



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #10 2023-24 School Year – Week of October 23, 2023

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

1. My son told me that there is no school on Wednesday. Is it true that there is no school in the middle of next week?

There is no school on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 as it is a scheduled vacation day. You can find the 2023-2024 instructional calendar at the following [link](#).

2. Can my child wear a costume to school on October 31st?

Many of our school sites have an opportunity for students to wear costumes during either a parade or a trunk or treat event. As it varies by school site, please reach out to your individual school site to ask for the guidelines and restrictions prior to having your child arrive at school in costume.

3. At Hazelton Elementary, we had an active shooter training drill this week. I think every site should do that. Is that happening?

The Emergency Services Division has conducted two active shooter training(s) and plans on completing similar trainings at all school sites and departments.

4. You make it seem like SUSD is doing so well. When are you going to admit that many things are not working?

One of the primary duties of the Superintendent is indeed to recognize and celebrate the hard work of our 4,500 dedicated employees and highlight the incredible programs and initiatives that are making a positive impact on our students and the community. It is crucial to emphasize the positive aspects of our district to foster morale and maintain a strong sense of community and pride. However, this does not mean we are ignoring areas that may need improvement. In fact, it is the responsibility of the Superintendent to work on a co-created plan to enhance the lives of our students and address any challenges we may be facing.

The State of the District report is a comprehensive report that not only highlights our achievements and positive programs but also contains priority recommendations for areas that require attention and enhancement. These recommendations will not be overlooked. The recommendations came from our staff, students, parents, and community who attended the listening sessions and town halls. Recognizing our successes and addressing our challenges go hand in hand, and the Superintendent's role is to strike a balance between these aspects to ensure that our students receive the best possible education and support. We are committed to continuously striving for improvement and providing a world-class education that will prepare our students for the future they deserve.

- 5. CSEA 821 has not had a pay increase since 2020. With this combined with inflation our pay is falling behind drastically. How will you address this issue with the group of employees that keep your schools open?**

We understand the concerns regarding pay stagnation and its impact due to inflation. We are committed to addressing this issue through our current negotiations process. We are working diligently to provide a comprehensive compensation package to ensure our valued employees are fairly rewarded for their vital contributions. Your dedication to keeping our schools open does not go unnoticed, and we will strive to secure the best possible outcome for all.

- 6. What was the significance of the color orange for Unity Day?**

SUSD's PLUS Program and SUSD support Unity Day, which was created by Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center. We join efforts with millions of people across the world on Unity Day each year in wearing orange to send one large ORANGE message of support, hope, and unity to show that we are united against bullying and united for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Unity Day is celebrated in October, and **orange** is a color commonly identified with the month and the autumn season. It is also a color that is associated with safety and visibility. It is a color described as warm and inviting, and its vibrancy makes an impactful statement. We had an amazing Unity Day this year that was full of awareness and prevention activities to kick off November's Bullying Prevention Month.

- 7. How many students did you serve during Fall Break? Are you going to be doing the same type of programming for winter break?**

Over Fall Break, Extended Learning Opportunity Program (ELOP) kept the doors open and lights on for over 4,447 TK - 8th-grade SUSD students, and an average of 890 students attended daily. ELOP provides direct services to our SUSD students before-school, after-school, during Fall Break, Spring Break, and Summer Break. ELOP does not provide winter programming for our TK-8th-grade students at this time. We look forward to our next Spring Break Day Camp. Stay connected by visiting us at <http://www.stocktonusd.net/ELOP>

- 8. I understand we have hired virtual speech therapists. Teachers do not have time to set up these Zoom calls, and the classroom setting is too noisy for them to do speech in class. What is the district's plan for making sure these kids get services?**

We have hired a number of virtual speech therapists as we continue our efforts to recruit in-person Speech Therapists for our district. We recognize that it is not ideal, however, this practice is necessary to ensure that students are receiving their Speech and Language services. Our Special Ed Program Specialist is working with the site teams to arrange and secure a plan to ensure each student has access to the speech services being provided by the virtual therapist. Each site will vary with their plan of location and delivery. We are working to maximize all resources that are available in these unusual circumstances to ensure that students receive the services listed on their IEP. Everyone's teamwork and understanding are appreciated during this until we have the in-person staff needed. Please join us in our efforts to recruit and join in problem solving, by encouraging those you know to spread the word of the upcoming job fair as we continue our relentless recruiting efforts.

- 9. Why isn't there any school zone signs so drivers can go slow on Rosemarie Street that runs behind Stagg and into the sports parking lot? We wait for our daughter on**

that street but continuously see drivers speeding through the area not caring about the safety of students.

Stagg High School currently has school zone signs around its perimeter at the intersections of Rosemarie and Crown, Rosemarie and McGraw, Brookside and McGraw, and Brookside and Crown. The Federal Highway Administration Safe Routes to Schools Guide recommends signs be posted near intersections to give the sign maximum exposure. It is further recognized that excessive use of posted signs may lead drivers to ignore the devices. We will work with the Department of Public Safety to deploy the speed radar signs in the area and conduct traffic enforcement to deter these behaviors.

10. I wanted to be part of the Thriving Educators program but I did not sign up in time. Will you be doing another cohort in the future?

The first session was this week and there was excellent feedback. If it continues to be rewarding for staff, we will have another cohort next year.