

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

**Friday Memo**  
**October 11, 2019**

**Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy**

October 12: Fingerprinting Party, Helms, 9:00 - 12:00  
October 15: CBOC, FOC, 6:15 PM  
October 15: DLCAP, Kennedy Library, 6:30 PM  
October 16: Board of Education, DeJean, 6:30 PM  
October 18: Homecoming Parade, ECHS, 1:00 PM  
October 19: Special Education Parent Conference, Contra Costa College, 8:00 - 1:00  
October 22: End of First Quarter  
October 22: AASAT Committee, DeJean Library, 6:00PM  
October 22: Governance Committee, Alvarado, 6:00 PM  
October 23: Minimum Day - Report Card Marking, MS & HS  
October 23: Board of Education Meeting, DeJean, 6:30 PM  
October 25: Homecoming and Grand Opening Ceremony, PVHS  
October 26: MDAC Training, Helms, 9:00 - 2:00  
October 29: Agenda Setting, Superintendent's Office, 4:30 PM

**Upcoming Agenda Items October 16 - Matthew Duffy**

Positive School Climate Update  
Charter Renewal  
Surplus Property  
CTE Update

**Next Week's Meeting - Matthew Duffy**

Next week's Closed Session will begin at 5:00 PM.

**Interim Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Marci Williams - Matthew Duffy**

I have named Marci Williams, Interim Acting Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Marci is the most senior and experienced manager in HR and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the district. At this time, we will not be backfilling Marci's position. To support Marci and HR, our team will be taking on some of the HR responsibilities. For example-claims and Level 2 Grievances will go to Business Services. We look forward to the coming months ahead and to Marci's leadership. I am fully confident that Marci will lead the HR team successfully through the 2019-2020 school year.

**Special Education Contracts - Board Agenda Item C.5 - Tony Wold**

Special Education Contracts for Non Public Agencies (NPA) and Non Public Schools (NPS) have been brought to the board for approval at the beginning of the year. These approvals are based upon estimates and then as the students are placed through the IEP process the actual amount of the contract is then ratified by the board. This attempt at creating an estimate for services has caused confusion and is not following the best practices model of contract management for Special

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Education. For example, the District may approve an estimate for two different NPS sites both at \$500k in the initial estimate. Once IEPs are completed it is determined that the first school is the more appropriate placement for \$750k and the second school only utilizes \$150k.

In this scenario the Board would see an item to increase the first school by \$250k, but would not see any reduction of the second site until the end of the school year even though the total cost for services is not increasing (and possibly decreased) the current methodology is creating a distorted view in isolation.

We believe that it is important to provide information to the board to ratify contracts and clearly show when contracts may be required to increase as we do with change orders in facilities, but the concept of estimating NPA and NPS contracts at the beginning of the year without true caseload requirements is having unintended consequences.

The changes reflected in item C5 on the upcoming board agenda are not increasing the overall special education expenditures budgeted for the current year and as we have the opportunity to complete reconciliation we will make adjustments throughout the year. Since we started the process this year by doing pre-approval we will continue to bring changes to the board for ratification and will refine the process for next year to provide a more clear and reflective process when the board ratifies contracts.

**Power Outages impact on funding J-13A Waiver for LEAs Affected by PG&E's Public Safety Power Shutoff – Dr. Tony Wold**

School Services of California released information (attached) on October 8, 2019 providing a link to the California Department of Education J-13A waiver (Request for Allowance of Attendance Due to Emergency Conditions) FAQ webpage to assist local education agencies which may be affected by power outages. We will be assessing our attendance during the outage period as some of our school sites are within the anticipated outage boundaries. The district is continuing to reach out to staff and families with updates as they are received. We will be submitting the appropriate paperwork to the California Department of Education regarding our current school closures. In addition, we have begun work on a J-13 for Kennedy High School as a result of decreased student attendance two weeks ago. To complete the waiver process the Board will be required to approve several resolutions at a future board meeting.

**Budget Update - Tony Wold**

The District is continuing to work with multiple stakeholder groups to review the current budget situation. The next couple of weeks we are focusing on the non-salary portion of the budget and will be presenting this information in more detail at the October 23rd Board meeting.

After that meeting, we will be going into detail regarding contracts with the DBEC, Solutions Team, Principals, DLCAP among other groups and synthesizing this information in Cabinet to bring some possible recommendations to the Board as part of the November 20th meeting in preparation for the First Interim Budget report. At the First Interim the Board will need to certify that we will complete

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reductions by Budget adoption in June 2020 for the 2020-2021 school year. The County Office of Education is completely in support of our timelines and we have gained the support for this process from each of the groups that we have met with as well.

As part of the final approval of the DBEC committee at the October 16th meeting the board will also begin the process of analyzing the current governance structure of committees and the impact of district operations in light of best practices. The work of our committees will continue during this process and we will be looking to identify some time to meet with the board to discuss best practices, possibly including some study sessions with the support of some outside consultants, and map out a timeline for review and possible adjustments of our structure moving forward as we outline the scope of work and ensure that we are operating effectively for the remainder of the school year.

The timeline of upcoming presentations to the Board regarding the budget and other frames of the budget conversation through First Interim is listed below:

- October 16 - Facilities Surplus Property presentation - with AALLR
- October 23 - Budget Update - "The Story Part 2" - non salary  
Bond Financing update with KNN
- November 6 - Advocacy update from Sacramento - with Kevin Gordon
- November 20 - Budget Update - "The Story Part 3" - administrative and investments discussion
- December 11 - First Interim Budget Presentation

Beginning in January and February we likely will begin preliminary discussions with the board regarding the salary and staffing components of the budget. Much of this discussion will likely begin in closed session along with some updates in open session which may require some additional time for closed session discussions.

**Charter Renewals - Gracie Guerrero**

On October 16, 2019 Aspire Richmond California College Preparatory Academy will present information in support of their charter renewal. The Board may ask questions at that time, and the public is invited to comment either in support or opposition. No Material Revisions or significant changes in enrollment are expected. On November 6, 2019 staff will make a recommendation, and board will vote whether to renew the petition.

Four other charter schools will submit renewals this year. Each school delivers a ten-minute presentation with information supporting the renewal. Board questions charter staff at Initial Hearings, and may also ask questions prior to the vote during the Decision Hearing. Dates for each follow, except for John Henry High.

School	Initial Hearing	Decision Hearing
Richmond College Prep	11/6/19	12/4/19
Manzanita	11/20/19	12/18/19
Aspire RTA	1/15/20	2/26/20

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**Making Waves Academy (MWA) Planned Expansion - Gracie Guerrero**

MWA has submitted plans to the city of Pinole to build a second school site at 2151 Appian Way, Pinole. The building will be 95,250 square feet, and the site will include outdoor space. Planned enrollment is 488 Kinder through fourth grade students. This expansion requires a Material Revision of the charter, which has not been submitted or placed on the agenda for the Contra Costa County Office of Education, who are the authorizers for MWA. MWA has expanded other campuses and expects to enroll up to 1,500 students by 2024.

**Contract for Millie Burns - Trauma Informed Practices - Matthew Duffy**

The district will continue its work with Millie Burns, a consultant who has supported training and professional development in trauma informed practices over the past many years. Ms. Burns works with teachers and leaders to educate them on trauma and implementation of trauma informed practices into schools and classrooms. The contract is for \$49,500 which is below the \$50,000 threshold for contracts to come to the Board but wanted to be clear and transparent about a contract at that price.

**Media Stories of Interest- Marcus Walton**

The following news stories may be of interest. Copies are attached.

<https://richmondstandard.com/richmond/2019/10/10/wccusd-schools-to-reopen-friday-due-to-power-restoration/> - WCCUSD schools to reopen Friday after power restored

<https://richmondconfidential.org/2019/10/10/support-dog-bear-heals-richmonds-hearts/> - Support Dog “Bear” Heals Richmond’s Hearts

<https://usatodayhss.com/2019/three-arrested-de-anza-high-school-football-shooting> - Three teens arrested in California high school football shooting

<https://edsources.org/2019/effort-to-increase-the-number-of-teachers-of-color-in-california-classrooms-gains-momentum/618412> - Push to increase the number of teachers of color in California classrooms gains momentum

<https://capitolweekly.net/for-california-schools-2020-could-prove-historic/> - For California schools, 2020 could prove historic



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# *The* FISCAL REPORT *32* *informational* *update*

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No. 21

## **By the Way . . . CDE Publishes FAQs About Availability of J-13A Waiver for LEAs Affected by PG&E's Public Safety Power Shutoff**

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) has embarked upon a campaign to shut off power, known as the Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS), when weather conditions are most advantageous for fire risk. The PSPS is PG&E's response to the fires that have ravaged the state over the past couple of years.

As of October 8, 2019, PG&E's most recent implementation of the PSPS is planning to affect thirty counties, and several hundred thousand customers, with an effective shutoff time beginning October 9, 2019, at 4:00 a.m. The estimated downtime is yet to be determined.

Local educational agencies (LEAs) may also be affected by the power shutoffs and the California Department of Education (CDE) has provided a frequently asked questions (FAQs) webpage about the availability of the J-13A waiver as a result of these power shutoffs. The FAQs can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

While the guidance does not provide an explicit approval, and many LEAs do not have a history of school closures and emergency days built into their calendar, we commend the CDE for providing the FAQs. The webpage provides contact information for the department should additional questions regarding the J-13A waiver arise as a result of the PSPS.

posted 10/08/2019



Home / Learning Support / School Disaster and Emergency Management / Public Safety Power Shutoff FAQs

## Public Safety Power Shutoff FAQs

Public Safety Power Shutoff FAQs in regard to funding for generators, instructional time requirements, and the [Form J-13A](#).

[Expand All](#) | [Collapse All](#)

### 1. Is there any funding for generators that would at least keep food storage safe during power outages?

There is no state funding currently available for generators to keep food storage safe during power outages. Some options that CDE has found include: checking with city, county and state surplus property sales for potential generators. Additionally, contact your local air quality district for advice on suitable generator equipment, permits, and recommendations.

### 2. How many minutes are required to be scheduled to meet the minimum school day requirements in order to generate attendance for apportionment in an event of a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS)?

In order for a school district to claim attendance on a day that school closes early due to a PSPS, the part of the day that school remained open would have to meet the minimum school day requirements. The minimum school day requirements vary by grade span as outlined in the table below.

Note: school district minimum school day requirements do not apply to a charter school. There are different minimum school day requirements for county programs. For minimum school day information for a specific county program, please email [attendanceaccounting@cde.ca.gov](mailto:attendanceaccounting@cde.ca.gov).

Grade Span	Minimum School Day Requirements	Minimum School Day Requirements - Averaging Option
TK/Kindergarten	180 instructional minutes	The average of the total instructional minutes scheduled over a span of 10 consecutive school days is equivalent to or greater than the minimum school day of 180 minutes and any given school day is not less than 60 minutes.

Grades 1-3	230 instructional minutes	The average of the total instructional minutes scheduled over a span of 10 consecutive school days is equivalent to or greater than the minimum school day of 230 minutes and any given school day is not less than 170 minutes.
Grades 4-8	240 instructional minutes	<p><b>Elementary School Setting</b></p> <p>The average of the total instructional minutes scheduled over a span of 10 consecutive school days is equivalent to or greater than the minimum school day of 240 minutes and any given school day is not less than 180 minutes in an elementary school setting.</p> <p><b>Junior High Setting</b></p> <p>The average of the total instructional minutes scheduled over a span of 2 consecutive school days is equivalent to or greater than the minimum school day of 240 minutes and any given school day is not less than 180 minutes in a junior high setting.</p>
Grades 9-12	240 instructional minutes	The average of the total instructional minutes scheduled over a span of 2 consecutive school days is equivalent to or greater than the minimum school day of 240 minutes and any given school day is not less than 180 minutes.

3. If there is a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) in the morning or afternoon, can a school district adjust the start of the school day to meet the minimum school day requirements?

Yes. A school district may accommodate for a PSPS by starting the school day earlier or later in order to provide enough instructional minutes to meet the minimum school day requirements.

4. Can a school district offer independent study as an alternative instructional option for all students during a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS)?

The California Department of Education encourages school districts to consider alternative ways to provide instruction during a PSPS. Education Code Section 51747(c)(7) requires an independent study program to be voluntary and provide a classroom option for the student. To the extent that the district does not have a classroom option for the students during the PSPS, the district cannot generate attendance for apportionment for students that do not have a classroom option. The district can give the student academic credit but they cannot claim attendance credit if the school district did not meet all the apportionment significant requirements for independent study.

For charter schools and county schools/programs planning to offer independent study as an alternative way to provide instruction during a PSPS, please email [attendanceaccounting@cde.ca.gov](mailto:attendanceaccounting@cde.ca.gov) for further guidance.

5. If a local educational agency (LEA) closed school or had a loss of attendance due to a Public Safety Power Shutoff, would the LEA meet the conditions of the Form J-13A request?

While the California Department of Education cannot provide an approval in advance, to the extent LEAs have to close due to an unforeseen power outage that causes participation in school to be unsafe, or LEAs find that they can keep schools open but in doing so experience a material loss of attendance as a result of an unforeseen loss of power, they would most likely meet the conditions for a J-13A waiver.

6. Is a local educational agency (LEA) expected to add built-in emergency days in their school calendar for Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)? If so, what is the California Department of Education's (CDE) guidance for determining the number of built-in emergency days to add to a school calendar?

To the extent a LEA anticipates a school closure for any reason in advance, they should plan ahead by adding the number of days they foresee needing to close. Historically, CDE's guidance on determining whether or not a school site within a LEA should have built-in emergency days in their calendar is based on an evaluation by the school's closure history. The school's closure history should include all closures regardless of whether a J-13A request was submitted to CDE. The LEA should also examine the last five fiscal years to help establish a case for the number of days that school may reasonably be expected to be closed due to extraordinary events or conditions. In locales where an emergency event will predictably force school closure for a day or more every year, the school should foresee the need to close and build in emergency days to their school calendar in order to compensate for the foreseeable loss of instructional time. Since PSPS days are relatively new, a LEA may not have a history upon which to rely for these types of weather related outages. The CDE recommends that LEAs contact their utility provider to help determine the number of expected PSPS days so that LEAs can plan accordingly.

7. Should a local educational agency (LEA) use their built-in emergency days for any school closure due to a Public Safety Power Shutoff?

Please refer to question number 23 on the [Form J-13A frequently asked question](#) web page.

8. Does the California Department of Education (CDE) provide any additional guidance about the Form J-13A waiver process?

Yes, the CDE has additional Form J-13A information including FAQs and instructions available on the [Form J-13A](#) web page.

# WCCUSD schools to reopen Friday after power restored

October 10, 2019



WCCUSD offices at 1108 Bissell Ave. in Richmond.

All West Contra Costa Unified District (WCCUSD) schools that closed today due to the planned PG&E power shutoff will reopen Friday, as the power was restored earlier than expected, the district announced.

As of 3:45 p.m., the City of Richmond also announced the power was being restored to impacted areas in Richmond.

It spelled the beginning of the end for PG&E's first Public Safety Power Shutoff event, which aimed to prevent wildfires in the presence of warm dry and particularly windy conditions.

The power shutoff impacted over 700,000 customers in more than 30 counties, with an initial expectation of about 50,000 customers losing power in Contra Costa County.

That prompted WCCUSD to close five schools that lost power: Pinole Valley High, and Ellerhorst, Kensington, Madera, and Olinda elementary schools. Those schools will resume with normal schedules on Friday, the district said.

The power shutoff was controversial. Michael Lewis, senior vice president of Electrical Operations for PG&E, said in a statement it was a difficult choice.

"We faced a choice between hardship or safety, and we chose safety," he said. "We deeply apologize for the inconvenience and the hardship, but we stand by the decision because the safety of our customers and communities must come first."



# Richmond Confidential



## Support Dog “Bear” Heals Richmond’s Hearts

[Kathryn Hurd](#) on October 10, 2019

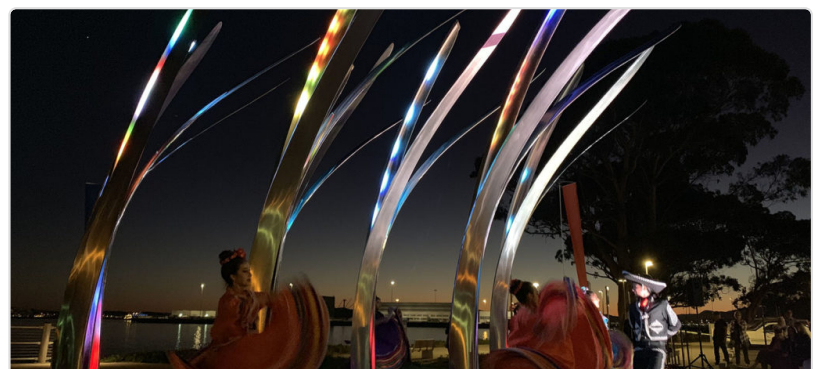
Bear is, in many ways, just like countless Richmond residents. He wakes up each Monday, puts on his uniform, and gets ready to work a full day. When he’s off the job, he likes to spend time with family, goof around, run, swim and stay active. The only difference is, Bear is a dog.

The two-year-old black Labrador retriever is the Contra Costa District Attorney’s Office’s newest member of the investigative unit, where he serves as an emotional support animal. Whether he’s helping victims of trauma, or sitting with child witnesses in court as they testify, Bear has been trained to be an integral part of the unit’s operations.

Though Bear was bred to be a service dog, his “perfect, chill demeanor” made him an ideal candidate for the District Attorney’s Office. Despite his more specified role, Bear continues to wear his service tag that allows him to work with victims and witnesses in public places.

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### Latest Posts



### Stunning Sculptures Light Up Richmond’s Waterfront

[Seigo Kan](#) on October 8, 2019



### Local triple shooting leaves two dead and one wounded

[Kathryn Hurd](#) on October 5, 2019





Janet Era, Bear's handler, is responsible for working with the talented pup. Bear has the temperament of a "saint," and is extremely obedient, even when assisting volatile victims, Era says. When Bear is around her three-year-old, who "tests his limits," he remains calm and continues to fulfill his emotional support duties.



Bear receiving a hug from an affectionate friend. Photo courtesy of Janet Era.

Part of Bear's training has empowered him to more easily identify victims and people who need his help. Era explains that upon entering a room, Bear sometimes "gravitates" towards those who have experienced the most extreme amount of trauma. Though Era's unsure of how Bear does this, she believes it relates to a person's body language. His instincts are strong.

In more formal settings, like court proceedings, Bear will rest his head on a witness' lap, out of the sight of the jury, to comfort the person he's serving. He wears a "noisy tag" that activates and jingles when a victim is agitated or crying. The noise alerts Bear that the victim needs additional service.

Last week, Bear made an appearance at De Anza High School, where he spent time with students dealing with the aftermath of a recent shooting. Era describes the students as being "receptive" towards Bear, petting him, hugging him, and watching him do tricks. His specialties include high fives, fist bumps, and even building puzzles with kids. Era says they're now "working on bowling." Bringing joy to the community is an inevitable byproduct of Bear's role.

Off the job, Bear is just a normal two-year-old dog. He loves to play with kids, goof around the house, and be a "total nutcase." You might also find him posing for his popular Instagram account, "Cocok9bear." However, come Monday, Bear will be back in uniform and on duty, serving Richmond's traumatized survivors – or those who just feel like a bit of furry therapy.

## [Richmond Hears from Congressman DeSaulnier on Impeachment Craze in Washington](#)

[Ashley Njoroge](#) on October 5, 2019

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Photo: Google Maps

# Three teens arrested in California high school football shooting

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By: **Logan Newman, USA TODAY High School Sports** | October 8, 2019

Three minors were arrested last week following the shooting after a California high school football game, according to **ABC7 News**.

On Sept. 27, multiple fights broke out at the De Anza (El Sobrante, California) vs. Pinole Valley (California) rivalry football game, according to **NBC Bay Area**. The two schools are only a few miles away from each other in the Richmond area.

Spectators involved in the fights were kicked out of the stadium and removed from De Anza school grounds.

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The shooting occurred shortly after.

Three people were shot. Two 16-year-old boys have since been released from the hospital, according to NBC, but a 17-year-old girl with injuries to her torso remained in the hospital as of Sunday.

Another victim had cuts due to broken glass, according to NBC.

The three suspects are all males below the age of 18. Police found a handgun believed to have been used in the shooting, according to NBC.

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**Report: Three teens shot after Calif. high school football game**

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**Two arrested in shooting that resulted in Nebraska HS basketball player's leg amputation**

**LATEST**

## Push to increase the number of teachers of color in California classrooms gains momentum

*Initiatives underway to increase diversity among California teachers*

OCTOBER 11, 2019 | DIANA LAMBERT



BRITTANY MURRAY, PRESS TELEGRAM/SCNG (2016)

Increasing the number of teachers of color in California classrooms has been a top priority for State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond since he started the job in January. Now, he's planning a statewide task force focused on improving teacher diversity in California schools.

“The data shows when kids see a teacher who looks like them it makes a huge difference,” Thurmond said in an [earlier EdSource interview](#).

Hiring a diverse group of teachers can help students academically and provide role models for their future, research has revealed.

Thurmond already has assembled an advisory group focused on closing the persistent [achievement gap](#) between students of color and their white and Asian peers.

Research shows a strong association between poverty and students' lack of success on achievement tests. And while poverty is not unique to any ethnicity, it does exist in disproportionate rates among African-Americans and Hispanics, and among English learners.

Having more teachers with diverse backgrounds in the classroom has a positive impact on learning for students of color and for closing achievement gaps, according to a [study](#) from the Learning Policy Institute. Students of color generally have higher test scores, are more likely to graduate from college and to succeed in college when they have teachers of color in the classroom they can look to as role models.

But this doesn't happen often enough. Fewer than 4 percent of teachers in California were African-American and 20.7 percent were Latino, while 5.4 percent of the state's students were African-American and 54.2 percent were Latino in 2017-18, according to data from the California Department of Education. About a quarter of the state's teachers are male.

A survey of participants of a virtual town hall on the achievement gap, hosted by the Department of Education in Sacramento in September, found that an overwhelming majority agreed that getting more teachers with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds into classrooms is essential to reducing the achievement gap.

## State tests show achievement gap persists

Percentage of students who met or exceeded state standards on Smarter Balanced tests in 2019.

	English	Math
African-American	33	21
American Indian	38	27
Asian	77	74
Filipino	71	60
Hispanic	41	28
Pacific Islander	43	33
White	65	54

The Closing the Achievement Gap Initiative has come to much the same conclusion. The group is led by four co-chairs: Manufou Liaiga Anoa'i, a school board member with the Jefferson Elementary School District in Daly City; Ryan Smith, chief external officer for the [Partnership for Los Angeles Schools](#), a nonprofit that runs 18 schools within Los Angeles Unified; Roseann Torres, CEO of Torres Law Group and a board member in the Oakland Unified School District; and Elisha Smith Arrillaga, executive director of [The Education Trust-West](#), a nonprofit organization focused on closing the achievement gap.

At least 100 people across the state have been working with the initiative, which launched in February. Diversifying the teacher workforce is a large part of their discussion, Smith said.

“We see recruitment and retention of teachers of color to be key to improving the outcomes of marginalized students,” he said.

Smith said the most impactful teacher he had growing up was another African-American male who told him he could do anything and that there would be obstacles, but that he believed in him.

“What I see is that when students see themselves in the educator we put in front of them and when the educator can speak to the experiences of the student and understand the culture that the student resides in and they understand the challenges of being a person of color, there is a connection there that is important,” Smith said.

The California Department of Education defines teachers of color as all teachers who are not white, said Scott Roark, a spokesman for the department.

Thurmond and the California Department of Education also want to identify effective strategies of school districts that have successfully been able to recruit and retain teachers of color, according to Smith. They want to work with advocacy groups to raise awareness about the need for those teachers and to spotlight universities that have effectively increased the number of students of color who go on to become teachers.

San Diego State University recently started a [program](#) aimed at increasing the number of Latino and bilingual teachers in California. Beginning next year the university will accept 100 students from local colleges into its bilingual credentials program, which prepares teachers to teach in bilingual K-12 classrooms. The program, which is supported by a \$3.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, will offer students a stipend.

That effort will be ratcheted up when a task force focusing on increasing teacher diversity in California classrooms begins its work. The California Department of Education is in the early stages of putting the task force together and no timelines have been set, according to Roark. The task force will work closely with CSU Northridge, which has a [program](#) focusing on preparing men of color to become teachers.

In the meantime, the Closing the Achievement Gap Initiative will continue to meet monthly and conduct virtual town halls, surveys and regional meetings with stakeholders across the state.

Although the group’s recommendations to close the achievement gap won’t be completed until early next year, a report released in September by The Education Trust and Teach Plus, a nonprofit organization that trains teachers for leadership roles, may offer some insight into what is needed to retain black and Latino teachers.

The [report](#), “If you listen we will stay: Why teachers of color leave and how to disrupt teacher turnover,” is primarily based on interviews with administrators and teachers who identify as African-American or Latino, from California, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee and Texas.

The report offered four recommendations to state leaders to help recruit and retain African-American and Latino teachers:

- Offer loan forgiveness, service scholarships, loan repayment incentives and relocation incentives.
- Invest in the recruitment, preparation and development of leaders committed to positive working conditions for a diverse workforce.
- Collect and study data on teacher recruitment, hiring and retention by race and ethnicity.
- Ensure curriculum, learning and work environments are inclusive and respectful to all racial and ethnic groups.

The teachers who were interviewed said they often experience an antagonistic school culture and feel undervalued and disconnected from the curriculum being taught. They would like to be allowed to teach in more creative and meaningful ways because students aren’t always represented in the curriculum or in classroom materials, according to the report.

The teachers said they want to work in an environment where they can impact students beyond test scores and allow them to graduate with a strong racial identity. They tend to stay at schools where there are strong relationships among staff and a commitment to equity, social justice and the dismantling of racism, according to the study.

“Recruiting teachers of color only gets them into the building,” according to the report. “We must pay equal, if not more, attention to their retention to make a long-lasting change in the diversity of the workforce.”

 Comments

SCHOOLS-  
2020-  
COULD-  
PROVE-  
HISTORIC(')

November 2020 ballot. There is speculation in the Capitol that this measure may become the subject of legislation next year, allowing the Legislature and governor to place it on the ballot.

Finally, the Schools and Communities First campaign is circulating a property tax

*In the 1970s, California ranked in the top five states in the nation for per-pupil funding and student outcomes. Yet now it ranks near the bottom.*

reform measure that would generate \$4.5 billion a year for K-12 schools and community colleges as well as \$6.5 billion for local governments. It, too, is aimed at November 2020.

This initiative would rewrite California's controversial Proposition 13, which voters approved in June 1978. It would lift property tax caps on commercial and industrial properties while retaining caps for residences. However, the campaign is revising the measure to include more property tax protection for small businesses and to ensure that all school districts receive equitable funding. Now the campaign is collecting signatures to qualify the revised measure for the ballot.

David Kline, a spokesperson for the California Taxpayers Association, questioned the need for new taxes when the state is experiencing a record surplus of \$21.5 billion. He added that more taxes are not good for anybody.

"Our cost of living is already so high in California," he said. "Consumers will face even higher costs for everything they buy because the tax would be passed on."

But Troy Flint, a spokesperson for the California School Boards Association, said California's public schools are still woefully underfunded. The state ranks 38<sup>th</sup> in per-pupil funding, paying only about \$10,281 per student as compared to the \$20,540 per student paid by top funder Vermont.

"Our measure addresses the neglect of our school system," he said.

In the 1970s, California ranked in the top five states in the nation for per-pupil funding and student outcomes. Yet now it ranks near the bottom, though the state boasts the 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world.

The state faces steep challenges educating its 6.19 million public school students as 58 percent are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and 23 percent are English learners.

"Everybody benefits from strong public schools," Flint said. "They are the foundation of a healthy society

*Recent increases in school funding have only put the schools back where they were before funding was drastically cut during the last recession in 2008.*

and a strong democracy.”

The California School Boards Association believes that the initiative is its best option to restore funding since other strategies haven't worked, including working with the Legislature and a court case. In 2016, the California Supreme Court declined to hear *Robles-Wong vs. the State of California*. In that case, the association and other plaintiffs argued that the state's school funding system violated the state constitution by denying all students access to an education that prepared them for the work force and full participation in our democracy.

Recent increases in school funding have only put the schools back where they were before funding was drastically cut during the last recession in 2008. “The last decade, we've treaded water,” said Flint.

*If the measure passes a “split roll” will be created with one set of taxes for residential property owners and another for business property.*

Gov. Newsom's budget allocates \$103.4 billion for K-12 education, a record high. “The only logical conclusion is the current tax structure is doing a really good job of providing for government programs,” Kline said.

The Schools and Communities First initiative, if approved, would be the first time Proposition 13 has been changed since its passage. Proposition 13 limits property taxes for both homes and businesses to 1 percent of the property's taxable value and prohibits the taxes from going up more than 2 percent per year until the property is sold. In this way, property owners who have held on to their land for many years often pay much lower taxes than new buyers.

If the measure passes a “split roll” will be created with one set of taxes for residential property owners and another for business property.



Supporters of the Schools and Communities First initiative say a reform of Proposition 13 is long overdue. “For 40 years, California’s novel approach to taxing commercial and industrial property has starved funding for schools and local communities, disadvantaged small and startup businesses and exacerbated our housing crisis,” they noted.

The California Taxpayers Association and others have formed the group Californians to Stop Higher Property Taxes, which warns that if the split roll passes, property tax protections for home owners will be removed next.

The group’s website also points out that Californians already pay the highest income and sales taxes, and have the highest utility costs in the nation. “This is not the time to raise taxes again,” the website said.

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