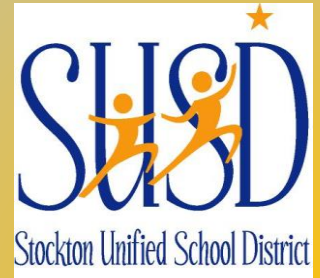




Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #17 2023-24 School Year – Week of December 18, 2023

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

- 1. I have heard the district is going to cover the insurance increase and lower my monthly payment. I also heard there may be a retention bonus coming. Is this true? Is this for all employees?**

SUSD is committed to and understands the importance of providing comprehensive healthcare benefits to our valued employees. To support staff wellness, SUSD has proposed the District would absorb the 10% increase to health and welfare costs and increase the medical cap for 2024 to all labor groups, which, if approved, would cover the cost of Kaiser for all eligible employees of the district and their families. This means that Kaiser family coverage would be available at no additional cost to all eligible employees within the District.

To further express our appreciation for our staff's hard work and dedication, the Stockton Unified School District has put forth an initiative and proposal to provide a one-time retention bonus. This bonus of \$5000 would be paid in two installments upon ratification of all parties.

- 2. If the agreements with the unions on the District covering the cost of the health care increases falls through, will the employees have to repay the amount that the District covered in December and January?**

In the support of its employees, the District is covering the entire 10% increase to the healthcare benefits until we can reach a formal agreement. Regardless of the final outcome of the negotiated agreement, employees will not have to repay any of the expenses covered by the District.

- 3. Why did you select to pay a \$5,000 retention bonus to all employees instead of a percentage?**

We selected a \$5,000 retention bonus for all current SUSD employees to emphasize equal value across all roles, fostering a sense of unity and recognition within our organization.

- 4. I am a part time classified employee so you are telling me that I will receive the \$5,000 retention bonus as well?**

Our offer to all of the classified unions including CSEA 318, CSEA 885 and CSEA 821 is to provide a \$5,000 retention bonus to all employees including part-time employees.

5. I am a teacher and want to know if the district will shut down GoGuardian during the winter break and who will monitor the alerts if it not turned off during the break? Many people do not know what it is.






Beacon is suicide and self-harm prevention software for schools designed to help staff proactively identify at-risk students so they can quickly get them assistance. Specifically, Beacon is built to identify when a student accesses content or exhibits online behaviors that may be related to self-harm or suicide. This software helps notify the school officials that are assigned to the escalation list in Beacon.

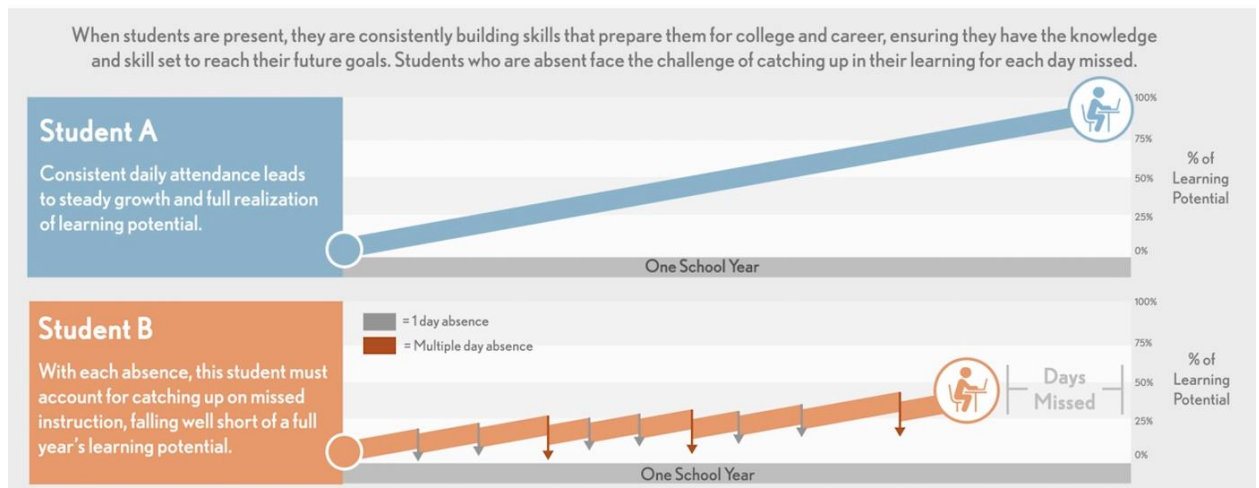
Although it has been in the past, GoGuardian Beacon will not be turned off during the winter break. School site principals and district administration, including myself, will monitor GoGuardian Beacon notifications during the winter break.

6. Since we are ending school so close to Christmas. When do students have to return back to school?

We will welcome our students when they return back to school on Monday, January 8, 2024. We look forward to seeing all of our students on that day as school attendance is very important. Here are some facts to consider:

How Does Chronic Absenteeism Impact Students?

-  83% of students chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade cannot read at grade level by third grade
-  Students not reading at grade level by third grade are 4X more likely to drop out of school
-  By sixth grade chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school
-  Students who feel that they belong are more likely to show up to school regularly and engage academically
-  Improved attendance provides access to caring support that buffers the effects of adversity and stress



- 7. I am a teacher within the district. Many teachers across the district have short throw interactive projectors in our classrooms with document cameras connected. When a teacher with one of these projectors is out for the day and a substitute is in our classrooms there is a problem with the substitute being able to use the projector and document camera. One must log on to the computer to be able to use the projector and the document camera, as they are all connected and dependent on each other, but substitutes are not given their own logins so they are unable to use the projector nor the document camera, which are essential tools needed during instruction in the classroom. The only way they can log on is if the teacher leaves their personal login information for the substitute or if someone else as the school logs them in using their personal login information, which is not a safe practice. If substitutes are unable to log on to use the projector and document camera then there are very limited things a teacher can leave for their students to do in their absence. We certainly would not be able to have the substitute continue with Benchmark and Ready Math lessons, so that we do not fall behind in our pacing, as the projector and document camera are essential for this. This is a problem for both teachers and substitutes. Is it possible for the district to give substitute teachers their own logins or in the very least give substitutes log in information for a "guest" account so they can utilize the interactive projectors and the document cameras so that substitutes can be more effective in their role? And, is it possible to give training to substitutes on how to use the interactive projectors that so many of us have? Thank you for your consideration on this matter.**

Currently, our substitute teachers do have access to document cameras and projectors just as our SUSD teachers. When a substitute arrives at a school site, they should be provided a District Chromebook which provides them with access to the projector and document camera. With regard to training, our Instructional Technology staff are available to provide training on document cameras and/or projectors at staff meetings or 1-to-1. Instructional Technology staff also work with other departments to provide regular routine professional development for substitute teachers as in prior years as a long-term solution. At this time, if teachers or staff have any questions regarding access and training on projectors and/or document cameras, they can reach out to Technology and Innovation Services at 209-933-7090, and they will be more than happy to provide assistance.

8. My principal told me today that all K-8 students are going to get a winter kit from the school district. What will my third graders receive?

Using Expanded Learning Opportunities monies, each child in SUSD in grades TK-8 grade will receive a winter kit by the end of the week. Each grade level kit is designed to include a book and a fun activity. For examples, third grade kits include a book, a sketch pad, colored pencils and a ball/hackey sack toy. Below are a few pictures of a winter kit.



9. This can be a difficult time for students as they cannot eat at school during our winter break. Are there any food give-a-aways that you know of?

The Emergency Food Bank will be open during the break and offers food distribution and even food delivery via DoorDash. Here is the link to the Emergency Food Bank's website which provides more information on how to access food during the winter break:

<https://www.stocktonfoodbank.org/Get-Food>

In addition, the Bread of Life, also a local food distribution organization, provides assistance. To find information on the locations where Bread of Life will be delivering, parents and families should visit their Facebook page or their website. Here is the link to Bread of Life's website: <https://www.breadoflifeca.org>

10. My school doesn't not have hot water for staff to wash their hands, is this a district wide issue?

Typically, schools do not provide hot tap water in restrooms because of concerns related to temperature control and scalding. As required, all school sites have hot water in the kitchens for proper food preparation. In addition, many Health Centers have hot water for personal care in which the water temperature should be between 105-125 degrees.