

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
*Office of the Superintendent*

**Friday Memo**  
**April 1, 2022**

**Upcoming Events – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D**

April 4-8: No School - Spring Recess

April 13: Board Meeting, 6:30pm, Lovonya Dejean Middle School

April 14: Strategic Planning Meeting, 5:30-7:30pm, El Cerrito High School

**Next Board of Education Meeting April 13, 2022– Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D**

Closed Session will begin at 4:00pm

**College & Career - LaResha Martin (Allison Huie & team)**

**PVHS Law and Justice Academy Study Trip to San Quentin**

Patricia Blades, Law Academy Lead and CTE teacher at Pinole Valley High School, has been taking groups of students on a unique study trip to San Quentin State Prison for many years. A College & Career staff member recently had the opportunity to tag along as a chaperone - the first time that this trip has been possible since the start of the pandemic - to see first hand the impact that this experience has on students who are enrolled in the district's only Law Academy with a Public Service & Safety focus.

San Quentin has a program in which inmates apply for and are trained to facilitate tours of the facility. It begins in the chapel, where four residents briefly introduce themselves and then open it up to questions. Ms. Blades' students asked probing, thoughtful, and sometimes difficult questions, from 'Why are you in here?' to 'What was your childhood like?' to 'Do you feel like there was equity and fairness in your trial and sentencing procedures?' Students were clearly moved by the honest, open responses, and, in the end, very reflective about how easy it really might be to make a wrong decision or an error in judgment that could potentially have life-altering consequences. Based on the thought-provoking questions these individuals in turn asked students, leading them to that realization seemed to be intentional. A few of the inmates with whom students interacted were no older than these 11th graders when they made that fateful error; they don't want any young person with their whole life still ahead of them to wind up where they are. Sharing their stories and life lessons is part of how they are now giving back to society.

Following the conversation in the chapel, students toured the medical facilities, viewed the general prison population yard as well as exercise facilities for inmates on death row, and stepped inside a 4 x 9 cell that is typically shared by two people. At every location, other residents were on hand to share their stories and take questions from the students.

The mood was somber as students finally shook hands with each of the four tour guides and made their way back to the bus. And there seemed to be an additional realization: there are bad things everywhere, both on the outside and inside the prison system, but there is also goodness in both places. On this day, students saw some of that goodness that has grown in men who made huge mistakes many years ago.

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## **Communications Update - Ryan Phillips**

### **Thursday, March 31, 2022**

#### **[Rosie the Riveter park's most famous ranger retires at age 100 - Richmond Confidential](#)**

America's oldest active park ranger, Richmond's Betty Reid Soskin, who weaved her real-life experiences in the 1940s into programs at the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park, retired quietly Thursday, six months after celebrating her 100th birthday.

#### **[National Park Service Ranger Betty Reid Soskin retires at 100 | Richmond Standard](#)**

The iconic Betty Reid Soskin, 100, the National Park Service's (NPS) oldest active ranger, retired today after 15 years of "sharing her personal experiences and the efforts of women from diverse backgrounds who worked on the World War II Home Front," according to Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond.

#### **[High schoolers reveal challenges of adjusting from remote learning - NBC.com](#) [VIDEO]**

#### **[High Schoolers Reveal Challenges Of Adjusting From Remote Learning - YouTube](#)**

### **Wednesday, March 30, 2022**

#### **[Mobile Dairy Classroom visits Richmond's Grant Elementary](#) | Richmond Standard**

Grant Elementary students didn't have to go to the farm to receive an immersive education on food literacy. On Tuesday, the farm came to them. The Mobile Dairy Classroom Assembly by the Dairy Council of California dropped by the elementary school campus at 2400 Downer Ave. in Richmond Tuesday morning to provide students with insight into where dairy foods come from. Attending the event was Olaf, a one-week-old calf making his first visit to a school, and an older "superstar" named Buttercup.

### **Monday, March 28, 2022**

#### **[WCCUSD releases graduation schedule for Class of 2022](#) | Richmond Standard**

High school graduations begin Saturday, May 21 with Middle College at the Contra Costa College football field and continue through Tuesday, June 21 with Extended Learning, West Contra Costa Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Chris Hurst announced Friday.