

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
September 15, 2023

Upcoming Events – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D
September 15: Minimum Day - Middle Schools Only

Next Board of Education Meeting September 20, 2023 – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D.

Communications Update - Liz Sanders

[West Contra Costa superintendent seeks to raise reading scores](#)

Turning the tide on years of lagging elementary school reading scores at West Contra Costa Unified has become Superintendent Chris Hurst's "No.1 priority." Hurst, in his third year as the district's superintendent, says he is committed to improving elementary reading test scores by 5% each year, having reached the same goal during the 2022-23 school year. That goal is one of several in the strategic plan Hurst and his Cabinet have been developing to improve outcomes at the school.

[Contra Costa County Board of Education Welcomes First Ever Student Members](#)

The Contra Costa County Board of Education welcomed its first-ever student members at its meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 2023. Sophia Nguyen from El Cerrito High School in the West Contra Costa Unified School District and Daphne Milich from Monte Vista High School in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District were selected by the Board to represent the voices and perspectives of students in Contra Costa County.

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment - Early Learning/TK-12 Literacy/Humanities- Sonja Neely-Johnson (Sonja Bell & Team)

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) 2023-2024

TK expansion continues! All 31 GenEd Transitional Kindergarten teachers have been invited to participate in monthly Community of Practice Meetings in 2023-2024. In communities of practice, small groups of teachers will choose areas of focus related to Transitional Kindergarten instruction. These small groups of TK colleagues will then share their learning and resources with the entire TK teacher community.



Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment STEM- Sonja Neely-Johnson (Dr. Gabriel Chilcott & Team)

Hispanic/Latino STEM Heroes Slide Deck – In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, the WCCUSD Math Department has again shared [these slides](#) of STEM Heroes for teachers across all school sites.

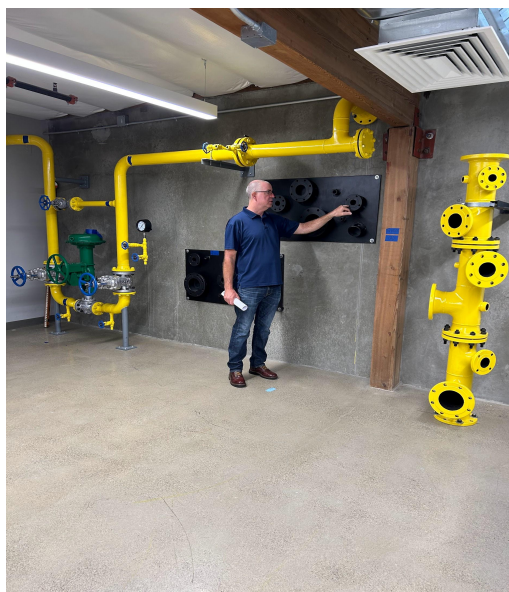
College & Career - Sonja Neely-Johnson (Dr. Allison Huie & Team)

Counselor Trades Tour

This week, WCCUSD School Counselors joined other School Counselors from throughout Contra Costa County for a Trades Tour experience. Counselors had the opportunity to visit and hear from representatives from a variety of Labor groups and to learn about career opportunities for students in different trades. This included:

- UA 342, Concord CA
- IBEW 302, Martinez CA
- Boilermakers 549, Pittsburg CA
- Ironworkers 378, Benicia CA
- Tradeswomen Inc, Oakland CA
- LiUNA NorCal Training Center, San Ramon CA

This important event will help our School Counselors to have the first hand knowledge and information they need to support students who are considering the many different career opportunities available.



CCCOE Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship Kickoff

WCCUSD District Staff and teachers participated in the Contra Costa County Office of Education's Apprenticeship Kickoff event this week to collaborate with County staff, College staff, and employer partners about building pathways to apprenticeship in the field of Early Childhood Education (ECE). In partnership with the Contra Costa County Office of Education, we are offering two sections each of the first course in a Teacher Education Pathway at Hercules High School and Richmond High School.

College and Career Exploration for Elementary Students

In the 23-24 school year, we are launching a new app on Clever that offers in-depth career interest and exploration lessons in addition to activities to support social emotional wellness, all in one place

[SchoolLinks K-5](#) is an educational application that gets our elementary students excited about their futures and builds foundational social emotional growth. SchoolLinks lessons are easily folded into lessons and units teachers are currently teaching and allows students to engage in self discovery and awareness. Students and teachers have access to career building units, student portfolios, as well as student-led SMART goals. The SchoolLinks app is available via Clever to elementary students and teachers.

To support the integration of supplementary college and career learning experiences into elementary students' experiences, we are offering a virtual professional development for teachers in grades 2-5 on Wednesday, September 20.

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

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The Office of Positive School Climate has joined a nationwide effort to celebrate the [Attendance Awareness Campaign](#) in September and has pledged focus on reducing chronic absenteeism in the new school year; our campaign will extend its run, district-wide, through October and our emphasis on attendance will continue throughout the school year.

West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) recognizes that good attendance is essential to academic success, but far too many students are at risk academically because they are chronically absent. When students are chronically absent, the district and schools utilize a care coordination strategy that involves intentionally organizing student and family services at a school site to support a student to overcome barriers to attendance. Simply put, we want all of our students to show up to safe and supportive environments every day!

Schools and central office staff will work collectively to foster a sense of belonging at our school sites so that when students become chronically absent there are existing, meaningful relationships that support students and families. Schools will be closely monitoring attendance data and implementing teams to intervene early when students are at risk of chronic absenteeism. Please see the [Principal Toolkit](#) that has been shared with all administrators.

The Office of Positive School Climate is sharing resources and messages with students, families and community leaders about the importance of engaging with youth during [Attendance Awareness Month](#) and throughout the rest of the year. Join us in committing to attendance!

