



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #24 2023-24 School Year – Week of February 19, 2024

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

1. Help me understand why the District is doing the health care changes. What is going on?

Due to the 2024 CalPERS 10% increases to our health and welfare costs, the grand majority of SUSD staff would have seen a decrease in their paycheck for the month of December and future months. To avoid staff receiving a reduced take home pay, the District absorbed both the employee and District increased costs starting December 2023 which ranges from \$84.59 to \$214.89.

Beginning 2023, the District’s Healthcare Contribution for employee’s range was from \$1609.30 to \$2158.42. The total District Healthcare Contribution including the CalPERS has increased to ranges from \$1824.19 to \$2158.42. Once all parties agree to the District’s Healthcare Cost Impact Mitigation proposal, employees would see a monthly cost savings from \$0 up to \$539.54 depending on their health plan.

2. What happened with the large COLA that the District received this year?

The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) covers all on-going expenditures. For districts with declining enrollment, including three quarters of all CA Districts such as SUSD, it also covers the loss of funding from loss of Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Below is a listing of how the COLA was used in SUSD:

COLA		8.22%
Increase from COLA		\$20,949,791.50
Decrease due to ADA		(\$15,814,097.00)
PERS Increase		(\$1,679,713.09)
Medical Increase		(\$4,730,704.87)
Step and Column		(\$5,829,947.00)

3. I am a teacher in the District, and my Principal had us complete training on Catapult. The training mentioned receiving emergency notifications on our cell phones. Are we required to put it on our cell phones?

The District does not require teachers to put the Catapult application on their cell phones as it is optional. However, we expect staff members to use at least one district-supplied device such as their desktop computer, laptop, or tablet. Our IS Department is currently working on placing the application on all classroom computers. We recommend downloading the app to your cell phone as an additional safety notification during emergencies. The mobility and portability of the cell phone will allow you to receive updated communication from Catapult in an emergency.

4. Where can I find out information on the Specialty Schools? I want my daughter to go to Primary Years Academy?

Stockton Unified School District offers a variety of unique schools and programs to meet the needs of many students. Every type of learner has an opportunity to thrive. SUSD has a range of options, including fundamental schools that inspire innovation and creativity in career pathways and STEM. If interested, you are encouraged to review the portfolios of the specialized programs in the District. You may choose the school of interest beginning January 8, 2024.

Five elementary schools implement a random selection process using a lottery system including Commodore Skills, Fremont, Hong Kingston, Kohl, and Primary Years Academy.

Timelines and selection processes vary. For interest in non-lottery schools please check their school brochures to ensure the application process is followed and meets the required deadline.

Lottery School Important Dates:

January 8th: Online application period opens for the 2024-2025 school year.

February 23rd: Online application for random selection sites closes at 4:00 pm

February 27th: Lottery selection postings available from **9:00 a.m.-11:00:00 am**

After March 9th: Confirmation and status of the application are mailed to applicants.

As openings are available, applicants in the random selection will be placed in schools. Other applicants will be on a waiting list as determined by the arbitrary selection process.

More information on all 19 SUSD Specialty Schools at the following link:

<https://www.stocktonusd.net/Page/677>

5. As an employee of the district, are there any privileges with getting our children enrolled in Head Start preschools (that are on SUSD campuses)?

Stockton Unified Employees are encouraged to enroll their children into district operated preschools to which they qualify. Early Childhood Education staff are available to assist all employees to determine which program best meets their needs.

Stockton Unified School District operates California State Preschool and Head Start Preschool Programs. Enrollment in California State Preschool and Head Start is based upon income eligibility or additional need-based criteria such as IEP status. California State Preschool has significantly raised the income eligibility guidelines over the past two years. Many families may now qualify for services – see charts below. Unfortunately, there are no income waivers available for school employees at this time.

Income guidelines for each program are included below. If you have any questions regarding eligibility, please contact Nancy in the Early Childhood Education Department at (209) 933-7380 x 1383 or visit the SUSD Early Childhood Education Department webpage at

<https://www.stocktonusd.net/Page/319>.

Head Start Income Eligibility 2023-24	
Household Size	Annual Income (Before Taxes)
1	\$14,580
2	\$19,720
3	\$24,860
4	\$30,000
5	\$35,140
6	\$40,280
7	\$45,420
8	\$50,560
Each Additional Member	+ \$5,140

2023-24 Schedule of Income Ceilings for the State Preschool Program California Department of Education Child Development Division		
#Persons in Family	Income Eligibility Threshold	15% Above the Income Eligibility Threshold
1-2	\$7,068	\$8,128.20
3	\$8,049	\$9,256.35
4	\$9,342	\$10,743.30
5	\$10,837	\$12,462.55
6	\$12,332	\$14,181.80
7	\$12,612	\$14,503.80
8	\$12,892	\$14,825.80
9	\$13,172	\$15,147.80
10	\$13,453	\$15,470.95
11	\$13,733	\$15,792.95
12 or more	\$14,013	\$16,114.95

- 6. I'm looking for information to get my GED, but I was wondering if there's any chance to get it online. or do you have any classes on line, I would like to enroll for my GED and English as my second language.**

Stockton School for Adults has online options for all programs, including GED Prep and ESL, during the morning and afternoon sessions. For both programs, students can register in-person or online ([Registration link HERE](#)) and will be scheduled for an initial assessment. Immediately following the assessment, students entering the ESL program will choose the class session time and format (in-person or online) they prefer. Students entering the GED Prep program will receive a phone call from the GED Counselor to discuss schedule and online options.

- 7. I'm struggling with classroom routines and procedures. Are there classroom management trainings provided by the district?**

We offer classroom management trainings at every STA PD day. Cari Chavez's department has a number of people trained as trainers of CHAMPS and they offer classroom management trainings throughout the year.

Additionally, individualized help is always available from an instructional coach, program specialist, mentor provider, site support provider or curriculum specialists depending on the teachers' site and credential status. We want to support teachers at all times and not make them wait for a training to be offered before receiving the assistance they need. We encourage them to reach out to site administration or site support providers.

8. What is the process to request assistance from our Technology Department?

For the fastest service, you can submit a tech request through the Technology Department's [helpdesk](#) system.

9. I've been an educator in SUSD for over 15 years and am amazed that SUSD does not recycle paper, cans, anything! I know that this is a state law that school sites recycle materials and yet we are not. Additionally, I feel we are missing a critical piece of instruction for our students to learn about resources and recycling. I hope we can get the systems needed to make this happen soon. Thank you

We have officially launched a pilot recycling program at two schools, Chavez High and Rio Calaveras. This groundbreaking initiative started on January 19th and is already showing incredible promise. This is the first time there has ever been a program like this in SUSD. It is meant to replace the current system which is taking multiple staff an extended period of time. Despite all of the time and energy, it is not being implemented correctly. Once we have worked out any issues with the two pilot schools, we would like to take this district wide.

What sets this program apart is our partnership with the Greater Valley Conservation Corps, a dedicated group operating out of the San Joaquin County Office of Education. Not only do they assist with handling all recycling materials, but they also provide invaluable academic instruction, employment opportunities, green job training, and essential life skills to young adults aged 18 to 26 free of charge. The impact of this collaboration extends beyond just recycling. It creates a meaningful learning experience for young adults, instilling in them a sense of environmental responsibility while equipping them with essential skills for their future endeavors. I am pleased to announce that we are now exploring the expansion of this program to our facilities office and the Coleman center.

Greater Valley also offers recycling bins for classrooms and office spaces for those who want to participate. For example, the Sustainability Club at Chavez has taken on the task of placing bins and encouraging students to recycle. If any teachers are interested in implementing this program at their school, our Energy Education Specialist, Jermaine Reece, is more than willing to provide assistance and support every step of the way.

In addition, Under AB 1826 we are required to recycle all organic waste anywhere we place organic waste, such as food in designated containers, and discard appropriately by our custodial staff. Our Custodial staff, in partnership with Cal-Waste, train and educate students and staff, after service, to put plates in a designated location, scrape leftover foods to a designated container, and discard leftover milk into a designated container for disposal.

Child Nutrition has made and will continue to make efforts to minimize any negative environmental effects related to the discard of supplies used in the Child Nutrition Program. Styrofoam plates have been eliminated and the department is now using fully environmentally-friendly and fully biodegradable trays and plates.

During and after COVID the use of Individually wrapped products increased due to the fears of transmission from person to person. The Child Nutrition Department has made efforts to eliminate unnecessary packaging to reduce the amount of waste after service. In addition, they have focused on our site meal productions to ensure a minimal amount is leftover for discard. They also are in the process of identifying official carts or equipment that will be used as Share Tables so that any food items that are wrapped and uncontaminated by touch could be offered to students that may still be hungry after receiving a reimbursable meal, therefore minimizing further any leftover organic waste.

10. What is the District doing to provide more locally grown food to students?

Child Nutrition and Food Service Department received a grant for local food sources. This grant provides funding for SUSD to work with local farms, socially disadvantaged farms and minority-operated farms. With this grant, Child Nutrition and Food Service Department is currently feeding students All Natural Sous Vide Chicken drumsticks from a company located in Modesto, CA. Next month, students will have spaghetti, the spaghetti will be made with grass-fed ground beef from another local vendor. In addition, produce is delivered twice a week from local vendors.