

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
February 11, 2022

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

February 12: Collins Elementary Vaccine Clinic, 9-4pm, Collins Elementary School
February 12: Volunteer Fingerprint Party at Harding Elementary, 9-12pm, Harding Elementary
February 14: CBOC Meeting 6-8pm, Zoom
February 14: Valentine's Day

Next Board of Education Meeting February 16, 2022– Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D
Closed Session will begin at 4:00 pm

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Early Learning/Elementary- LaResha Martin (Christi Roscigno & team)

Language and Literacy Collaborative

On February, 15, 2022, the Departments of Literacy and EL Achievement are hosting the February Community of Practice for Language and Literacy Lead Teachers, a group of educators across TK-12 schools in WCCUSD. Each teacher has selected a topic to dig into with like-interest colleagues, and are researching, trying our new EL & literacy strategies, and preparing for sharing their work with the broader WCCUSD teaching community in April. This upcoming session marks the sixth out of ten for this school year.

TK/UTK Expansion Committee

On February 14, 2022 the TK/UTK expansion committee will gather to collaborate on WCCUSD's plan for the programming at our existing and new TK classes. Topics will include: Professional learning, site materials, schedules, and expanded learning.

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

Honoring National School Counseling Week and Black History Month

As we shared at the end of January, we are celebrating National School Counseling Week the week of February 7-11. This week of recognition seeks to highlight public attention on the contributions of school counselors in our school communities.

A parcel tax to fund athletics, libraries and school counselors was first approved by voters in West Contra Costa Unified in 2004. District Residents voted to renew the [parcel tax](#) in 2008, 2012, and again in 2015. Recognizing that school counselors are essential to supporting the success of our students, WCCUSD opened several additional counseling positions this year to further reduce counselor caseloads and add additional College & Career counselors at high school. Additionally, our School Board Trustees recently voted to support the revision of our School Counselor and College Counselor job descriptions.

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Recently, we received a request from our District AASAT members who wanted to know more about how school counselors specifically support students who are interested in Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We are happy to share a response from one of our College and Career Counselors, in the form of a staff spotlight.

Counselor Spotlight: Krista Jann, College & Career Counselor at Richmond High School

“Here are things that I do to promote HBCUs at Richmond High. I'll also mention the pre-pandemic ones that I'm hoping we'll be able to do again when things are more back to normal.

Current:

- In our advisory presentations about pathways about college systems, we include HBCUs as one of the options and describe them and note who on campus attended an HBCU
 - We also talk about the Black Common App too during our presentations
- During college application workshops, we list HBCUs as one of the applications students can get support from a staff member
- I'm on the CCC to HBCU Listserv and share their weekly events and presentations to my advisors, the BSU advisor, and post in the advisory Google Classrooms for all grade levels
 - They have good informational webinars to prepare students for an HBCU and learn more about them
- I follow the NCR Foundation who organizes the Black College Expo and the CCC transfer to HBCU on Instagram and share events and information on the RHS social media channels
- Shared and promoted the Black College Expo Virtual Fairs throughout the pandemic on Instagram in advisory Google classroom
 - provided transcripts for students who plan to attend

Pre-Pandemic:

- When invited, brought students to the CCC HBCU Caravan
- Hosted the Power of Me Tour that brings in speakers from the Black College Expo prior to the event in Oakland
 - all Black/African American students were invited.
 - They provided Black College Expo tickets to students who attended the presentation at Richmond High
 - I provided the Seniors attending with multiple copies of transcripts and test scores to bring with them and the underclassmen with a copy of their transcript.
- Worked with the BSU advisor to have Black Common App workshop session and paid for application fees if student didn't receive a fee waiver
- Site-funded HBCU tour”

African American Student Achievement - LaResha Martin (William McGee & team)

Black History Month events

The OAASA has put together a list of some of the community events for this year's Black History Month which can be found [here](#). In addition to the community events, each school site is offering their school community a variety of events to celebrate such as an African American Read-In, virtual and in-person assemblies, career day events, and more. Bright Futures worked with OAASA and coordinated three in-person assemblies at three elementary schools. The Ed Fund has offered arts funding grants to our sites and AAPACs.

High school visits

In partnership with the Ed Fund, the OAASA will be visiting high schools and supporting Black students with learning about their scholarship opportunity, and others in the community. The visits will happen over a two week time span. The College and Career department has also provided a counselor's contact information to partner with.

Scholarship information session

Students Rising Above (SRA) and the OAASA hosted an information session for high school juniors pertaining to their program and scholarship. The opportunity was sent to our AAPAC delegates and the high school juniors themselves. Students were highly engaged and asked questions. SRA has volunteered to meet with our children again.

Information about the program and photos from the info session are below

[Students Rising Above](#) (SRA) supports and empowers low-income, first-generation college students to obtain a post-secondary education and secure career-ladder jobs, fueling a diverse and inclusive workforce and thriving economy.

SRA's Rising Stars program offers five to six years of a full continuum of comprehensive, individualized college and career support. These services include college access and success advising, healthcare navigation, socioemotional support, financial capability training, career guidance and readiness, and professional development and mentorship.

The Rising Stars [Application](#) is due on March 4th, 2022.

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Across the nation, for every 100 students from low-income backgrounds...

- 88 will receive high school diplomas
- 45 will enroll in college
- 11 will complete postsecondary program

- National low-income student education for every 100 students: 88 will receive high school diplomas, 45 will enroll in college, but only 11 will complete postsecondary program.
- Keeping the data in mind
- Students Rising Above is a nonprofit that empowers underrepresented students to achieve their life goals by connecting them to tools, resources, and a supportive community they need to excel and thrive on their college-to-career journey.

Participants: LeJon Butcher, CJ Miles, Chekwume Ashiedu, Nina Hill, Maleah

Participants: LeJon Butcher, CJ Miles, William McGee, Chekwume Ashiedu, Nina Hill, Maleah, Jordan Irwin

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Why apply to SRA's Rising Stars Program?

Students Rising Above empowers underrepresented students with drive and potential to achieve their life goals by connecting them to the tools, resources, and supportive community they need to excel and thrive on their college-to-career journey.

Manual: What's applying to the program? Put a 1. What resources do you need?

Participants: LeJon Butcher, CJ Miles, William McGee, Chekwume Ashiedu, Nina Hill, Maleah, Jordan Irwin

Response to Trustee Charter Questions- Business Services Robert McEntire, Ed.D.

TRUSTEE CHARTER QUESTIONS (responses in **BOLD**):

1. Wanted to ensure that you saw this publication from FCMAT ([Charter Petition Evaluation Matrix](#)) and that your team is aware of and considers the use of this tool for charter school evaluation now that CARSnet is not functioning (I did not know they were no longer a functioning entity).

Prior to release of this document, staff leaned heavily on legal counsel for guidance through the initial charter petition evaluation process. This document mirrors the prior guidance and experience of staff in evaluating new charter petitions, and will become the evaluation tool moving forward.

2. I want to also ensure that you know that your team can/should/highly recommend a request from the CDC at the end of every year the following information contained in this slide (below). I think it is important information that would help to guide future renewals.

Staff will include the data referenced in the guidance from YM&C in the annual oversight process starting this year (2020-21 review). In order to ensure a fair, balanced and thorough review of existing charter schools, District staff decided to use a tool authored by FCMAT (Financial Crisis & Management Assistance Team) called the [Charter School Annual Oversight Checklist](#). Just this week, staff met with all charter school leaders within the District's boundaries, and representation from the California Charter Schools Association to review the tool, procedures, process, timelines, and scheduling for school site visits.

3. Would you be able to tell me who has responsibility for charter academic oversight within WCCUSD? Ms. Romo owns the financial compliance piece, but who on the academic side of the house has charters under his/her wing for that part of the compliance/oversight?

Oversight currently resides in the Chief Business Officer's division. Day-to-day work is assigned to Ms. Margarita Romo, Coordinator, Charter Schools. However, the annual review process includes content experts from within the district to review their respective areas and submitted by each charter school. A small group of the individuals listed below will join Ms. Romo on the annual site visits.

Business Services

Robert McEntire, Chief Business Officer

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SeungJa Cha, Executive Director, Business Services

Educational Services/District Operations

Gabriel Chilcott, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Christi Roscigno, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Edith Jordan-McCormick, Principal Vista High School & Virtual Academy

Nicole Joyner, Director of Accountability Data

Michael Booker, District Safety Consultant

Facilities & Operations

Ellen Mejia-Hooper, Director of Facilities Planning and Construction

Vince Meyer, Interim Director of Maintenance and Operations

Human Resources

Sylvia Greenwood, Director of Certificated Human Resources

Special Education

Sonja Neely-Johnson, Interim SELPA Director

Rachel Avanesian, Director, Special Education

Legal

Ed Sklar (Lozano Smith)

Communications Update - Ryan Phillips

Friday, February 11, 2022

[Gerald Knapp Obituary \(2022\) - Resident Of Vallejo, CA - East Bay Times - Legacy.com](#)

Gerald "Jerry" Knapp April 23, 1931 - January 11, 2022 Resident of Vallejo, CA

Jerry Knapp has "left the building." A man who left lasting impressions, a generous man who knew who he was, always honest, brave, reliable, and truthful. We will miss his booming voice, especially when yelling at the TV. The family home was on land that is now occupied by the El Cerrito Plaza, and a dog racing track was nearby. His playground was the Albany Hill. He went to local schools, Harding Elementary and El Cerrito Junior/Senior High, graduating in 1948.

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

[Making Black Lives Matter at School - California Teachers Association](#) | BY JULIAN PEEPLES

The training has evolved and expanded over time. It now embraces the community schools model and provides more support for members to continue the work after the training. Jones and Myart-Cruz have continued to facilitate during the pandemic, leading Black Lives Matter at School trainings with educators at El Cerrito High School, with health and human services professionals who work in multiple school districts, as part of CTA's Tuesday Takeovers for Racial and Social Justice, and in numerous CTA service centers. The duo was recently joined as facilitators by CTA Board member Taunya Jaco.

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Tuesday, February 8, 2022

[WCCUSD initiates COVID-19 group tracing this week | Richmond Standard](#) | By Kathy Chouteau
West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Chris Hurst notified the school community Monday that, effective this week, the district is beginning a group tracing approach to contract tracing for school COVID-19 cases.

[Hercules students arrested for bringing guns to school - KTVU](#)

[Hercules](#) police said they arrested two students Monday for bringing guns to school. A photo of the students carrying guns on social media prompted a lockdown at Hercules Middle and High schools around 1:30 p.m., investigators said. In the photo, the students were standing in the school bathroom holding the guns. One was pointed at the camera.

[Two teens suspected of bringing guns to Hercules High - East Bay Times](#) | By [RICK HURD](#)

Two teens were arrested Monday after bringing guns to Hercules High School and posting pictures on social media with them, police said.
One of the teens is 17, and the other is 15, according to police. Authorities added that they did not believe that either appeared poised to do harm.
“There was nothing that indicated there was a mass shooting in the process of the plan,” Hercules police Cmdr. Joseph Vasquez said in an interview. “On the surface, it just looks like two kids showing off with firearms at the school.”

[Student Brings Loaded Gun To Hercules Middle, High School: Police | Pinole, CA Patch | Bay City News](#), News Partner

Hercules High and Middle School went into lockdown on Monday after police received a report of two juveniles in possession of firearms on campus.
Officers got a report at approximately 1:27 p.m. of two juveniles posing with firearms on social media. The schools were put on lockdown while the officers investigated the incident, they said.
Both youths were identified as 17-year-old and 15-year-old students. Officers located the 15-year-old and then searched the school, finding a bag containing a firearm with a loaded, high-capacity magazine.

Monday, February 7, 2022

[Richmond teachers union, West Contra Costa schools, reach agreement on COVID protocols | KALW](#)
A union news release reported Friday that 93 percent of the members had approved the agreement, which centered around personal protective equipment and staff at school sites.

[Hercules schools locked down after students pose with guns for social media photos](#) | SF Chronicle
Hercules police were called to Hercules Middle School and Hercules High School around 1:30 p.m. for a report of two students possibly in ...

[Limited number of spectators allowed at indoor TCAL games | Richmond Standard](#)

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The Tri-County Athletic League has updated its COVID-19 safety policy to allow a limited number of spectators at indoor games, according to the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD). Per the policy, each player and cheerleader will be allowed to bring two guests. WCCUSD will permit cheer to take place for district home games only. Mask covers and proper social distancing will be required.

Sunday, February 6, 2022

[Richmond Teachers Approve COVID-19 Agreement With District - NBC Bay Area](#) | By [Bay City News](#)

The United Teachers of Richmond have approved a tentative agreement that negotiators reached Jan. 29 with the West Contra Costa Unified School District on additional COVID-19 safety protocols. A union news release reported Friday that 93 percent of the members had approved the agreement, which centered around personal protective equipment and staff at school sites.

[Richmond Teachers Approve COVID-19 Agreement With School District - CBS San Francisco](#)

The United Teachers of Richmond have approved a tentative agreement that negotiators reached Jan. 29 with the West Contra Costa Unified School District on additional COVID-19 safety protocols. A union news release reported Friday that 93 percent of the members had approved the agreement, which centered around personal protective equipment and staff at school sites.

Saturday, February 5, 2022

[If Bay Area school districts struggle with teacher shortages, why are they sending layoff notices?](#) | SF Chronicle

... while in Contra Costa County, education officials are holding a teacher job fair later this month, even as West Contra Costa Unified is ...

[COVID: West Contra Costa kids could have more time to get vaccinated - East Bay Times](#)

Would we be able to make it in May?," Jamela Smith-Folds, a school board trustee for Area 1, said at the meeting. "I don't feel like I can make a ...