

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

**Friday Memo**  
**June 14, 2019**

**Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy**

June 15: Richmond Juneteenth Parade & Festival, 10:00 AM  
June 17: Summer School Starts  
June 18: Agenda Setting, Superintendent’s Office, 4:00 PM  
June 18: Governance Committee, Alvarado Room 1, 6:00 PM  
June 19: Solutions Team, UTR Office,  
June 19: Facilities Subcommittee, FOC, 3:00 PM  
June 20: CBOC, FOC, 6:15 PM  
June 26: Board of Education, DeJean, 6:30 PM  
July 4: Independence Day Holiday, Schools and Offices Closed

**Upcoming Agenda Items - June 26 - Matt Duffy**

Budget Adoption  
LCAP Adoption  
Special Ed Annual Plan and Budget  
Immigrant Month Resolution

**Parcel Tax Charter Compliance - Matt Duffy**

Internal Auditor Margarita Romo reports that our charter schools are complying with the terms of the Settlement Agreement. Staff will continue to evaluate this prior to issuing parcel tax payments to ensure they continue to provide the required items (audit reports, student names, and state student ID numbers).

**Media Stories of Note - Marcus Walton**

The following media stories may be of interest:

<https://edsource.org/2019/bay-area-school-slated-for-redesign-gets-new-operating-agreement/613670>  
- Bay Area school slated for 'redesign' gets new operating agreement

<https://edsource.org/2019/charter-schools-cost-east-bay-district-nearly-1000-per-student-report-asserts/613186> - Charter schools cost East Bay district nearly \$1,000 per student, report asserts

<https://postnewsgroup.com/2019/06/13/56830/> - Academic Coaching Program Succeeds at Holding Black Students to High Standards

<https://www.cffoundation.net/stories/principal-community-of-practice/> - “RE-MOTIVATED”: HOW SEVEN WCCUSD PRINCIPALS UNITED TO STRENGTHEN LEADERSHIP, IMPROVE INSTRUCTION, AND KEEP EACH OTHER INSPIRED

**"RE-MOTIVATED": HOW SEVEN  
WCCUSD PRINCIPALS UNITED TO  
STRENGTHEN LEADERSHIP, IMPROVE  
INSTRUCTION, AND KEEP EACH OTHER  
INSPIRED**



## **By Justin Warren, Chamberlin Family Foundation**

"What's your commitment to yourself?"

That internal question motivated Principal Jessica Petrilli to join a peer learning cohort that has inspired a small group of WCCUSD school leaders to renew their focus on effective teaching and learning.

In her fifth year as principal at Helms Middle School, Petrilli is one of seven school leaders who this year joined the Principal Community of Practice cohort to strengthen their instructional leadership and promote best practices at their school sites.

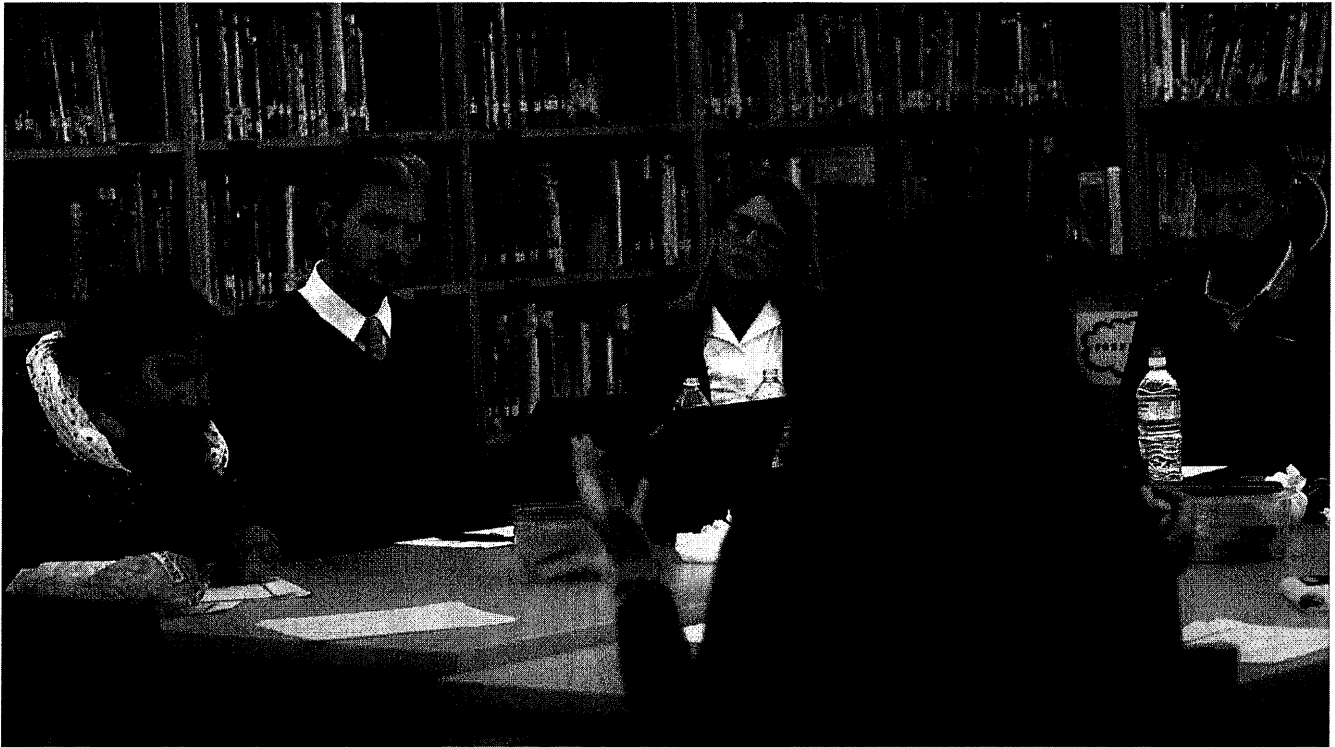
"There's a lot of us that are really hungry, and we just want to learn more. We see the value in community," Petrilli said.

The Community of Practice (CoP) launched in 2018 when a group of experienced West Contra Costa principals from some of the district's highest-need schools came together to learn how to better overcome shared challenges in driving student academic growth.

With support from the Chamberlin Family Foundation (CFF), these school leaders convened twice monthly throughout the school year to meet with experts in curriculum and assessment, teacher observation, and standards alignment. By the end of the year, the principals had honed their instructional vision and crafted an actionable plan to drive academic gains at their schools.

"The Community of Practice will provide important coaching support for leaders to hone their skills around effective instruction, quality curriculum implementation, and teacher collaboration," said WCCUSD Superintendent Matt Duffy in a written statement about the program.

"Additionally, it gives teachers an opportunity to grow in areas of learning that are personalized and differentiated," Duffy said.



*"Throughout the day, ask yourself: How is what I'm doing right now impacting student learning?" Melissa Granetz, a Leadership Coach from TNTP, posed this and other questions to WCCUSD Principals during a Community of Practice session. At top: Helms Middle School Principal Jessica Petrilli shares her instructional leadership approach with other WCCUSD principals.*

The Community of Practice extends CFF's continuing investment in nurturing strong WCCUSD school leaders. The foundation supports school leaders to advance its belief that strong instructional leadership is a key driver to improve student performance over the long term.

This belief is rooted in research showing that strong leadership is critical to turning around underperforming schools, according to Caroline Damon, Senior Program Officer at CFF, who administers the Community of Practice.

"The evidence is clear that for historically struggling schools, great leadership is necessary to achieve ambitious goals." Damon said.

"We're hoping that providing additional support for school leaders — especially those who serve our district's highest-need students — will allow them to

successfully implement practices that lead to even greater academic gains for students in the coming years," Damon explained.

The CoP held its first session in October, 2018, and welcomed principals from Nystrom, Verde, Peres, Chavez, Wilson, and Montalvin elementary schools, in addition to Helms. After an open application process, CFF selected principals who demonstrated a clear desire to become stronger and more effective instructional leaders.

This year's participants met after school and on Saturdays to learn from best-in-class professional development partners including Achievement Network and TNTP. Each participating principal was also matched with an experienced leadership coach who had served as a principal in a school known to be highly successful at serving low-income students.

In addition, the CoP facilitated school reviews during which members of the cohort visited each other's sites to observe, identify strong practices and note opportunities for improvement in each school's instructional methods.

***"They're incredibly open to feedback and being pushed, and they really want to improve their practice."*** —Jeff Rutel, Founder, 102 Group

"We're trying to help them learn how to look at their school on a daily basis and focus on the things that matter most," said Jeff Rutel, who led the school review sessions. Rutel is the founder of 102 Group, a national leadership training organization that conducts on-site school quality reviews and provides leadership coaching to school leaders.

During the two-day school reviews, Rutel said, the primary goal for principals is to identify three "key levers" that can make a difference for student success, and "direct their work toward doing those really well."

To further broaden the principals' exposure to best practices, the CoP also sponsored school leaders to attend acclaimed professional development

conferences including the UnboundEd Standards Institute in Los Angeles and the Managing to Change the World workshop in Oakland.

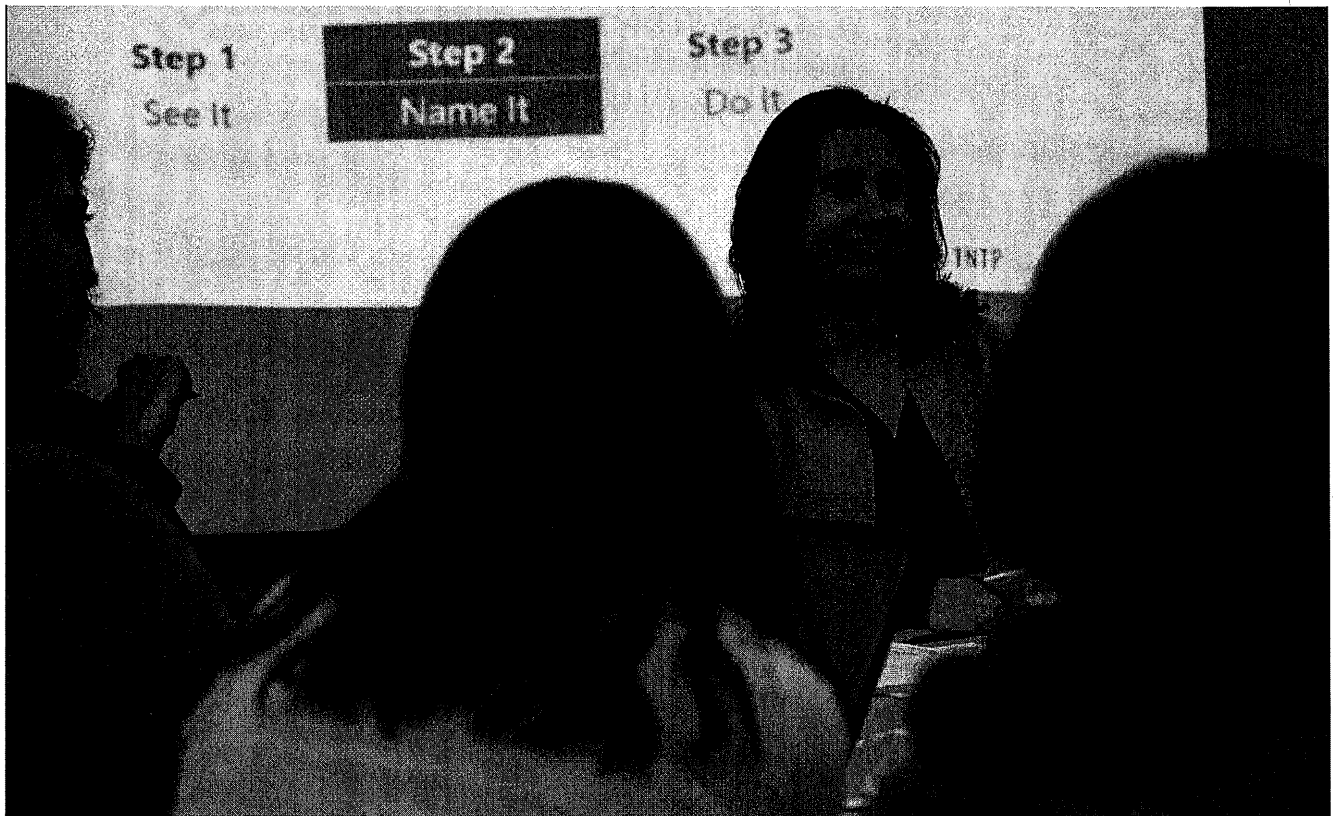
***"You can't do this alone."*** — *Jessica Petrilli, Principal, Helms Middle School*

As they look forward to building on the takeaways from this year's sessions, the principals can approach their instructional leadership with a renewed focus on what works, and how to implement successful practices school-wide.

"I consider myself to be a life-long learner," said Claudia Velez, Principal at Wilson Elementary School. This year, Velez is leading her school through a facilities upgrade that will create "flex learning" suites designed to be more adaptable to project-based learning and various instructional methods.

For Velez, the shift in classroom design is a perfect opportunity to reconsider the instructional practices that engage learners and drive academic growth.

"Because we have to change so rapidly," Velez said, "I really, really am trying to get as much knowledge as I can from a bunch of different places."



*Wilson Elementary School Principal Claudia Velez joins colleagues during a CoP professional development session at Montalvin Elementary.*

When the CoP began, Velez saw a chance to connect with peers and gain professional development that could enhance her team's impact. She is already applying insights from the CoP to help her teaching team implement standards-aligned curricula, ensure rigorous, high-quality instruction across grade levels, and adopt techniques that are working for other WCCUSD principals.

"This particular group of principals I have already collaborated with, I currently collaborate with, and I respect and value their insights," Velez said. "I felt like it would be a good opportunity for me to delve into some interesting topics that all of us are working on."

***"I consider myself to be a life-long learner."*** —Claudia Velez, Principal,  
*Wilson Elementary School*

The principals explored a range of topics throughout the year, guided by experts like Melissa Granetz, a Leadership Coach at TNTP. Granetz, whose sessions focused on instructional leadership, found a "pretty impressive" cohort that demonstrated a clear desire for continued professional growth.

"There was no convincing needed with this group," Granetz said. "They're eager to grow and get better."

But improving instructional leadership calls for "an ecosystem of support," Granetz explained, noting that quality instructional leadership requires a broad set of conditions that can lead to success across each school.



*TNTP's Melissa Granetz discusses observation and feedback techniques with Verde Elementary School Principal Eric Acosta-Verprauskus.*

Creating this ecosystem, she said, is the "core function" of each participant's role as a principal.

"They need to systematize it," Granetz said, "so that the teachers can benefit from it, and, ultimately, so that the students will benefit."



When effective leadership becomes part of the school's culture, Granetz added, the benefits can be profound.

"There is a lot of research that shows that teachers who are in a school with a solid instructional culture, who know the vision for instruction and get support to reach that vision are more likely to stay," she said.

Over time, Granetz said, a culture that supports teacher retention translates to "time well spent" when it comes to student success.

***"They're eager to grow and get better."*** —Melissa Granetz, Leadership Coach, TNTP

For Helms Principal Jessica Petrilli, time spent with peers in the Community of Practice is part of her personal commitment to ongoing improvement.

In order to provide constructive leadership for her staff, she says, she depends on continued learning and camaraderie to keep her goals ambitious and her team energized year over year.

"You can't do this alone," Petrilli said, adding that the opportunity to bring vice principals to the sessions allowed her team to zero in on the practices that matter most to drive student learning.

"It takes a community to do this work," Petrilli explained, noting that the CoP has allowed her to tap into support from principals she trusts, and in turn provide stronger coaching for the teachers she leads.

"It's about finding those pockets where it's safe to be vulnerable, but also where you can challenge yourself," Petrilli said. "I'm re-motivated now to sit side-by-side with my VPs or my coach and make sure we're all aligned."

"That's what hooked me into wanting to join this cohort, just seeing that it's really authentically trying to help school leaders," Petrilli said. "We're all better together, thinking it through."

"It's a commitment to yourself," Petrilli continued, "to invest in yourself, in your professional development."

"It's for the long haul."

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## APPLY FOR THE 2019 COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

WCCUSD principals: Want to join the Community of Practice cohort for Fall 2019? A limited number of openings are available for new participants, and online applications will be accepted through June 14, 2019. There are no fees to apply or participate. [Click here to apply or learn more.](#)

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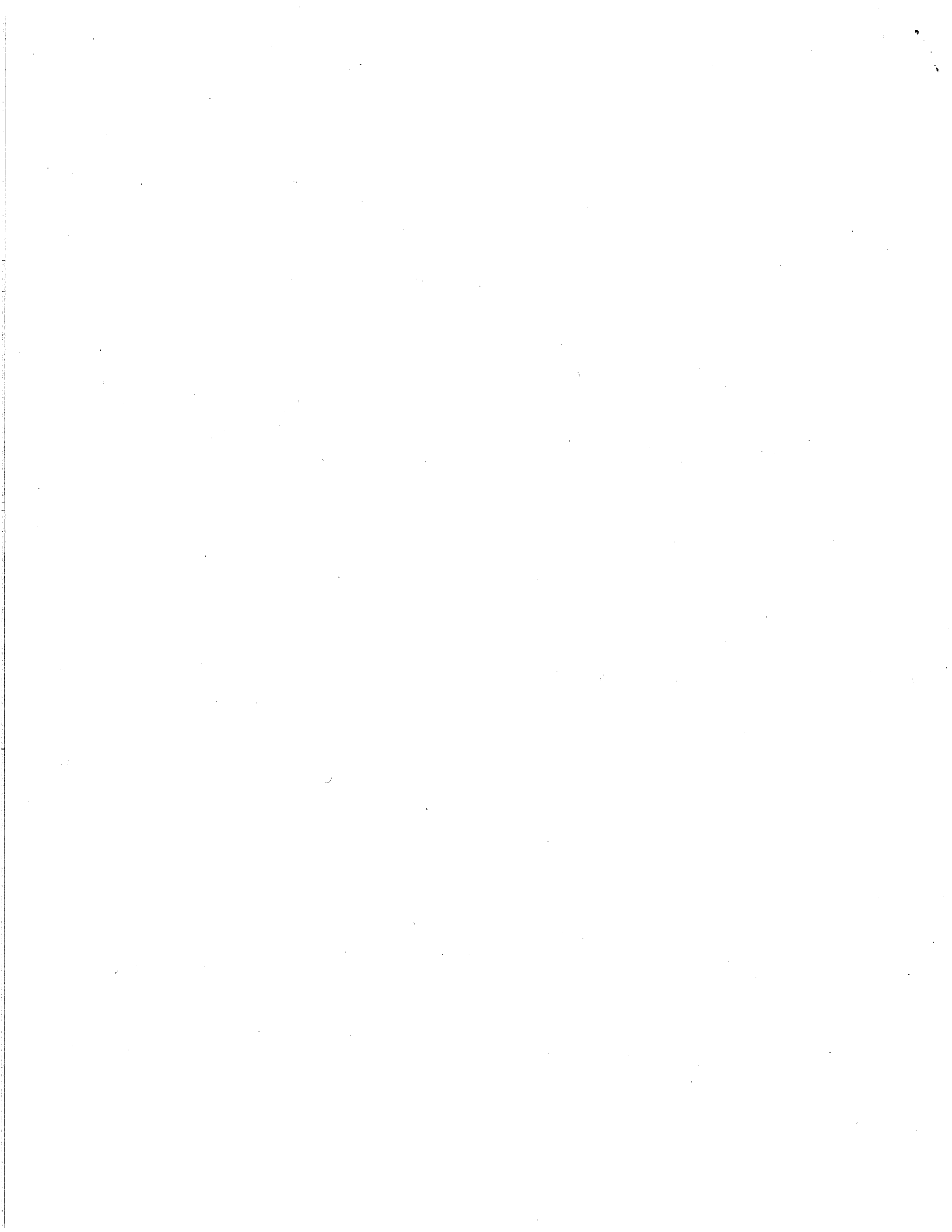
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## Charter schools cost East Bay district nearly \$1,000 per student, report asserts

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JUNE 7, 2019 | THERESA HARRINGTON

As the controversy around charter school expansion intensifies in California, a report commissioned by the West Contra Costa Unified School District estimates that the district is losing nearly \$1,000 per student as a result of rising charter school enrollments.

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The report, released last month, was produced by In the Public Interest, an Oakland-based research and policy organization that produced a similar report last year looking at three other California districts. That report claimed that charter schools were draining away funds, which contributed to fiscal crises in

those districts.

Superintendent Matthew Duffy said the new report provides the district with “a starting point that helps us tell our story” and “helps us understand the bigger picture.”

However, reflecting the heated environment in which the report was produced, the California Charter Schools Association blasted it as “pure propaganda” and “far from impartial.” The report, the association charged, “is yet another tactic by special interests to prioritize politics over kids.”

In the district, which includes Richmond and surrounding communities, the proportion of students attending charter schools has more than doubled in four years, from 8 percent of the district total in 2014-15 to 17 percent this year, according to the report. Meanwhile, enrollment in district schools has dropped from 29,145 to 28,121 during the same period.

In February, the district’s school board voted 4 to 1 to ask the state to impose a statewide moratorium on charter school expansion.

Board president Tom Panas, the lone vote against the moratorium, expressed a caveat about the report, saying it “does not paint a complete picture of the charter school situation” in the district. “Like any other school district, there are successes and areas that need more attention,” he said. “The charter

school issue is just one area that needs additional scrutiny” as the district strives to “ensure that every student receives the best education possible.”

The report focused only on financial impact, not on the relative performance of district and charter schools. It comes amidst a plethora of reports that present often contradictory views of the impact of charter schools, prompting criticisms from opposing sides that the reports are influenced by the biases of their authors or by the agendas of their funding sources.

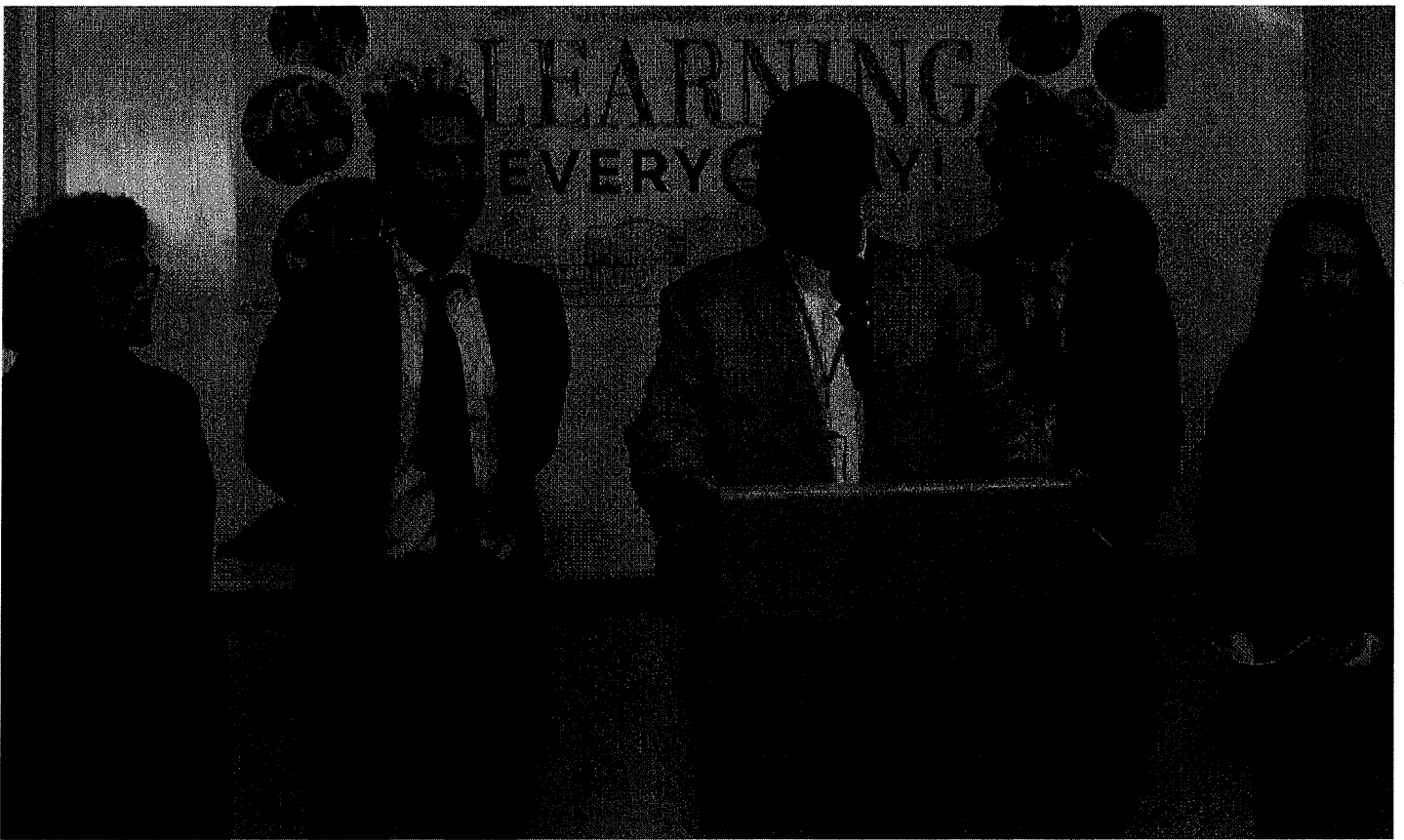
The funding calculations in the In the Public Interest reports use an approach developed by Gordon Lafer, a professor in the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon. The report calculated the difference between the revenues West Contra Costa Unified would have received in state and federal funding for students who have enrolled in charter schools and subtracting the amount it would have had to spend directly on the students in the form of books, supplies, teachers and other staff. What was left was \$27.9 million, the portion of the funds that the district could have used to pay for a range of more centralized services provided to all students, the report argues.

In 2016-17, the district received \$11,738 per student in state and federal revenues, Crawford said. The loss per district student was calculated at \$978 by dividing \$27.9 million by the 28,518 students attending regular district schools at that time.

Of the nearly \$274.4 million the district received in unrestricted general fund revenues from the state and other sources, some of those funds were spent on essential services that serve the entire district or entire schools, like heating, teacher training, or principals and other operating costs.

But when funds that could have been used to cover those services go to charter schools, the district has less money to pay for them, the report argued. This in turn can require cuts in direct services for district students, such as tutors the West Contra Unified school board recently agreed to reduce.

“While the district has experienced other financial pressures, charter schools have been a large contributor to the district having to cut spending on academic tutoring, services for English learners and more,” said Clare Crawford, senior policy advisor for In the Public Interest.



TERESA HARRINGTON / EDSOURCE

*West Contra Costa Unified district officials (l-r) board member Consuelo Lara, Superintendent Matthew Duffy, Marcus Walton, board president Tom Panas and In the Public Interest senior policy adviser Clare Crawford speak about new report impact of charter schools.*

The nonprofit In the Public Interest is a project of the Oakland-based Partnership for Working Families, which obtains funding from private foundations such as the Irvine Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation, as well as from labor unions including the AFL-CIO.

The partnership's website describes In the Public Interest as “a project of the Partnership for Working Families” that “provides assistance to campaigns around the country that are fighting bad privatization deals or trying to enact responsible contracting policies.”

The district turned to In the Public Interest after the school board passed the resolution calling on the state to impose a moratorium on new charter schools. The resolution included the district's desire to analyze the fiscal impact of charter schools. Because the district was familiar with In the Public Interest's first report, it asked the group to perform the analysis, said district spokesman Marcus Walton.

The report notes that state funding follows students when they transfer from district to charter schools — approximately \$9,563 per student in 2016-17 — but also says it is difficult for the district to cut its costs in direct proportion to the number of its students that enroll in charter schools.

For example, if a district has 14 percent fewer students to serve due to charter school growth, it cannot simply cut 14 percent of its costs for expenses such as principals, heating, building maintenance, bus

route planning, grant writing and budget development because these are relatively fixed costs that the district incurs from year to year. When basic operational costs cannot be cut, districts must often cut student services, the report says.

Emily Bertelli, spokeswoman for the California Charter Schools Association, said the report ignores the positive impact charter schools have on their students. "It's time to put politics aside and support all public schools that are helping our students grow and thrive, while also balancing the very real needs of local school districts," she said. She asserted that charter schools in the district "are helping to close the achievement gap," with higher graduation rates and higher rates of students meeting college entrance requirements.

Last December, the West Contra Costa school board approved \$12.5 million in budget cuts for next year that would eliminate 82 positions, decimating an academic tutoring program and slashing programs for English learners. The board is also considering reducing or capping the amount it spends on school police officers.

Some of these cuts were necessary to help pay for salary increases for teachers and other district staff members. However, board member Consuelo Lara, who pushed for the charter school moratorium resolution, said the funds the report says the district now doesn't have because of charter school enrollments could have been used to restore cuts.

*Editor's Note: As a special project, EdSource is tracking developments in the Oakland Unified and West Contra Costa Unified School Districts as a way to illustrate some of the challenges facing other urban districts in California. West Contra Costa Unified includes Richmond, El Cerrito and several other East Bay communities.*

## Comments

### Comments Policy

We welcome your comments. All comments are moderated for civility, relevance and other considerations. [Click here for EdSource's Comments Policy.](#)

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**Franklin Franks**

3 days ago

Charter schools exist because public schools do not adequately meet the needs of all students. Charter schools fill a need. Yes, some are improperly managed (just like public school districts).

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▶ **Lorenzo**

3 days ago

I read the last comment from the writer where 3% of students are proficient in math and I am floored!! That means 97% of students cannot perform math at grade level! Then to hear the parent (Suzanne) talk about the practice of teachers exposing children to their adult issues is despicable. In what other industry is this acceptable?! Could you imagine if a surgeon had 97% death rates, or if an attorney lost 97% of cases? ...

[Read More](#)

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▶ **Zeev Wurman**

6 days ago

So let me put it simply to make sure I understand. The district gets roughly \$12,000/year per student, and it costs it about \$11,000/year to educate such student, leaving the district with about \$1,000/student of essentially "free" money it can spend almost any way it wants. Now, because some 5,000 students "prefer" to go to charter schools – nobody forces them, after all – the district complains that it "loses" the free money for those students, ... [Read More](#)

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**Anonymous**

5 days ago

So, Zeev, you are okay with taxpayer money being diverted to charter school enterprises (some of which are for-profit)? Many of them are fiscally mis-managed and have high teacher turn-over. This is "free money" that can be spent by a charter company any way it wants, for example on high administrative and marketing expenses.

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▶ **Zeev Wurman**

3 days ago

There are so many problems with your short pseudo-question that I need to number them to keep track (smile). 1. The extra money is not being "diverted" – it is being saved. A typical charter student gets only about 75% of what a typical regular public school student gets, so the state – that's you and me, in case you didn't notice – save about \$3,000 on every charter student. 2. Some charters are, indeed, "for profit." ...

[Read More](#)

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▶ **Suzanne**

6 days ago

I hope my message is added to the response thread. I have three kids- 2 in WCCUSD schools, and one in a charter school. At first I was unaware of the large differences between school district and charter schools. All I heard were bad things about charters from the teachers at my kids' schools and I believed them. But in reality, I had become more frustrated, and more disillusioned with the WCCUSD schools ... [Read More](#)

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**Anonymous**

5 days ago



With all due respect, Suzanne, high quality education depends on attracting high quality teachers. In any district – but especially in a high-cost-of-living area – low salaries make it difficult to attract teachers. The students benefit from teachers who are and well-paid.

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▶ **Ann**

5 days ago



So? Where in her post did you read that either the quality of teachers at her child's charter were poor or they were poorly compensated. What she did say was the teachers at the public elementary weren't teaching but engaging in union activism and student academic outcomes in the district are poor and she fears will only get worse. If you want higher teacher salaries then we must assure we will get quality teachers ... [Read More](#)

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▶ **Ray**

6 days ago



The money belongs to the taxpayers, not the school district. If their outcomes , which include 0.1% proficiency in math at Kennedy High School (or 99.9% below grade level to spin it another way) then why would I agree to send my kids and tax dollars there? The system is broken and the bully tactics of the teachers (many who do not live in central Richmond) will not work in the long run. In the ... [Read More](#)

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**John Fensterwald**

6 days ago



Ray, the proficiency rates on the 11th grade Smarter Balanced test is low (about 3 percent meeting Levels 3 and 4, the definition of proficiency) but not as bad as you assert. See Ed-Data to verify.

---

**ann**

5 days ago



3%? Not as bad? A difference without a distinction. What are the outcomes at the charters? Any charter that is not making progress should be held accountable even as the public are not, at least not by the system. Of course the accountability *is* parents choosing charters.

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**John Fensterwald**

4 days ago



Didn't say it was good or acceptable. Just accurate.

## Bay Area school slated for 'redesign' gets new operating agreement

*Union, district agree to longer school days and year, stipend for teachers*

JUNE 13, 2019 | THERESA HARRINGTON

**A** Bay Area school district and its teachers' union have reached a groundbreaking agreement that will put money and resources behind the effort to turn around a school with declining enrollment and chronically low test scores.

Stege Elementary, a K-6 school in Richmond in the East Bay, will see longer school days, a longer school year and more teachers, who will each receive \$10,000 extra pay. The extra money acknowledges that it is a "significantly hard-to-staff school" that suffers from high teacher turnover.

The agreement, which covers the 2019-20 school year, is seen as a potential model for improving other district schools.

"It's different and we've never done anything like this before," said Demetrio Gonzalez, president of the United Teachers of Richmond union that reached the agreement with the district. "This is really a collaboration and partnership between the union and district staff." He stopped short of calling it "historic" because it is a one-year agreement and it remains to be seen whether it will achieve its goals. However, it is viewed as a pilot that could be made permanent in 2020-21, when teachers will need to reapply for their jobs as the district strives to find "the right" people to meet students' needs.

## Superintendent Matthew Duffy



Out of 10,000 California schools, Stege Elementary is among 481 schools cited as lowest-performing in the state in 2017-18, based on poor test scores, high suspension rates and chronic absenteeism.

Stege Elementary, pronounced “Steej,” has lost so many students that the West Contra Costa Unified School District has designated it for a redesign that started in February and will fully launch in 2020-21. Instead of giving up on the school and closing it, the district and union want to revitalize it to attract experienced teachers and new students — along with those who have left to attend charters or other schools. Although some community members feared the district might close the school, Superintendent Matthew Duffy assured them during meetings about the redesign that the district is committed to keeping it open.

In the last decade, Stege Elementary, which serves mostly low-income African-American and Latino students, has lost about a third of its students, dropping down to 260 as families turned to charter schools and other district schools.

The agreement, known as a Memorandum of Understanding, grew out of meetings with community and staff members about how to re-imagine Stege Elementary. The district and union agreed to prioritize the hiring of highly qualified teachers, lengthen the school day, give teachers extra prep and collaboration time and add enrichment classes for students.

“It is clear that Stege needs significant supports and a change in structure, rather than minor fixes,” Gonzalez said. “We know that the Stege community has a strong vision of success for its students and we want to ensure that vision is fully supported” by the district.

Duffy also praised the agreement that was signed June 3 and will be revisited in June, 2020.

“The United Teachers of Richmond has been a great partner in our work around Stege and I look forward to seeing the results of our increased investment into that school,” he said. “The extra collaboration and preparation time codified in the MOU will allow teachers to refine their instructional practices so their methods better serve students. The teachers, administrators and classified staff members serving Stege are key to ensuring the school grows stronger and more stable as we work with the community to re-imagine the educational program.”

Giving teachers the training they need to work with their challenging student population, including many children who have experienced trauma, is one key element of the plan. Teachers will receive 10 additional days of training, including five before the school year begins and five throughout the school year.

#### **Highlights of Stege Elementary’s agreement for the 2019-20 school year**

- Pay \$10,000 stipend to all teachers who agree to work at Stege next year.
- Add 10 teacher work days to 196 for all teachers.
- Extend school day by 50 minutes to 3 p.m. to give teachers time to prepare and work together.
- Add two teachers to offer enrichment classes in physical education, art, music or technology.
- Hire highly qualified teachers — a top priority — who have completed all requirements to obtain a clear credential. Candidates must complete a teacher preparation program to receive a preliminary credential that is valid for up to five years. They must then complete a Teacher Induction Program with two years of on the job mentoring or be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
- Give additional hiring priority to teachers with any of these qualifications: National Board Certification, urban experience, special training.
- Hire a teacher as an in-house substitute.

Because students won’t attend school on training days, their school year will end one week later than at other district schools — on June 12 instead of June 5. And while teachers are preparing lessons or collaborating with each other for 50 minutes each day,

students will be taught enrichment classes in physical education, art, music or technology by two new teachers hired under the agreement. Students' school days will extend until 3 p.m. daily.

Parents, as well as district and union officials, have been concerned by the high rate of teacher turnover at the school, which many believe contributes to low student academic achievement.

After the 2016-17 school year, 11 of 18 teachers left; after the next year, 15 of 18 teachers left. By the end of last week, four teachers had decided to leave the school next year and 10 had decided to stay. The rest of the teachers must decide by the end of this week. Those who leave the school will be guaranteed a position at another district school, Gonzalez said.

There are now about 260 students in grades K-6, including 94 percent who are low-income, 29 percent who are English learners, 12 percent who have disabilities, 6 percent who are homeless and 1 percent who are foster youth. About 52 percent of students are African-American and 29 percent are Latino or Hispanic.



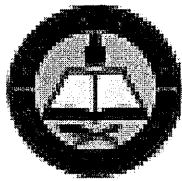
PHOTO: ANDREW REED/EDSOURCE

*Children play at Stege Elementary School in Richmond.*

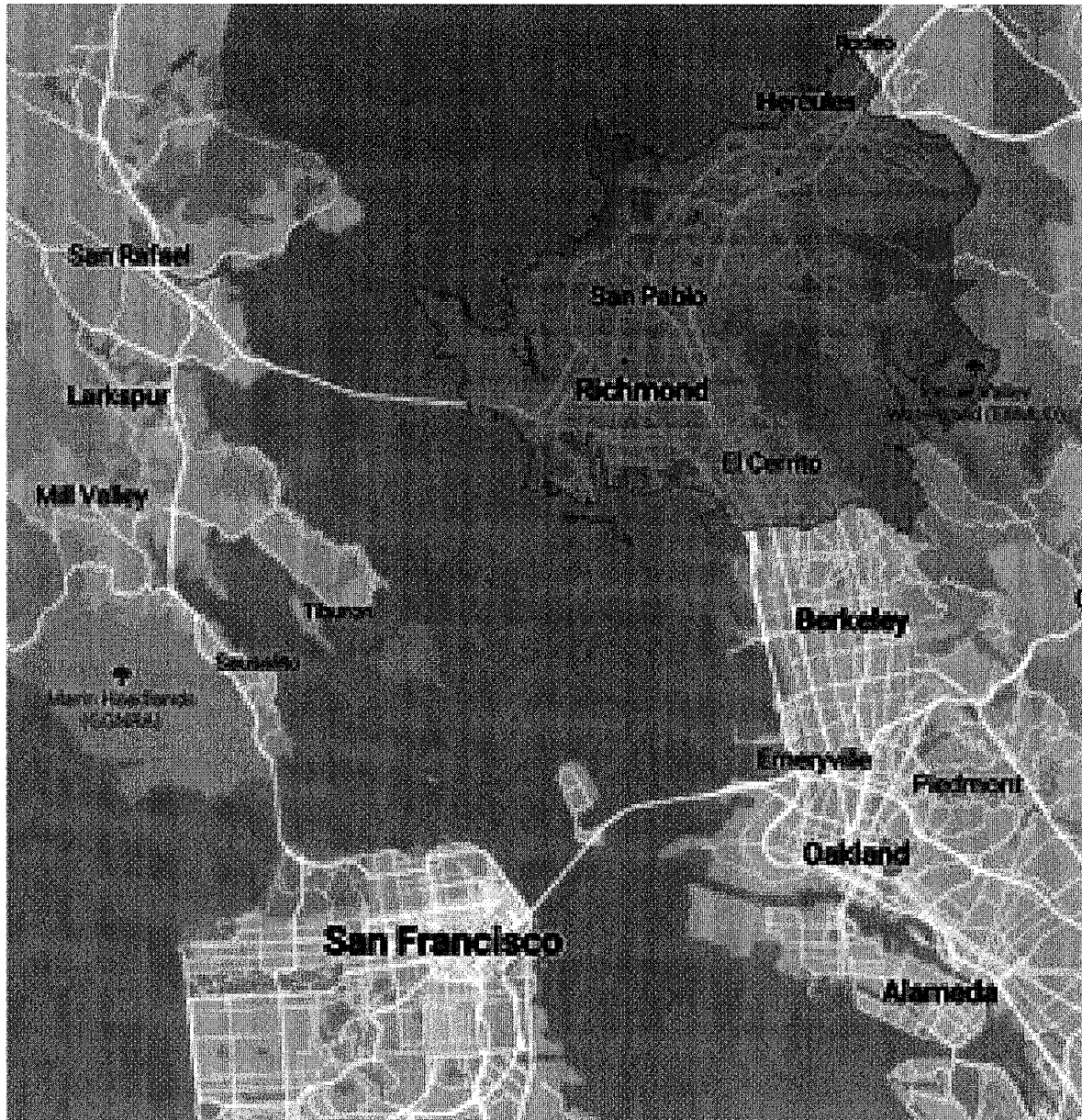
The union agreed to give the district a \$50,000 grant it received from the National Education Association to help pay for a full-time Community School Coordinator. The coordinator is expected to meet with families, teachers and district and community leaders to help a new principal who will be hired next year and will assume leadership of the school in 2020-21. Working with the community, the principal and coordinator will help come up with the final redesign plan, Gonzalez said. The district has agreed to pay the remaining salary and benefits costs for the coordinator not covered by the grant.

The union hopes the redesign will help transform the school into a "full service community school" that includes "deep parent, community, student and staff engagement in programs and services," he added. Although the school does not currently provide social and mental health services, Gonzalez said he expects the Community School Coordinator to apply for grants and pursue school and county partnerships that could bring those services to the school in 2020-21.

The union is paying the salaries of three teachers who are working this summer visiting students' homes, collecting data about students and their needs and conducting community meetings with the district.



# West Contra Costa Unified



The district hopes to improve the caliber of instruction by placing a priority on hiring fully credentialed teachers who have completed all necessary on-the-job training after first obtaining preliminary credentials.

The district will also pay a \$140 fee for each of two years to help those who don't already have National Board Certification, but commit to obtaining it. The certification trains teachers in nationally recognized standards and requires them to "demonstrate advanced knowledge, skills and practice" in their selected area of expertise by

completing three portfolio assignments and passing a rigorous assessment, according to the organization's website.

Other desired training includes experience working in high-poverty urban areas, or training in culturally responsive teaching strategies, positive behavior strategies and/or restorative justice practices.

Culturally responsive teaching takes into consideration the cultural backgrounds of students as a way to engage students in their learning. Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions, known as PBIS, use a system of positive rewards to reduce student discipline. And restorative justice focuses on conflict resolution that builds healthy relationships between students and staff instead of punitive discipline.

“As a district, we have to do better for the Stege community, students and educators and work alongside them,” Gonzalez said. “We are deeply committed to supporting this school, to working with district staff and will continue to work with all stakeholders to make sure we are serving kids. There is genuine and honest energy by families, educators, staff, board members and advocates to do things differently moving forward and our hope is that we will create change for all kids in the Stege community.”

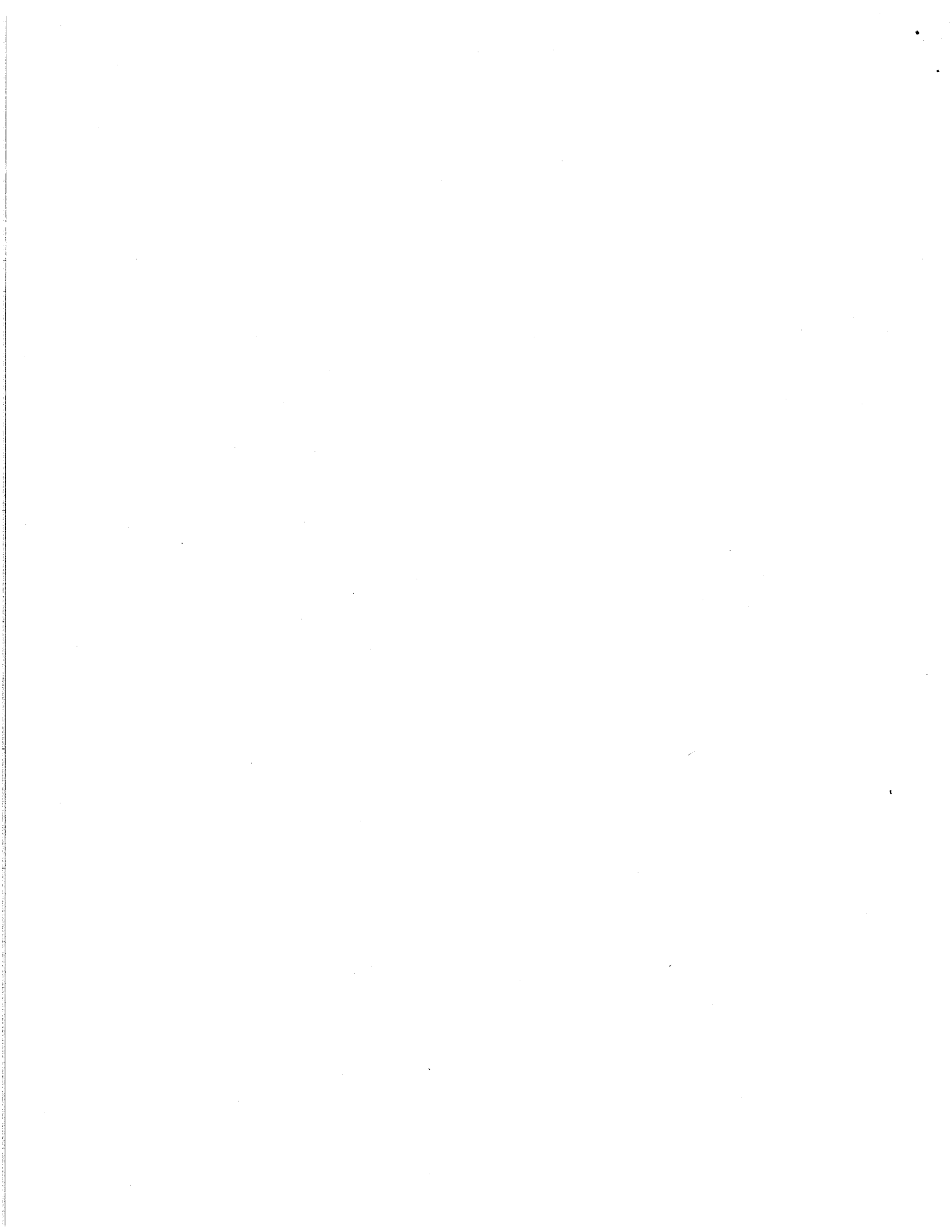
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## Comments

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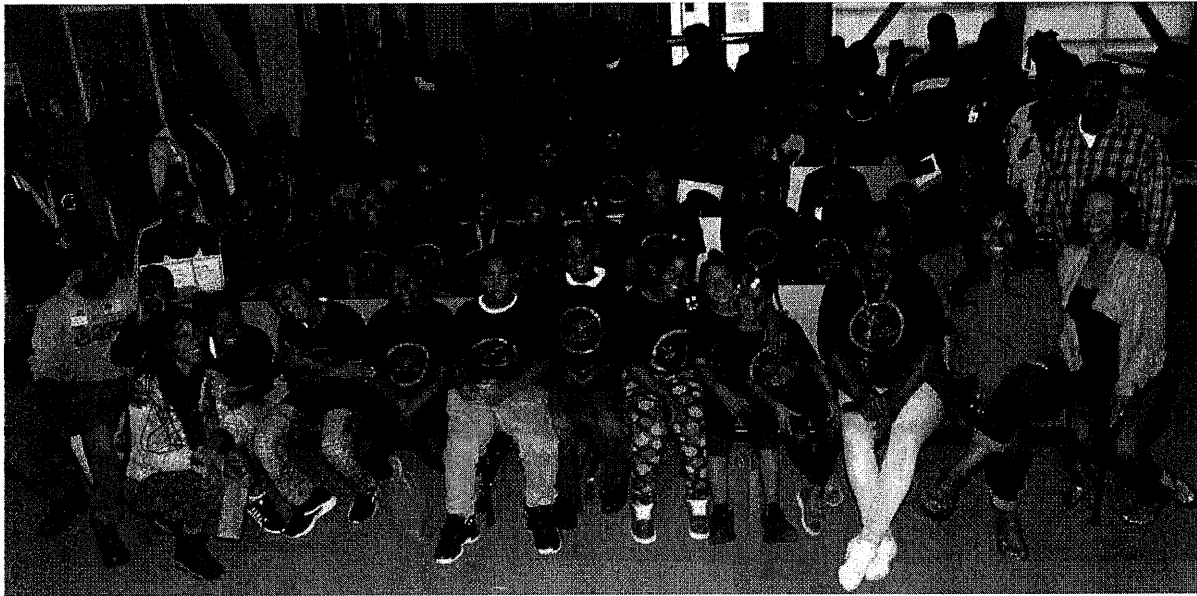
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# Academic Coaching Program Succeeds at Holding Black Students to High Standards

By Andre L. Shumake - June 13, 2019



*Mafanikio Academic Coaching Program at Nystrom Elementary School end of the year yelebration. Pictured are students who are wearing the black Mafanikio T-shirts). Front row, from left to right: Dallez Edwards, Deshawn Ford-Howard, D Jae Harrell, Armaya Johnson, Jamari Lloyd Godfrey, Jaleel Lyles, Brooklyn Moore, Nevaeh Simms, Braylon Moore; 2nd row: De Shonae Barker, Edward Boafman, Arnaya Ford-Howard, Steven Hudson, Michael Nelson, Dynasty Mitchell Douglas, Jah'Zae Poole, Jasmine Quilter, Landon Sims, Jr., Ajani Truvillion, Tavaris Conard; 3rd row- left to right: Josiah McGhee, Adrian Walker, Ashlyn Walker, Richard Noah Cheney, Joya Simmons, Ma Naiya Square, Sherone Bradley. The students are surrounded by their parents, grandparents, and guardians. Photo by Joe L. Fisher.*

The Nystrom Mafanikio Academic Coaching Program held its closing ceremony on Thursday, May 30.

Twenty-five student scholars from third through sixth grades received certificates of achievement for outstanding participation in the program. Also, 15 students completed the How to Tie a Tie ceremony, and received Certificates of Completion of the Rites of Passage program that evening.

The goal of the Mafanikio Academic Coaching Program at Nystrom, which started in September 2018, is to improve the academic outcomes of the students and to build trust in order to increase parent engagement, said Rev. Andre Shumake, Sr., site coordinator of the program and school Community Outreach worker. Parents are given strategies so they can help their student scholars at home. African American parent engagement has increased significantly at Nystrom since the inception of the Mafanikio program.

Parents, grandparents, and guardians are often all involved.

The following is the Nystrom Mafanikio Get Smart Formula!

1. Be focused. (go to class WILLING to learn)
2. Pay attention to the teacher.
3. Follow instructions.

We believe that if each student show up on campus with this positive mindset and apply these three simple steps, their academic outcomes will improve, and they will have a more enjoyable learning experience at school on a daily basis.

The "Mafanikio" (Swahili for achievement) Academic Coaching program was created at the request of a self-formed group of African-American parents in the West Contra Costa Unified School District who were not satisfied with the status of AA student achievement and the growing performance gap.



In the 2016-17 school year, Sonja Neely-Johnson and Dr. Janet Scott, directors in the district's Educational Services department, were tasked with creating a supplemental program as a response to those African American parent concerns. Research has proven that tutoring, mentoring, and the promotion of academic mindsets were identified as effective strategies to support growth in overall student achievement.

The Mafanikio program was designed to support and promote the achievement of AA students through incorporating these elements. The pilot year 2016-17 was an overall success because of programs headed by staff, such as Shumake.

The Mafanikio program at Nystrom flourished because Shumake took the initial program frame and added community engagement and parent education components. Shumake, who is also a WCCUSD certified Efficacy Parent Trainer, incorporated the knowledge and principles of self-efficacy, a mindset to challenge misconceptions and deepen the belief that African American students can achieve at high levels.

With the support of his principal, James Allardice, Nystrom teachers Dorcus Sims, Ibilola Soyode, Alicia Wheat, Oji Blackston (retired), Grad Tutor Nerina Illili, and district staff, Shumake has ensured that students have multiple opportunities for cultural validation and enrichment.

They gained exposure to STEM activities and researchers at UC Berkeley as part of the Road Map to CAL vision, Bay Area Black Youth (BABY) Tech and study trips to the District's Fab Lab, etc... Reverend Shumake, as he is also known, has made it his goal to provide the students and families he supports at Nystrom and in the greater Richmond community more access to positive educational experiences.

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**Andre L. Shumake**

