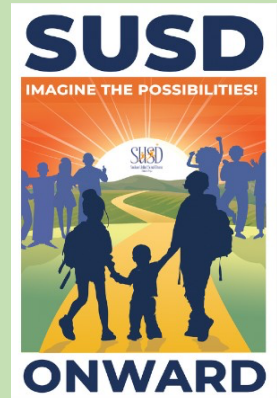




# Ask Dr. Rodriguez



## Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #15 2024-25 School Year – Week of November 18, 2024

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

**1. Can we bring back high school busing? This is a huge problem for families and many of us do not feel comfortable sending our children on the city bus.**

We are excited to share our goal of providing district transportation for high school students starting in the upcoming school year. To ensure this initiative meets the needs of our community, we are preparing a survey for all 9-12 general education students to gather feedback on the number of students we anticipate serving.

Our Transportation team is proactively identifying and planning to reinstate bus stops to accommodate students efficiently. We are also engaging with our DELAC (District English Learner Advisory Committee) and PAC (Parent Advisory Committee) to communicate this plan and gather input, with presentations being scheduled in the coming months.

To build the capacity of our Transportation Department, we are emphasizing the importance of testing and training new candidates. Additionally, we are in the process of creating a new job description for a Behind-the-Wheel Trainer position, which will be crucial in supporting the development and onboarding of our growing team. Recruitment and transition planning for this role will also be a key focus in the months ahead.

This comprehensive approach will ensure we are prepared to deliver safe, reliable, and efficient transportation services to our high school students. Thank you for your continued support as we work toward this goal.

**2. We have two old model copy machines that break down every other day. At the moment both are down and have been for over a week. Teachers are already having to make masters at home because of our site not having ink and now are having to come in early to wait in line to use the 1 working (newer) copier in the office. Many are not able to make the copies they need due to the line getting so long and running out of time. Are there funds for sites with old/rundown copy machines to get replacements? Printer Ink and Copy Machines are essential tools for teachers and they seem to be the hardest to come by these days. We are struggling.**

The district recognizes the challenges associated with older equipment and is actively working on a solution. We will be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to secure new copiers for our sites, which will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval in the

coming months. In the meantime, to address immediate needs, the district is arranging short-term leases for copiers to ensure schools and departments can maintain their operations effectively. Please contact the Purchasing Department directly, and they will assist in arranging a leased copier for your site.

**3. When will SUSD open SDC TK classes? Currently students who are TK age and receiving services in a SDC class, are enrolled in SDC preK classes.**

The Special Education Department is excited to announce that it is exploring the development of a Transitional Kindergarten Special Day Class (SDC) for Fall 2025, contingent on special education enrollment and student needs. This initiative reflects a forward-thinking approach to addressing the needs of students with disabilities and ensuring they have access to the best opportunities for success in school and beyond. It will undoubtedly be a valuable addition to the Special Education Early Learning landscape, supporting students in their formative years. SDC Transitional Kindergarten will be designed to bridge the gap between early education and Kindergarten, providing students with a comfortable, familiar environment. It will prepare students, not only academically but also socially and behaviorally, helping students feel confident and capable when they enter the Kindergarten setting.

**4. When is there going to be sports at the elementary schools?**

The Expanded Learning Opportunity Program (ELOP) has already begun intramural sports at our K-8 schools for our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Below is a flyer which highlights our current efforts in flag football:



## 5. How can our police department help more with traffic? It is horrible.

Early morning traffic and afternoon traffic around our schools pose several safety concerns for our students and staff. This is an issue highlighted by the fact that we have hundreds of parents, students, and staff entering or leaving our schools during a short period of time. The Stockton Unified School District Police Department provides service for approximately 56 school sites, with a daily operating sworn staff of 8-10 officers. This limits their ability to provide daily traffic support for school sites, especially as all schools start and end at the same, or near the same time. As a result, we sought alternative methods to provide support to our school sites through a District Traffic Plan.

The Traffic Plan consists of three methods of approach: Education, Engineering, and Enforcement. Department staff respond to a school site to observe and assess the current traffic flow and major issues. Through education we work with school sites to identify the most common violations and create flyers to educate our parents on how those violations impact our school safety. Through Engineering we identify infrastructure issues that may be impacting the area and work with the city or county to implement traffic controls to help traffic flow. Lastly, the department uses enforcement to cite traffic violators who do not comply with the traffic laws. This is the avenue of last resort for the department as we want to encourage parents to bring their student to school safely. A citation for a traffic violation ranges from \$100-\$500 and can be the difference between rent and food for many of our families. Such fines can also hinder their ability to bring their students to school, thus contributing to chronic absenteeism. Citations are usually only used for significant traffic safety concerns.



### **TRAFFIC SAFETY & PARKING PROGRAM:**



**6. What are the dates of the Saturday Schools for this year? Why are sites being told that they have to hold them only on those dates?**

The Saturday Schools for this year are scheduled for February 1, February 22, and March 8. We are holding them on these specific dates to ensure district-level support for all sites. On these days, various departments will be present including our SUSD Police Department, Transportation Department, and Child Nutrition and Food Services. They will be available to assist with operations and ensure the events run smoothly.

**7. I am hearing that different school sites have to do a different number of Saturday Schools. How many does my site have to do?**

The number of Saturday Schools assigned to each site is determined based on the level of chronic absenteeism recorded during the 2023-2024 school year. The distribution for each site is outlined in the graphic below.

## Number of Saturday Schools Needed per School Site



Based on Last Years 2023-24 Overall Chronic Absenteeism Rates



**8. Are we going to provide the gifts for our FIT families this year?**

You can pick up a tag to purchase a gift for one of our 214 Families in Transition (FIT) families at one of the following locations: District Office, Early Childhood Education, Facilities Transportation, Health Services, Purchasing, Mental Health or Counseling Department. The gifts should be provided by Monday, December 9, 2024. We ask that the items are not wrapped but placed in a gift bag so they can be checked prior to the FIT Holiday Event on December 18<sup>th</sup> at the Family Resource Center.

**9. I would like to know about English classes. How long does a 4th-grade student receive ELD instruction in the classroom?**

K-6 English Learners (ELs) must receive ELD (English Language Development) instruction for 30 minutes daily. Currently, we are using the Benchmark ELD curriculum for this instruction in the classroom.

Additionally, I am pleased to share that we are piloting a program called *Hello! For Newcomer students*. This program could potentially expand to all K-8 sites in the future, depending on the results of the pilot and feedback from teachers and students.

**10. I would like to know if there is a plan to update job descriptions for CSEA 821? Some employees are not performing job duties because the job descriptions are outdated (2006). Having job descriptions so outdated creates grievances, insubordination, conflict and disengagement. What will the district be doing to rectify this issue?**

The district has been working on updating job descriptions as they are brought to Labor Relations. Changes to job descriptions require significant review and negotiations with CSEA 821. There are times when reaching an agreement can take longer than anticipated, which may lead to delays in implementing new job descriptions. We understand and acknowledge that such delays can have an impact on our operations, our employees, and ultimately, our students. We appreciate your patience and commitment as we work through these complexities together.

If any concerns arise regarding assigned work, it is important to distinguish between classification-related issues and workplace expectations. Should an employee refuse to perform assigned duties, please reach out to Human Resources immediately for guidance, as this may be a disciplinary issue. The Labor Relations department can also help to clarify expectations. They can review the issue and provide support as needed ([hrlaborrelations@stocktonusd.net](mailto:hrlaborrelations@stocktonusd.net)).

Lastly, for employees whose job responsibilities have evolved over time, the CSEA 821 reclassification process may be an option. Yesterday was the first of two orientations, with the next one scheduled for December 4th at 5:00 PM. Please share this information with any interested employees.