

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
August 14, 2020

Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy

August 17: School Starts with Distance Learning
August 18: Elementary School Parent Orientation
August 18: Agenda Setting, 4:30 PM
August 19: Middle School Parent Orientation
August 20: High School Parent Orientation
August 23: Terence Martin Day
August 26: Regular Board Meeting, 6:30 PM
September 1: Agenda Setting, 4:30 PM
September 7: Labor Day Holiday, Schools & Offices Closed

Contracts Update - Tony Wold (Mary Kitchen, David Johnston)

The August 26th board summary has three items for review. Mills College Teacher Scholars will co-design and facilitate an elementary and a secondary leadership learning community in service focusing on equity and deeper learning. Although this program was offered for secondary principals last year it is being expanded to include elementary principals this year. We are benefiting in a 35% reduction in cost due to Mills Teacher Scholars raising some of the money for this service. There is an increase to Renaissance Learning that is adding STAR Mathematics assessment for all elementary and middle schools. This is an addition to the STAR reading that was already approved on August 5th. Also presented is the contract for School Based Reimbursement Partners. This company prepares and submits Medi-Cal claims for payment. In addition to other services, they also perform eligibility checks on students receiving services and follow up on unpaid claims.

PPE Equipment and Supplies - Tony Wold (David Johnston)

The warehouse started delivering on Friday August 7th of Ziploc bags to all school sites for distribution of supplies to students. The warehouse continues the week of August 10th as more bags are received. The warehouse also continues with deliveries of textbooks to sites as they request additional material.

The warehouse successfully delivered PPE supplies on August 6th and 7th to all school sites in preparation of material distribution the week of August 10th.

Math Course Progressions and Detracking - Rubén Aurelio (Gabriel Chilcott & team)

The WCCUSD Math Department has been working the past several years on aligning our current district math practices and policies with recommendations from the California Department of Education, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Mathematical Association of America, the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics¹, and the University of California Board of Admissions². In doing so, it has aligned a math course sequence that does the following:

- Encourages all students to take the CDE-recommended CCSS-M course sequence of Course 1, 2

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and 3 in Grades 6, 7 & 8. This action...

- Ensures that all students experience the added rigor of middle school standards, providing an opportunity to strengthen the deep conceptual understanding needed for high school coursework.³
 - Reduces the effects of tracking which has been repeatedly found to be harmful to students enrolled in “lower” tracks and to provide no significant advantages for higher-tracked students.⁴
 - Helps create more equitable teaching practices and learning opportunities for all students.
 - Builds and reinforces positive math mindsets and student self-image.
 - Minimizes the potential for racial segregation of classes.⁵
 - Aligns with one of Roadmap 2.0’s strategies/tactics to increase UC/CSU eligibility by detracking all core courses in middle school.
- Allows opportunity for every student to take an advanced math course in high school.
 - Provides multiple acceleration options and pathways in high school.⁶

As part of a gradual detracking process, and despite powerful wording from the CDE (“Even strong mathematics students [should] take the grade-eight CA CCSSM course instead of skipping ahead to Algebra I in grade eight.”³), the pre-COVID plan for 2020-21 intended to phase out 7th graders in Algebra I, yet still giving the opportunity for rising 8th graders to take an assessment to demonstrate proficiency in middle school standards in order to take Algebra I in 8th grade, and to phase out this process in 2021-22.

This will be the last year that a handful of grandfathered classes will run at two sites, before we phase out 8th grade Algebra altogether and follow CDE guidelines.

1 [Joint Position Statement from the Mathematical Association of America \(MAA\) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics \(NCTM\)](#)

[Closing the Opportunity Gap--Position Statement from National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics \(NCSM\)](#)

[President's Message on Discontinuation of Tracking \(NCTM\)](#)

2 [Statement on the Impact of Calculus on UC Admissions UC Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools \(BOARS\) April 2016](#)

3 [CDE: Appendix D: Course Placement and Sequences of the Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, p 827](#)

4 [A Small Slice of the Abundant Tracking Research Available](#)

5 [EKMS Math Class by Ethnicity 2019-20](#)

6 [WCCUSD Secondary Mathematics Course Sequence with Sample Schedules](#)

Career Pathways Summer Internship Program - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)

This summer, 103 students enrolled in Career Pathway programs participated in our Summer Internship Program during June and July. Despite the need to quickly pivot to a virtual internship format and support

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industry partners to shift to that model, this year's number represents 2.1 times the number of students who participated in the previous year's programming. Some of the Partner institutions hosting WCCUSD interns this summer include Career Training Fellowship, Lawrence Berkeley Lab, Center for Youth Development through Law, East Bay Municipal Utilities District, Orthopaedic Trauma Institute at UCSF, Contra Costa Health Partnership, WCCUSD College & Career Department, and Richmond Neighborhood Housing.

Perkins Funding for CTE - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)

The U.S. Department of Education has approved California's Federal *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V) State Plan. The 2020–23 Perkins V State Plan is posted on the California Workforce Pathways Joint Advisory Committee's web page at [California Workforce Pathways - General Information \(CA Dept of Education\)](#). This means continued funding for CTE programs via this Federal program. Last year, WCCUSD qualified for just over \$400,000 in Federal Perkins funding to support CTE programs. These funds were used to purchase materials and supplies, purchase CTE specific equipment, and pay for teacher professional development to support our Career Pathways programs.

Learner-Centered Design - Rubén Aurelio (Sarah Breed & Alison Makela)

The Office of Learner-Centered Design supports the continued transition toward deeper learning/ learner-centered focus and practice across the district. We provide direct support to lab schools in design and practice, facilitate the Learner-Centered Network, and build district-wide tools needed to operationalize the District vision for Deeper Learning.

Our initial work is to create a Learner-Centered Network (Community of Practice) to share and scale practices district-wide. Eighteen WCCUSD schools have been awarded grants to support Learner-Centered Design through generous grant support from Hewlett Packard and in partnership with the West Contra Costa Public Education Fund. The ultimate goal of the Hewlett Foundation's Education Program is for all U.S. public school students to receive a motivating, challenging education that prepares them well to succeed in college and careers and to become engaged citizens, a goal we share.

The following eighteen schools will participate in the Learner-Centered Design Community of Practice during the 2020-2021 school year: Bayview, Chavez, Collins, Crespi, De Anza, Ellerhorst, EM Downer, Harding, Helms, Highland, Korematsu, Michelle Obama, Montalvin Manor K-8, Nystrom, Richmond High School, Shannon, Verde K-8 and the West County Mandarin School.

Each site has developed a plan for this year in consultation with their Instructional Lead Team (ILT). Common focal areas include Project-Based Learning (PBL), Deeper Learning in Mathematics, Performance Assessment, Learner-Centered Instruction, Newcomer programs, and African American Achievement. Sites have begun professional learning in their focal areas and will be supported throughout the year to engage in deeper learning, design professional learning for teachers, and analyze changes in instructional practice to improve student learning. The monthly community of practice will provide an opportunity for site leaders to reflect on leadership practice, deeply engage in a focal area, network, and virtually visit model programs.

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In addition to facilitating the Learner-Centered Community of Practice, we are actively working to develop university partnerships and to support the development and implementation of performance assessments. Currently, we are meeting with UC Berkeley, Stanford, Eastern Carolina University, and Teachers College at Columbia University, to establish partnerships, seek guidance, and design research projects that support Deeper Learning.

African American Student Achievement - Rubén Aurelio (William McGee & team)

Outreach and engagement:

1. The Office of African American Student Achievement (OAASA) has reached out to site leaders to gauge their readiness for supporting African American/Black students. Questions that were asked were about services and supports they have for Black students, support needed for the African American Parent Advisory Council (AAPACs), and extracurricular activities. Various sites and district departments have reached out to the OAASA for support and information.
2. A letter to families who identified as African American/Black in PowerSchool is going out to introduce the new Director and the OAASA to the community. Along with the letter, the African American Site Advisory Team (AASAT) has asked that a survey be conducted to garner the readiness of Black students for distance learning. I will share the information with the Board once the information is compiled.

Supporting the resolution:

1. The beginning stages for building out the OAASA has commenced. By the Aug 26 board meeting, we are hoping to present the hiring of a coordinator to support the work as well as the job description in one package. The OAASA has worked with the School Supervisors Association (SSA) and the Human Resources department to get everything set up and in proper order for board approval.

Initial ELPAC & Optional Fall Summative ELPAC - Rubén Aurelio (Leticia Castañeda & Esaul Orozco)

The state of California requires that the initial English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) be given to all new students that have identified on the home language survey that a language other than English is spoken in the home is still in effect. The state is still determining if a fully online version is going to be possible. We are moving forward with the administration of the 600 plus initial ELPAC assessments. Additionally, the state is allowing a fall summative ELPAC to be administered for those students that have been identified as being close to reclassification. We have determined with data a list of students that we will administer the fall summative assessment to.

The current plan will utilize classrooms in conjunction with all safety and health protocols for social distancing, use of PPE, and sanitation. Students will be scheduled for their assessments and spaced appropriately. The Multilingual & Multicultural department will work with the district operations team to ensure a smooth and safe testing environment.

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Technology Access & Learning Update - Tracey Logan

Access is key. Central office IT and site teams have been working feverishly over the past few weeks to prepare the technology that students and staff will need to fully engage in distance learning this fall. Over the course of this last week, school sites and the IT office have been distributing new and swapping out ill functioning student and staff devices. More than 3000 chromebooks, 200 staff laptops and 1000 hotspots have been distributed to date. We are delighted to announce that all of our classroom support aides will receive their Chromebooks starting Tuesday of next week so that they may support students with distance learning.

At our next Board meeting we will be bringing two additional purchases of (100) staff laptops and (1000) student Chromebooks needed to further support distance teaching and learning by ensuring that devices are high functioning and reliable. As anticipated, we are finding that many student Chromebooks have been lost as students left WCCUSD or damaged while at home. As we build a culture of Chromebook responsibility and care along with systems of accountability, we simultaneously need to ensure we have sufficient inventory to meet demand. For now we have sufficient hotspot inventory to meet the demand, but we will continue to monitor this very closely.

On Monday we launched our Back to School ed tech PD series which offered a series of training on our district supported tools and platforms including Seesaw for Pk-2, Google Classroom for 3-12, Google Meet and Zoom for video conferencing. These PD offerings will continue for the next month with optional office hours for teachers who need additional support. Additionally, we have a master learning Google Classroom and Seesaw which contain all of the PD resources and recorded PD sessions for asynchronous anytime learning for all WCCUSD staff. Starting in September we will launch grade level/subject alike cross-site learning opportunities on Fridays, along with a tech series for support staff.

The solution to access is multi-prong and requires partnership. Thanks to our partnership with Education SuperHighway and TMobile we have partnered with the City of Richmond to provide superspots (mega hotspots!) on the Library Book Mobiles that will allow students to access wifi. These superspots allow for 30 students to connect simultaneously with robust reliable connection. We will also be partnering with community based Bright Futures and Y-Care centers to provide these superspots for our students who will be at these facilities doing their distance learning during the school day.

And lastly, we all know that the digital divide is only growing as this pandemic continues. Access to information and connection is more important now than ever. At the direction of the Board in our July meeting, we will be bringing a Digital Divide resolution to the Board at our next meeting. We alone cannot fundamentally bridge the divide for all of our families for the long term. However, local, state, and federal partnerships and advocacy that include private partnership can build the long term infrastructure solutions that we need to reliably connect every WCCUSD family.