

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
January 27, 2023

Upcoming Events – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D

January 28: EdFair, 10:00am at DeJean Middle School

January 31: Board of Education Retreat, 9:00am-3:00pm, 855 Marina Bay Pkwy, Richmond

February 1: First Day of Black History Month

Next Board of Education Meeting February 1, 2023– Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D.

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment STEM/Library Services- LaResha Huffman
(Gabriel Chilcott & team)

Library Services (Francie Kunaniec & team)

Teacher Librarian Corinna Carlile once again facilitated Pinole Valley's annual Poetry Out Loud event on January 24th. Fourteen students culminated weeks of preparation by reciting their selections on the school theater stage. The audience was composed of classmates, family members, and friends. Students were judged by PVHS counselors and district staff.



Corinna is pictured below with the top three contestants, who move to the next level of competition.

(L - R) 3rd place - Gage Eda (*War Widow* by Chris Abani), 2nd place - Victoria Costa (*A Song in The Front Yard* by Gwendolyn Brooks), and 1st place - Harper Illes (*I felt a Funeral in my Brain* by Emily Dickinson)



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Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment - Early Learning/TK-12
Literacy/Humanities/OAASA- LaResha Huffman (Elizabeth Henry & team)

The WCCUSD Literacy Department is continuing our focus of learning walks in the identified focal (Mission Critical) schools. The team visited DeJean, Nystrom and Lincoln and partnered with the school teams to identify areas of celebration and areas of needed support.



The WCCUSD Literacy Department recently facilitated a SIPPS training for School Leaders. Principal Read and Principal Allardice shared resources and tips on how to get started with schoolwide implementation and leaders had time to collaborate with their peers and plan next steps.

College & Career - LaResha Huffman (Allison Huie & team)

Welcome New Student School Board Trustees

The College and Career Department wishes a hearty welcome to our newly appointed student Trustees. Both new trustees have previously participated in or are currently a member of one of our high school College & Career Pathways in the Public Service Sector.

CSU System Won't Increase Quantitative Reasoning Admissions Requirement

On Wednesday, January 25, the CSU Board of Trustees voted to take formal action to officially abandon the proposed quantitative reasoning requirement that sparked widespread concern when initially offered for consideration in 2019. Under that proposal, the CSU system proposed altering their current admissions requirements to include a fourth year of quantitative reasoning class work instead of the editing requirement of three years, to take effect in 2026.

Across the state, many school boards, administrators, and student advocacy groups, including state, business, civil rights, and community organizations took issue with the proposal, claiming that the added requirement would create an access barrier for rural, low-income, Black, and Latinx students, effectively exacerbating existing inequities in access to higher education. In a [report](#) commissioned by the Campaign for College Opportunity, opponents of the increased admissions requirement charged that the additional requirement would result in a reduction of:

- Overall eligibility of high school graduates from 41% to 34%
- Eligibility of Black students from 31% to 24%
- Eligibility of Latinx students from 32% to 26%
- Eligibility of students in growing regions such as the Central Valley from 34% to 27%

In response, scores of parents, hundreds of students, and several key stakeholders, including Superintendent Tony Thurmond and Lt. Governor Eleni Kounalakis, wrote opinion articles, attended public comment sessions, and otherwise advocated to stop the proposal.

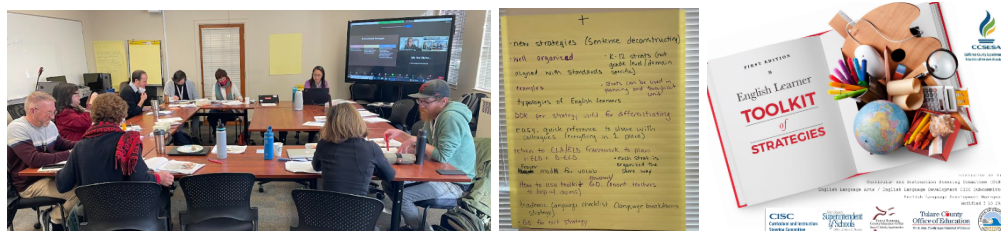
After years of debate, including independent analysis and several proposed Assembly Bills, the CSU Board of Trustees announced today that they will not move forward with this proposed increase to admissions requirements in Quantitative Reasoning.

English Learner Achievement - LaResha Huffman (Esaul Orozco & team)

We are excited to collaborate with school site administrators and coaches on next year's PD expansion using the EL Toolkit for Literacy Achievement. [English Learner Toolkit of Strategies \(ELTS\)](#). We are also honored to have Toolkit co-author Lynn Friedman and our county English Learner Specialist join in our development process. Thank you principals and site coaching for joining in this work.

Last week we also had 26 new teachers participate in Ellevation professional development focused on high leverage strategies for English Learner Achievement.

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Family & Community Engagement - LaResha Huffman (Martine Blake & team)



WCCUSD's Office of Family & Community Engagement, Peres Elementary principal and School Community Outreach Worker (SCOW), four (4) parents and two (2) students, joined district's across the state at California's [Community Engagement Initiative](#) (CEI) Conference in Ontario, Ca. Our experience allowed us to collectively learn more about the impact of quality engagement and share a vision of how WCCUSD can and should deepen our work around building intentional relationships with students, families and community.

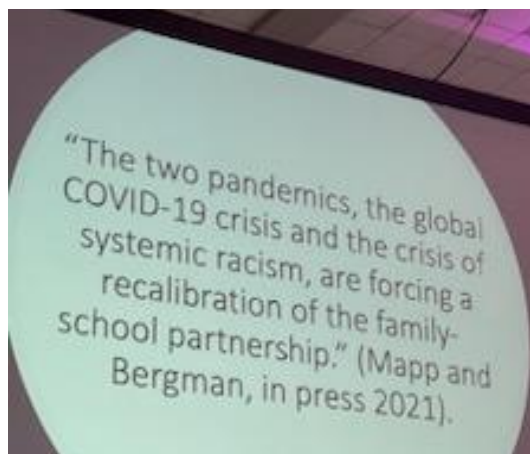
One shared belief that resonated with each of us is from Dr. Karen Mapp's keynote address, "Family (and Student) Engagement is not a goal, it's a strategy." A strategy that must be integrated into planning and throughout implementation of key system priorities. Dr. Mapp shared that when districts begin to see engagement as a core practice (as opposed to an add-on) and embrace the family-school partnership as an indispensable component of student success and school improvement, student outcomes begin to improve, including reduced suspensions and high-risk behaviors, and increased high school graduation rates.

Staff, students and parents left the conference feeling most deeply that WCCUSD must establish a deeper, authentic, and sustained culture of trust and relationship building that should stand at the cornerstone of everything we do. This culture must be embedded into the system in a way that defines the way we do school, and must extend from staff to staff relationships, teacher to student relationships and school to family relationships. As Dr. Karen Mapp, shared - "Relationships are the anecdote to ensure that we can achieve our priorities.

We look forward to continuing to work with our CEI cohort and community to deepen our engagement with students, parents and community.



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Expanded Learning - Kasey Blackburn-Jiron

The Expanded Learning Office launched its Building Intentional Communities (BIC) Community of Practice to support after school partners with the implementation of the adopted [Building Intentional Communities SEL curriculum](#). We had 80 after school staff spanning all of our 32 school based after school programs. Also launching last week was the Restorative Justice (RJ) Community of Practice which is supporting after school partners from 17 after school sites with building the capacity of youth to lead Tier 1 circles.

The Expanded Learning Office will have staff present for this Saturday's Education Fair. Families will be able to access information about the District's 32 school based after school programs as well as learn about the various speciality enrichment programs and offerings.

Positive School Climate & OAASA- LaResha Huffman (LaShante Smith)

The Office of School Climate began a series of climate walkthroughs this week, using the Tiered Fidelity Inventory. Each WCCUSD school will receive a visit, followed by climate recommendations based on the walkthrough.

Secondary teachers had the opportunity to participate in a session focused on trauma, the impact on the brain, and de-escalation strategies. This is a repeat of the same session that was provided to elementary teachers in December.

Schools are currently screening students using the mental health tool, mySAEBRS. The window will be open until just before February break. The goal is to have 70% of students screened, a 10% increase from the Fall screening.

K-12 Schools: - LaResha Huffman (Keisha Joyner, Koy Hill & Summer Sigler)

Monthly AP/VP Meetings

On the 19th of January, we met at the Richmond High school Library for Title IX Training and Master Schedule collaboration. Pictured are De Anza High School and Betty Reid Soskin Middle feeder pattern counselors and administrators collaborating regarding master schedules and using resources provided by the College & Career Department.



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Special Education Department Updates - Sonja Neely-Johnson, SELPA

WCCUSD's 5th Annual Special Olympic Basketball Tournament February 8, 2023 - 9-12 @ ECHS - See schedule of the day at this link - [SONC BASKETBALL SCHEDULE 2.8.23](#)

2023 Special Education Parent Conference is Back!

Registration is now open for the 2023 Special Education Parent Conference Saturday, February 11, 2023 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Special Education International Teachers are arriving - January 27, 2023

22 international teachers have arrived and were greeted at the Special Education office on Friday, 1/27. They are currently in the process of obtaining social security numbers and all clearances to begin working. We have rescheduled the three-day New-Teacher Institute for February 8-10. The teachers will begin teaching at sites as soon as they are cleared by HR.

Communications Update - Liz Sanders

[West Contra Costa Education Fair to offer a world of resources - Richmond Standard](#)

[West Contra Costa Unified School District](#) (WCCUSD) and [EnrollWCC](#) are coming together to host the West Contra Costa Education Fair for the benefit of local families on Sat., Jan. 28. The fair will take place at Lovonya DeJean Middle School at 3400 Macdonald Ave. from 10 a.m. to noon, according to Natalie Walchuk, executive director of GO Public Schools West Contra Costa.

[Letters: WCCUSD crisis | Federal action | Biogas difference - East Bay Times](#)

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West Contra Costa Unified School District is in crisis. WCCUSD has [130 teaching openings](#). At Kennedy High School, students are doing math and science classes with only their Chromebooks. Superintendent Kenneth Hurst and the WCCUSD School Board must attract more teachers to our district by using the multi millions of dollars [in unprecedented education federal and state funding](#), for raising teacher pay like school districts around us. We are losing teachers to surrounding districts..

[‘I feel like you guys don’t care about our school’: Stege students, staff ask WCCUSD to fix 80-year-old building - Richmond Confidential](#)

That’s what Stege Elementary School fourth graders wrote in letters to the West Contra Costa Unified School District Board last school year. Other students wrote letters, too, citing a variety of problems they wanted to see fixed: broken windows, a lack of air conditioning, chipping paint and no grass on the playground, to name a few.

Contract Update for the 2/1/23 Board Meeting – Robert McEntire-Mary Kitchen & Team

Contracts Summary - Business Services

The following contracts are on the February 1st Board Meeting Agenda for Board approval.

[Link to Contract Summary](#)

[Link to Contract Backup](#)

CA Public Employees Retirement System Projected to Increase- Robert McEntire, Ed.D.

CalPERS rate is projected to increase by 1.80 % in 2023-24 and 3.50% in 2024-25.

CalPERS Rates Projected to Increase



BY CHARLENE QUILAO

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The California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) revised its projected out-year employer contribution rates as of June 30, 2021, and has again adjusted its estimates for future employer contribution rates with increases beginning in 2023-24 as follows:

Year	Prior Adopted Rates per CalPERS	New Projected Rates per CalPERS Actuarial Report ¹
2022-23	25.37%	25.37%
2023-24	25.20%	27.00%
2024-25	24.60%	28.10%
2025-26	23.70%	28.80%
2026-27	22.60%	29.20%
2027-28	22.60%	30.70%