

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
November 20, 2020

Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy

November 23-27: Thanksgiving Week, No School
November 26-27: Thanksgiving Holidays, Offices Closed
November 30: Agenda Setting, 4:30 PM
December 1: AASAT Meeting, 6:00 PM
December 3: Learner-Centered Design Community of Practice, 2:00 PM
December 3: Safety Committee Meeting, 5:30 PM
December 3-4: CSBA Annual Education Conference (Virtual)
December 7: Agenda Setting, 4:30 PM
December 7: CAC Meeting, Community Advisory Committee for Special Education, 5:30 PM
December 8: DLCAPS Meeting, 6:30 PM
December 9: Board of Education, 6:30 PM
December 10: Governance Committee Meeting, 5:30 PM
December 16: Board of Education Meeting - Annual Organization Meeting

No Friday Memo on November 27 - Matthew Duffy

Because district offices will be closed during the Thanksgiving holidays, there will be no Friday Memo on November 27.

Classroom visits - Rubén Aurelio

This week, I enjoyed visiting Ms. Mortensbak's Kindergarten classroom at Mira Vista Elementary and Ms. Applegate's 9th/10th grade English class in the Internationals program at Richmond High School.

In the kindergarten classroom, I watched the homeroom session that included check-ins with each student, routines, and timely topics. Students are eager to learn and can't wait to speak up. They've learned how to take virtual turns, use the zoom features like pros, and support one another. Thank you kindergarteners for welcoming me to your classroom.

In the high school English classroom, I was able to watch how our skilled Internationals teacher is using technology and breakouts to ensure student voices have opportunities for discourse. The teacher's skill is apparent as she ensured students had strong language models to follow. The students were preparing to give oral presentations. The lessons had strong scaffolds and modeling from peers and the teacher.

Construction 101: Career Path Awareness - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)

[This event](#) is open to WCCUSD high school girls who are interested in learning more about the construction industry. The event, hosted by McCarthy Building Companies, will take place in January of 2021 and seeks to showcase the multi-faceted construction industry and the possibilities available to women of all backgrounds. Students will get to hear from successful women who have played key roles in building hospitals, schools, civil infrastructure, housing, and more. Speakers will include professionals from the engineering, architecture, and construction industries. Students will be able to interact with guest speakers and mentors via Q&A sessions.

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College Application Drive - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)

Even though school will not be in session, we know many of our Seniors will be working to finalize their college applications over the November recess. Our UC Berkeley partners from Destination College Advising Corps and Early Academic Outreach Program coordinate a [College Application Day](#) event on November 23rd and 24th to support students to complete college applications. Interested students will RSVP for one of three sessions and have access to personalized college application support from our volunteers.

Event for parents of English Learners - Rubén Aurelio (Christi Roscigno & team)

The Department of English Learner Achievement and Literacy, in partnership with the Department of Family and Community Engagement and the MDAC committee, is proud to extend an invitation to you to the 1st Annual Saturday English Learner Parent Summit! Faculty, staff, and the English Learner community are invited to participate in a set of workshops and opportunities to support our mission of increasing academic achievement for our English Learner students and supporting families during Distance learning. A flier with Zoom links to attend will be available in the next Friday memo.

Board Approval of 2020-21 Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) - Tony Wold (Lyn Potter)

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed, reauthorizing the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This act replaced the prior reauthorization known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). **Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic many of the normal operational plans were delayed and are being done in modified formats.**

ESSA includes many requirements for the use of Federal fiscal resources, program design and focus. One important school level planning document required by ESSA is the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA); the document is used for schoolwide planning. [The normal timelines for the plans have been adjusted due to the pandemic, and staff plans to bring these plans to the Board for review as a consent item in January 2021 due to the need to make extensive modifications.](#) **Staff reviews all plans prior to bringing them to the Board** to ensure that all requirements are met and that the plans include the following:

- Purpose and Description - describes school program and vision including plans to address Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)* status
- Theory of Action - outline of how/why the school has selected the strategies and plans to achieve identified goals
- Opportunity and Equal Access - plans made within the regular program to meet the needs of underperforming students
- Stakeholder Involvement - description of contributors to the development of the SPSA
- Resource Inequities - gaps in resource availability identified through needs analysis
- Three SPSA goals aligned to LCAP goals: Achieving Students, Thriving Employees and Caring Schools which detail:
 - Goals which are aligned with the overarching WCCUSD goals outlined in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
 - Smarter Balanced Assessment-based goals based on growth toward proficiency
 - Youth Truth Survey data about level of engagement and satisfaction with the

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school

- Dashboard data on chronic absenteeism and suspensions.
- Description of identified areas of need
- Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) growth targets linked to local assessment data
- Description of actions and services to meet these student needs and achieve AMOs and reach
- Budget/costs of actions and service
- A comprehensive needs assessment: analysis of verifiable state and local data, consistent with state priorities
- Budget summary of all funding sources included in the SPSA
- Charts of most currently available Dashboard data

In order to complete this plan each year, school administrators follow a process to engage staff and parents in the work:

- Each Spring all school sites conduct an Annual Review in which staff work with the School Site Council (SSC) to:
 - review local data (STAR Reading, math assessments by whole school and student group)
 - review progress made on prior year SBAC assessments
 - based on this analysis, determine level of impact of programs described in SPSA
 - update SPSA to include information about the outcomes of the Annual Review process
 - update SPSA to include revisions to goals (AMOs), Action Plans and funding allocations
- Each Fall all school sites finalize the SPSA by:
 - incorporating review of any available SBAC data
 - incorporating a review of local assessments administered in the Spring of the prior year
 - working with SSC to finalize and approve SPSA and associated funding allocations
 - working with subject area content experts to review and update SPSAs to ensure alignment with WCCUSD vision and goals
- Late Fall/Winter each year WCCUSD School Board reviews and approves SPSAs
- Each Winter all school sites conduct a mid-year to check in to:
 - review academic growth based on Fall local assessments in order to determine if site is on track to meet AMOs identified in SPSA
 - determine level of implementation of actions and services outlined in SPSA

Special note about modifications to the process for development of 2020-21 SPSA:

- Due to the COVID shelter in place and the cancellation of SBAC testing for the Spring of 2020, WCCUSD staff were unable to update the Goals charts with additional SBAC data. As a result the SBAC charts in all three Goal 1 sections contain the latest data available.
- Due to the COVID shelter in place and the cancellation of in-person classroom instruction, schools were unable to administer the Spring local assessments. As a result sites were unable to review the final set of Spring assessments in the Fall to further inform the development of the SPSAs

*Schools are identified for **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)** by the California Department of Education based on an established set of criteria as follows:

1. Low graduation rate

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- High schools with a graduation rate less than **67 percent averaged over two years** (Based on 2018 Dashboard)
 - High schools with a graduation rate less than **68 percent averaged over two years** (Beginning with 2019 Dashboard; Adopted by the State Board of Education on September 11, 2019)
2. Not less than the lowest-performing five percent of Title I schools
- Schools with all red indicators
 - Schools with all red but one indicator of another color
 - Schools with all red and orange indicators
 - Schools with five or more indicators where the majority are red

For 2020-21 the following schools have been identified for CSI: Bayview ES, Chavez ES, Ford ES, Greenwood HS, Helms MS, Lake ES, Lovoyna De Jean MS, Peres ES, Verde ES

Schools are identified for **Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)** based on an established criteria as follows:

If any student group at the school, on its own, meets the criteria for the lowest-performing 5 percent of Title I schools for CSI.

For 2020-21 the following schools have been identified for ATSI: Coronado ES, Crespi MS, Dover ES, Downer ES, Fairmont ES, Korematsu MS, Lincoln ES, Martin Luther King ES, Murphy ES, Nystrom ES, Ohlone ES, Pinole MS, Shannon ES, Stege ES, Tara Hills ES

Athletics Update - Tony Wold (Tashaka Merriweather, Michael Booker, and Julio Franco)

The California Interscholastic Federation and our TCAL league had previously announced that CIF sports practices would begin on December 7, 2020 with the normal schedule of sports consolidated into two seasons beginning in January 2021. With the announcement yesterday by Governor Newsome that 41 Counties, including Contra Costa County had moved backward to the Purple band the CIF announced on November 16, 2020 that everything is now in a hold position.

The guidelines that were to be released in anticipation of resumption of activities have been withheld. It is unclear when they will be released and what is the next step in the State's approval/delay in allowing high school sports. In WCCUSD, we will need to hang tight and wait for the next word from the State. We hope to get more information in the coming days.

The District continues to work to support some form of competitive athletics when it is safe to do so. With the likelihood of an additional delay the District team will continue to plan for additional options. The District is investigating the ability to run our own mini-league later in the spring within our High Schools should CIF not be able to begin. At this time, however, based upon the safety guidance we will remain in the planning phases.

State Budget Update - Tony Wold

This week we received some positive news on the State budget in releases from the Legislative Analyst's office and reports from the Department of Finance that tax revenue continues to come in above

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projections. The current year budget for Education includes more than \$12 billion in deferrals to education. This allows the State to reduce the amount paid to Proposition 98 while “holding districts harmless.” This week I was able to virtually attend the CASBO CBO Symposium and presented at a CASH Webinar with Tom Duffy and interacted with the top economists across the State as we all reviewed the economic indicators.

To remind the Board, our current budget as defined at the unaudited actuals has us close to no structural deficit within the current year, and then utilizing some committed reserves in 2021 - 2022 and required cuts for the 2022 - 2023 school year. This budget assumed that the State revenue would not increase and that the District would be subject to approximately a 10% LCFF reduction in the next two fiscal years.

The tax receipts to date at the State level are projected to be just about equal to the deferrals from the current fiscal year at this point already year-to-date. If the trend continues we could see revenue come in between \$20 - \$30 billion more than projected (which was an almost \$30 billion reduction). ***“Simply put the LAO report is at best just a reset, not a windfall”*** - Kevin Gordon from Capitol Advisors to all CBOs on Friday, November 20, 2020. The reason for this is that California’s tax structure is highly reliant on higher-income wage earners. During the pandemic a disproportionate impact has occurred for employees in the service sector who were already lower wage earners. Those employees did not contribute significantly to the State income tax revenues so the impact was not as great as anticipated. Higher wage earners have found effective methods to continue to work in a remote environment and did not result in lower wages. This is good news for Education funding possibly, but we need to remember how volatile the economy is and how more than half of our income comes from the top 1% of wage earners. If those individuals ever get the sniffles, public education financing immediately gets pneumonia.

At the First interim we will present a more thorough update of the trend from the State, but will not fully update the Multi-year Projection (MYP) other than adjusting the projected reductions. The reason for not updating everything is that there are still multiple factors that impact the budget that must be addressed by the Governor and Legislature and until the Governor’s January proposal every estimate will be pure speculation. The other factors that can impact our MUP include:

- The impact of multipurpose income submissions and our LCAP funding
- The impact of enrollment decline due to the pandemic
- The impact of students who this week finally were able to get immunizations and the ADA rate
- The impact of services necessary to support students this year that were finalized within budget
- The impact of required increased costs for technology and special education
- The Governor’s January budget proposal & how the State addresses deferrals over the next 2 years
- The possibility of additional funding from the Federal government

Each of the above can have a significant impact on the budget as can the positive cash position from the State. We know in the worst case that our finances were stable for next year with a more significant need to cut in 2022 - 2023. Should conditions improve, we may be able to shift to needing to make modest cuts over a period of several years as we stabilize the organization. **The key message to clearly articulate is that the District still has a structural deficit in the out years of our multi-year projection that is real, and will require some strict fiscal measures.**

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We are more stable than other districts now, but this is because we are being extremely fiscally conservative and we are not in a position to deviate from this pathway. We can, however, breathe and be optimistic that the current State trend will allow us to be less aggressive in reductions and more focused on building systems.

Charter School Oversight Regulations - Tony Wold (Denise Cifelli)

At its meeting on November 6, 2020, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved recommendations related to verified data required by the enactment of Assembly Bill (AB) 1505 (Chapter 486/2019).

AB 1505, among other things, made changes to the charter petition renewal process by requiring that authorizing agencies base renewals on the California School Dashboard (Dashboard) data including presumptions of renewal and non-renewal for what the California Department of Education (CDE) has named high-performing and low-performing charter schools.

- High-performing charter schools are to be renewed for a period of between five and seven years;
- low-performing charter schools are not to be renewed unless certain written factual findings are made, but only for a period of two years;
- all other charter schools are to be renewed for a period of five years.

(Note that these renewal tiers do not apply to charter schools that qualify for the Dashboard Alternative School Status. These charter schools have their own renewal criteria).

High-Performing Charter Schools

A chartering authority cannot—with some exceptions—deny renewal if either of the following apply for two consecutive years immediately preceding the renewal decision:

1. The charter school has received the two highest performance levels schoolwide on all of the Dashboard's state indicators (note that the charter school must have school wide performance levels on at least two academic indicators)
2. For all academic performance measurements, the charter school has received performance levels schoolwide that are the same, or higher, than the state average and, for a majority of subgroups performing below the state average, has received performance levels that are higher than the state average

Low-Performing Charter Schools

Conversely, a chartering authority cannot—with some exceptions—renew a charter school if either of the following apply for two consecutive years immediately preceding the renewal decision:

1. The charter school received the two lowest performance levels schoolwide on all of the Dashboard's State indicators
2. For all academic performance measurements, the charter school has received performance levels schoolwide that are the same, or lower, than the state average and, for a majority of subgroups performing below the state average, received performance levels that are lower than the state average

Middle-Performing Charter Schools

Charter schools that fall between high- and low-performing are referred to as middle performing by the

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CDE, and can only be denied renewal upon making certain written findings. For these charter schools, the chartering authority must consider schoolwide performance and the performance of all subgroups on the state and local indicators, providing greater weight to academic indicators. The chartering authority must also consider clear and convincing evidence of either of the following:

1. Measurable increases in academic achievement, as defined by at least one year's progress for each year in school
2. Strong postsecondary outcomes, as defined by college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers

Per AB 1505, **if Dashboard indicators are not available for the most recently completed academic year before renewal**, the charter authorizer must consider verified data related to the Dashboard indicators. Verified data must also be considered for renewals of charter schools in the low-performing and middle-performing categories.

Verified data

As defined by AB 1505—is data derived from nationally recognized, valid, peer-reviewed, and reliable sources that are externally produced,” including the measure of postsecondary outcomes. AB 1505 required the SBE to establish criteria to define verified data and identify an approved list of valid and reliable assessments by January 1, 2021. Only these adopted data sources can be used as verified data. The CDE undertook an extensive and collaborative process that included stakeholder meetings, submittal of evidence for assessment review by test publishers, a survey of charter schools, and analysis by the CDE's consultant in its efforts to research and define verified data and compile an approved list, culminating in the November 6, 2020, recommendation to the SBE.

The CDE recommended, and the SBE ultimately approved:

1. the criteria to define verified data;
2. the data use procedures related to verified data;
3. the academic progress indicators for inclusion with the approved verified data list; and
4. the postsecondary indicators for inclusion within the approved verified data list.

List of approved verified data can be found [here](#).

Staff is currently reviewing the petition for renewal by Summit Tamalpais and this charter falls in the middle performance category. Staff will be using the AB 1505 criteria to generate an appropriate staff report with areas identified that the school should focus upon in the current and future years. The regulations above are fairly clear in terms of renewal and our focus shall be on ensuring the best possible programs and supports are in place for students. The staff report will be published and posted on December 1, 2020 which is the required 15 days prior to the renewal recommendation at the December 16, 2020 Board meeting.

Mandated Speech Services - Kristen Hardy

As a result of COVID pandemic, the speech and language department has experienced unexpected staffing shortages due to resignations and leaves. In order to fulfill mandated IEP services, the department has entered into a contract with Sunbelt Staffing to provide direct services to students with

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IEPs in the amount of \$167,580.00. Due to the inability to recruit new personnel and the need to maintain services beginning at the end of November we are entering into this contract for now for 1 Speech and Language therapist and one SLPA . The contract will be brought to the Board on December 9 with other contracts to be ratified.

Our first goal remains to hire qualified permanent staff members to serve our students, but these staffing shortages have resulted in our existing therapists taking on caseloads beyond the allowable CDE cap. Even during Distance Learning, there is no waiver for providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education to our students with IEPs, including provision of all services in compliance with the student's Individual Student Learning Plan. As during in person instruction, there are a dearth of Speech and Language Therapists, and the department has worked diligently and carefully for the past several weeks to fill positions. After thorough review of licenses, credentials and interviews, the department has identified one Speech and Language Therapist and one Speech and Language Therapy Assistant who are strong fits for current openings through Sunbelt Staffing. We will be working through Sunbelt Staffing to contract these individuals between November 30, 2020 and June 9, 2021 at a total cost of \$167,580.00. This is an agency that the district has worked with in prior years to provide these services, but does not currently have a contract for 2020-21. The budget from the currently vacant positions will be moved from the 1000 and 3000 object codes to the 5000 object code to support this new contract. We are notifying the Board in this Friday letter that staff will be executing the contract to begin on services prior to the next Board meeting and then have the new contract on the consent listing for ratification. We continue to do everything that is necessary to serve our students with special needs and will continue to recruit to find individuals for these positions next year. Please contact Kristen Hardy or Tony Wold with any questions.

Bright spots of practice - Kristen Hardy

Our nursing department did an unbelievable job supporting the immunization clinic yesterday! Our health aides have tracked immunizations by individual students since the beginning of the year to ensure that we had comprehensive and accurate information. This allowed the district to plan for and execute the clinic within a short planning window. The health aides, in collaboration with our School Community Outreach Workers, also supported family communication and scheduling. Yesterday, our LVNs and RNs manned the stations, supported with logistics, and supported students and families during the clinic. A special thank you to Caitlin Robinson for all of her tireless effort and collaboration with many WCCUSD departments to plan for and carry out an excellent and very busy event!

Last week was School Psychologists' Week. As Mr. Duffy shared at the Board meeting, we truly do have one of the most professional, dedicated, and talented groups of school psychologists that I have ever had the honor to work with. They have pivoted to creatively and responsively meet the needs of their communities. They have shifted to a new way of conducting assessment this year that protects the health and safety of our community, is valid, and gathers deep and meaningful information about student strengths and needs at school. And they are leading their school site teams to engage in thoughtful collaboration with parents to address short and long term learning needs of students. Many of our school psychologists produce, deliver, and share weekly Social Emotional Curriculum and activities with staff and students. One of our school psychologists is providing weekly Wellness consultation with our paraprofessional staff to support with skills to work with students and families during Distance Learning

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and to support staff social emotional health and well being. These sessions are open to all paras in the district and have been well attended.

An ESN teacher at De Anza high School was inspired by the global Jerusalema Challenge. Here is the email that she sent to our community:

Recently in Newsela the viral dance craze Jerusalema was featured. Jerusalema by DJ Master KG and vocalist Nomcebo has been streamed more than 96 million times on Spotify and is one of the top searches globally on Shazaam. The song's gospelesque lyrics means Jerusalem is my house/Guide me/Take me with you/Do not leave me here.

In South Africa where the song Jerusalema was born, their country's president, Cyril Ramaphosa urged everyone to reflect on the difficult journey they've all traveled. He continues

"NEGATIVE STORIES REINFORCE NEGATIVE NARRATIVES AND THOSE NARRATIVES HAVE A REAL IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE GROWING UP. THEY ARE TOLD BY THE WORLD THEY ARE HELPLESS AND EVENTUALLY THEY BELIEVE THEY ARE HELPLESS TOO".

(excerpts are taken from article)

The ESN classes at DeAnza are taking on this challenge and they want to include you and your class/ site to show everyone in the district and the world "What we are capable of". In celebration of reaffirming our commitment to ensure equal opportunity for all and continued fight against inequities and inequality, we are challenging everyone to take on the Jerusalema challenge. The call is for all administrators, teachers, students, paraprofessionals, nurses, employment specialists, therapists, and everybody who loves and supports West Contra Costa----LET'S DO THIS!

If you are up for the challenge, record your solo/ class/ or group dance (30 seconds to a minute) and send the video to Myrna Hadjirul mhadjirul@wccusd.net by October 23, 2020, so we can add all videos together to be streamed in our district October 30th. The streaming video will be publicly viewed, therefore please notify caretakers of their student's images possibly being viewed throughout the district and possibly throughout the world.

Here is the result. This video is a testament to the strength, solidarity, energy, engagement, and inclusivity of our entire community. Watch... smile.. move [Inclusion Is Within Everyone's Ability.mp4](#)