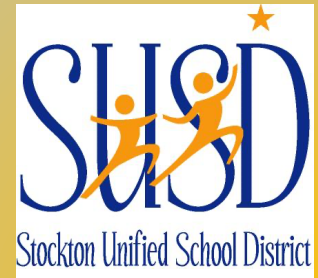




Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #2 2023-24 School Year – Week of August 21, 2023

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

1. Why did you accept this job as superintendent knowing how many problems this district and city have? How are you going to solve these problems?

I accepted the position of superintendent Stockton Unified School District (SUSD) because I believe in the transformative power of education and the positive impact it can have on students' lives. I fulfilled my commitment to Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) of staying for seven years which is a testament to my dedication to facilitating meaningful change and making a lasting difference in the community.

Another key reason I chose SUSD is my desire to continue supporting vulnerable student populations. Being in a larger district provides an opportunity to reach and help a greater number of students in need. I believe that every student deserves access to quality education, regardless of their background or circumstances, and I am eager to work towards creating an inclusive and equitable environment for all. My deep skill set in both curriculum and instruction as well as budget management equips me to address the multifaceted challenges of SUSD. By focusing on curriculum and instruction, I intend to enhance the quality of education students receive, ensuring that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the modern world. Additionally, my experience in budget management will allow me to allocate resources efficiently and effectively, promote a culture of accountability and ensure that the district's financial resources are utilized in ways that have the greatest impact on student outcomes.

I am committed to a collaborative approach in solving the district's problems. I believe that meaningful change can only occur when all stakeholders – including teachers, families, parents, community members, and students – are actively involved in the decision-making process. By fostering open lines of communication and partnerships, we can collectively identify innovative solutions and implement them effectively.

My focus will also be on system development within the district at many levels. I recognize that lasting change requires the establishment of robust systems and processes that can sustain improvements over time. This involves not only addressing immediate concerns but also implementing long-term strategies that will lead to continued progress even after my tenure.

2. You said that Let's Talk is anonymous. Is it really confidential?

You are able to submit your comments and questions without providing any contact information, therefore, I do not have access to any personal information. However, as with all online communication, K12 Insight could provide key information to law enforcement if

there was a need to reach out to the person due to a threat or inappropriate content being provided.

3. **Have you been receiving a lot of questions through Let's Talk? Are you the one who is answering them?**

I have received 103 comments and questions over the last several weeks. Although it is time consuming, I believe it is important that I am the one reading and responding to the messages. Below is a word cloud of the top topics and themes that have been shared:



4. **When are we going to start back up negotiations?**

The first day for our new Director of Labor Relations is this coming Monday, August 28, 2023. We have also been solidifying our budget projections, so we understand our fiscal standing. We are scheduling the negotiations dates with the various union negotiating teams so we can begin the process as quickly as possible.

5. **What was your reasoning behind limiting the number of conferences that administrators can go to?**

In a strategic effort to ensure fiscal solvency while simultaneously enhancing operational oversight within SUSD, there was a reduction in the number of conferences allowed per year, with a limit of three conferences for each administrator. At this time, this limitation only applies to administrators. This restriction applies to multi-day conferences which require travel and hotel expenses. We believe that this measure will not only contribute to fiscal solvency but also enable us to strengthen operational oversight.

Conferences have long been a valuable avenue for professional development, networking, and remaining updated on industry trends. However, as we strive to maintain fiscal responsibility, align our resources effectively, and settle negotiations with our labor partners, it has become imperative to reevaluate our approach to conference attendance.

Rationale and Benefits:


1. **Fiscal Responsibility:** By reducing the number of conferences attended, we will significantly curtail travel and accommodation expenses. This will free up resources,

both general fund and categorical funding, that can be directed towards essential operational needs, further supporting the financial health of SUSD.

2. **Focus on Alternative Professional Development:** We recognize the importance of continuous personal and professional growth. Beyond conferences, numerous effective avenues exist, including:
 - Professional Learning Communities: Collaborative groups fostering shared learning and expertise.
 - Book Studies: Engaging in group readings and discussions of relevant literature.
 - Peer Groups: Learning from colleagues and sharing best practices.
 - Job Embedded Coaching: One-on-one guidance and mentoring within daily work.
 - Mentorship: Cultivating relationships with experienced mentors.
 - Learning by Doing: Hands-on experiences and project-based learning.
3. **Local Conferences and Required Trainings:** Administrators will still have the opportunity to attend local one-day conferences that do not require overnight stays. Moreover, the one-day trainings, webinars, or any required trainings approved by your Assistant Superintendent will not count towards the three conference limit.
6. **We have a problem with students being absent all of the time. What are we doing about it?**

We have a dedicated Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) team who is committed to reaching students and families who are currently disengaged from our schools. This year to date, the team has completed 440 home visits and made 964 phone calls. Additionally, the team has successfully located and confirmed enrollment for 63 "no show" students with that number growing daily. Next month is Attendance Awareness Month and below is the information that will be provided to all families and community members:


SEPTEMBER IS ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH



Did you know?

- Good attendance can help children do well in school, and eventually in the workplace and in college.
- Missing 10%, or about 2 days each month over the course of a school year, can make it harder to learn to read.
- Starting in preschool and kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Absences can be a sign that a child is losing interest, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other difficulty.

When do absences become a problem:



Absence Level	Description
Chronic Absence	Missing 18 days or more
Warning Sign	Missing 10-17 days
Satisfactory	9 or fewer absences

What you can do

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine. Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors and other parents for advice on how to make your child feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- If your children must stay home because they are sick, make sure they have asked teachers for resources and materials to make up for the missed learning time in the classroom.
- Communicate with our school staff, teachers, counselors, support persons if your child is struggling with school. We are here to help :)

Source: Attendanceworks.com

7. I want to transfer my child to a different school. What do I do?

You may request an interdistrict transfer through our Admissions and Family Services Department at the following [link](#). Approval for interdistrict transfers is determined by the following criteria:

- Students are accepted on a space-available basis
- The student fails to have satisfactory academic performance.
- Your child must have good attendance with no "cutting" classes and few or no tardies
- Your child must not have any behavioral or discipline problems
- All transportation will be provided and/or arranged by the parent

8. Will the food give-away at the Family Resource Center continue? I have not seen any information on it.

Food distribution occurs at the Family Resource Center through our collaboration with Second Harvest of the Greater Valley every second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 11am to 1pm. Below is additional information on the resource.

**SUSD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS &
SECOND HARVEST OF THE GREATER VALLEY**

**FREE
GROCERY
DISTRIBUTION**

**2ND AND 4TH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
11 AM TO 1PM**

Join Stockton Unified School District's Family Resource Centers team for a free grocery handout at our main office!

The event will be a drive-thru. We request that all families wait in their vehicles to receive groceries.

The grocery distribution will be located in the School for Adults Annex Building Parking Lot.



Contact SUSD Family Resource Center
1661 Pacific Ave. Stockton Ca, 95204
209.933.7470
familyresourcecenter@stocktonusd.net
<https://www.stocktonusd.net/Domain/167>



9. How old do I have to be to be a Junior Cadet?

To be part of the [District Police Department Explorer Program](#), you must be at least 14-20 years old and graduated 8th grade. In addition, you have and maintain a 2.0 GPA or better, be able and willing to attend meetings and volunteer at events and pass a background check and interview. If you wish to be a police officer trainee who is sponsored into the Police Academy, we have two openings which you can apply through Edjoin. For the police officer trainee, you must be 21 years old.

10. So how would I go about making reports about negligence at a school?

We encourage the early, informal resolution of complaints at the site or department level whenever possible. The first step in resolving a complaint is to speak with the staff involved

and/or the administrator of the school site or department. If there are issues that cannot be resolved or if the issue is very serious, a more formal process may be followed. You can find the compliant form at the following [link](#).

Once received, Constituent Services will determine the level to assign for resolution.

Level 1 –Site Administration/Supervisor

Level 2 – Department Director

Level 3 – Department Assistant Superintendent

Level 4- Constituent Services or Human Resources Complaint

The complaints will be forwarded to the supervisor or site administrator to resolve the complaint. If the supervisor or site administrator finds that the allegations in the complaint have merit, they may address the complaint by taking appropriate corrective actions within the authority of their position. The findings in the investigations shall be explained to the complainant and respondent.