

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
September 29, 2023

Upcoming Events – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D
September 29: High Schools Only - Minimum Day

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

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

K-12 Science Curriculum Summary - Science Department (John Iwawaki & Team)

Students and teachers in WCCUSD have access to some of the most modern and up-to-date, [NGSS](#)-aligned curriculum in the Bay Area. New science programs have recently been adopted at each level: Elementary - Twig in 2023, Middle - Amplify in 2020, and High - McGraw Hill/Savvas in 2021. Each program reflects the pedagogical [shifts in NGSS](#), and uses a “phenomena-based” approach encouraging students to develop skills to *figure out* science concepts based on observations, data, and experiences. Each program is highly digital, full of simulations and videos and an online platform, but also includes optional printed materials based on teacher preference. More information and a summary can be found [HERE](#).

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

During the 22-23 school year, teams of teachers and administrators took on the task of revising the elementary report cards. The revised, standards-based report cards will be used in 2023-24. The new report cards feature standards-aligned skills and areas of focus, a section for social-emotional development and lifelong learning skills, along with a narrative section. We thank all stakeholders for their work and input on this project.

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

College and Career Represents at Kermés Festival

The Washington Elementary school Parent Teacher Association hosted a first-ever Kermés festival to celebrate the beginning of Hispanic heritage month and the College and Career Department was very happy to participate.

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The lively event was very well attended and provided us an opportunity to share information about the Career and Technical Education pathways that are available to students in West Contra Costa Unified School District with families and the community. We also spoke with local professionals and even several WCCUSD alumni who are interested in supporting WCCUSD students by serving in one of the many volunteer opportunities available in our CTE programs. If you too might be interested, please [CLICK HERE to support career-based learning experiences in WCCUSD](#).

Annual WCCUSD College and Career Night

This year's College and Career Night is scheduled for Thursday, October 12, 2023 and will be held at Richmond High School from 5-7PM. We have over 40 colleges and universities and 20 business/industry partners who have already confirmed attendance and we are adding to the list every day. Attendees can save time and skip the line by using the [QR code on our flyer](#) to RSVP in advance.

2023-2024 NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete

The 2023-24 NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete is designed to help college bound student athletes to understand the NCAA initial-eligibility process and prepare their students for transitioning from high school to becoming an NCAA student-athlete. With over 1,000 colleges and universities across three divisions, NCAA schools offer a variety of academics and athletics programs to meet the needs of students. When students are ready to work on their dream to become an NCAA student-athlete, reading this guide would be one of the first steps. [Access and download the 2023-24 Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#).

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

The climate coaching team continues to meet with administrators and community school directors at our targeted schools. The team is beginning to understand trends in what schools are identifying as challenges and priorities. As part of the process of introducing coaches to their schools we have also been completing Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) walkthroughs which will help us understand each school's implementation of systems that support student behavior and school climate.

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In addition to introducing climate coaches to their schools, we will also hold the first of four Climate Team meetings. These meetings will introduce school climate teams to processes and protocols that should take place at school climate and safety team meetings. This will be the first of many, and all schools must be trained. We are excited to begin this much needed training and to provide sites with resources that will help align us as a system.

Human Resources - Camille Johnson, Ed.D.

Employee Assistance Program

HR is happy to announce our NEW Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to WCCUSD employees. EAP provides:

- counseling
- financial coaching
- legal counseling and mediation services
- digital support tools for professional care, self-help programs, and more

Multiple options to access:

- download the Optum Assist mobile app
- call **866-248-4096**
- sign in to liveandworkwell.com.

*Register with your HealthSafe ID or enter WCCUSD access code **CCCSIG**.

For additional information, please click on the links below:

[Where to Start](#)

[What's available to me?](#)

[Support with Stress](#)

[Talkspace Online Therapy](#)

[Optum EAP Wallet Card](#)

Classified Professional Development Day

Join us on **October 9, 2023**, at **Pinole Valley High School**, for Classified Professional Development Day. We will offer a wide range of courses and training to all classified personnel. Our goal is to provide classified personnel with the opportunity to learn new skills and improve their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Complimentary breakfast and lunch will be served. Please make sure to use the link below to register for a great day of learning.

[CLASSIFIED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REGISTRATION](#)

Communications Update - Liz Sanders

[Betty Reid Soskin marks 102nd birthday at her namesake school](#)

On the morning of her 102nd birthday, Betty Reid Soskin arrived with family members at her namesake Betty Reid Soskin Middle School to be greeted by a swarm of students, school and district leadership to celebrate her special day. There, she was feted by balloons and more school students, as well as brief speakers including West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) Board of Education Board President Demetrio Gonzalez-Hoy, Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Chris Hurst—who presented Ms. Soskin with beautiful flowers—Diara Reid and other family members.

[Contra Costa County Teachers of the Year.](#)

Alvarico and Gonzalez-Ortega were selected as winners from four finalists that were announced in the spring. The other two finalists were Danya Townsend formerly of Olympic High School (Mount Diablo Unified School District) and Patricia Ogura of Hercules Middle and High Schools (West Contra Costa School District). The finalists were selected from the 21 district teachers of the year who represent 16 school districts, the Contra Costa County Office of Education, and the Contra Costa Community College District.

[WCCUSD Unveils Fingerprinting Party Dates for Volunteer Badges](#)

Are you a parent, legal guardian, or community member who wants to volunteer at a West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) school or event?

If so, first, you need to get fingerprinted and badged at one of the district's upcoming fingerprinting "parties." The WCCUSD is hosting a series of six fingerprinting parties at different district schools in September, October and February. Reportedly, the process takes little time investment, the volunteer badges are free, and the visits are drop-in—meaning, no appointment is necessary.

[114 Contra Costa County Students Named 2024 National Merit Semifinalists](#)

Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Lynn Mackey congratulated 114 high school seniors for being named Semifinalists in the 69th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. The awards were announced last week. Led by 52 students at Dougherty Valley High School in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District, there are 13 Contra Costa County high schools represented on the list of more than 16,000 National Semifinalists. El Cerrito and College Park high schools each had one Semifinalist. These high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,140 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$28 million that will be offered next spring.