

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo  
January 17, 2020

**Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy**

- January 17: Secondary Work Day, No School for Middle and High Schools
- January 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, Schools and Offices Closed
- January 22: Early Learning TK-2 Family STEM Night, Coronado ES
- January 23: Wilson Renaming Committee, Grace Lutheran Church, 6:00 PM
- January 25: West Contra Costa Education Fair, RHS, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- January 28: AASAT Meeting, DeJean, 6:00 PM
- January 29: Board of Education, DeJean, 6:30 PM
- January 30: 100th Day
- February 4: Agenda Setting, Superintendent’s Office, 4:30 PM
- February 4: Early Learning TK-2 STEM Night, Olinda ES
- February 6: Early Learning TK-2 STEM Night, Wilson ES
- February 17-21: Presidents’ Week Recess, Schools and Offices Closed

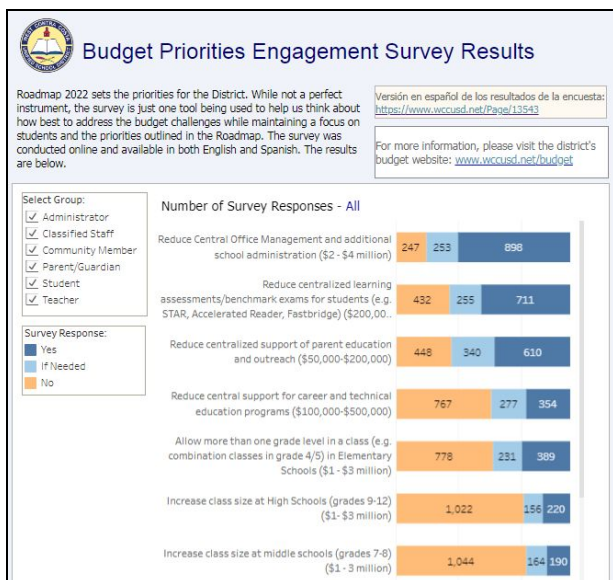
**Budget Priorities Engagement Survey Results Released - Tony Wold / Tracey Logan**

Results from the Budget Priorities Engagement Survey have been compiled into an English and a Spanish dashboard. Viewers may select a respondent group to view how they rated each of the budget priorities

The survey results are posted on our budget update website at the following links:

- [Budget Survey Results in English](#)
- [Budget Survey Results in Spanish](#)

**Dashboard Screenshot - English**



**Dashboard Screenshot - Spanish**



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

**Friday Memo - Bond Program Management Plan Update - Luis Freese**

The Bond Program Management Plan is a compilation of policies and procedures to ensure the ongoing implementation of effective controls. The Plan documents the internal controls in place to properly implement the District's policies, safeguard its assets, provide compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, and produce timely and accurate financial information.

The District anticipates publishing the Bond Program Management Plan by June 2020. In an effort to develop a comprehensive plan, the District is posting draft sections on the District website <https://www.wccusd.net/Page/13520> and then opening a 30-day public comment window. Written suggestions for revisions, additions, and improvements are encouraged and may be submitted using a [google form](#) available online. If anyone would like to be notified when additional draft sections become available, they can subscribe by submitting a request via email to [facilitiesplanning@wccusd.net](mailto:facilitiesplanning@wccusd.net).

**Media Stories of Interest - Marcus Walton**

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

<https://edsource.org/2020/san-francisco-bay-area-parents-declare-state-of-emergency-over-districts-failure-to-educate-black-children/622439> - San Francisco Bay Area parents declare state of emergency over district's failure to educate black children

<https://patch.com/california/pinole-hercules/family-teens-joke-gun> - Family In On Teen's 'Joke' With Gun

<https://edsource.org/2020/san-francisco-bay-area-districts-budget-cuts-may-hurt-neediest-students-advocates-fear/622169> - San Francisco Bay Area district's budget cuts may hurt neediest students, advocates fear

<https://richmondstandard.com/community/education/2020/01/13/wccusd-new-family-enrollment-begins-jan-21/> - WCCUSD: New family enrollment begins Jan. 21

<https://edsource.org/2020/closing-a-middle-school-and-converting-others-to-k-8-stirs-opposition/622539> - Closing a middle school and converting others to K-8 stirs opposition

## San Francisco Bay Area parents declare state of emergency over district's failure to educate black children

*Parents demand action from West Contra Costa Unified School District*

JANUARY 15, 2020 | THERESA HARRINGTON



THERESA HARRINGTON / EDSOURCE

*This story was updated at 2 a.m. Jan. 16 to reflect the board's discussion and action.*

**F**ed up with a growing achievement gap between African American students and all others in a San Francisco Bay Area school district, a group of parents is declaring an “educational state of emergency” and demanding improvement.

“For years now, this district has not seen or served African American/black kids,” said Golddie Williams, whose daughter attends El Cerrito High in West Contra Costa Unified. “That all

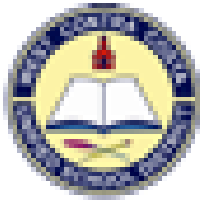
changes tonight. There is no more time for consideration. The time is now. It's time they see us."

The parents, who are members of the district's African American Site Advisory Team, presented their demands Wednesday night to a meeting of the district's school board. The board unanimously approved the resolution presented by the group and agreed to implement all of its recommendations next year, which are expected to cost up to \$7 million, by shifting money the district is currently spending on student programs to services that will better serve African-American students.

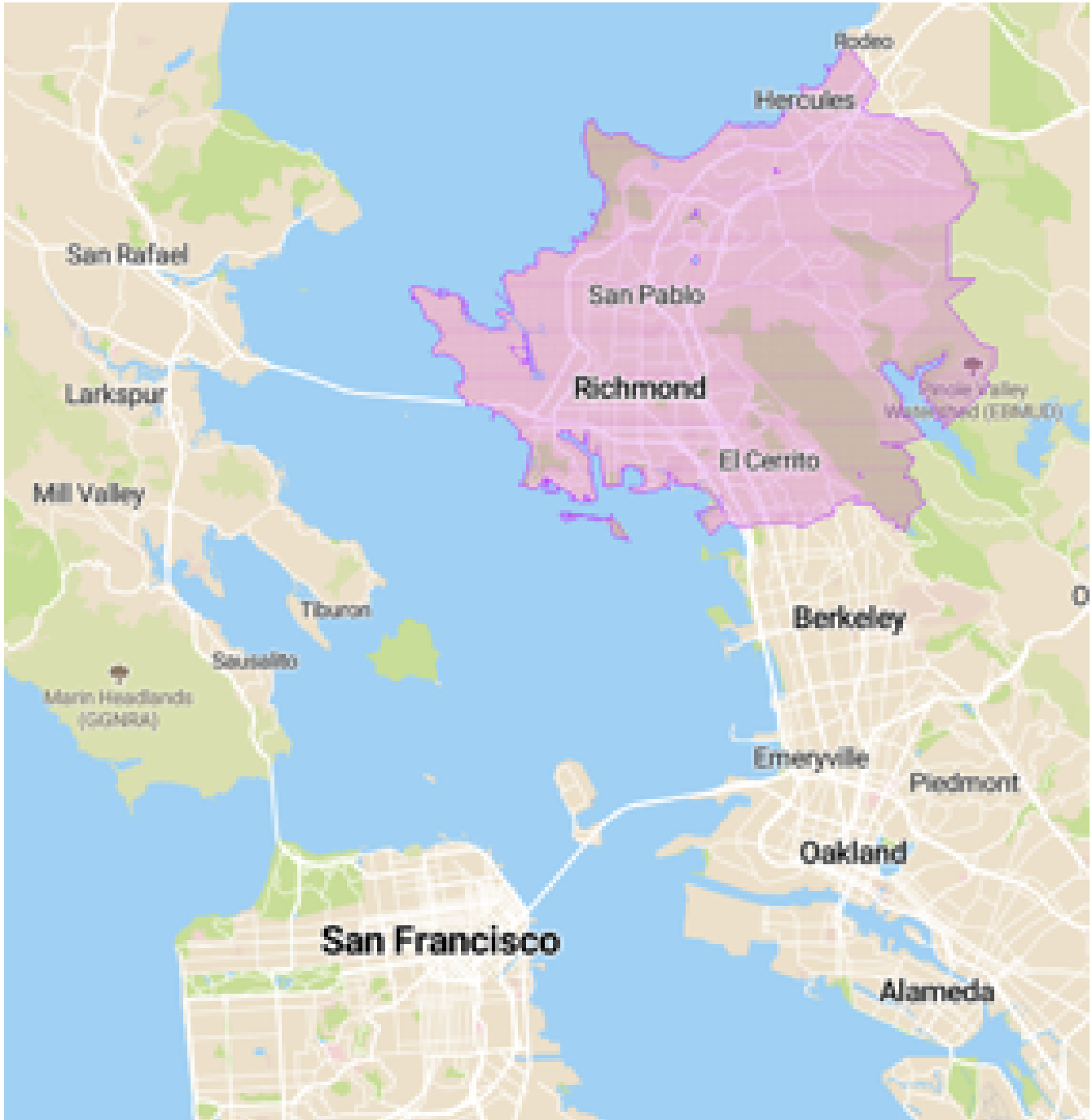
But Superintendent Matthew Duffy and associate superintendent for business services Tony Wold warned that the Contra Costa County Office of Education may reject the district's budget with this new commitment, since the district has not yet identified what it would cut to free up the money for the new services. The district is already grappling with the need to close a deficit of up to \$48 million next year.

Wold said the county may require the district to increase its projected deficit to nearly \$54 million to reflect planned expenditures related to African-American student achievement. But Williams and more than a dozen other supporters of the African-American resolution said they didn't want to wait two years to see them implemented.

"The district has stated that it's a priority to address education gaps with African American students," Williams said. "From a moral standpoint, this is what's needed. This is a crisis."



# West Contra Costa Unified



She is co-chair of the group, which demanded that West Contra Costa Unified improve its services for African American students in the district that includes Richmond and surrounding communities.

Data shows the achievement gap between African American students and others is growing in the district, where only about 20 percent of African American students met or exceeded English standards on statewide tests last year and a mere 10 percent met math standards. In contrast, about 61 percent of white students met the English standards and half met the math standards.

In both subject areas, African American student achievement has dropped over the past five years, while white student achievement has improved. In 2015, 21 percent of African American students met or exceeded English standards compared to 57 percent of white students, and 11 percent of African American students met or exceeded the math standards compared to 48 percent of white students.

“If we don’t change the expectations for the students from the teachers, the administrators, the parents — from everyone — nothing’s going to change,” Williams said. “The expectation has to be that this is unacceptable.”

The parents’ group asked the district to allocate \$7.2 million to improve services for the district’s 5,000 African American students, including the creation of an office within the district to support the students and their families. The parents also asked that the district invest in small group tutoring and mentoring for African American students, and provide more culturally relevant curriculum, with a greater emphasis on African American history and culture in books and other instructional materials, field trips and assemblies. To do this, they recommended that the district evaluate what’s working and what’s not and eliminate programs or services that are not effective so it can redirect that money into services that would have better results.

The districtwide group’s meetings attract about 40 to 50 people and include representatives from school site African American Parent Committees, said Zelon Harrison, who also co-chairs the advisory team.

Due to fiscal constraints, Duffy and Wold originally presented the idea of waiting until 2022-23 to consider cuts of \$7 million in some areas so it could redirect that money to fund the ideas presented by the African American parents. But board members unanimously rejected this idea, saying they wanted to ensure the district followed through on its promises immediately.



The plight of African American students lagging behind their peers [statewide](#) is also on Gov. Gavin Newsom's radar. When he released his proposed 2020-21 budget last week, Newsom [emphasized](#) the fact that the achievement gap for African Americans and for students with disabilities is not closing statewide.

“If you overlay socio-economics with race, the scores are deplorable in contrast to what they should be and can be,” he said, contrasting this “bad news” with improvement by some other student groups. “We have to start getting serious, and do something about it.”

The district group's resolution also called out the need to recruit, support and retain African American teachers. The district's United Teachers of Richmond union also supported the resolution, along with the Richmond Branch of the NAACP and Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks, who represents the Richmond area in the state Legislature.

“Every student has the capacity to thrive, but they can only meet their potential if we provide them the tools and opportunity to do so,” Wicks said in a statement. “It's long past time we address these systemic opportunity and achievement gaps in West Contra Costa County, and I'm proud to support this resolution to support every child's ability to learn and achieve.”

According to the state's current school funding formula, districts receive additional money for students who are low-income, foster youth or English learners. But the state has not set aside any additional money specifically earmarked for African American students. Williams said her group calculated that 13.6 percent of the low-income students and foster youth in the district are African American, so they should benefit from that share of funds that the district receives.

Newsom's budget proposed additional money for teacher preparation programs, along with about \$300 million to support the state's lowest-achieving schools and districts. West Contra Costa is already working to redesign one such school — [Stege](#) Elementary in Richmond — which includes a high percentage of African American students. The board has also identified this as a budget priority, despite cuts that need to be made elsewhere.

Wold also said that legislation is being proposed that could earmark funding specifically for African-American students. If that legislation passes, he said West Contra Costa could be well-

positioned to receive funding to assist in its commitment to provide better services to those students.

*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 and several other East Bay communities.*

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#### **Sandra Davenport**

1 day ago



This need has been here for many years. But now we have other minority concerns: how about the needs of our Hispanic students? It's no coincidence that the Hispanic students feed into Richmond High School, the high school with the most needs and largest problems. How about them?

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#### **▶ Rob Appeldorn**

1 day ago



How does teaching black history to school children help them to learn math and English? Do the high performers in Contra Costa County schools get a personalized history lesson of their ethnic heritage? Is that why students of non-color do better? How can having personalized tutors for black kids guarantee they will do their homework? Not every student of any ethnicity can perform at the same academic level, everybody is different. Maybe it would be ... [Read More](#)

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#### **▶ Edwin Javius**

1 day ago



The urgency for educating Black students in California has always been there! I urge the district(s) to have a comprehensive 3 to 5 year plan drive the reform and not the money. Granted it takes funds to operationalize the plan. I hope we don't let the tail wag the dog. Money doesn't change results, a solid



plan that is different/tighter than LCFF structure. Research on changing the outcomes for Black students is not ... [Read More](#)

## Schools

## Family In On Teen's 'Joke' With Gun

The teen posed with an AR-15-style rifle and said that students should stay away from Hercules High School on the 13th.

By Bay City News, News Partner  
Jan 14, 2020 10:28 am PT

Reply



The police department took the threat seriously, and investigated the threat thoroughly. (Hercules Police Department)

HERCULES, CA — A 15-year-old Hercules High School student was sought by police following a report of a threat against the school Monday, police said.

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Officers received information at about 5 a.m. about a possible threat toward the school at 1900 Refugio Valley Road in Hercules.

[Subscribe](#)

A parent told police that her daughter had seen a Snapchat video of a person holding an AR-15-style gun and a post saying that Hercules High School students should avoid the school on the 13th, according to police.

Officers received a screen shot of the gun from the girl and the boy suspected of posting the video was identified through his Snapchat account name, police said.

## View Video

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Officers got in touch with the school before it opened and all students in middle and high school were told to call the school office if they saw the boy who posted the video.

Police said officers went to the boy's home and learned that the boy and his family were out of state. Officers checked the family's home and did not find any evidence of guns. Police called the family, who were still away, and they said the video was shot at a sporting goods store that was not in California.

The boy was supervised as he held the gun and the post was a poor attempt at humor, police said the family told them. Police will not be making any arrests.

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## San Francisco Bay Area district's budget cuts may hurt neediest students, advocates fear

*Governor's budget offers little hope of avoiding \$50 million in cuts over two years to balance budget.*

JANUARY 14, 2020 | THERESA HARRINGTON



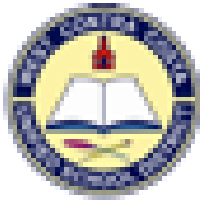
THERESA HARRINGTON / EDSOURCE / EDSOURCE

Like most districts across California, West Contra Costa Unified gets extra state funding for vulnerable students, including those who are English learners, in foster care or from low-income families.

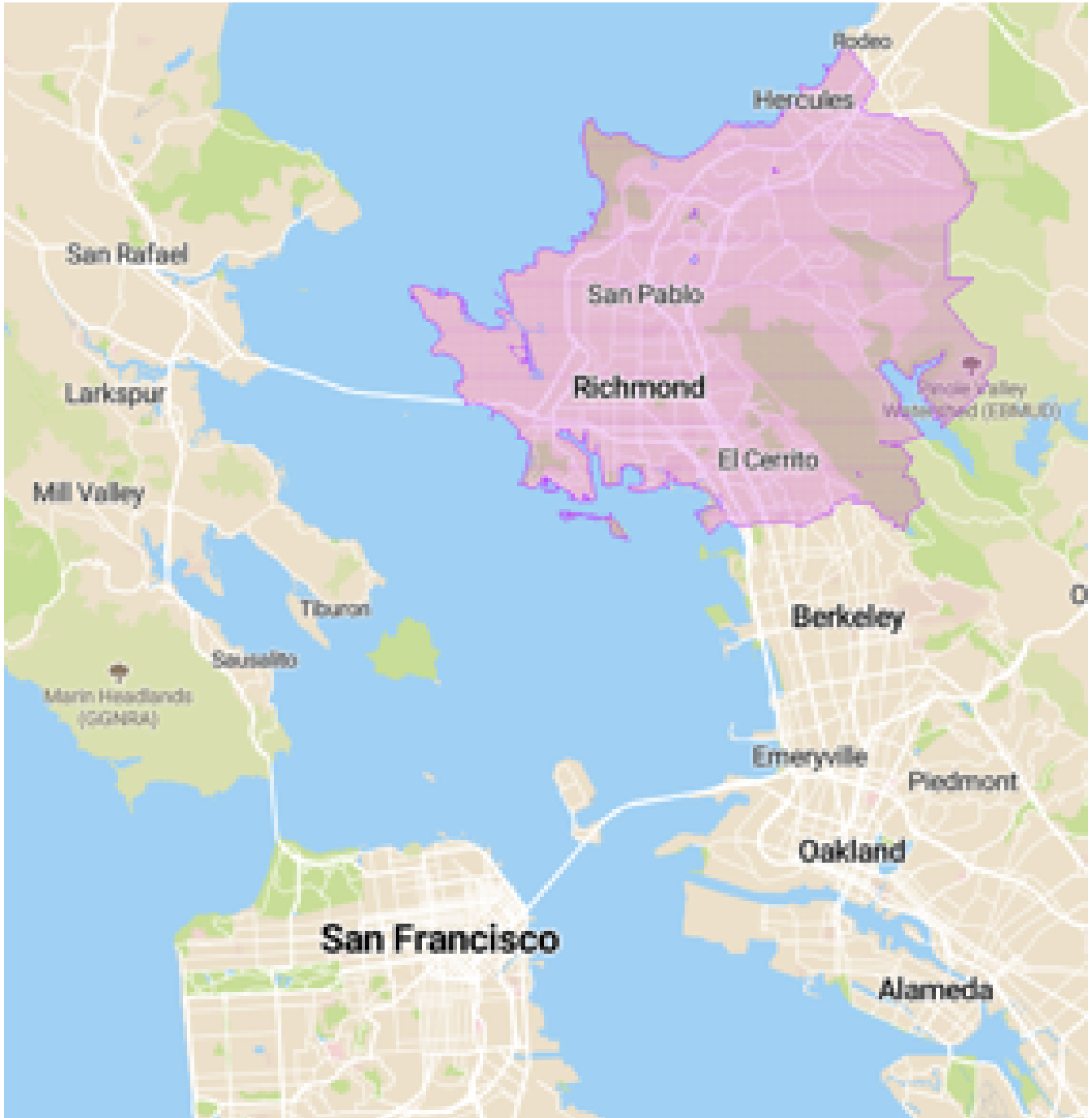
Yet, those are the very students who could suffer the most when the district makes nearly \$50 million in cuts to close its budget gaps for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, says a coalition of advocates. Those cuts are expected to include layoffs.



“Cuts should not be borne disproportionately by our students, and front-line school staff and services that meet high-need student needs should be preserved,” coalition members said in a [letter](#) to district leaders. To ensure transparency, the group urged the district to clearly identify “what will be cut, with which funds, at which school sites and for which student groups, specifically at the highest-need and lowest-performing schools.”



# West Contra Costa Unified



The group, which includes the [Public Advocates](#) law firm, a non-profit advocacy organization, said the district — which includes Richmond and surrounding communities — should cut only programs or services paid for with the extra funds that don't actually help high-needs students.

District officials had hoped that the governor's proposed 2020-21 [budget](#) released last Friday would bring new revenues.

But, it turns out that Newsom is suggesting a cost of living adjustment of 2.29 percent instead of the 3 percent that West Contra Costa and other districts statewide had expected. The difference will cost the district \$2 million this year and compound to \$4 million over the next two years, officials said.

Final word on the aid will come in June after the budget makes its way through the State Legislature and final negotiations with the governor.

The board, which will consider the budget on Wednesday, expects to approve an unspecified amount of budget cuts in March, and to finalize total cuts in June, when it adopts its 2020-21 budget.

The board adopted a revised 2019-20 budget last month that showed a deficit of \$35 million that is expected to grow to nearly \$43 million next year. That total includes use of a one-time state preschool grant of \$4.5 million that is not expected to be available in the future.

To cover its deficit, the district expects to spread its total cuts of nearly \$48 million over two years. The district is actually in better shape than it could have been because it has reserves for retiree benefits that it will use — \$15.6 million this year and \$15.8 million next year. In the future, the district expects to replenish those funds, as its budget picture improves, said Tony Wold, associate superintendent for business services.

For 2020-21, Wold expects the district to cut a minimum of \$6 million from contracts and other non-salary items, about \$4 million from management staff and an additional \$2 million from school site budgets. The district expects to negotiate \$20 million in cuts with its unions for next year — including layoffs — followed by another \$15.8 million in 2021-22.

The district has not yet identified the positions or total number of layoffs that may be required. In response to advocates for African-American students who are frustrated by the low overall academic achievement of this group, the district may make an additional \$7 million in cuts in 2022-23 in other areas to redirect funding to [services](#) for those students, Wold said.

He is recommending \$821,476 in cuts from the superintendent's office and business services department, including reductions for outside contracts, legal expenses and consultants. He plans to bring recommended cuts to district office administrator positions by Jan. 29, along with more non-salary reductions in other district departments by the end of next month.

The district last month asked for feedback about possible cuts to be implemented next fall through an online survey that a student advocacy organization and union leaders criticized as "divisive," saying it "overwhelmingly puts student-centered services on the chopping block without any context, any grounded methodology and without integration of student-centered and student-driven data." The survey was open to anyone, including parents, students, staff and community members.

More than 1,400 people completed the survey, including 41 percent who were parents, 28 percent teachers, 10 percent students, 10 percent community members, 8 percent "classified" staff who are not teachers or administrators and 3 percent administrators, according to a presentation Wold will deliver to the board on Wednesday.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they were "comfortable" with nearly two dozen suggested budget cuts. They were also free to write in their own suggestions.

Most urged the district to avoid cutting student-related spending like school-based funding and services for those struggling to read.

Ideas that received the most support were:

- Cuts to central office and school administrators;
- Replacing "door to door" service with centralized pick up locations where possible for special education transportation;
- Reducing high school courses with low enrollment;
- Eliminating some non-mandatory student testing.

Least supported suggestions were:

- Reducing school site funding;
- Cuts to learning centers that serve special education and struggling students;

- Increasing class sizes;
- Slashing centralized support for visual and performing arts.

Since May, West Contra Costa Unified has been working with the Contra Costa County Office of Education to ensure it maintains fiscal solvency. To fix its ongoing structural deficit, it must make reductions that “will be painful,” said county spokesman Terry Koehne. “But they’re also necessary to bring the district back into balance.”

The teachers’ union is pushing the district to negotiate its layoff plans before the March 15 deadline to send out pink slips, said Demetrio Gonzalez, president of the United Teachers of Richmond union.

Union leaders asked the board last month to keep cuts as far away from students as possible. They urged the district to be honest about mistakes that led to the deficit, for cuts to start with contracts and central office management, for better accountability systems to prevent deficit-spending in the future, and to ask the community for its ideas on what to cut.

“We have to continue to engage staff members, labor, students and families in a genuine way so that they feel that they are part of the solution to this problem,” said Richmond High Principal Jose DeLeon, who represents the West Contra Costa Administrators Association. “We believe we will get out of this crisis together.”

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## Comments

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► **Rocky**

3 days ago



This district is an abject failure. Not only is it failing at the task of preparing its neediest students for higher education and career; not only has it failed to run a responsible cost-conscious construction program; not only has it driven-away huge numbers of students to charters through its unresponsive and high-handed behavior, but it can't even manage the minimal baseline responsibility of tracking and forecasting revenues and expenditures and maintaining a balanced budget. Local ... [Read More](#)

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**Bo Loney**

3 days ago



Let's not forget that gifted and talented students also fall under protection as high needs students under Obama's 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act.



# WCCUSD: New family enrollment begins Jan. 21

January 13, 2020



File photo

The enrollment period for new families wishing to attend their West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) neighborhood school opens at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 21, including for transitional kindergarten and kindergarten, the WCCUSD said. Current WCCUSD students who would like to transfer to a school within the WCCUSD can fill out their applications from Feb. 3 though Feb. 28.

Kindergarten children must be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2020 to be eligible, and Transitional Kindergarten students must turn 5 between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2, 2020.

More information on enrollment can be found on the WCCUSD site [here](#) and on the flyer at the bottom of this story. Also, families are encouraged to attend the West Contra Costa Education Fair at Richmond High on Jan. 25, where you'll find a wealth of information and resources about district schools and local organizations.

## To enroll, follow these steps:

1. Find your neighborhood school by entering your address [here](#).
2. Either visit your neighborhood school or enroll online (if you enroll online, you will still need to visit your neighborhood school).
  - o To enroll online you will need:
    - *Email account*
    - *PowerSchools Account (This created during online registration) The Register Now Link at the top of the page will be live at **9 am Tuesday, Jan. 21***
    - *Required documents ready to upload*
3. Make an appointment for an **in-person** ID verification and confirmation with your resident school

*\*Families who wish to enroll their child in Transitional Kindergarten online can do so by selecting 'K' or 'Kinder' in the online application. View the TK school chart to find your school of residence.*

**Documentation & Records**

The following documents ARE REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION at your school:

1. Verification of residency (two documents)
2. Age verification: birth certificate or Baptismal record
3. Immunization record
4. Parent, guardian or caregiver identification (one document)
5. Documents required under special circumstances

Student placement is on a first come, first served basis upon submitting a complete enrollment application.

For more information, please contact your school of residence or the Transfer Office at (510) 307-4535.

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All students who are enrolling in a district school for the first time for the 2020-21 school year can sign up at your neighborhood school beginning Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2020.

You may register your child online or at your neighborhood school of residence.

For more information on enrollment please visit the district's website at [wccusd.net](http://wccusd.net). You may also visit the links below for the following information: Enrollment Requirements | School Locator | Online Registration | Transfer Office

**IN PERSON ENROLLMENT TIMES:**  
9:00am – 11:00am & 1:00pm – 3:00pm

**YOU WILL NEED:**

- **Birth Certificate or Baptismal Record**
- **Address Verification** (two documents i.e. utility bills or rental agreement under the parent/guardian's name)
- **Immunization Record** documenting that the child has been fully immunized per Senate Bill 277
- **Valid Photo Id**

TK students must turn 5 years of age between September 2, 2020 and December 2, 2020 to enroll. Kindergarten students must be 5 on or before September 1, 2020.



Mike Aldax

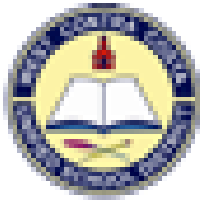
## **Closing a middle school and converting others to K-8 stirs opposition**

*Superintendent in San Francisco Bay Area district gets pushback.*

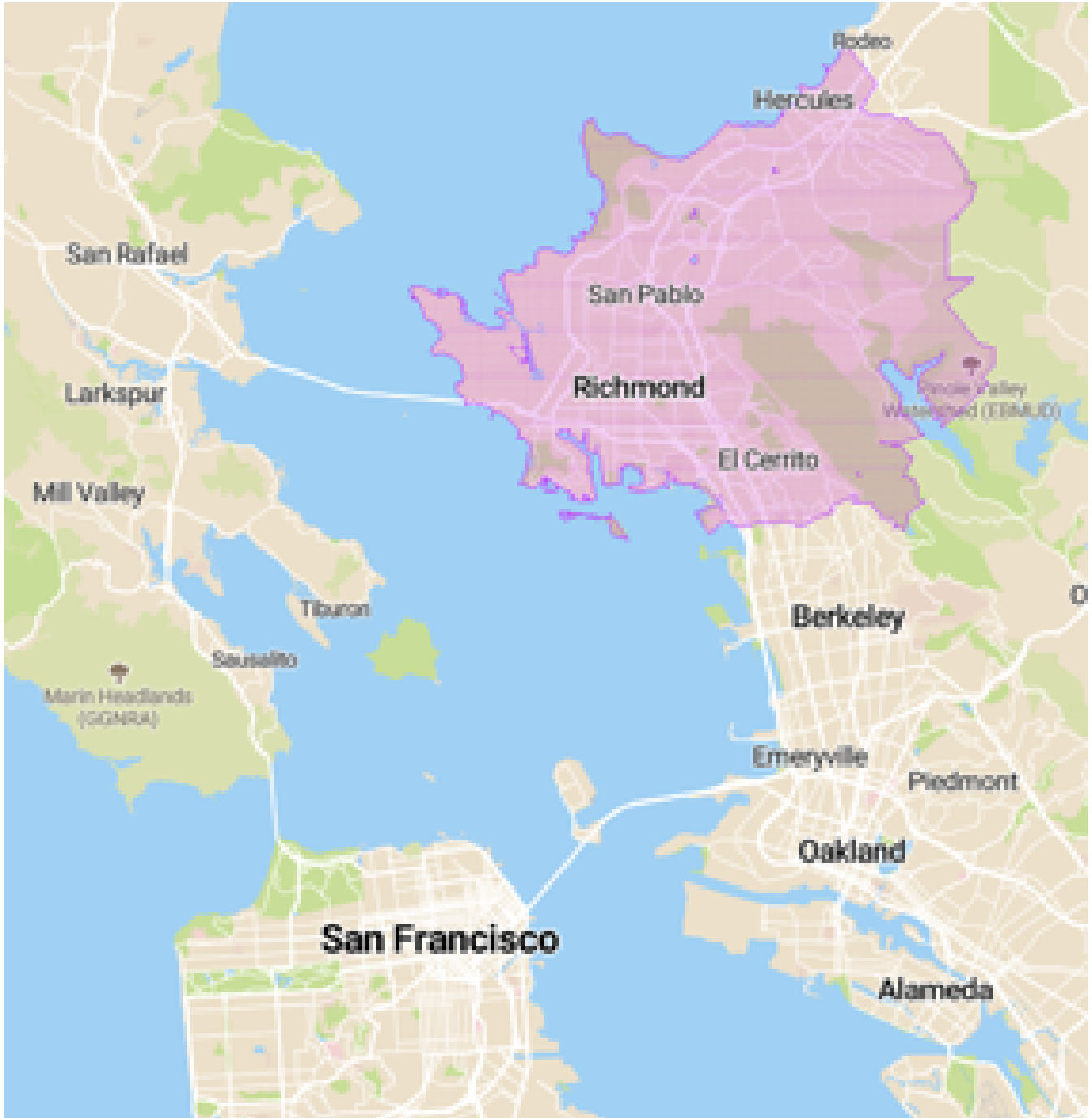
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JANUARY 17, 2020 | THERESA HARRINGTON

**T**he superintendent in West Contra Costa Unified says his district is losing enrollment as students finish sixth grade. Rather than move on to middle school, they often jump to charter and private schools.



# West Contra Costa Unified



Superintendent Matthew Duffy thought he had a solution by converting six K-6 elementary schools into K-8 schools, which feed into DeJean Middle School, the only middle school in Richmond. The district could even convert that school into an arts campus to attract students from across the district.

“We’re now proposing that we begin that transition next year,” Duffy said at Wednesday’s board meeting, adding that the district, which includes Richmond and other communities, surveyed parents at the six schools and found that at least 80 percent of 6th grade families would send their children to the elementary schools if they offered 7th grade next year and 8th grade the year after that.

Duffy proposed putting the plan in motion by Jan. 21, but he was shut down by the school board, middle school staff and some community members, who said he needed to seek board approval before he could move forward. They also said that he should better engage the community about the idea and further research the pros and cons of such a change.

Duffy wanted to finalize the transition by next Tuesday when open enrollment begins in the district, to ensure parents and students would have the option next year of staying in elementary schools that would begin offering 7th and 8th grades in the next two years.

His attempt to announce the plan as a done deal for next year, however, backfired.

“I just feel like we’ve had no serious analysis,” said board member Tom Panas. “I would want to see data about how the other new K-8s are doing,” he added, referring to the three other district elementary schools that were converted to K-8s last year.

Duffy’s decision to announce the change before seeking board approval is causing confusion in the community, where some elementary school parents have already received letters from the district informing them that they could send their children to their elementary schools instead of to the middle school next year. It also stunned the DeJean Middle School staff, including the principal, who said they have been making progress toward academic and attendance goals, as well as with staff retention.

Nearly two dozen speakers opposed the plan, saying it was too rushed and not well thought out or communicated to the staff and the community. No one spoke in favor of the proposal, which would affect the Wilson, Nystrom, King, Lincoln, Grant and Coronado elementary schools, that are all in Richmond.

But some African American parents, who earlier in the meeting persuaded the board to adopt a new plan to spend \$7 million on improving supports for African American students,



especially at schools with a high population of those students such as DeJean Middle School and the six elementary schools, said they felt like their campuses were being “targeted.” Some also said middle school provides students with important opportunities to mature and to enjoy options such as band and sports that may not be available at elementary schools.

Those parents who want their children to attend a middle school might have to spend more time transporting them to middle schools farther away from their homes.

Emma Erbach, executive director of the United Teachers of Richmond teachers’ union, blasted Duffy’s presentation, calling it “a disgrace” that was “shoddy and misleading and based on false data,” noting that the surveys were not comprehensive.

“The unions were not notified,” she said angrily. “My teachers were calling me crying over the weekend. Your poor decision-making, Matthew Duffy, has caused trauma to the community.”

Board member Mister Phillips agreed with Panas that more details were needed before the district could commit to such a change.

“Anytime we’re talking about closing schools, that’s not a decision for staff to ever make,” he said. “That’s a decision that should always be made up here (on the board dais) with input from staff and the larger community.”

Phillips said he had looked at the test scores for the elementary schools and that most were doing worse than [DeJean](#), so he questioned how leaving students at their elementary sites would help them. Several DeJean teachers pointed out that the students they receive in 7th grade are often working several grade levels below that and need intensive interventions to catch up academically.

The only elementary school with better test scores, Phillips said, was [Wilson Elementary](#). He said he knew parents there wanted the K-8 option, so he would support it at that site. He also said he would like to see a school of the arts in the district, but it’s too early to move in that direction without more analysis of the district’s options.

All three other board members also lambasted Duffy for his attempt to rush this decision through. Board president Stephanie Hernandez-Jarvis said she felt “blindsided” by the

proposal, which she called “half-baked.”

Duffy defended himself, saying the board and community often call for bold changes, but he’s not sure they are really committed to making them. Board members said they’re not against changes, but they need to be thoughtfully considered and well-communicated to allow for wide community input.

Board member Consuelo Lara said she was “shocked” to see this presented as a foregone conclusion. However, she said she didn’t necessarily think it was a bad idea and asked Duffy to present more information at a study session in the future.

“Sounds good,” Duffy said.

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