

West Contra Costa Unified School District
Office of the Superintendent

Friday Memo
March 25, 2022

Upcoming Events – Kenneth Chris Hurst Sr., Ed.D
April 4-8: No School - Spring Recess

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

BUSINESS SERVICES UPDATE - Robert McEntire, Ed.D.

CAPITAL ADVISORS MEETING

March 22, 2022

Capital Advisor	WCCUSD
Jack O’Connell	Dr. Chris Hurst
Rob Reading	Dr. Robert McEntire
Bernadette Carter	

THEMES AND NOTES FROM MEETING

- Don’t expect more from D.C., it’s not coming
- State Budget looks very strong (revenues way up from January estimates)
- LCFE COLA likely to end north of 6% (inflation over 7%, nearly 8%), better than 5.33% current
 - o Many programs get COLA that is lower than LCFE
 - o Some programs get no COLA (transportation)
- Unemployment (national UE is 4.5%, while CA is 6%)
- GANN Limit
 - o Exemptions (can spend excesses on these items)
 - § Capital Expenditures
 - § COVID
 - § Bond indebtedness
- LEGISLATION PRIORITIES
 - o Increase base funding
 - § Another potential SUPER-COLA, COLA above statutory required amount
 - § Potential additional funding to STRS/PERS
- School Bonds – could put excess taxes over GANN limit here, or sell more bonds (as the state pays down indebtedness with excess revenues)
- Two facilities bond proposals in circulation:
 - o Assembly PK-14 proposal – polling poorly.

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- o Senate PK-12 proposal – polling better without higher ed.
- There is a lot of turnover coming in the legislature
 - o 22 people in the legislature not running again due to term limits
 - o Currently 4 vacancies in legislature (now 54/76 needed to override a veto)
- Proposed change from ADA to Enrollment would cost \$3.4B. Its 50/50 that this will move forward at this point.
- It is likely LCFF will be funded with COLA above 5.33% and the Governor’s 3-year average ADA proposal all move forward.
- Industry Themes (concerns from Superintendent’s across the state)
 - o Facilities – get more “equity” between districts with facilities
 - o 10-12% cost increases normal, now that’s quarterly increases
 - o Pressure from PG&E 13% rate increase next year alone (FY23)
 - § More brownouts and unpredicted shutoffs

Bond Refunding Rating Calls

On March 23, 2022, the District finance and facilities teams, supported by the KNN finance, J.P. Morgan and Raymond James (underwriters), all met with Standard & Poors and Fitch to update the District’s credit ratings in advance of a potential bond refunding. The meetings went very smoothly and the rating agencies felt a level of comfort with the information provided. Since the last board meeting, interest rates have risen substantially. Higher interest rates lower savings and have pushed most of the bond we intended to refinance “out of the money.” That means the refinancing would not meet the district’s criteria for savings to move forward. As a result, we have requested that the rating agencies hold the new data we provided and not re-rate the district until we tell them we are ready to move forward with a transaction once conditions meet district policy for refinancing. To ensure we are ready to respond to quick moving market conditions, we will move forward with all of the legal documents and board authorizations. It is worth noting that the district pays no fees or expenses unless the transaction closes, and all fees would be paid from within the transaction.

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

District Wide Language and Literacy PD

On April 28th there will be an opportunity for all teachers in grades TK-12 to collaborate about best practices in Language and Literacy. The Language & Literacy Teacher Leaders will be facilitating small groups that other teachers can opt in to based upon their interests.

Communications Update - Ryan Phillips

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

[Vallejo High badminton team sweeps Pinole Valley - Times-Herald](#)

The Vallejo High badminton team routed Pinole Valley 17-0 on Tuesday in Tri-County Athletic League play. In girls singles, Rachel Contreras beat ...

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[Bethel High School boys volleyball team upset Pinole Valley - Times-Herald](#)

The Bethel High School boys volleyball team upset Pinole Valley 25-18, 25-19, 25-21 on Tuesday as the Jaguars avenged an earlier defeat to the ...

[West Contra Costa Unified School District could run out of money they project \\$151M debt in 2024 | ABC7](#)

In the East Bay, the West Contra Costa County School District is facing a staggering budget deficit that could result in them running out of money next year. Superintendent Kenneth Hurst started this job 10 months ago, and now he is inheriting years of budget deficit. "I'm deeply concerned about our future," said Superintendent Hurst. According to the latest WCCUSD report, they are currently [\\$42 million](#) in debt.

[Candy and donuts: School mask incitement in SF's Left Bay Area overshadowed by fears of unease and bullying | The Bharat Express News](#)

The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) continues to strongly recommend that all students and staff wear a mask at school or work, but has spoken out against teachers who offer rewards to students who remain hidden.

"Encouraging students to wear masks is prohibited. Providing candy and donuts to students to encourage them to wear masks is against the district's student welfare policy, which discourages the use of candy and similar rewards for student conduct," said San Francisco Bay Area. Area district said.

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

[West Contra Costa students launch weather balloon into earth's stratosphere | EdSource](#)

Students from West Contra Costa Unified's Vista virtual academy and Hercules Middle School launched a [weather balloon](#) miles up into the earth's stratosphere Tuesday after studying weather patterns and learning about meteorological studies.

The balloon launch, dubbed "Mission Validate" is part of the district's partnership with the ["Never Stop Looking Up" research Group](#), a collective of scientists, engineers and mathematicians who work to inspire students.

[School mask incentive in lefty SF Bay Area trumped by fears of unwellness and bullying | Fox News](#)

The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) continues to strongly recommend that all students and staff wear a mask while at school or work, but it has come out against teachers who had been offering rewards for students who stay masked. "Providing incentives to students to wear a mask is prohibited. Providing candy and doughnuts to students to encourage them to wear masks goes against the district's student wellness policy, which discourages the use of candy and similar rewards for student conduct," the San Francisco Bay Area district said.

[Sacramento's teacher strike could be third in Northern California this month](#) | **The Sacramento Bee**

In January, teachers at West Contra Costa Unified School District staged a "sickout" to protest for KN95 masks for students, as well as weekly required testing for students and a formalized omicron variant response plan from the district, according to EdSource. Earlier this year, two Oakland teachers took part

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in a 20-day hunger strike to protest the planned closure of two schools at the end of the school year, according to EdSource.

[PTA yard sale to benefit Verde Elementary | Richmond Standard](#)

Verde Elementary, a K-8 grade school in the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), will host the “Verde Mini Pulga PTA Fundraiser” Sat., March 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the school’s PTA in support of Verde students. According to Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia on Facebook, the yard sale is “an excellent opportunity to support our only school in North Richmond and buy one-of-a-kind items from local residents.” In addition to the opportunity to peruse local treasures, the yard sale will offer food and boosters for \$10 in support of the school, per organizers.

Monday, March 21, 2022

[Richmond High Students Transfixed and Inspired by Jackson Confirmation Hearings | KPIX5 CBS San Francisco](#)

A group of students at Richmond High School were riveted by Monday’s Senate Supreme Court confirmation hearings, finding inspiration and encouragement in the example set by nominee Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson. “Someone who looks like me who’s going to be on the highest court is inspirational since a lot of my family members didn’t go to college. Seeing that actually makes me think I can succeed at that level,” said Richmond High senior Starr Williams.

[WCCUSD prohibits incentivizing students to wear masks | Richmond Standard](#)

West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) Superintendent Dr. Chris Hurst says it is prohibited to incentivise mask wearing in schools, such as providing candy or doughnuts to convince students to wear them. In his weekly newsletter, Dr. Chris Hurst strongly recommended masking but reminded school communities that wearing a mask is [no longer required](#) on campuses as district policies have aligned with state health recommendations.

[Richmond Promise launches search for new team member | Richmond Standard](#)

Richmond Promise—a college success initiative that aims to build a college graduating culture in Richmond via a college scholarship, collaborative partnerships and supportive programming—is looking to hire a full-time [college access and scholarship operations coordinator](#) to join its team. The position’s salary range is \$55,000 to \$65,000, based on experience, and benefits include health care, retirement 401K match, paid holidays and vacation. The ideal candidate for this position will be “passionate about the mission of the Richmond Promise and equitable access to higher education,” per the organization in its job description, adding that they should also believe “deeply in doing whatever it takes to help our students succeed.”

Sunday, March 20, 2022

[State Fiscal Austerity Agency Says 11 School Districts Face Similar Fate as OUSD | Post News Group](#)

The financial austerity arm overseeing public education in California, the Fiscal Crisis Management and Assistance Team (FCMAT), has performed a behind-the-scenes role determining budgets, repeated cutbacks, layoffs, and the closures of 21 schools since they moved into Oakland along with the state

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receiver in 2003. One district, West Contra Costa Unified, recently defied pressure from a FCMAT spokesman to lay off school staff, voting against the layoff recommendation proposed by the district administration.