



# *Ask Dr. Rodriguez*



## Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #9 2023-24 School Year – Week of October 16, 2023

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

**1. We have never had a State of the District before. Why did you hold the event?**

The State of the District event is a platform to showcase student talent, express appreciation for staff dedication, highlight our unique programming, and engage with our educational community to discuss SUSD's strengths and areas of opportunity along with priority recommendations for the future.

The State of the District event provided the community with a view of our talented students in the Chavez Jazz Band, Mariachi Chavez, Chavez Choir, Franklin Color Guard, Fremont Bulldog Jazz Combo and our Franklin Women In Construction Program. SUSD has innovative program approaches and initiatives that set our district apart from others and that need to be highlighted. These programs and initiatives are implemented through the unwavering dedication of our almost 4500 staff members. The success of any school district depends heavily on the hard work, commitment, and expertise of teachers, administrators, and support staff. The State of the District event offered an opportunity to publicly recognize and thank our staff for their tireless efforts in providing quality programming and support to our amazing students.

The State of the District event also served as an open forum for the community to gain insights into both our strengths, areas of opportunity and priority recommendations. By sharing our achievements and priorities, we aim to foster a transparent and constructive dialogue with our educational community about our path forward. We must work together collectively to implement the priority recommendations with the students at the center of our decision making.

**2. You said that there was minimal cost for the State of the District event. I heard he charges \$30,000 to \$50,000 to make an appearance. Did you pay Edward James Olmos to be there?**

We did not pay Mr. Olmos to be at the State of the District nor did we pay for any of his travel expenses to get to Stockton. He has spoken at two of my previous State of the Districts events in other communities and never charged for his appearance. The same is true for the SUSD State of the District event.

**3. You held the State of the District in the morning. Would you consider holding it at night so that staff could go to the event?**

The State of the District will be an annual event. The morning time generally works best for community partners; however, I can consider changing the time if we believe that staff would like to be present. We did record the event which you can find at the following [link](#).

**4. Why is the district sending home an Alternative Income Verification form asking us as parents how much money we make? Why do we have to share the information?**

The Income Verification form is an annual document that districts throughout California use in order to receive additional funding to support the needs of their student population. The Alternative form is a simpler version. The information you provide is confidential. It is used for the sole purpose of generating state funds to support student learning at your child's school. At no time will your information be shared. If you already completed the original verification form earlier in the year, you should not be receiving an Alternative form this time. Thank you for taking the time to complete the form. The funds go directly to supporting your child's school.

**5. I hear some students were approached by homeless people on their way to school, what are you guys doing about?**

The District is collaborating with our Department of Public Safety and the Stockton Police Department to increase patrols in the mornings near our schools. The Department of Public Safety patrols before and after school are conducted to help ensure safe pathways to and from school. They have also made operational changes by moving their officer briefing to a later time, once school is in session. This will allow officers to check in for the day and immediately go out to the school sites to assist in helping our students make it to school safely. The District also worked with our law enforcement agencies to develop safety tips, we encourage you to go over these with your students.

**6. Is it true that teachers will be receiving \$250 to use towards classroom instructional materials and supplies?**

The SUSD Board of Trustees approved the Board Agenda Item on Sept. 26, 2023, for the allocation of \$250 per classroom teacher exclusively for educational materials. The materials will be purchased through Southwest School Supply. Items must be purchased through the school site's established PO process. Funds must be spent between October 1- April 30, 2024.

**7. Have you decided yet when and where the town hall on Special Education is going to be? I want to go.**

The town hall meeting on Special Education will be on Monday, November 6, 2023 from 5:15-6:30pm at the Walton Special Education Center at 4131 N. Crown Ave, Stockton.

**8. It seems each school has different programs and events. does each school site have different funding system? and if so why?**

Each school may have different programs and events, primarily because they receive varying levels of funding or they choose to use their site discretionary monies differently. School funding is typically based on the number of students enrolled, but it can be further influenced by factors such as the number of students in specific subgroups, including foster youth, students living in poverty, and English Learners. This differential funding is meant to address the unique needs of these subgroups and ensure equal educational opportunities. In addition to student counts, schools may receive additional state and federal grants, such as the Early Literacy Block Grant or improvement grants based on low achievement, to support specific programs and initiatives tailored to their student population and academic goals. These variations in funding aim to address the diverse needs of students and improve educational outcomes across different schools.

**9. Does Stockton Unified have any resources or workshops to support parents of LGBTQ+ students, especially during the Month of October, since it is LGBTQ+ History month?**

We are dedicated to supporting the inclusion of all students, therefore, our SUSD Family Resource Center is hosting two parent/guardian, and caregiver workshops. The first workshop around supporting LGBTQ+ students will be held on October 26, 2023 at 9:00am in English and 10:30am in Spanish. The second workshop on Transgender and Non-binary Awareness will be on November 17, 2023 at 9:00am in English and 10:30am in Spanish.

**10. Do you have any safe events for Trick or Treating for students?**

We hope students and families can join for our SUSD's Department of Public Safety Trunk or Treat event on Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup> from 4:00-6:00pm at Weber Point Event Center. Apart from candy, students will be able to enjoy a car show, reptile show and music.

