

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
October 13, 2023

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

October 16: CBOC Meeting, 6-8pm, 1400 Marina Way S, Richmond

Next Board of Education Meeting October 25, 2023 – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D.

Educational Services - Sonja Neely-Johnson

College & Career - Sonja Neely-Johnson (Dr. Allison Huie & Team)

WCCUSD Counselors Attend CSU Conference



WCCUSD Counselors were able to attend the annual California State University Counselor Conference in order to connect with representatives from the 23 universities and learn about admission and financial aid updates as well as the new Transfer Success Pathway and Transfer Planner.

PSAT Saturday October 14, 2023

85 Juniors from WCCUSD high schools are signed up to take the PSAT/NMSQT exam this Saturday, hosted at El Cerrito High School.

DeAnza Law Academy Hosts Voter Registration Day

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Students participating in DeAnza High School's Law Academy CTE Pathway worked alongside professionals and other volunteers to host a voter registration day at school. Every eligible Senior got the opportunity to register or pre-register.



Special Education - Sonja Neely-Johnson (Guthrie Fleischman & Team)

SPED 101 - Training Offered by Scott Booth (School Psychologist) and Alcid DelaCruz (Program Specialist)

On October 9, this training was offered by the two above named educators and attended by over 130 classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, psychologists, clerical staff, speech language pathologists, site administrators, and other educators with a 97% positive response rate. Plans for SPED 102 are already in the works. A great example of educators within our system taking initiative and building at the grassroots level.

Business Services - Kim Moses (Margarita Romo, Charter School Oversight)

Business Services wants your attention on a noteworthy development that has transpired as a result of Senate Bill 114, which came into effect in July 2023. This legislation has far-reaching implications for charter schools within our district, particularly those whose current terms expire between January 1, 2024, and June 30, 2027.

Senate Bill 114 mandates a one-year extension of the existing terms for charter schools falling within this specified timeframe. In light of this, we would like to provide you with a list of WCCUSD approved charter schools and their revised term dates, all in accordance with the provisions of the Senate bill.

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Two schools of significant importance, Amethod Richmond Charter Academy and Leadership Public Schools - Richmond, are slated to see their current terms expire at the culmination of the 2025 school year. To ensure comprehensive oversight and adherence to the new legislative requirements, we will schedule site visits to these institutions for the upcoming fall of 2024.

We recognize the significance of these changes and are committed to upholding the highest standards of educational governance within our district.

	Charter School	New Term with SB 114 Extension
1	Amethod Richmond Charter Elementary-Benito Juarez	2019-2027
2	Amethod Richmond Charter Academy	2017-2025
3	Aspire Richmond California College Prep Academy	2020-2028
4	Aspire Richmond Technology Academy	2020-2028
5	Leadership Public Schools, Inc.	2017-2025
6	Richmond College Prep Schools	2020-2028
7	Summit Public Schools - Tamalpais	2021-2027
8	Voices College Bound Language Academies	2018-2026
CDE Charter School Directory Link		

Communications Update - Liz Sanders

News of the Week:

[WCCUSD partners with firm to help more students access mental health counseling](#)

Nearly 40% of 11th graders in the West Contra Costa Unified School District have reported “chronic sadness,” according to a recent California Healthy Kids Survey.

The survey says chronic sadness has been on the rise in the county and the state, across grade levels, since 2017.

“This is definitely shocking,” said LaShante Smith, the district’s director of positive school climate, after presenting the survey results at the Sept. 6 school board meeting.

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Smith said the district is hoping to turn the tide and address untreated mental health conditions through a new partnership with [Care Solace](#), which helps school staff, students and their families find available mental health care providers.

[WCCUSD College & Career Night set for Richmond High](#)

Are you a middle or high school student thinking about your future? The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) can help: It's hosting the annual EAOP/DCAC West Contra Costa County College & Career Night Thurs., Oct. 12 from 5-7 p.m. at Richmond High School.

That night, students and their families can connect with over 70 college/CTE representatives and career partners looking to share admissions info, scholarship opportunities, career benefits and more, per the district.

Community members interested in participating should [RSVP](#) for the event here.

[The Practice Space Receives Funding to provide Curriculum and Coaching to serve English Learners](#)

Richmond-based nonprofit The Practice Space announced today it will join a distinguished national cohort of innovators developing breakthrough learning solutions to improve equity in education, funded by NewSchools Venture Fund. This collaboration will make it possible for The Practice Space to launch and expand a full-year, project-based, speech and debate curriculum and teacher coaching services to support English Learners in high schools.

Zach Porter, a Kennedy High School teacher who piloted the program, notes, "The project-based approach helped my students go from whispering at desk level to wanting to make their podcasts public. The authenticity really helped student engagement."

Mary Ann Lafosse, an administrator from West Contra Costa Unified School District, a long-time partner of The Practice Space, says, "Who is speaking and who is silent in classrooms? Public speaking provides an inclusive space to build equity and joy for all students, particularly those who are underheard. The Practice Space is uniquely equipped to help students at any school thrive and achieve."

Legislative Updates:

[Newsom signs bill to combat cyberattacks against K-12 schools](#)

Introduced by Assemblymember Diane Papan, D-San Mateo, [Assembly Bill 1023](#) passed the state senate unanimously last month. The bill will expand CAL-SIC assistance to K-12 schools. CAL-SIC is a state cybersecurity agency that has already worked with higher education systems such as the University of California.

California to prohibit ‘willful defiance’ suspensions in schools

California Governor Gavin Newsom has [signed](#) a bill that eliminates the practice of suspending students for “willful defiance.” According to the press release, the bill was designed to keep kids in school by prohibiting the suspension of students for low-level behavior issues known as “willful defiance” in California’s public schools, grades TK through 12. Under the bill, teachers would have the authority to exclude a student from a particular class due to disruptive conduct without resorting to a school suspension. Instead, the responsibility would lie with school administrators to assess and implement suitable in-school interventions or support for the student promptly.