

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
October 23, 2020

Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy

October 26: Agenda Setting, 4:30 PM

October 29: Michelle Obama Grand Opening, 11:00am – 1:00pm

November 3: Election Day

November 4: Board of Education, 6:30 PM

November 9: Agenda Setting, 4:20 PM

November 9: Governance Committee, 5:30 PM

November 11: Veterans Day Holiday, Schools / Offices Closed

New Legislation Regarding Brown Act - Matthew Duffy

In the recent Lozano Smith Client Brief, an article was published regarding new legislation effective January 1, 2021 that aims to clarify what types of social media interactions are permissible under the Brown Act and which are not. Staff felt this information important to share with the Board and public, [New Law Attempts to Address Social Media Use and the Brown Act](#). This will be reviewed in depth with the new Board as part of their induction.

College Tea Thursdays - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)

Our partners from UC Berkeley's National College Advising Corps have resumed the [College Tea Thursdays Workshops](#) for all WCCUSD students starting this month. Sessions are held every 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. Students must RSVP for the session before the workshop, and a follow-up email will be sent to students to join the zoom call a couple of hours before the start of each session. Workshops are open to all high school grade levels.

College & Career Pathways - Discover Engineering!- Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & and Gabriel Chilcott & team)

WCCUSD College and Career Pathways is pleased to partner with Bay Area Linking Education & Economic Development Strategies (LEEDS) to enrich students' work-based learning experiences in our College and Career Pathways programs each year. Traditionally, Bay Area LEEDS recruits about 70 students from up to 10 PLTW East Bay schools to participate in the Bay Area Science Festivals (BASF) at CSU East Bay and Oracle Park each year. Every year, students in our Engineering College and Career Pathways at Richmond High and Pinole Valley High School, along with students in MESA student programs, participate in these efforts.

This year, Bay Area LEEDS is hosting a [Discover Engineering! event](#), in collaboration with Chevron and the Discover E! Teachers group. Several students from WCCUSD are featured in this year's short film, including:

- Nicole Bravo, Pinole Valley Engineering Pathway
- Katilan Nguyen, Middle College MESA Program

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- Kevin Nguyen, Middle College MESA Program

This year's project is a 30-minute film where students demonstrate their skills and experiences from the program. Students developed a storyboard for this learning experience and worked over two weeks to recreate shots of students demonstrating the skills they learned via the Discover Engineering program. While Discover E! Staff assisted with some technical aspects, the focus is on the hands-on learning and acquisition of skills by students. This short film is another amazing opportunity to glimpse our students' lived experiences.

The film debuts Wednesday, October 21 at 4:30. There will be a live chat with students at 5:00 PM. The film will continue to be available via the [BASF website](#) through the festival (Oct. 25, 2020).

College Readiness via 10,000 Degrees - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)

WCCUSD in-kind partner organization 10,000 Degrees is offering three free financial aid 101 sessions open to ALL WCCUSD students and families:

Students and families will have the opportunity to learn the importance of applying to financial aid (FAFSA / CA Dream Act), how to prepare for once they decide to apply, and learn what financial aid is.

- There will be one English and one spanish session
- **Open FREE to all** students, families, and partners who may be interested to learn more about financial aid
- Students interested in applying to *any* college/university are invited to attend
- Guest may **RSVP** via the link: <https://forms.gle/aWa4kjpMwgbK696>
- This will be a visual presentation with some time allocated to questions at the end

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

The Office of Learner Centered Design supports coherence and alignment toward our overall vision for quality and equity in learning for all in an environment where people are known, seen, heard and valued.

One of our projects is coordinating the Grading for Equity professional learning series in partnership with Joe Feldman and Mark Boswell of the Crescendo Education group. Joe Feldman is the author of *Grading for Equity* and recently facilitated a series with UC Berkeley professors focused on equitable grading practices. Our series mirrors the content of the CAL series. The first workshop, on Friday, October 16th, was attended by all WCCUSD staff and was well received. Focal areas for our on-going professional learning series include; The history of inequitable grading practices in US education, unconscious bias in grading, the dangers of averaging, the 0-4 scale, use of clear rubrics, proficiency scales, and mastery based grading. Participants will engage in follow-up sessions both collectively and at their sites, focused on examining grading practices and identifying shifts to make grading more equitable, with a clear focus on learning. Our next Grading for Equity session will be November 6th.

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We also are, as mentioned before, engaging in research-based partnerships with several university partners. One such project is a collaboration with Mills Teacher Scholars and Eastern Carolina University's Project i4 to support District and site administrators growth in leadership capacity to set conditions for and assess adult and student learning. All elementary and secondary principals are currently engaging in monthly public learning sessions well-facilitated by Mills Teacher Scholars, which model best practices.

The Deeper Learning Community of Practice of leaders from the 18 recipients of Hewlett Foundation grants will meet monthly beginning November 9th. We look forward to this time to learn together. With the partnership generously offered by Project i4, our work will focus on setting the conditions for learning and leadership strategies, including data-based observation strategies, to support and measure student voice and discourse within the various site specific projects.

We find ourselves in a myriad of projects, working with Academic Cabinet to focus the work in WCCUSD around learners, particularly our students, so that, with a clear vision and mission, we cohesively support them to lift their voice, take the lead in their learning, and develop a joy and passion for learning.

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment - Rubén Aurelio (Gabriel Chilcott & team)

Science - John Iwawaki and Team

Our science team put out a [Science Newsletter for the Fall](#) to help with communication during our distance learning. This newsletter will be recurring support for science teachers and other community members going forward.

Math - Mark Lobaco & Team

The math department continues to develop Math Power Half Hours to deliver both within the Professional Development time and after work hours. The current work areas are Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Math, Integrated English Learning in Math, and updating a Math Guide for parent talks during conferences.

English Learner Achievement & Literacy - Rubén Aurelio (Christi Roscigno & team)

MDAC - Rubén Aurelio (Christi Roscigno & team)

On Thursday October 22nd, we held the 1st MDAC meeting of the 2020-2021 school year. We held the MDAC elections, members had a chance to review a draft three year ELL plan, shared data around student achievement, and announced a District-Wide EL Town Hall to be held on Saturday, December 5, 2020. In addition, we shared the upcoming EL Student Listening sessions that are occurring on November 10th, 2020.

Elementary Principal and VP Professional Development with Colleen Cruz - Rubén Aurelio (Christi Roscigno & team)

On Monday, October 19th, Elementary Site leaders came together to work with TCRWPs Director of Innovation, Colleen Cruz around how to support and supervise Balanced Literacy Instruction during Distance Learning with an emphasis on planning for EL students and Students with IEPs.

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Phonics in Balanced Literacy- in the news - Rubén Aurelio (Christi Roscigno & team)

Recently, FPM reports published an [article](#) asserting that TCRWP's founder, Lucy Calkins was "changing her views" about phonics instruction. There is a [response piece](#) from Dr. Calkins, but here's a brief summary of the most relevant information:

The FPM article asserts:

- Phonics is not emphasized in Balanced Literacy/Units of Study
- There will be a change in TCRWPs approach to include phonics going forward
- An emphasis on the 3 cueing system the only one emphasized, at the expense of phonics

However, the response describes, and we agree that:

- TCRWP has always valued and supported the use of phonics. They have actively supported schools in using effective phonics programs such as Foundations. Recently, TCRWP developed their own phonics curriculum, to offer schools using the Units of Study another, better aligned option. Our schools all have this curriculum with the supporting materials and have engaged in professional learning to teach phonics well.
- The 3 cueing system is important, and is used in conjunction with phonics instruction to meet the needs of students. One small but significant shift TCRWP is making is that when a child makes a miscue, they are now advising that we first attend to the phonics for word solving. Meaning can be used as a cross-checking system for typically developing readers. And ultimately, once students have a good grasp of phonics, instruction in comprehension comes to the forefront. Meaning is the ultimate goal of reading.

Bottom Line: Since the phonics units of study have been written, there is increased cohesion between Reading, Writing, and Phonics. We have all three tools for our schools, and we are well equipped to meet the needs of our students.

A glimpse behind the IT curtain continued....closing the digital divide in WCCUSD - Tracey Logan

Working to ensure that students have access to the internet at home is not work that started when the pandemic hit. For the past 3 years, the WCCUSD IT department has been hard at work identifying students in need and building external partnerships to meet the need. We are delighted to announce that we have recently been awarded up to 3,000 hotspots with 100GB of data for families that qualify for free/reduced lunch thanks to the [TMobile Project 10Million](#).

Glimpse #1 Profile of our very own Colleen Denny Duggan, HelpDesk Support Technician- Mark Terrill, David Oliver

Colleen started working on our hotspot program before we even had a formal hotspots program. In 2017, we sent out our first district-wide student survey and found that over 1600 students reported no internet access at home. We partnered with Sprint for the 1million grant for our secondary students, and ConnectED for our elementary students. We distributed an additional 2000 hotspots through these programs.

When the pandemic hit, we found many more students needed internet access. In the last 6 months alone, we have distributed over 3000 hotspots. In total, we've provided over 5,100 hotspots to our students.

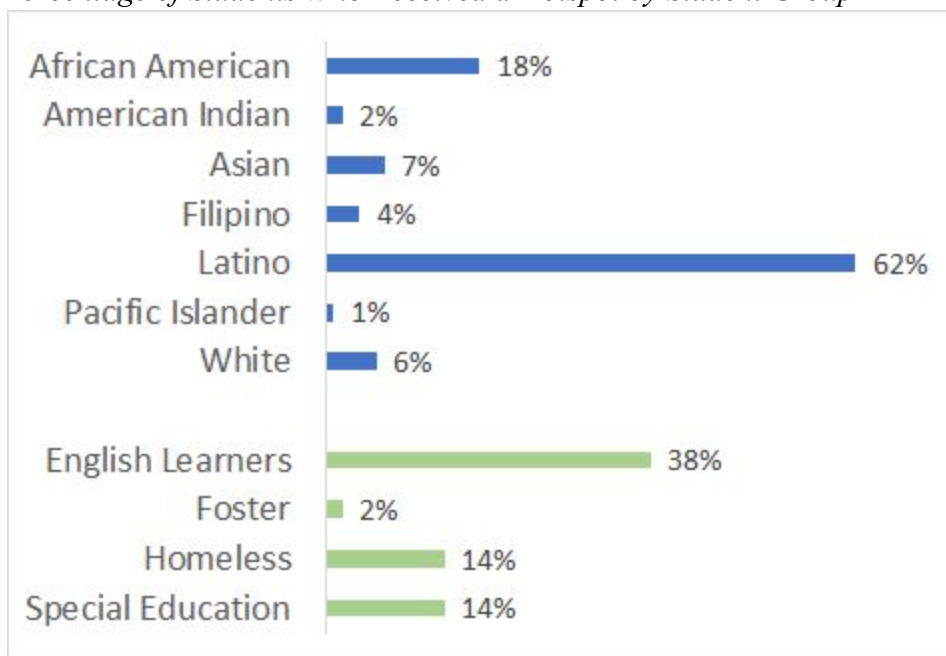
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Colleen has been the lead on these projects since day one – tirelessly verifying eligibility, inventorying, coordinating deliveries and pickups with parents and staff, and keeping detailed records. She has been the oil for this project’s many moving parts. Colleen says she’s honored to continue with TMobile’s 10million project. We could not have endeavored without her, and we are grateful for her steady commitment to closing the digital divide in our community!

Glimpse #2 Who are our students without reliable home internet - Nicole Joyner

To date, 5,110 students have received hotspots. Of those students, 53% live in Richmond, 25% live in San Pablo, 7% in Pinole, 6% in El Sobrante, 5% in Hercules, and 4% in El Cerrito.

Percentage of Students Who Received a Hotspot by Student Group



Glimpse #3 What’s next to permanently close the Digital Divide

Building a permanent solution in partnership with our cities, County, and technology business partners is the next step. We are currently investigating technology solutions and exploring partnership opportunities with the cities of Richmond and San Pablo where we have the densest need. Our goal is to have a permanent solution in place for the start of next school year 2021-22.

Importance of Multipurpose Income Verification Forms - Tony Wold (Barbara Jellison and Regina Webber)

Each year we must collect a multipurpose income verification form to determine eligibility for free and reduced price lunch and for designation as socioeconomically disadvantaged students. This data is reported to the California Department of Education through the CALPADS data system. The total number of students that meet this requirement, plus English language learners and foster youth are then

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defined within an unduplicated pupil count (UDP) to determine the percentage of students who earn the district supplemental and concentration grant funding. This data drives our funding.

To mathematically explain the school funding for students there is a base grant by grade span (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12) each of these amounts is slightly different.

Grade Span	Base Grant	Supplemental Grant (per UDP)	Concentration Grant (per UDP above 55%)
K - 3	\$8,503	\$1,701	\$4,252
4 - 6	\$7,818	\$1,564	\$3,909
7 - 8	\$8,050	\$1,610	\$4,025
9 - 12	\$9,572	\$1,914	\$4,786

Based upon our enrollment of 28,199 and a funded ADA of 26,555 the District receives \$228,459,752 in base LCFF Funding for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

The District then receives supplemental grant funding of 20% of the base grant for each student within the UDP (70% of all students for 2020 - 2021) for a total of \$32,322,486.

Finally, the District receives concentration grant funding equal to 50% of the base grant for each student above the 55% threshold. For the District this means receiving this funding for 15% of our students (70% - 55%) and is a total of \$17,979,782.

The combined supplemental and concentration grant funding equals \$50,302,268. This is how much is available for the LCAP goals. Any changes in the UDP directly impact the LCAP and drops in UDP have a significant financial impact when the concentration grant drops as the loss of funding becomes significant.

2020 - 2021 LCFF Funding

Enrollment	28,199
Funded ADA	26,555
Base Grant	\$228,459,752
Supplemental Grant	\$32,322,486
Concentration Grant	\$17,979,782
Total	\$278,762,020

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The percentage of students who are part of the WCCUSD UDP has declined slightly over the past couple of years with the rolling average this year at just over 70% based upon the data submitted to CALPADs for the 2019 - 2020 school year. **The pandemic has changed our community and the expectation is that more families may be eligible for free and reduced price meals. This would result in an increase in UDP, which would create an increase in future years of supplemental and concentration grant funding allowing for additional services.**

At present, however, Statewide, and in WCCUSD there is a challenge in getting all families to complete the annual verification forms. Currently, the District is approximately 10% below last year in total UDP based upon the number of forms returned.

School sites are working diligently to get all families to complete the forms. We are asking our homeroom teachers to work to connect with any family who has not completed the forms and continue to message the need for this in all of our communications. Because the USDA has extended the waiver allowing all of our students below the age of 18 to continue to receive free meals, there is not the same urgency for families to complete the form to maintain benefits. Normally the deadline to collect this information is the end of October, but the California Department of Education has provided an extension until after the Thanksgiving holiday giving us much needed time.

We are ensuring that this is of paramount importance and is a high priority that every family completes the forms. Today we are providing a simple worst case scenario to the District based upon our current data.

SCENARIO for 2021 - 2022. If no additional forms are returned the total UDP for the District would drop to just over 60%. The District will receive funding next year (2021 - 2022) based upon the same enrollment and ADA as this year (2019 - 2020 base year) due to the pandemic. This normally would mean flat funding from this year to next. The only thing that could change would be if the UDP changes as described in the chart below:

	2020 - 2021	Hypothetical 2021 - 2020	Change
Enrollment	28,199	28,199	N/A
Funded ADA	26,555	26,555	N/A
UDP %	70%	60%	(10%)
Base Grant	\$228,459,752	\$228,459,752	N/A
Supplemental Grant	\$32,322,486	\$29,086,300	(\$3,236,186)
Concentration Grant	\$17,979,782	\$5,990,078	(\$11,989,704)
Total	\$278,762,020	\$263,536,130	(\$15,225,890)

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It is clear that the reduction in UDP would have a SIGNIFICANT impact on the concentration grant. The loss of \$15,225,890 would reduce our total LCAP budget down to \$35,076,378! These are the funds that support our services for our neediest students and impact the ability to fund any and all initiatives including the AASAT resolution, school site budgets, and mental health services.

This requires our community and families to complete the form to maintain the eligibility and we have time to complete these forms. Our sites are working extremely hard to make sure every family is reached and understands the importance of completing the form. We cannot assume the State will hold districts harmless due to the State budget and may allow this to occur as a way to save money. Our families deserve the services that can be provided from the supplemental and concentration grant funding, and it is likely if 100% of families complete the forms our UDP could go up bringing more revenue and services.

We need everyone to get the word out to complete these forms. As we continue to work on this we want to highlight 3 schools for their efforts so far:

- Middle College has reached 99% completion led by Principal Finy Prak and Office Manager Kris Moore. They have 1 paper application that has been filled out by the parent that is being processed to move them to 100%!
- Sylvester Greenwood Academy is also at 99% completion led by Principal Phil Johnson and Office Manager Genea Alexander and Greenwood staff. They only have 2 families left that need applications to be completed.
- Riverside Elementary is at 98% completion led by Principal Christine Hatcher and School and Community Outreach Worker (SCOW) Beatriz Ortega and Riverside Staff. They have 7 students left that need applications to be completed.

We will continue to highlight the tremendous efforts of schools to get this critical work completed over the next month and we want to make sure that everyone continues to express the importance of this work to ensure our continued ability to support our students.

Food Services Update - Tony Wold (Barbara Jellison)

Food Services continues to celebrate Farm to School month. New to our website this week are fun facts, nutrition information and a healthy recipe. Everyone in the family can learn more about the fruit and vegetable offered with meals served curbside in a fun way. The information can also be found online on the Food Services Department webpage at www.wccusd.net. This was part of a project created by Paula Ramirez, a Sacramento State dietetic intern on rotation with Food Services the last 3 weeks. This week, strawberries and yellow squash were the featured produce. On Tuesday October 27, we will be offering a cantaloupe and yellow onions with meals and on Thursday October 29, we will be highlighting pumpkins and persimmons. Look for these new helpful tips on our website.

On our October 29 curbside meal pickup, families can receive their children's meals from our friendly costumed cafeteria staff at our 15 school site locations. Staff will be serving our trunk or treat pumpkin vegetable special with each meal which can be carved, baked and eaten.

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Fixed Asset Review and Site Inventory - Tony Wold (David Johnson)

The District is currently working on preparing schools for the possible time when we can reopen safely. We have engaged with our insurance provider, Keenan, to contract for a Forensic review of our facilities in regard to what modifications may be required to provide appropriate social distancing. Part of this work will require the removal of items that clutter up classrooms. These items include older equipment (e-waste), furniture, and outdated instructional materials that have been held on to by staff over the years. In addition, under Education Code Section 35168 and Federal Code of Regulations 200.313 and 200.439 the district every two years is required to perform a district wide inventory audit of our fixed assets. The assets include all equipment and furniture that falls under object codes 4400, 4460, 6400, and 6460.

With the district needing to remove and surplus outdated items and the requirement of maintaining an accurate inventory we are coordinating the two requirements. CPRS currently manages our asset system Asset Vista and has conducted our asset inventory audits in the past. Staff will be bringing a contract to the Board for approval to contract with CPRS to perform our 2020-2021 asset audit that will occur during winter 2021 and be coordinated with the removal of items from classrooms. CPRS will update our Asset Vista system upon the completion of the asset audit. More information will be provided in the coming months as these initiatives are fully aligned.