

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
September 11, 2020

Upcoming Events – Matthew Duffy

September 12: League of Women Voters of West Contra Costa County & WCCUSD School Board Candidate Forum, 9:45 AM - 2:00 PM

September 14: CAC, Community Advisory Committee, 5:30 PM

September 16: Agenda Setting, 4:30 PM

September 15: Governance Committee, 5:30 PM

September 15: AASAT -OAASA's Parent Engagement/Empowerment Speaker Series, 6:15

September 23: Regular Board Meeting, 6:30 PM

September 30: Board/CBOC Joint Meeting, 5:00 PM

Opening New Model of School - Matt Duffy, Tony Wold and Rubén Aurelio

We wanted to take a moment and let you know that we have certainly accomplished a great deal over these 4 weeks. With all of the challenges K-12 Education in California has addressed we can be proud to know that the District and our Teachers have been collaboratively engaged in the process of designing our new model of Distance Learning. In March, we had to immediately shift, over the course of a 48-hour weekend, to a brand new instructional delivery model that no one had planned or been trained in. During the Months of April and May and into June the guidance from the nation, state, and county agencies shifted across a wide spectrum.

In a normal school year, our teachers end their work year around June 10th and do not return to paid status for 9 - 10 weeks until the middle of August. **This summer, however, a significant portion of our teachers worked though this entire period without compensation** to obtain feedback from students, participate in grade and subject-level feedback groups, attend parent and community input sessions and design and build our distance learning program with the District. Our site Principals also worked straight through the month of July without compensation to plan for the coming year. While we are still reading of major school districts where plans were not agreed upon, or feedback was scattered and major conflicts continue to be the subject of newspaper articles [**we stand apart in WCCUSD from other districts!**](#)

The entire West Contra Costa Unified community has actively worked together and the positive results continue to manifest themselves with conscientious collaboration that is unprecedented across the State. Following the direction of the board to maintain an inclusive process the input of students, parents, community groups, teachers, employees, and the board has been utilized to enter into multiple action plans and shaped our opening of the 2020 - 2021 school year.

We will continue to obtain input from our stakeholders and identify the priorities that we can fund. The CARES act funds only last through December of this year and have been utilized to sustain our critical services. Where we could direct additional resources we will and those one-time funds will be what we can use for some of the services and priorities that we define collectively, but in the end we cannot make everyone happy. We must ensure long term fiscal solvency for the District as our first priority, and then augment things as we can. If we do not do this, we end up unable to serve any of our student populations. The LCP is a living document and as we obtain more information, clarity on the State and

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Federal supports for public education, and our ability to maintain fiscal responsibility, we will be able to implement more and more recommendations in a thoughtful and accountable manner. There are many asks of the district in this difficult time. We cannot, however, immediately commit to everything, nor can we please every voice, but we must listen to all voices and as we have with our labor partners compromise, collaborate, and work together to advocate for adequate funding and continue to build a trusting relationship.

Adopted Instructional Materials - Rubén Aurelio (Gabriel Chilcott and Francie Kunaniec)

On Wednesday evening, the school board adopted our updated instructional materials list. On the list of adopted materials, there were 11 new titles. Mr. Panas asked if we could list the budget string for these adopted materials. Here is that string 01-6300-4100-630-1110-1000-300120-0-0000-

Further, there was a question regarding the Cybersecurity text and where that text is used. Currently it is in use at the Project Lead the Way course offered at Hercules High School.

Update on the use of SAT and ACT in College Admissions - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)

In a ruling issued Monday, September 1st in a court case filed in Alameda County, a Superior Court Judge ruled that plaintiffs had demonstrated cause to halt the use of SAT and ACT tests for admissions to the University of California. The complaint alleges that applicants with disabilities had virtually no access to test-taking sites or legally required accommodations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The complaint further adds that little data exists to show whether the tests are valid or reliable indicators of students' future college performance.

UC made a statement on Tuesday, September 2nd, indicating that they “respectfully disagree” with the court’s decision in this matter and said they were evaluating whether they would pursue further legal actions.

This latest development comes on the heels of a May 2020 decision by the UC Board of Regents to suspend the ACT and SAT tests as an admissions requirement until 2024. Under that plan, the submission of standardized testing scores is optional for students through 2022, which was a response to the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, applicants in 2023 and 2024 would have had the option to submit scores, but those would only be used for purposes of determining course placement, scholarship eligibility, and eligibility for the statewide admissions guarantee.

Enhancing College and Career Pathways Curriculum - Rubén Aurelio (Allison Huie & team)

College and Career staff collaborated with College and Career Pathway Lead Teachers with input from Pathway Advisory Boards to identify course additions for the 2020-2021 school year. Three courses from the [University of California Curriculum Integration](#) project have been added to Pathway course progressions this year, bringing the total number of UCCI courses offered in WCCUSD to five. These innovative courses are all designed by California teachers and integrate A-G academic work with Career Technical Education (CTE), to help students prepare for college while they explore potential career paths. UCCI courses meet A-G course requirements for freshman admission to UC and CSU campuses, making them valuable components of schools' CTE pathways. Of the three courses added this year, two are designated as Honors courses, bringing the total number of Honors-designated UCCI courses to four.

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UCCI courses offered in WCCUSD

Pinole Valley High School:

1. Protective Services Academy [P] - G elective: added in 2020

Sylvester Greenwood Academy:

1. Advanced English and Public Health [H] - B course: added in 2020
2. US History and Public Health [H] - A course: added in 2020

Richmond High School:

1. US History and Public Health [H] - A course: added in 2016
2. Mind Matters: A Study of Mental Health & Illness [H] - G elective: added in 2016

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

1. Please attend the OAASA's Parent Engagement/Empowerment Speaker Series. If you will attend, please let me know so I may introduce you.

Black Parent Engagement & Empowerment Series

EDUCATING BLACK STUDENTS

Building Resilience Through Relationships

Tuesday, September 15, 2020
6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m.

This workshop will emphasize the importance of parent engagement and the empowerment needed to advocate for your child's education.

- Learn about the OAASA
- How to organize your site's AAPAC, and
- How to take an active roll in the AASAT



Hosted by the Office of African American Student Achievement
West Contra Costa Unified School District
www.wccusd.net/oaasa | Email: OAASA@wccusd.net | Social: [@oaasawccusd](https://twitter.com/oaasawccusd)



Guest Speaker:
Dr. Pedro Noguera
Dean, Rossier School of Education

Register at
www.wccusd.net/oaasa/events



2. For our 1st installment of our monthly newsletter please click [here](#). Thank you to Mr. Andre Shumake and Ms. Cicely Day for their contributions to it, and Ms. Raechelle Forrest for getting it together. The plan is to do a monthly newsletter to strengthen our communication with African American/Black families.
3. We have been meeting with site leaders to discuss their SPSA. The discussion has been around monitoring data, creating high impact action steps, and goals for African American/Black students.

Student Grading Feedback Sessions - Tony Wold and Rubén Aurelio (with Marissa Glidden, UTR President)

As part of the extensive work done by both the District and the United Teachers of Richmond, multiple listening sessions and feedback forums were held with students. Sessions were held with student groups at all levels and the feedback captured by Teachers from UTR for these sessions is reflected in the summary. This feedback was incorporated in both the Phase 1 MOU for Distance Learning as well as the MOU in regard to the implementation of the revised Board Policy on Grading. We are very pleased to have been collaboratively focused on building a model of evaluation that was grounded in a focus on student need for appropriate and equitable feedback. The Following are some of the meetings that were completed with a brief summary of some of the major takeaways from each:

- High Schools (El Cerrito, Richmond, DeAnza, Pinole): June 16th
 - Students gave feedback on experiences with grading during the Spring.
 - Many expressed appreciation for P/NP grading policy given the issues they faced with technology.
 - Some expressed frustration with not being able to get A-F grades and thought it impacted motivation of peers.

- Grade 3/4 Elementary Student Feedback Session: June 23rd
 - Students discussed experience with Distance Learning in general.
 - Students expressed that they missed their friends along the Social Emotional aspect of school.
 - When asked about report cards, they said they didn't know what the grades meant but liked when their parents read them the comments.

- High School Sub-Groups Feedback (RHS, ECHS): June 30th
 - Students expressed a need for grading to be more equitable.
 - They wanted an option for some students to get P/NP
 - But they shared concerns about P/NP impacting some student's ability to apply to UCs or CSUs if the Colleges changed their policy.
 - Students wanted to emphasize the need for teachers to be flexible about assignment due dates and not penalize students for missing class.
 - Students did not want participation to count for grade.

- Middle School Feedback Group: July 2nd
 - Students expressed anxieties about grades and were worried about finishing assignments online in enough time.
 - They also shared that they did like the motivation that getting a grade gave them but wanted more support with distance learning.

- Grade 5/6th Elementary Student Group Feedback Session: August 11th
 - Students discussed fears and excitements about the upcoming year.
 - They shared that grades sometimes made them "feel bad" because they felt that they would put in the effort and not see an impact on their grades.

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- This often impacted their self confidence in the subject area and made them "not want to try as hard".
- They did share that they "felt happy" when getting good grades.
 - They liked reading the comments on the Spring Narrative Report Card.

Closing the Books - Tony Wold (Regina Webber, Gustavo Aguilera, Andrea Arnold, Tomas Goco, Mary Kitchen)

This has been a very unique and challenging year. With all of the changes in the regulations and needs to be flexible due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have constantly been required to change the way we do business. Tasks that used to be resolved in a couple of minutes can take hours, and sometimes days, to complete. Every one of our staff members continue to innovate and develop solutions to complete the necessary work to serve our students. One area that has taken longer was the closing of the books to be able to complete the unaudited actuals that will be presented at the September 23rd meeting.

The “hard close” in our Management Information System (MIS) was a success! The 2019 - 2020 fiscal year is now officially closed. Each year, we schedule three days of closure within the MUNIS system to go through several rigorous phases:

- Phase 1 is closing the 2019 - 2020 books;
- Phase 2 is opening the new 2020 - 2021 fiscal year; and
- Phase 3 is posting the Budget Completion Journal successfully

The challenge is to have all ledgers balance appropriately without a fatal error that causes the system to crash which would require us to reconcile the errors and then restart the entire process over again. This process requires the system to be closed for normal business and usually entails all staff to retreat to a room to complete the process. Doing so remotely required significant logistical planning and cooperation among staff to ensure the process could be completed in this new environment.

We are extremely pleased to report that we completed each phase successfully and did it all in two days! With this process completed we were able to reopen the system for all district staff a day earlier than scheduled. Many of our classified staff work behind the scenes to make a difference in our operations. Our Classified staff are the backbone to support teaching and learning from the Instructional Assistants, Custodians, Maintenance and Office Staff who are visible to our teachers, students, and parents and the back office team in Accounting, Budget, Payroll, and Purchasing, Technology, and Human Resources worked day, night, and weekends to prep for these stressful days to work in two years simultaneously to make this happen and we thank them all for those efforts.

Unaudited Actuals - Tony Wold (Regina Webber, Gustavo Aguilera, Andrea Arnold)

With the books closed we are now completing the necessary processes to finalize the unaudited actuals and define the next steps within the budget process. We will provide additional information in next Friday's Memo in respect to the budget once all the analysis has been completed, but initial review is that the hard work done by the board, associations, and collaboration with the community to adopt ongoing reductions and the work done by the staff to control expenditures and implement position control have resulted in the ability to be able to utilize some carryover to mitigate the structural deficit over a period of a couple of years while we advocate to the State and Federal Governments to adequately, and equitable

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fund K-12 education.

The challenge this year in quantifying the budget is that our adopted budget that is reflected in the SACs form is based upon the Governor's proposal that we were required to use based upon the recommendations from the County Office via FCMAT. The State SACs forms will not allow us to revise the budget until we are at First Interim officially, but we are working to create a side-by-side adjusted budget within our Multi-Year Projection (MYP) to present to the board with the unaudited actuals. In addition, we had not identified the full CARES act one-time funds which must be accounted for. Since approximately \$10 million of those funds were expended in 2019 - 2020, but will not be booked as revenue until 2020 - 2021 we will have a unique situation in SACs where there is an accrual of negative carryover.

The challenge of the negative carryover is that the ending fund balance will adjust overall and will require some explanation to be able to track. In addition, the SACs forms were not programmed to have expenditures in resources that did not exist in the previous year and this creates errors that staff have to manually address. Any time we do anything manually we audit the work to ensure that it is accurate, and this takes time. We will have this work and explanations built into our presentation on the 23rd. We will also work to create the manual MYP to demonstrate the impact of one-time revenue to the structural deficit and ensure that we do not lose the fact that there is still a structural deficit to address. With the projected carryover, however, we will be in a much more comparable position with other school districts in the area, and due to the measures that we did take we may be even better off.

Next Friday the letter will have the first part of the analysis and the full data will be posted the following Friday, September 18th along with the unaudited actuals in preparation for the board meeting and to allow for analysis, evaluation, and questions prior to the board meeting. **We appreciate the board understanding the unique issues we are facing in logistically presenting the budget information but we want to assure the board that we still 100% confident that the plan we initiated in September 2019 is working, and that we do have as long as we stay the course a pathway to maintain the services we have now and move toward continuing to reduce the structural deficit in an ongoing way.**

Much of what we present on September 23rd will change based upon the results of the November elections, the determination of whether there will be additional Federal aid to States, and the release of the Governor's January Budget proposal. Because we already made the possible reductions to non-salary expenditures we are limited to negotiated reductions that relate to staffing and compensation. With the changes that are coming **we do not believe that any negotiations should begin until after November** and that we would quantify our action next steps at the First Interim. We will continue to mitigate expenditures and maintain cost controls until that time and lay the groundwork for this work.

Safety and COVID Protocols - Tony Wold (Michael Booker and Kanon Lee)

The District has worked very closely with our labor associations to ensure that we have safety protocols in place to support our employees and ensure that we are able to effectively provide support for our students and community. We have implemented several protocols and actions that are summarized below:

- **Covid Case preparation within the district:**

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- The Covid response team was established to manage and address situations related to Covid. The team consists of two Operations Directors, Safety Consultant, CSO Supervisor, Communications Manager and four district nurses.
 - District nurse Kanon Lee facilitated a Zoom training session for the COVID-19 response team members focusing on key COVID-19 basics, infection timeline, contact tracing, response protocols for each scenario, and shutdown criteria that complies with local and state guidance.
 - Developed and distributed the WCCUSD COVID-19 assessment tool and flow chart that broadly covers all potential COVID-19 scenarios with brief action steps for site supervisors and staff to utilize. Essentially, the flowchart directs sites to contact the response team for additional information and/or resources.
 - Developed and implemented a google forms system that assists with tracking and documentation of potential exposure or positive COVID-19 cases.
- **Facilities safety assessments for sites that have reported positive or potential exposure Covid cases.**
 - The district's safety consultant conducted inspections of facilities for risk management and compliance of preventative measures prescribed by the County Public Health department.
 - The district nurse observed these safety assessments.
- **Formation and standardization of Covid screening process:**
 - Developed a simplified entry screening process that was in compliance with County Public Health and CDC guidance.
 - Incorporated a Covid self-screening instruction process for staff.
 - Developed processes to use QR codes at each site to assist with screening/entry of visitors and employees. The process was considerate of privacy laws and equity concerns.
- **Development of procedures for on site testing and materials distributions:**
 - The safety team standardized procedures for adult/EL in person testing and materials distribution at sites while complying with County Public Health department and CDC guidance.

Federal Program Monitoring (FPM) - Tony Wold (Lyn Potter, Wendy Forrest, and Margarita Romo)

Every two years monitors from the California Department of Education (CDE) visits the District to review our federally funded programs. The review that occurred this Spring highlighted a number of areas of strength (Expanded Learning Programs and Uniform Complaint Procedures) as well as identified some areas that require additional attention. District staff have responded to these findings by evaluating the current program and making needed changes to policies and procedures.

The CDE monitoring team has approved our new Administrative Regulations for Employee Code of Conduct (Conflict of Interest) policy that was approved by the Board to close this finding. In addition, The District has been reviewed regarding our Title III budget (support for English Learner Programs) which validated that our use of funding meets all appropriate Supplement not Supplant requirements as

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referenced in the site Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA).

Forensic Accounting Investigation Implementation of Recommendation ML #76 FI 1-1 - Tony Wold (Margarita Romo)

The District continues to work on validation of the areas that were identified in the Phase II Forensic Accounting Investigation of the District's school construction bond program completed by Vicenti, Lloyd & Stutzman, CPAs which resulted in 112 recommendations. As of February 2020, 100 of the 112 recommendations have been implemented. In order to continue to make progress toward this goal of validating all areas, the District's Lead Internal Auditor is working with Business Services to update Board Bylaw 9270 which will allow the District to implement ML #76 FI 1-1.

This recommendation (ML #76 FI 1-1) states:

- "Draft a "District Business Ethics Expectations" policy which articulates business ethics requirements for vendors, contractors and others doing business with the District Bond Program.
- Require all vendors, contractors, and subcontractors who will be doing business with the District Bond Program to implement a program requiring their employees sign acknowledgements that they have read and understand the "District's Business Ethics Expectations" policy and the related obligations.

It has been determined that this policy can be incorporated within the existing Board Bylaw 9270 by amending the Bylaw to:

1. Include language in this "District's Business Ethics Expectations" policy which requires vendors, contractors and subcontractors, who will be doing business with the District Bond Program, to disclose in writing to the District when they make any contribution or donation to any organizations or nonprofit charitable organizations in any way related or connected to the District or District Board member and any contributions to campaigns for District Board members and Bond campaigns.
2. In addition, this "District's Business Ethics Expectations" policy should also address:
 - a. District expectations that vendors, contractors, and subcontractors, while performing contract work, maintain business ethics standards aimed at avoiding any impropriety or conflict of interest which could be construed to have an adverse impact on the District's best interests.
 - b. Vendors, contractors, and subcontractors shall permit interviews of employees, reviews and audits of accounting or other records by District representatives to evaluate compliance with the spirit of these business ethics expectations.
 - c. Require Board members and District staff to fully disclose to the Board in writing any solicitation of contributions from vendors, contractors, subcontractors doing business with the District organizations related to campaigns and other organizations with some connection to the District and/or the District Bond Program. Encouragement of full disclosure will discourage the potential for any improper influences and encourage the consideration of possible recusal by a Board member."

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The revisions of the Bylaw will be drafted by the Business Services department to meet the requirements above and then brought to the Board for review and adoption in one of the October regularly scheduled meetings.