

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
October 26, 2018

Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy

October 29: Trustee Area Map Planning, Stege ES, 6:30 PM
October 30: Trustee Area Map Planning, The Latina Center, 6:30 PM
October 31: Minimum Day K-8 Schools
November 1: Elementary Conference Day, No School
November 1: Solutions Team, Kennedy HS, 3:00 PM
November 2, 5, 6, 7 & 8: Elementary Conference Days, Minimum Days
November 6: Election Day - many schools will serve as polling locations
November 4-7: DeAnza WASC Visitation
November 7: Agenda Setting, Superintendent's Office, 4:00 PM
November 7: Board of Education Budget Study Session, DeJean MS, 6:00 PM
November 8: African American Site Advisory Team (AASAT), DeJean MS, 6:00 PM
November 12: Veterans Day Holiday, Schools and Offices Closed
November 13: DLCAP, Kennedy HS, 6:30 PM
November 14: Board of Education Meeting, DeJean MS, 6:00 PM
November 16: Minimum Day All Schools
November 19-23: Thanksgiving Week, No School
November 22-23: Thanksgiving Holidays, Schools and Offices Closed
November 28: Agenda Setting, Superintendent's Office, 4:00 PM
November 29- December 1: CSBA Annual Education Conference, San Francisco
December 4: African American Site Advisory Team (AASAT), DeJean MS, 6:00 PM
December 5: Board of Education Meeting, DeJean MS, 6:00 PM

Trustee Area Map Planning Sessions Update - Marcus Walton

As you know, the District held the first map planning session on Monday, October 22 at Riverside Elementary School. About 20 community members showed up to work on trustee area maps with the demographer. Additional meetings will be held on Monday, October 29 at Stege Elementary School at 6:30 p.m. and on Tuesday, October 30 at The Latina Center at 10 a.m.

RASA announces Administrators of the Year - Marcus Walton

The Richmond Association of School Administrators announced the following members of the District's management team have been named the group's Administrators of the Year:

Elementary Principal of the Year - Claudia Velez, Wilson Elementary School
Middle Grades Principal of the Year - William McGee, DeJean Middle School
Secondary Principal Administrator of the Year - Summerlyn Sigler, De Anza High School
Central Office Administrator of the Year - Olanrewaju Ajayi, Early Learning Program Coordinator
Curriculum & Instruction Administrator of the Year - John Iwawaki, Math and Science Coach
Secondary Co-Administrator of the Year - Chris Pierce, De Anza High School
Secondary Co-Administrator of the Year - Jay Eirvin, El Cerrito High School
Retired Administrator of the Year - Sue Kahn

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

The local winners will now compete for Association of California School Administrators Region 6 honors.

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.

Media stories of interest - Marcus Walton

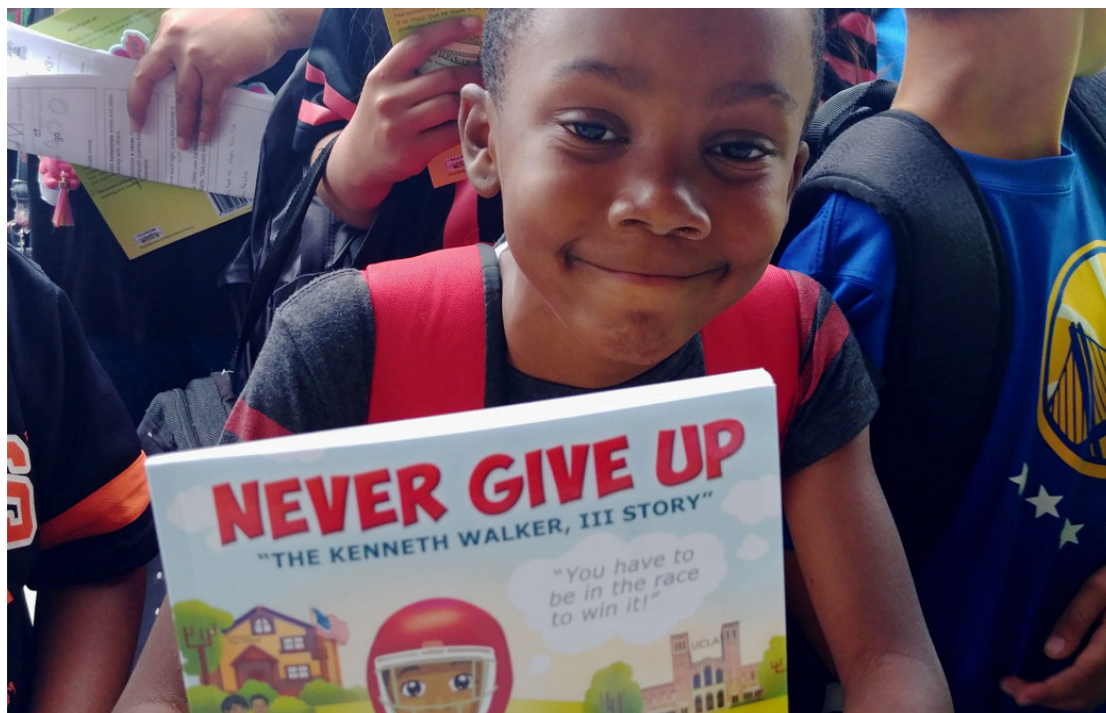
Attached to this memo are media articles that may be of interest.

Public Records Request Log 2018 - 2019
Week Ending October 26, 2018

	Date of Receipt	Requestor	Requested Records/Information	Current Status
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 Gathering/Reviewing Documents
1819-04	8/1/2018	Scott Rafferty	Communications, social media regarding trustee elections	8/6/2018 - Acknowledgement letter sent Reviewing Documents
1819-06	8/6/2018	Partida - Berkes Crane Robinson & Seal	Documents regarding the presence of asbestos at De Anza HS	8/10/2018 - Acknowledgement letter sent 9/21/2018 – DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE
1819-08	8/30/2018	Nicole Bates – LSC	Referral, Suspension, Expulsion, Transfer, Arrest data	8/30/2018 – Acknowledgement email sent
1819-09	10/8/2018	David Stephan	a. Invoices re: Amethod b. Number of teachers under various credentials c. UCP Complaints against Linda Delgado d. Form 700s submitted by Linda Delgado e. Purchase of 1400 Marina Way South	10/12/2018 - Acknowledgement letter sent 10/25/2018 – Documents available no later than Nov. 9
1819-10	9/28/2018	Michael Cunningham	2017-18 and 2018-19 teacher substitutes	10/25/2018 - COMPLETE
1819-11	7/16/2018	Denise Morgan - CCSA	Prop. 39 and space allocations for charter schools	10/25/2018 – 14-day extension invoked
1819-12	7/19/2018	Denise Morgan - CCSA	Facility use agreements with charter schools	10/25/2018 – 14-day extension invoked

Richmond native Kenneth Walker III star of children's book

October 22, 2018



*Child holds a copy of the new book, *Never Give Up, the Kenneth Walker III Story*.*

Richmond native and professional football player Kenneth Walker III has lots going on.

Walker, who starred as a football player at Kennedy High, UCLA and played briefly for the Jacksonville Jaguars, has joined the Arizona Hot Shots of the new Alliance Football League. Starting in February, the league aims to provide football to fans beyond the NFL season, as well as a place for good players to showcase their talents.

That's only part of the news headlines following Walker around. Turns out Walker isn't just a star on the football field, but of a new children's book. Walker's cousin, Richmond native Stephen Ashford and Bobby Mardis teamed up to craft the inspiring book about Walker's life. A soundtrack is also being recorded for the book, *Never Give Up, the Kenneth Walker III Story*, which is available on Amazon, Ashford said.

The book details Walker's challenges growing up in a neighborhood "filled with distractions," and being bullied for his small size. Despite stumbling along the way, Walker would follow his parents' advice to work hard, and to be unique rather than follow others. He would then discover his talent in sports, only to face a new set of challenges. And the challenges kept coming at every new level, from high school to college to the pros. But his parents' good advice, and the positive outcomes from that advice, remained the same.

Mike Aldax

Bay Area

Teacher of the Week: Julie Nesnansky focuses on students with autism

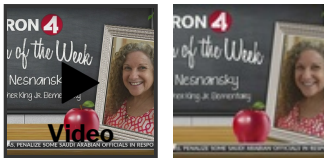
By:

Catherine Heenan (<https://www.kron4.com/meet-the-team/catherine-heenan/952786768>)

✉ (<mailto:cheenan@kron4.com>)

Updated: Oct 23, 2018 05:54 PM PDT

(Interactive Media Not Supported by Print)



SAN FRANCISCO (KRON) - KRON4 has been honoring outstanding teachers in the Bay Area, and on Tuesday night, it's a special education teacher at King Elementary School in Richmond.

Julie Nesnansky focuses on students with autism. Her principal says she has an exceptional way of connecting with them and has made a positive difference in hundreds of young lives.

She's described as going above and beyond, doing home visits and making sure her students have the services and experiences they deserve.

Julie has been with the West Contra Costa Unified District for more than 30 years.

If you know a special teacher you'd like to nominate, [just go to our website KRON4.com](http://www.kron4.com).

WHAT OTHERS ARE CLICKING ON:

- **25 THINGS THAT ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WINNING \$1.6B MEGA MILLIONS**
- **MAN REFUSES TO SIT NEXT TO BLACK WOMAN, GOES ON RACIST TIRADE**
- **NEWLY DISCOVERED FAULTS COULD TRIGGER 7.2-QUAKE IN OREGON**
- **CASH HANDOUT OF \$1K A MONTH WOULD GROW ECONOMY BY \$2.5 TRILLION**
- **SAN FRANCISCO HIT-AND-RUN CAUGHT ON SURVEILLANCE VIDEO**

>>MORE STORIES

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Pinole Valley High music teacher wins Eukel Award

October 18, 2018

Erik Radkiewicz/WCCUSD

Erik Radkiewicz, an accomplished musician and music teacher at Pinole Valley High School, teaches students in his marching band that there are no shortcuts, that practice is crucial and every musician in the band has an important role.

It's just one of the reasons Radkiewicz is being recognized by the Warren W. Eukel Teacher Trust with the Eukel Award, which is given annually to three exceptional Contra Costa County K-12 classroom teachers, according to the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Radkiewicz has been no stranger to accolades. He was nominated by WCCUSD as the [Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year](#) for 2018-19. He also was awarded the West Contra Costa Public Education Fund's [2018 Teaching Excellence Award](#).

Last year, School Band and Orchestra Magazine named Radkiewicz as one of the 50 high school band directors in the country who "make a difference."

"Erik demands excellence and his students rise to the challenge," Pinole Valley Principal Kibby Kleiman said in a WCCUSD statement. "Their hard work and commitment has made the marching band the soul of our school."

Learn more about the Eukel Award online at [here](#).

Mike Aldax

Richmond High to debut renovated theater tonight

October 25, 2018



Richmond High at 1250 23rd St.

The community is invited to help debut Richmond High School's renovated theater tonight.

At 7 p.m., the high school's Creative And Performing Arts Academy will present the CAPA VAPA Gala.

"Enjoy performances from the marching and jazz band, the Oilers' dance department, a short film from the Oilers' video production class, and much more," according to the West Contra Costa Unified

School District.

The event is free, with donations accepted.

In February, the school district awarded a \$1.29 million contract for the replacements and upgrades to the high school theater's theatrical lighting, curtain and audio-visual systems.

Funds for the project were said to come from the district's Career Technical Education Facilities Program. They aim to embolden the Richmond High School Creative & Performing Arts Production Pathway, which educates students on various aspects of theater production, such as set design and building, lighting and sound. The program "provides courses of study designed to provide the skills and knowledge required for adult life," according to the district.

RICHMOND HIGH SCHOOL'S CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS
ACADEMY PRESENTS:

THE CAPA
VAPA
GALA

UNVEILING THE TECHNICALLY RESTORED
RICHMOND HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25TH
SHOW STARTS AT 7PM

FREE ADMISSION, DONATIONS ACCEPTED AT THE DOOR

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN DONATING DURING THE 2018-2019 SEASON
CONTACT ASEDO WILSON: ASEDO.WILSON @ WCCUSD.NET
IG: OFFICIAL RHS CAPA, RHS_THEATRE



Mike Aldax

Bay Area district faces challenges in attempt to shut down a charter school

Charter school accused of inadequate teacher training on child abuse reporting

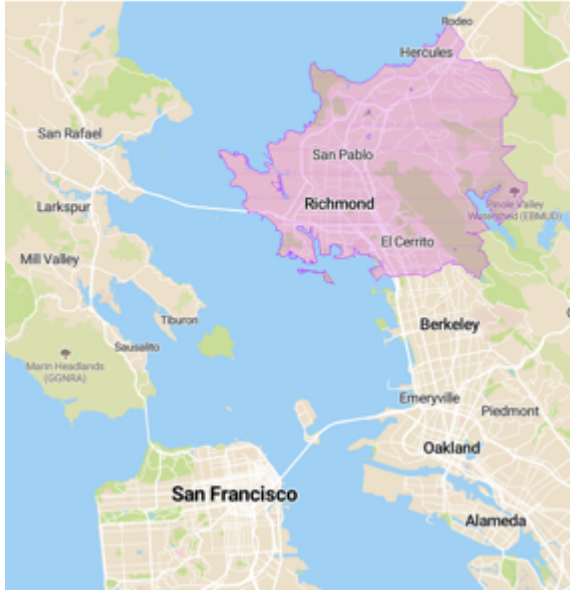
OCTOBER 16, 2018 | THERESA HARRINGTON



THERESA HARRINGTON/EDSOURCE TODAY

Supporters of the John Henry High charter school in Richmond crowd into a West Contra Costa school board meeting on Oct. 3, 2018.

A California school district's threat to shut down a charter school for allegedly inadequately training teachers on their legal responsibilities to report suspected child abuse is highlighting the challenges districts have in overseeing charter schools.



The issue has stirred controversy in West Contra Costa Unified — a district in the San Francisco Bay Area that serves Richmond and surrounding communities — along with passionate pleas from school supporters. It comes at a time when districts around the state are under more pressure to exercise greater oversight over charter schools.

West Contra Costa Unified threatened to shut down John Henry High School in Richmond on grounds that administrators put students in danger because teachers allegedly were not trained properly to spot and report suspected child abuse.

The district argued that if teachers do not report their suspicions that a child has been abused, that presents a “severe and imminent threat to student safety.” Under state law, that is one of the grounds for revoking a school’s charter.

As mandated reporters, teachers must report to authorities any time they suspect a child has been abused by anyone. The district’s allegations related to improper training of John Henry High teachers did not include any reports of child abuse inside the school. However, during a training session in 2017 an administrator allegedly referred to a child who in 2012 claimed he had been

abused at home. The administrator investigated the claim and determined it was unfounded.

That incident was allegedly used to illustrate why teachers should investigate child abuse allegations before reporting them.

Attorney Lisa Corr, of Young, Minney and Corr said the school follows state law and the administrator's alleged comments did not reflect the other training and policies in effect at the time.

According to the California Department of Education, no charters in the state have ever been revoked for posing a "severe and imminent threat to student safety." Charters are typically revoked for poor academic performance. In this case, John Henry High's average **scores** on the state's 2018 Smarter Balanced tests in 11th grade math and English Language Arts were higher than those for most of the district's high schools.

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The vote on whether to revoke the charter has been put off until at least next month to allow attorneys for both the district and Amethod Public

Schools, which operates six charter schools including John Henry High, to come up with a settlement that assures the district that the school is following the law. Amethod Public Schools operates three schools in Richmond and three in nearby Oakland. The name "Amethod" refers to its goal of serving each of its schools with a unique method or approach.

West Contra Costa has experienced a rapid expansion of charter schools over the past four years. There are currently 14 charter schools that enroll about 5,500 students out of the district's total enrollment of about 32,000.

Students attending charter schools make up about 15 percent of the district, up from less than five percent in 2014-15.

The expansion has been controversial, in part because of fears that more charter schools will cost the district state aid, since districts lose state money for every student who opts to attend a charter school.

Debates over whether California's charter school laws need to be revised prompted State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson in August to create an **"Action Team on Charter Schools"** to recommend updates to the 1992 laws.

According to state law, charters can be revoked for violating the charter's own rules, failing to meet students' academic goals identified in the charter, fiscal improprieties or mismanagement, or for violating any provision of law. However, even if districts find there is "a severe and imminent threat to the health or safety of the pupils," academic achievement must be considered "as the most important factor in determining whether to revoke a charter," the law states.

Madeline Kronenberg, a board member for 12 years, said she hopes the state task force will review whether academic achievement should be the most important factor in decisions to revoke a charter even when a district determines that there is a "severe and imminent threat to student health and safety."

The increasing role of charter schools in the district has also become an issue in the upcoming Nov. 6 school board election.

At the Oct. 3 meeting, some speakers suggested that the board action was politically motivated. Board president Valerie Cuevas responded by defending her initial vote on Sept. 26 to start the revocation of John Henry High as motivated solely by her desire to protect children.

The district earlier this year moved against another charter. The board voted to deny a charter to Rocketship Charter School, after finding that it was unlikely to successfully implement its proposed educational programs and did not adequately describe the programs it would offer in its petition. The

Contra Costa County Board of Education and the California State Board of Education both denied Rocketship's appeals.

The board's threat to close John Henry High is only the second time the board has considered revoking a charter. In 2012, the board revoked a charter for West County Community High School based on the poor academic performance of its students. The county board upheld the denial on appeal.

Normally, it takes several months to **revoke** a charter. Usually, a district will issue a Notice of Violation related to issues of concern and give the charter school time to address them.

West Contra Costa moved quickly to revoke the charter at John Henry High after the board received signed affidavits from former teachers claiming that administrators failed to properly train staff in their **legal obligation** to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

The former teachers said an administrator told them to "investigate the matter themselves before determining whether to fulfill their mandated reporting obligations," according to the district's **Notice of Revocation**.

The district's threat to shut down the school drew a standing room only crowd of more than 200 supporters to the Oct. 3 board meeting wearing yellow t-shirts with the Amethod Public Schools acronym "AMPS" and slogan: "Honor Hard Work."



Supporters of the John Henry High charter are greeted by the school's mascot at the West Contra Costa school board meeting on Oct. 3, 2018.

More than 50 people spoke passionately about the school's rigorous academic program and nurturing teachers.

"John Henry High is producing college-bound students," said Erik Munoz, a senior at the school. "I am, they are, and we are the future of the city of Richmond. If you close the school, you'll be sending over 300 college-bound students to other schools."

In arriving at a settlement, both sides will have to agree that John Henry is complying with state law related to teacher training in mandatory child abuse reporting.

Both attorneys said that attempts to revoke charters based on a "severe and imminent threat" to student safety are extremely rare and they disagreed over what that means.

"I think the law is unclear," said Edward Sklar, of the Lozano Smith law firm, who represents the district. "The courts haven't looked at this issue."



Attorney Edward Sklar of the Lozano Smith law firm prepares to speak to the West Contra Costa school board on Oct. 3, 2018.

Corr said students at John Henry High are not in imminent danger. She disputed Sklar's assertion that the district could bring the revocation back for a vote at a future meeting.

"You can't table a severe and imminent threat," she said.

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

Comments

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Morgan

22 hours ago



This is nothing more than an attempt for West Contra Costa County Unified to shut down a charter school that is performing at a higher level than other public schools in the district. For years they have blown taxpayers' money with very little improvement in educational performance to show for it. Parents are moving their children to charter schools because they want a better education for their children than the school districts are currently providing at public schools.

Mike McMahon

1 day ago



WCCUSD attempt to use "student safety" will ultimately fail in the courts. Just look at Oakland Unified attempt to close American Indian charter schools based on "fiscal mismanagement". Student achievement results win out in the long run.