

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
October 6, 2023

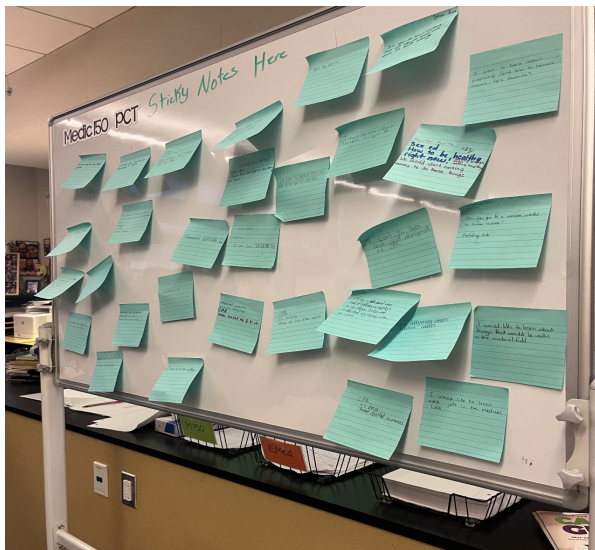
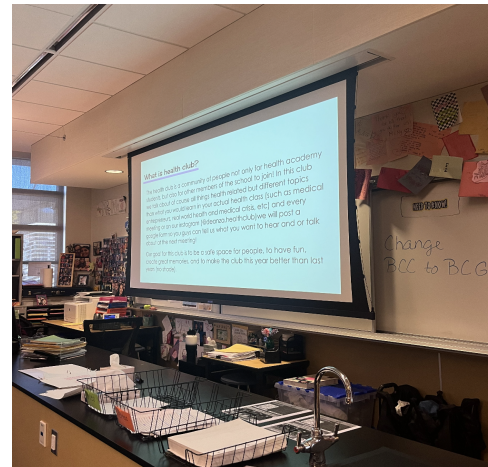
Upcoming Events – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D
October 9: Indigenous Peoples' Day - No School

Next Board of Education Meeting October 11, 2023 – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D.

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

Standing Room Only at De Anza's 1st Health Club Meeting of the Year!

The De Anza Health Academy Health Club had over 50 students show up to the 1st meeting of the completely **student-run** health club during lunch!



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Radio at El Cerrito HS

El Cerrito High seniors Sylvie “DJ Thumb” Diego and Porter “P-Dubb” Woodruff create content on radio station KECG’s daily music show for Media Pathway students. Students complete “listening logs” and have the opportunity to review and evaluate the program. For example, they can identify components such as mic breaks, station identification, and student-produced Public Service Announcements “PSAs.”



Bay Area College Tour Deadline This Week

The Black Recruitment and Retention Center (BRRC) at UC Berkeley sponsors an annual Bay Area College Tour. BACT is an in-person program designed for first-generation, low-income sophomores and juniors in high school to tour the different educational institutions available to them in the Northern California Region. During BACT, students will visit: UC Berkeley, Stanford University, San Jose State University, and CSU East Bay. Students will get a thorough look at the process of college applications, admissions, financial aid, and preparation as well as learn more about the social and academic life of Black students at the featured campuses. **BRRC is prioritizing applicants who identify as Black/African-American and strongly encourages them to apply. BRRC is excited to announce that the deadline to apply to our 2023 Bay Area College Tour (BACT) has been extended to October 9th at 5:00 PM!**

BACT lasts from Thursday, November 2nd to Sunday, November 5th. Interested students can apply at tinyurl.com/BACT2023. Additionally, we will be hosting an Info session to answer questions that you have about the program and the application. The Info session will be on

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Thursday, October 5th from 7:00 to 8:00 PM on Zoom. The link to join is tinyurl.com/BACTINFOSESSION. WCCUSD College and Counselors are supporting students to register.

College Week at ECHS

ECHS College Carnival is taking place this week! The College Carnival includes games for students to play and potentially win AirPods, speakers, and more! The Gaucho College & Career Center Staff are also hosting college rep visits and application walkthroughs for the UCs, CSUs, community colleges, and private/out-of-state schools.



ECHS COLLEGE WEEK

Oct. 2nd MONDAY
College Carnival
Lunch Quad
Play games for the chance to win **AirPods, speakers, and more!**

Oct. 3rd TUESDAY
UC Davis Rep Visit
11:00am Library
UC App Walkthrough
2:00pm Library

Oct. 4th WEDNESDAY
CSU App Walkthrough
1:15pm Library

Oct. 5th THURSDAY
Contra Costa College Rep Visit
12:20pm Library

Oct. 6th FRIDAY
U of Colorado Rep Visit
9:20am College & Career Center
Common App Walkthrough
10:40am Library
Washington U Rep Visit
2:30pm College & Career Center

You MUST RSVP for the Walkthrough and College Rep Visits!!



Positive School Climate/Student Recruitment & Retention - Sonja Neely-Johnson (LaShante Smith & Team)

Start With Hello Week

Next week, October 10-13, we will observe Start With Hello Week in conjunction with World Mental Health Day (Oct 10). Start With Hello was put together by the Sandy Hook Promise as a way to draw students into their school communities, reducing social isolation and increasing the kindness shown on school campuses. Reducing social isolation has been shown to decrease the incidence of school violence. In addition to making school campuses feel safer, we hope to use this week as a way to improve students' and families' feelings of connectedness to their school

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communities, which also supports school attendance! Want to see sample lessons and information... click here → [Start With Hello](#)



Communications Update - Liz Sanders

News of the Week:

[Diverse 'Night Market' fuses cultures, unifies school community](#)

The West County Mandarin School (WCMS)—a West County Unified School District (WCCUSD) Mandarin immersion school in Pinole—celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month and a Mid-Autumn Festival Fri., Sept. 29 while also throwing their community's first Night Market.

The school community events were a fusion of different cultures coming together during the special night. "Students and families [had] the opportunity to be exposed to the beauty of diversity because of the school's values and mission," according to organizers.

Organizers relayed a number of the family-friendly activities people enjoyed Friday night, including mooncake and lantern making—as well as mooncake tasting—playing the game Loteria and taking in a "breath-taking and impressive" performance by Danza Azteca Guadalupana, a local dance troupe.

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[NLP's newest ambassadors bring diverse backgrounds, expertise to their work](#)

NLP's News Literacy Ambassador Program kicks off the school year with its greatest reach and impact yet since its launch in early 2021. The new group of ambassadors includes award-winning journalists, authors and podcasters, and sought-after speakers and experts in their fields.

Merl Corpuz is an education specialist working in the San Francisco Bay area. She has worked in this capacity for the past 15 years. As an education specialist, she teaches core academic classes as well as world language to students with individualized education programs at various schools in the West Contra Costa Unified School District. It is her responsibility to differentiate learning material to the unique needs of each student on her caseload. In addition to core academics, she teaches financial literacy and is a Next Generation Personal Finance Distinguished Educator.

Legislative Updates:

[New California law cuts local school board control over educational content](#)

(The Center Square) California governor Gavin Newsom signed a new bill into law that would significantly reduce the ability of local school boards to shape local curriculums, even within previous state educational guidelines, and stop their removal of any books from school libraries if they “provide inclusive and diverse perspectives,” no matter how questionable the content may be for a library serving a more limited age group.

“Rather than limiting access to education and flat-out banning books like other states, we are embracing and expanding opportunities for knowledge and education, because that’s the California way,” said California State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, who sponsored the bill, in a public statement celebrating the new law. Thurmond recently announced his decision to run to succeed Newsom when he either terms out or potentially runs for higher office.

[Teacher retirement benefits protection bill signed by Gov. Newsom](#)

The governor on Friday signed Senate Bill 432, proposed by Sen. Dave Cortese, D-San Jose, ensuring retired teachers will have legal protection against penalties arising from errors made by the California State Teachers' Retirement System or CalSTRS.

SB 432 ensures that retired teachers will be informed about these errors, and the bill shields their monthly retirement payments from penalties when the mistake is not their fault.