



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #29 2024-25 School Year – Week of March 24, 2025

Questions are quoted as I received them directly from our community.

1. I am worried about the closure of the Department of Education. Do you have more information on what is happening and how it will impact our funding?

I understand your concerns about the potential closure of the Department of Education. It's important to note that an Executive Order does not have the power to unilaterally dissolve a federal department—only Congress has the authority to do so, as it was established through legislation. Any significant changes to the federal government's role in public education, including funding and student protections, would require congressional action. The Executive Branch alone cannot lawfully enact such measures. I will keep you informed of any changes and updates as they become available.

2. How are the Executive Orders going to affect our work around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion? Will we stop our work with ethnic studies or the equity audit we are doing?

On March 20, 2025, the Trump administration issued an Executive Order proposing to condition federal education funding on compliance with the administration's stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, this order is not law and appears to conflict with existing federal legislation. The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) explicitly prohibits the federal government from requiring specific curricular content as a condition for education grants. SUSD remains committed to advancing equity and inclusion. We will continue our equity audit at the system level and maintain our focus on culturally responsive learning (CRL) in the first ten schools with Dr. Hollie. Additionally, we will expand ethnic studies courses at the high school level to ensure students receive a well-rounded and inclusive education.

3. Which schools receive Equity Multiplier funding? Why do they receive funding and not others?

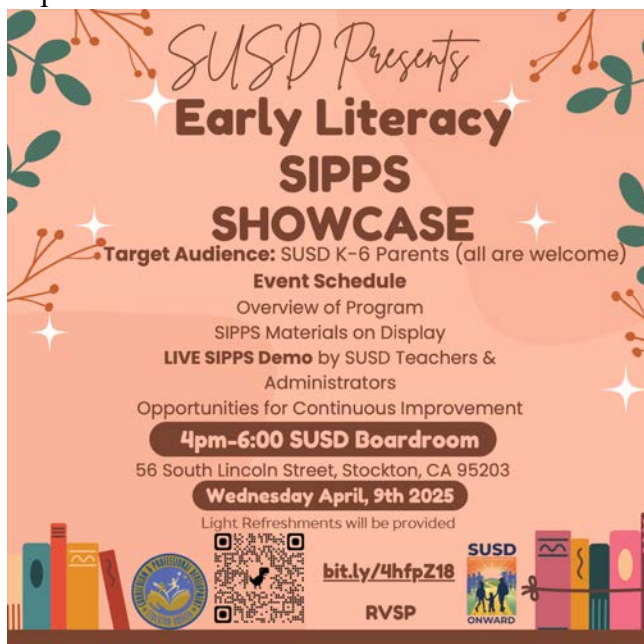
For the 2024-25 school year, SUSD had seven schools which received Equity Multiplier funding which included: Stockton High School, Jane Frederick, Stagg, Adams, El Dorado, Madison, and Van Buren. School sites with prior year nonstability (mobility) rates greater than 25 percent and prior year socioeconomically disadvantaged pupil rates greater than 70 percent, as reported in the California Department of Education's Stability Rate Data are eligible for LCFF Equity Multiplier funding. Each year, the California

Department of Education reapplies the funding formula to determine eligibility. Due to this recalculation, there is a change in the schools which will receive funding for the 2025-26 school year which will include Stockton High School, Jane Frederick, Stagg, Adams, El Dorado, Roosevelt, Wilson, Hazelton, and Van Buren.

4. I was invited to the SIPPS showcase. What will be happening there?

As educators committed to supporting our students' literacy development, we know that the Science of Reading is crucial to providing our students with the best possible foundation for learning to read. During the showcase, we will demonstrate how the SIPPS program, rooted in research-based strategies, can transform literacy instruction by focusing on the essential building blocks of reading. The special SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) Showcase will be held at the district office on April 9, 2025 from 4:00-6:00pm at the District Office Boardroom.

During the showcase, you will have the opportunity to see SIPPS in action and learn how it supports the development of critical phonics, phonological awareness, and sight word skills. As well as be able to listen to SUSD staff discuss how SIPPS has improved outcomes at their schools, view SIPPS materials and provide feedback for continuous improvement.



5. I am considering being on the Bond Oversight Committee for facilities. Where can I find the application?

The Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC) is made up of dedicated volunteers who help ensure transparency by reviewing the district's use of bond funds and reporting their findings to the Board of Education and the public. SUSD is seeking parents and

guardians to serve on the CBOC. If you are interested in serving on the committee, you can find the link to the application [here](#).

6. **We use Ready Math as our math curriculum, and we use iReady as our Math and Reading digital support for students. With the recent changes to our Phonics instruction with SIPPS Benchmark has become more challenging to implement and almost obsolete. As our field moves into the Science of Reading is it possible to switch to Ready Common Core Reading and Writing as our ELA curriculum? Is it possible to get it for those of us who would prefer it as a teaching tool?**

Benchmark is our board adopted core ELA curriculum for the following areas: vocabulary, comprehension, writing, ELD, and word study for grades 4th-6th. SIPPS was adopted by our Board on November 12, 2024, as our core curriculum for foundational skills. Using SIPPS and Benchmark combined, creates a comprehensive program, aligned with the science of reading. SIPPS is only a foundational skills replacement. It should not take any longer than Benchmark's foundational skills portion. iReady is a blended learning program with personalized pathways that should be supporting core instruction by supporting SIPPS and Benchmark instruction.

Regarding the use of Ready Common Core Reading and Writing as our ELA curriculum, that shift would need to occur through the materials adoption process. The new California ELA Framework's earliest anticipated approval and release date is in July of 2025 and the State Board of Education approved list of California ELA adopted Materials' earliest anticipated date is November of 2027. SUSD plans to engage in the adoption process and reconsider our ELA Core curriculum at that time. It is possible that if iReady is an approved materials program by the CDE, that our Adoption committee could select to pilot and recommend to adopt those materials.

Our ELA Curriculum Specialists in the Curriculum and Professional Development department are available to help support you in creating a schedule that includes the Science of Reading adopted curriculum, SIPPS and Benchmark Reading components into your daily instruction.

7. **Hello, I know our students get 10 free tickets for graduation. I was wondering if this year you all can sell tickets if students need more than the allotted number? Elk Grove and Sacramento Unified give their students so many free tickets and anything after that they sell them for \$10. This will help pack out the arena and make it where the graduates does not have to pick and choose who can attend graduation. It is also a way for each school to raise money.**

As we approach the exciting time of graduation, we want to share important details about this year's commencement ceremony at the Stockton Arena. Each graduating senior will receive 10 tickets for family and friends to attend and celebrate their achievement.

The Stockton Arena has a seating capacity of 6,000, and in an effort to ensure fairness and accessibility for all, schools have carefully allocated tickets to be as equitable as possible. We understand that some families may need additional tickets. If this is the case, students may contact their site administration to inquire about the availability of extra tickets. Additional tickets will be distributed while supplies last and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. While schools have historically not sold additional tickets to the community, this may be something sites consider in the future. However, please keep in mind that extra tickets are extremely limited.

Graduation is a momentous occasion, and we appreciate your cooperation in making it a memorable and smooth experience for everyone. If you have any questions, please reach out to your school's administration.

- 8. Hello, Can you explain why the district only allows certain retailers when allocating funds to teachers? Most of these sites are overpriced and limit the amount of supplies we can actually buy since they are usually marked up. There are other sites that would allow us to get more from each dollar the district gives us.**

The district selects specific retailers for allocating funds to teachers as part of an effort to streamline our procurement process and ensure compliance with government and education codes. These retailers are chosen based on their ability to leverage competitive government and cooperative contracts, which are awarded through a rigorous public process mandated by law. This approach helps us effectively track funding sources and streamline payment processes across the district.

While we understand concerns about pricing and the range of supplies available, using approved vendors ensures consistency and adherence to standards throughout the district. We continually review our vendor selection to balance cost-effectiveness with meeting the diverse needs of our educators. Your feedback is valuable, and we are committed to optimizing our procurement practices to support teachers in maximizing the value of district funds.

- 9. Do students get any additional time off for the Easter holiday? My family wants to celebrate out of town but spring break was too early to do that.**

Students will have a day off on Friday, April 18, which is the Friday before Easter. However, there are no additional days off specifically for Easter beyond this date. If your family is planning to travel for the holiday and your child will need to be absent beyond the scheduled holiday, please communicate with their school regarding any necessary arrangements for missed assignments or independent study options.

10. Are there still dual immersion programs in the District? My daughter will be in first grade. Is it too late for her to be included?

In the SUSD, we offer several dual immersion programs that foster bilingualism and cultural awareness. These programs are designed to develop unique language skills from an early age, typically starting before second grade to ensure students build a strong foundation in both languages.

For children entering kindergarten, first grade or second grade, it is not too late to explore our dual immersion options. One of our prominent programs is the Hong-Kingston / Valenzuela's 90:10 English-Spanish Dual Immersion Program, which is actively recruiting students for the 2025-2026 school year. This program is an excellent choice if you are interested in your child becoming bilingual and biliterate.

Additionally, Pittman Charter School and McKinley Elementary School also provide opportunities for students to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. We encourage you to apply online now to secure your child's place and give them the valuable gift of language and cultural fluency.

Would you like your child to be bilingual?

Hong-Kingston / Valenzuela's 90:10 English / Spanish Dual Immersion program is recruiting!

We have been empowering students to be bilingual, biliterate and bicultural citizens since 1980!

The online application for the program is available now!

We are now recruiting Kindergarten-2nd gr. students for the 2025-2026 school year!

Click on the QR Code below to visit our dual immersion website.

SUSD
San Juan Unified School District
Since 1962