

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

**Friday Memo**  
**September 4, 2020**

**Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy**

- September 7: Labor Day Holiday, Schools & Offices Closed
- September 9: Regular Board Meeting, 6:30 PM
- September 14: Agenda Setting, 4:30 PM
- September 14: CAC, 5:30 PM
- September 15: Governance Committee, 5:30 PM
- September 15: AASAT Meeting, 6:00 PM
- September 23: Regular Board Meeting, 6:30 PM
- September 30: Board/CBOC Joint Meeting, 5:00 PM

**Next Week’s Board Meeting September 9 - Matthew Duffy**

Closed Session will begin at 5:00 PM.

**Career and Technical Education Curriculum and Industry Partnerships - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team) jointly with (Gabriel Chilcott & team)**

Throughout the district, we offer 11 courses at high schools and 2 courses at the middle schools that utilize the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum. These courses will serve approximately 1200 students this year. PLTW curriculum focuses on hands-on, applied learning experiences and is designed to “empower students to imagine and design solutions to real-world challenges.” WCCUSD is able to offer this curriculum via a partnership with Chevron, which provides financial support for the curriculum, course materials, and teacher training. WCCUSD instructors leading courses utilizing this curriculum have engaged in a series of professional development activities provided by PLTW this Fall designed to support them to shift learning activities to a completely cloud-based remote learning environment.

**HIGH School Courses (# sections)**

<b><u>Engineering</u></b>	<b><u>Computer Science</u></b>	<b><u>Biomedical Science</u></b>
Principles of Engineering RHS (7), PVHS (4)	Computer Science Software Engineering RHS (3)	Medical Interventions PVHS (1)
Introduction to Engineering Design RHS (3), PVHS (4)	Cybersecurity HHS (1)	Human Body Systems PVHS (1)
Computer Integrated Manufacturing RHS (3), PVHS (1)	AP Computer Sci Principles HHS (1)	Principles of Biomedical Sciences PVHS (2)
Civil Engineering & Architecture PVHS (1)		

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<u>MIDDLE School Courses</u>	<u>ELEMENTARY School Courses</u>
Gateway to Technology 1 DeJean (4) Helms (3) Korematsu (1)	Launch Grade 4 Tara Hills - 1 teacher
Gateway to Technology 2 DeJean (1)	Launch Grade 5 Tara Hills - 1 teacher

**Professional Development for Counselors - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)**

The Department of College and Career is providing training to site-based counseling staff on the Federal Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) and its implications for our digital learning environment. FERPA is the federal privacy law that applies to agencies and institutions and applicable programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The training is intended to provide information on common questions about FERPA under current circumstances, best practices around privacy and security, as well as other resources.

**Research Partnerships - Rubén Aurelio (Sarah Breed & Alison Makela)**

In partnership with Mills Teacher Scholars, we held our first convening with TK-12 principals on Tuesday, September 1st. Site leaders participated in public learning and were introduced to the Mills Teacher Scholars theory of action and public learning protocol. The focus is on Creating Conditions for Adult Learning in Service of Equity. The [Agenda](#) and [Learning Conversation Protocol](#) are here.

District leaders were supported by Lynda Tredway and Graduate faculty from Eastern Carolina University this week to map current WCCUSD Leadership and Learning structures, processes, and approaches to design a cohesive system of leadership development. This work is part of Eastern Carolina University’s i4 project which aims to exponentially improve student access, engagement and outcomes by ensuring equity-driven classrooms that demonstrate rigorous academic discourse, culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy, universal design for learning, and inquiry teaching and learning. We are exploring how we will partner with ECU to support our Leading and Learning initiatives through an anti-racist, equity driven lens.

**Learner-Centered Design Community of Practice (LCD CoP)- Rubén Aurelio (Sarah Breed & Alison Makela)**

We continue to hold 1:1 listening sessions with all recipients of Hewlett Foundation Learner- Centered Design Grants to gather input to shape the LCD Community of Practice. The initial session of the LCD CoP will be held in October. The goal of the LCD CoP is to support our site teams with designing learner-centered schools, observing and learning from innovative schools and systems, implementing Deeper Learning competencies, and collaborating to address and interrupt beliefs, practices, and structures that lead to inequitable outcomes. An overview of the Hewlett Foundation’s most recent [research on Deeper Learning pedagogy](#) is here.

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**African American Student Achievement - Rubén Aurelio (William McGee & team)**

Parent Engagement/Empowerment:

1. We are planning to have a parent engagement/empowerment zoom meeting with a special guest speaker on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. This will be our opportunity to introduce the OAASA to the community, and to set the stage for the site AAPAC and the district level AASAT. Finalization of the plans are occurring now, and once the details from the WCCUSD are confirmed, I will share the details. If you're able to attend, please inform me.
2. Please save the date of November 13 and 14. We are planning professional development weekend workshops for the staff and community via zoom. The tentative times are Friday, November 13 starting at 11:45 am, ending at 6:00 pm, and Saturday, November 14 starting at 8:30 am. Topics will be parent engagement, race and education, and how to support children in education.

**Special Education - Kristen Hardy**

The entire special education department has put in Herculean efforts to get school up and running for our students with disabilities. Last spring there was little guidance from the federal government, state, and county around what special education services could and should look like for students with Individual Education Plans, and the guidance that did come out was often unclear or contradictory. This resulted in additional barriers to implementing the cohesive and high quality services to students that WCCUSD Special Education provides to students with disabilities during in-person instruction. As we move into the 2020-21 school year, the state and CDE have provided some more actionable guidance through two education finance bills published during spring / summer 2020: Senate Bill 98 and Assembly Bill 77 that the department is implementing to improve services to students and families:

Requirements under SB98 and AB77	How WCCUSD is complying with requirement
Students must have access to instruction	Distributing chromebooks and hotspots - including our preschool students Tracking attendance and engaging in outreach to students and families of students who are not attending or engaged
In person daily contact with certificated staff and peers	Advisory / Homeroom / Circle Time daily and synchronous group instruction being regularly provided through both special and general education
Parents need to be informed how Individual Education Plan services will be provided during Distance Learning and the Distance Learning Plan needs to be reviewed at each IEP	An Individual Student Learning Plan has been developed for every student with an IEP by their special education team which provides a narrative description of how each service in the IEP will be delivered during Distance Learning. This document will be reviewed at each IEP. If parents have questions or concerns about the Individual Student Learning Plan, they may request an IEP,

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	<p>in addition to the required annual and three year meetings.          Virtual family workshops, support groups, and professional development will be available on how to support students with disabilities during distance learning</p>
<p>Instruction should mirror and maximize access to general ed</p>	<p>Daily school schedules allow flexibility for Resource Specialists and Designated Support providers to schedule routine sessions with students at times that minimize pulling students with IEPs from core instruction.          Paraprofessionals have received Chromebooks and are engaging in on-going professional development in best practices to support instruction during Distance Learning</p>
<p>Services in the Individual Student Learning Plan must be designed to support progress on goals and be provided as close as practical to the IEP</p>	<p>Designated Support Providers (speech therapists, school psychologists, occupational therapists, etc.) have received professional development in best practices to provide services through telehealth during Distance Learning.          Special Education teachers and service providers will be collecting data and reporting progress on goals, as often as report cards go home and at each IEP</p>

The first three weeks:

**Services:** Special education teachers and service providers have been contacting parents to introduce themselves, and schedule and begin providing services. They are developing the Individual Student Learning Plans and sending them home this week via email to parents in their primary language. IEPs are being scheduled and held, prioritizing legal timelines.

Assessment: School psychologists and speech and language therapists are actively researching and moving forward to conduct initial and triennial evaluations in ways that are safe, valid, and reliable. This is very challenging under the current conditions, and as with most bay area school districts, WCCUSD has not moved forward to conduct in-person testing at this time.

Child Find: Sites are convening Student-Centered Planning Team Meetings (SST, COST, CARE) to respond to parent requests for assessment, and where indicated, assessments are being recommended and initiated.

Parent Education: The division is responding to requests from CAC to design targeted parent education (student age group, disability type, learning needs) to support parents of students with disabilities to

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understand services during Distance Learning and learn specific skills to support their children. The virtual environment is expanding the opportunities for involvement of more families.

Enrollment: Overall, special education enrollment district-wide is very close to last year at this time, and most programs are at or near capacity.

Staffing: The division had a few leaves of absence or resignations due to COVID, but we have been able to directly hire or contract for all positions. We are in the process of on-boarding our last few specialists and teachers in order to be fully staffed.

Bright spots of practice:

Email from a Speech Therapist: “While doing speech-language therapy through a screen with preschoolers who have autism has many challenges, I love the increased involvement of parents and caregivers that I am seeing as a result. The parents sit with their children as I work with them and they see the strategies that I use to help increase their communication. The parents get to help prompt the children to participate and they are getting to see their children do things that they weren't able to do before. I look forward to having more family coaching sessions where I can give input about how to engineer the home environment to support communication and I'm expecting to see more progress than I would during the normal school year as a result of that.”

**Nutrition Services Update - Tony Wold (Barbara Jellison)**

This week, on Monday August 31, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue brought a huge relief to our district's school meal program and the communities we serve. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has extended several flexibilities through as late as December 31, 2020. These flexibilities will allow WCCUSD Food Services to continue its summer meal program. **This will allow us to continue serving free meals to all children under the age of 18 for our entire community!**

The change in demand was instant. On Tuesday September 1<sup>st</sup> Food services **saw almost a 300% increase of meals served over the two previous weeks since school started on August 17.** Our community needs the consistent provision of healthy meals for students, and since the beginning of the Pandemic in March our dedicated Nutrition Services employees have served over 3 million meals. The Nutrition Services staff have worked non-stop since March 13<sup>th</sup> to ensure that our community has a place to go to get a nutritious meal. If you have the opportunity to visit one of our food distribution sites on Tuesday or Thursday, please go out of your way to thank our employees who have worked non-stop to ensure our families have meals.

Our distribution plan for meals includes: Breakfast, lunch, supper and snacks are available for pickup from 8 am to 1 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the following schools: De Anza, El Cerrito, Kennedy, Pinole Valley and Richmond high schools, Dejean, Helms, Hercules and Pinole middle schools, and Bayview, Nystrom and Riverside elementary schools, and Montalvin Manor, Peres and Verde K-8 schools.

The flexibility for the USDA expires right after the Christmas break. This makes it ESSENTIAL that every family complete a meal application, even if they think they may not be eligible to ensure that we

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can continue to provide healthy meals to students, no matter what the Federal government does. Moving forward, we are beginning to also investigate the possibility of partnering with First Student (or Transportation company) to begin bringing meals to very densely populated areas of our District. We will update the Board should this become possible.

**Athletics and Facility use Update - Tony Wold (Tashaka Merriweather)**

We have continued to maintain protocols throughout our phased approach to opening of schools. Although we have been in phase 1 for a consistent time frame and during this time, Contra Costa County has loosened some restrictions. The State then implemented a color coded system that has created more confusion. This has prompted several inquiries as to when we will loosen our restrictions in WCCUSD, when will we make our facilities open and accessible, or when does the district plan to move to the next Phase of opening.

For WCCUSD, we have adopted our Phase 2 criteria. The conditions of the MOU require that certain conditions must be met to move to the next phase for opening. Our facilities will continue to remain closed to the public until the conditions set by the board and bargaining units are met. This will allow us to keep students and staff and slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. While we will continue to attempt to pilot conditioning for Athletes under the CIF guidelines, the District is not able to allow outside groups that it does not have supervision authority over, to utilize school facilities due to the possibility of liability. We understand that our facilities are a beacon to our community, but based upon the current impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the potential for increased liability, and the focus of the safety of our students and community the District's facilities shall remain closed to the public until further notice.

**Budget Update - Tony Wold**

Last week we talked about the utilization of CARES act and the potential structural deficit. As of this writing the District is still in progress of closing the books. At the suggestion of Trustee Panas, the District worked with the County Office of Education who has supported the **District to present the unaudited actuals to the Board at the September 23 board meeting.** Several other districts, including Mt. Diablo is also delaying the presentation of audited actuals due to the delays for the State to provide guidance on CARES Act.

The CARES Act funds will be officially received and recognized in the 2020 - 2021 budget, however, these funds were to be utilized by law beginning March 13, 2020. The result of this is that, from an accounting standpoint, the ending fund balance in Fund 01 restricted programs will contain negative carryover.

In simple terms what this means is that at the end of the year (June 30, 2020) the ending fund balance for the restricted side of Fund 01 was (for this example) \$5,000. However, the components of the ending balance included \$15,000 when listed, which does not correspond to the fund balance reported in the form. From a mathematical point of view this would mean that the CARES Act was utilized for \$10,000 of expense and at the Resource level there is a negative \$10,000 entry within the books that will carry into the next fiscal year.

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In the scenario above, the CARES Act funds were credited as revenue in the next fiscal year but there is no expense within the budget to address the \$10,000 in expense from the previous year. The proper fund balance of \$15,000 though becomes restored, even though the beginning balance is stated as \$5000. This will take multiple times to explain how the accounting of this works, and we will attempt to do so in the most transparent manner, but we felt it was imperative that prior to any budget reporting we began this explanation to maintain transparency in the challenges of this.

The positive outcome of receiving CARES Act funds is that the District was able to continue to provide programs, staff, and services that would otherwise have been required to be cut. Less than 365 days ago, we presented the unaudited actuals from the 2018 - 2019 school year. On September 14, 2019 WCCUSD had a \$39.9 million structural deficit that was immediate. We explained then that the strategy would be to balance cuts, funding shifts, advocacy, reserves, and investments to get to our goal. We also explained that this would require several years of focused, and disciplined action and that we had to learn from the past and not take on new ongoing expenses while we collectively worked to stabilize the budget. On September 23, 2020 we will present the updated budget and our strategy to continue to move forward toward fiscal stability. We will still have work to do, but WCCUSD will be able to serve our students effectively this year because we have been able to utilize the CARES Act funding to sustain services that would have been lost due to the States inability to adequately fund K-12 education. We will provide a full accounting of our status on the 23rd, but we remain confident that we will be able to provide a quality program for our students due to our efforts and utilization of one-time CARES act funds will allow us to make the remaining cuts that are required over a multi-year time period.

**Charter School Oversight - Tony Wold (Denise Cifelli)**

In July, the oversight of District Charter schools moved to the District Operations Division under Dr. Wold. We were pleased to have Denise Cifelli take on the task of coordination of all Charter work. As part of her outreach, we created an outreach effort to jointly meet together with the Charters authorized by WCCUSD. In addition, to try to maintain relations, we have included, on a voluntary basis, all other Charter schools that operate within our district boundaries. These meetings allow us to provide guidance to the charter schools, calibrate their efforts, and share pedagogy. This is not a political space, but designed to create an environment where information is shared. The oversight and evaluation components of our work are completely separated from this goal.

We are continuing our outreach program and meeting regularly on a monthly basis. Current charters under WCCUSD district oversight are: Amethod (Benito Juarez Elementary & Richmond Charter Academy), Aspire (Richmond California College Prep & Richmond Technology Academy), Leadership, Richmond College Prep (RCP), Summit K2 and Voices, with RCP the only charter remaining in our SELPA. Effective this fiscal year Manzanita moved to County oversight and John Henry High to State oversight. We have updated the annual calendar of submissions to include the COVID-19 Written Operations Report, Learning Continuity and Attendance Plans and Reopening Plans, all of which are reviewed by our department prior to submitting to the County Office. Currently everyone is working to close out the 2019-20 school year with Unaudited Actuals being due to us for review by September 10.

As was stated in the August 21 Friday Memo, there could be significant penalties for districts not properly monitoring attendance. We have shared our attendance tracking sheet with all the charters and asked that

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they provide daily attendance numbers, by grade, for these first few weeks of school. This will be beneficial to all of us as we work to identify “no show” students.

Lastly, Summit K2 will be up for renewal June 30, 2021. They have already notified us they are in the process of developing their renewal package which we should receive sometime this month. Once the complete renewal is received we will provide the timeline to the Board for their presentation and hearing dates based on the Board’s meeting schedule

**Richmond High School Health Clinic - Luis Freese**

At the Board meeting on September 9, 2020, Staff is recommending that the Board increase the Fund 40 Special Reserve for Capital Outlay budget for the Richmond High School (RHS) Health Clinic Project (Project) and approve an amendment to Lathrop Construction for the site work and installation of the Health Clinic.

During the design review process for the RHS Seismic Retrofit of the Science Classroom Building, the Division of the State Architect (DSA) required the certification of the existing fifty-year-old Health Center. Based on DSA’s requirement, Staff determined the best option would be to demolish the existing Health Clinic and install two new DSA approved modular buildings. The new Health Clinic will be installed closer to the parking lot entry on 23<sup>rd</sup> street, where the demolished auto shop building was previously located. The on-site construction scope of work includes site paving demolition, site grading, and preparation, new and upgraded civil utilities including power, concrete curbs, and asphalt paving, new fencing, striping, signage, and ramps.

Staff is requesting that the Board approve an increase to the Project budget and approve an amendment to Lathrop Construction in the amount of six hundred thousand dollars utilizing the Special Reserve for Capital Outlay Fund. This recommendation was reviewed at the Facilities Committee meeting on August 27, 2020.