>
62	4/17/18	Scott E. Jenny Jenny & Jenny LLP, Attorneys	Pinole HS Project- Tree removal, trenching and hill excavation project between Subject Properties, 2059 Shea Drive and 2069 Shea Drive, Pinole CA	5/31/18 Email sent extending date  <b>Gathering/Reviewing Documents</b>
65	4/27/18	J. Paul Fanning Lankford, Crawford, Moreno & Ostertag LLP	Richmond High School / Asbestos Records	6/8/18 Email sent requesting clarification in order to narrow search, per our Facilities Department  6/11/18 Updated/Revised PRR received by Requester  <b>Gathering Documents</b>
67	5/9/18	David Stephan	Roster of all WCCUSD High School Faculty	5/15/18 Acknowledgement email sent
68	5/15/18	Scottie Smith Educational Advocate	Student/District Inter and Intra Transfers Data for each School Site / For School Years 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18	5/15/18 Acknowledgement email sent  <b>Gathering/Reviewing Documents</b>
72	6/19/10	Pablo Portillo Polsinellie LLP	DeAnza High School-Cafeteria / Construction and/or Abatement Projects beginning in 1971 through 2001	6/19/18 Acknowledgement email sent  <b>7/27/2018 DOCs available</b>
1819-01	7/3/218	Jamie Lund - Freedom Foundation	A data set with a record for every 2017-18 employee represented by a labor union	7/12/18 - Acknowledgement letter sent
1819-02	7/11/18	Clare Wendt - mb public affairs	From 1/1/2007 to 12/31/2013 - 1. Internal Crime Statistics by school, year, type of crime 2. Incident reports/cases related to incidents/crimes at WCCUSD schools 3. Complaints and accompanying appeals related to student discipline, facility conditions, discrimination/harassment against students or staff	7/12/18 - Acknowledgement letter sent and 14-day extension invoked

## California high school grad rate drops with new methodology

*82.7 percent in Class 2017 got their diplomas; racial, ethnic gaps are wide*

JULY 27, 2018 | JOHN FENSTERWALD



CREDIT: PEOPLE IMAGES / ISTOCK

California's 2017 high school graduation rate dropped slightly from the previous year due to a change in methodology prompted by a federal audit, according to **much-delayed data released Thursday** by the California Department of Education.

Last year's graduation rate was 82.7 percent, down 1.1 percentage points from the 2016 rate. That year's rate — the proportion of 9th-graders who graduated within four years — reached an all-time high of 83.8 percent. However, state officials warn against comparing this year's rate with previous years, statewide and among districts, and comparing schools and

student groups, because the rules for calculating graduation rates have changed to conform with federal requirements.

The new graduation methodology results from a federal audit of California's 2013 graduation data that criticized poor oversight by the California Department of Education of districts' data collection and found that the criteria that the state used to determine graduation rates deviated from federal requirements, raising the state's graduation past rates by an estimated 2 percentage points.

The federal government has not yet released nationwide graduation rates for 2017. The national average in 2016 was 84.1 percent. California has not redone its 2016 graduation rate, but, based on the audit's findings, the state's reported rate was probably overstated.

The department posted the new data on DataQuest, broken down by counties, districts and schools, with filters to allow viewing by gender and some student groups, and differentiating between charter and district schools.

The new data show persistent disparities among racial, ethnic and other student groups. African- American students had a graduation rate of 73.1 percent and dropout rate of 15.3 percent, while white students' graduation rate was 87.3 percent, with a dropout rate of 6.3 percent. The graduation rate was 80.3 percent and the dropout rate was 10.4 percent for Hispanics, compared with a graduation rate of 93.1 percent and a dropout rate of 3.1 percent for Asians.

Only 50.8 percent of foster youths graduated, and 28.8 percent — more than a quarter — dropped out.

The updated graduation report also includes data on students who have taken and passed the course requirements, known as a-g, for admission to the University of California and the California State University. Students must pass those courses with a minimum grade of C. In 2017, a record 49.9 percent of graduating seniors passed the a-g requirement, 10 percentage points higher than just 4 years earlier. However, the adjustment downward of the graduation rate for 2017 also slightly throws off the accuracy of comparing the 2017 a-g completion to earlier years.

The a-g completion data also show significant disparities by race: 39.6 percent of African-Americans, 42.4 percent of Hispanics, 54.8 percent of whites and 76.3 percent of Asians qualified for UC or CSU admission.

Only 56 percent of 64,000 charter school students in the Class of 2017 graduated from high school, but that's because a large portion attend alternative high schools that serve students who are already at a greater risk of dropping out compared with the broader population at traditional high schools. Alternative high schools include continuation, juvenile court, and county-run special education schools. Excluding alternative charter and district schools, the graduation rate was 82 percent for charters and 91.5 percent for traditional district high schools. However, charters' a-g completion rate was 61.2 percent compared with 52.4 percent for traditional high schools, excluding alternative schools.

The U.S. Department of Education sets rules to calculate four-year graduation rates to enable accurate state comparisons. In 2013 the department's Office of Inspector General audited of three sample districts, including Los Angeles Unified, and found three problems that have now been corrected.

The state improperly counted as graduates students who transferred to adult education schools, where they received diplomas with different requirements than a regular high school diploma. At the same time, the state incorrectly removed students who transferred to adult schools and didn't get a diploma from the 4-year cohort. And it incorrectly counted students who passed the California High School Proficiency Exam as regular high school graduates.

Russell Rumberger, an emeritus professor at UC Santa Barbara and director of the [California Dropout Research Project](#), said the audit ignores a larger issue of whether students who got a diploma from an adult high school in California should be counted. Most of those students did fulfill the state's minimum academic course requirements.

"Are they a second-class diploma? I don't think they are," he said.

The modified rules for calculating graduation rates will require the state to recalibrate the achievement levels for the high school graduation indicator on the California School Dashboard, the website that rates school performance on multiple measures. Because 2017

rates can't be compared with previous years, the state is expediting the release of 2018 graduation data so that it can be used for the next dashboard release later this year.

## Comments

### Comments Policy

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## Complaint spurs Bay Area district to provide parents with more timely accountability data

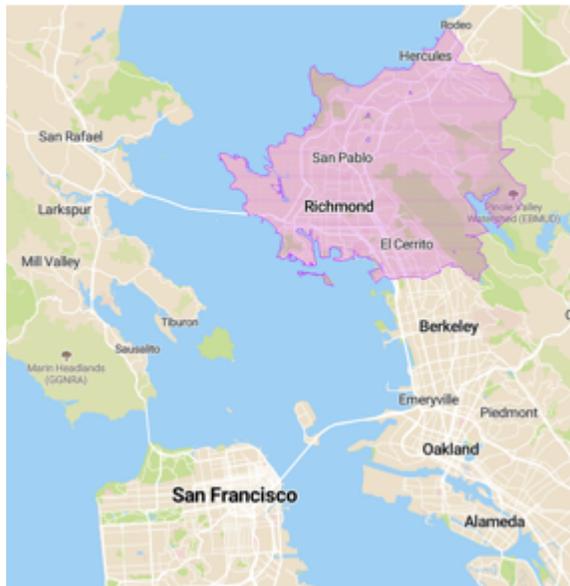
JULY 24, 2018 | THERESA HARRINGTON



THERESA HARRINGTON/EDSOURCE TODAY

*West Contra Costa Unified community members lobby school board to release accountability data.*

**T**he West Contra Costa school district, in response to a **complaint**, has agreed to provide data by November on student performance and spending to parents who help create its annual accountability plan.



The district agreed to settle a complaint filed last April on behalf of two parents and a student by **Public Advocates, Inc.** and pro bono counsel **Mayer Brown LLP**. The district includes Richmond and surrounding communities.

Parent Wendy Lopez, one of the complainants, said she is excited to know that the district will give her committee the data it needs to help create the next accountability plan months earlier than it did for the 2018-19 plan.

“It was like we finally achieved something,” she said. “Now, we’ll be able to work with the right tools and with the right data.”

District spokesman Marcus Walton said West Contra Costa Unified is working closely with the community to improve its process for creating and updating its accountability plan.

“This settlement reaffirms our commitment to provide data to our parents so they can make informed decisions about the education their children receive,” he said.

The complaint came after updated information crucial to evaluating how effective the district had been at meeting its annual accountability goals was not released — after several requests — to a committee working on its **2018-19 Local Control and Accountability Plan, or LCAP**.

Districts are legally required to adopt these plans annually, laying out specific goals for students and schools and showing how they will spend state funds to achieve them. The requirement is part of the California's Local Control Funding Formula, or **LCFF**, which gives school districts greater authority over the use of state funds and gives them extra money to educate low-income students, English learners, foster youth and homeless children.

According to the settlement **agreement** signed July 20 by district Superintendent Matthew Duffy, the district will report available data in its draft accountability plan before the school board approves it in June. All data for the prior school year will be reported to the community by November.

“We are pushing for the community to have more time to review information,” said Hans Moore, senior staff attorney for Public Advocates. “The reflection process the community needs to go through was delayed by some time.”

The district distributed updated data to the committee of parents and students working on the accountability plan in early May, just weeks before the draft was completed, Moore said.

If the district delays its reporting of information about whether it is meeting its goals, the community is unable to hold it accountable, he said.

## Comments

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Marcus Walton &lt;mwatson@wccusd.net&gt;

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## State Superintendent Torlakson Reports 2017 High School Graduation Rates

1 message

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**COMMUNICATIONS** <COMMUNICATIONS@cde.ca.gov>  
To: mwatson@wccusd.net

Thu, Jul 26, 2018 at 10:26 AM



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**NEWS RELEASE**

**TOM TORLAKSON**  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

REL#18-50

CONTACT: Scott Roark

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHONE: 916-319-0818

July 26, 2018

E-MAIL: [communications@cde.ca.gov](mailto:communications@cde.ca.gov)

### State Superintendent Torlakson Reports 2017 High School Graduation Rates

SACRAMENTO—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson announced California's high school graduation rates today under a new methodology that was adopted in response to a federal audit.

As part of this new methodology, three significant changes were implemented for calculating 2017 high school graduation rates: (1) Students who receive an adult education high school diploma are no longer considered regular high school graduates, and (2) students who pass the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE) are no longer considered regular high school graduates, and (3) students who transfer to adult education programs or a community college will remain in the denominator for the cohort calculation.

Using this new methodology, which reduces the number of students counted as graduates, 82.7 percent of California students who started high school as ninth graders in 2013–14 graduated on-time four years later in 2017. Under the old methodology, the statewide graduation rate was 83.8 percent in 2016.

Overall, the number of graduates increased from 2016 by over 900 for a total of 408,124 students. In addition, the number of students who dropped out in 2017 decreased by over 2,200 compared to last year.

In order to have the most recent data available for accountability, CDE has expedited the timeline for producing graduation rates for this year. Therefore, these new graduation rates for 2017 will be compared to the graduation rates for 2018 which will be released publicly in December, in time to be included in the Fall 2018 Dashboard.

One useful new feature in the updated graduation report is that it shows the number of students who have met all the (a-g) requirements for admission to a University of California (UC)/California State University (CSU). In California's high school graduating class for 2017, one out of two graduates, nearly 50 percent, met UC/CSU requirements for admission.

"California continues to make excellent progress in education," said Torlakson. "The percentage of our graduates eligible for the University of California and the California State University is soaring. In addition, more of our students are passing Advanced Placement® exams and the number demonstrating proficiency in a foreign language has quadrupled since 2011."

Since 2007, there has been more than a 30 percent increase in high school graduates eligible for UC and more than a 53 percent increase in CSU eligibility. In addition, there has been a significant upward trend in graduation rates. Using the old method of calculating rates, they moved from 74.4 percent for the class of 2010 to 83.8 percent for the class of 2016.

In addition, another useful new feature in the updated graduation report is that it shows the number of high school graduates earning a State Seal of Biliteracy, which recognizes graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing one or more languages in addition to English. In 2017, 44,594 graduates earned the State Seal of Biliteracy.

Torlakson, through his Global California 2030 initiative, has called for vastly expanding teaching and learning of world languages and seeks to more than triple the number of students who receive the State Seal of Biliteracy by 2030.

But the data also reveals a significant challenge. As in previous years, disparities in graduation rates continue. Torlakson said much work needs to be done in narrowing what he calls the "pernicious, persistent" achievement gap between Asian and white students and Latino and African American students.

"We have a long way to go and need help from everyone—teachers, parents, administrators and community members—to narrow these gaps," he said. English learners continue to need support to improve their graduation rates. In addition to the new graduation rate calculation methodology, CDE made other improvements to more accurately identify students who were English learners during high school. These improvements removed some students from the English learner subgroup who had reclassified as fluent English proficient just prior to the beginning of high school. This resulted in a decrease of the graduation counts for English learners.

The updated reporting allows users to utilize new filtering options also available in the Enrollment, Discipline, and Chronic Absenteeism reports in DataQuest. In alignment with the

California School Dashboard, charter schools are removed from the school district reports by default but can be added to the school district totals by using the filter option.

For the class of 2017, the graduation rate for California charter schools, excluding alternative schools, is 82 percent. For comparison, non-charter schools, excluding alternative schools, showed a graduating rate of 91.5 percent. Schools identified as "alternative" include, but are not limited to, continuation, juvenile court, county-run special education schools, alternative schools of choice, and serve high risk students who are already at the greatest risk of dropping out, compared with the broader population at traditional high schools.

To view state, county, district, and school graduation and dropout rates, visit the California Department of Education's [DataQuest](#) web page. Downloadable data files are available on the California Department of Education [Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and Outcome Data](#) web page.

Since the prior graduation rates use a different methodology, the 2017 graduation rates should not be compared to prior years. The CDE will use the new methodology for the 2018 California School Dashboard to calculate performance levels (colors), using the 2017 graduation rates for change, and 2018 graduation rates for status.

#### *Attachments*

*Table 1: Graduation and Dropout Rates by Student Group*

<b>Ethnic/Racial Designation or Program</b>	<b>2017 Graduation Rate</b>	<b>2017 Dropout Rate</b>
African American	73.1	15.3
American Indian or Alaska Native	68.2	16.0
Asian	93.1	3.1
Filipino	93.0	2.9
Hispanic or Latino	80.3	10.4

Pacific Islander	81.8	10.4
White	87.3	6.3
Two or More Races	83.8	7.8
Not Reported	34.7	44.6
English Learners	67.1	16.9
Foster Youth	50.8	28.8
Homeless Youth	69.9	16.6
Migrant Education	80.4	9.6
Students with Disabilities	65.0	12.5
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	78.8	10.8
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>82.7</b>	<b>9.1</b>

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The California Department of Education is a state agency led by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. For more information, please visit the [California Department of Education](#) website. You may also follow Superintendent Torlakson on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).

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7/26/2018

West Contra Costa Unified School District Mail - State Superintendent Torlakson Reports 2017 High School Graduation Rates

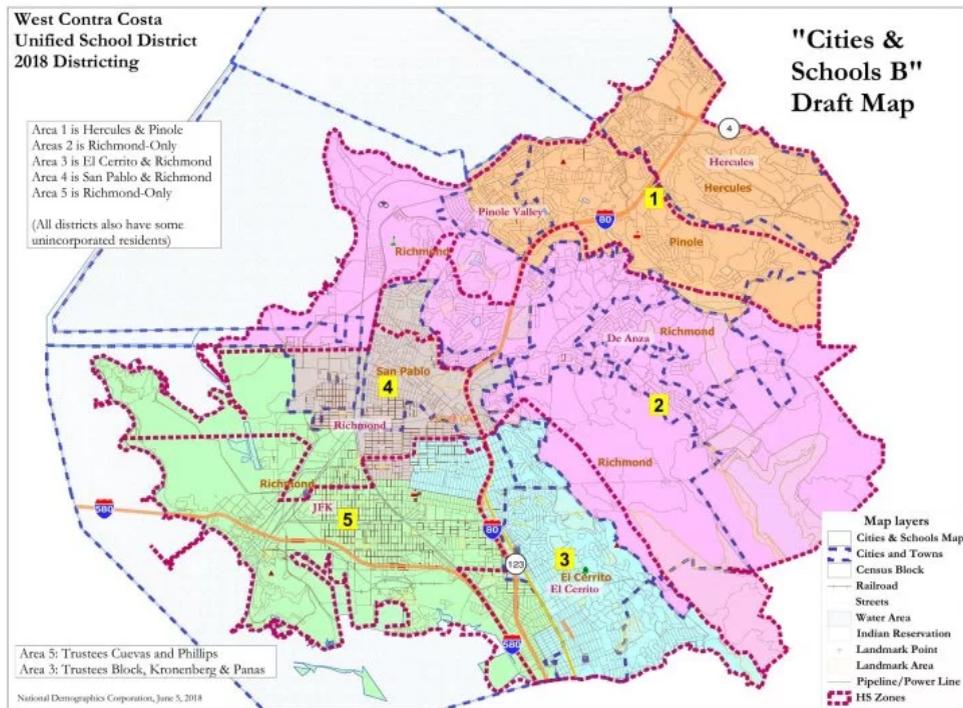
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**BREAKING NEWS** Second firefighter killed as wildfire in Redding area burns out of c

**News**

# County turns down West Contra Costa Unified trustee area map



This map showing the proposed district boundaries for West Contra Costa County Unified School board elections was nixed by the county school board Tuesday, July 24. (Courtesy of WCCUSD)

By **ALI TADAYON** | atadayon@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group  
 PUBLISHED: July 26, 2018 at 4:09 pm | UPDATED: July 27, 2018 at 5:07 am

West Contra Costa Unified will try again to set trustee district boundaries after the county Office of Education rejected its first map.

Some activists have argued that the rejected map — which grouped Point Richmond, the Richmond Marina and the Iron Triangle in the same trustee district — would [give an unfair advantage to wealthier candidates](#), who would have more money to spend than working-class people running for office.

The district encompasses Hercules, El Cerrito and Richmond.

ADVERTISING



The Contra Costa County Board of Education’s committee on school district organization voted 3-2 against the district’s proposed map at its meeting Tuesday at Richmond’s Lovonya DeJean Middle School. Several opponents of the map spoke out at Tuesday’s meeting.

“These lines do not represent what’s best for our community at the moment,” said Anthony Caro, who is running for school board.

County board trustee Fatima Alleyne — who voted against the map — said she felt the district had not taken residents’ concerns into consideration.

“We have people from the Iron Triangle, which could be considered a low-income community, and their comments and input were not factored into the map that was drawn,” Alleyne said at the meeting.

Despite the district's online and social media outreach, phone notifications, newsletters and public meetings, there was little public participation in the mapping process, West Contra Costa Unified spokesman Marcus Walton said in an interview.

The school district must come up with a new plan, which will be approved by its board, he said. The boundaries will be discussed at the upcoming Aug. 8 school board meeting.

"Obviously, we heard from our community that the option that was put forward before the county committee was not acceptable to the people at the meeting, and the county committee agreed with them," Walton said. "So next we have to move forward in order to find a new plan."

The county board of education is still putting together its rationale in rejecting the plan, Walton said, which the district school board needs before taking its next steps.

Though the district doesn't have a specified deadline as to when it has to designate trustee districts, all the board members' terms expire in November 2020. Walton said the district plans to have areas designated by the November 2020 school board election.

Previously, West Contra Costa Unified's five school board trustees were elected at large from voters in the entire district. The change was prompted by lawsuits filed against the school board and other publicly elected Bay Area entities challenging the fairness of at-large voting.

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Tags: [Education](#)



**Ali Tadayon** Ali Tadayon is an award-winning journalist covering Oakland for the Bay Area News Group. He joined the team in 2017 after working as a crime reporter in Riverside and Idaho Falls, Idaho.

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