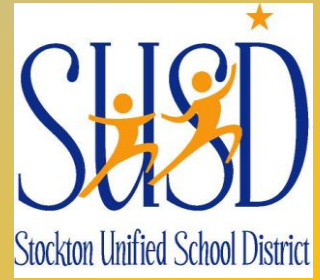




Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #21 2023-24 School Year – Week of January 29, 2024

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

- 1. I usually receive my direct deposit 2 days before the end of the month. For the last 2 months I have not. Do you know why this is happening?**

Payday is the last working day of the month and direct deposits are scheduled to post that day. Direct deposits posted two days prior to payday may be a courtesy from your banking institution. Please reach out to the payroll help desk at 209-933-7001 ext. 1 or submit a help ticket available on the Payroll department site [Payroll Department / Department Homepage \(stocktonusd.net\)](https://stocktonusd.net) if your direct deposit is not posted on payday and they will be happy to assist.

- 2. With cursive being brought back to the classrooms statewide, how is the district supporting the implementation? Will there be a program such as Handwriting Without Tears that will be used district wide to allow consistency throughout the district?**

Our core language art program, Benchmark Advance/Adelante, has cursive and printing practice units built into the program. Benchmark Universe Cursive overview/intro is provided by grade level beginning in second grade as well as a unit 1 week 1 sample practice pages. Benchmark Advance has it outlined for the entire year as cursive has been included in California Common Core State Standards since their adoption.

Kinder and first grade Benchmark Advance/Adelante curriculum have printing pages with explicit directions for writing each letter. All teachers have access to all grades so if a teacher wanted to introduce in K/1 they could use the 2nd grade set as the lines are bigger and have directions. For third-sixth grade it is the same, and the lines are much smaller.

In addition, SIPPS has a developmental spelling/dictation component which is also an opportunity to provide handwriting instruction with feedback and printing/handwriting practice.

In the future, we will be ensuring that these components are highlighted, easily identified and accessible to classroom teachers, while also sharing best practices with explicit instruction and feedback as resources. It is critical that students receive practice opportunities with feedback, while learning the appropriate techniques and that instruction be incorporated into meaningful contexts. Students practicing the wrong technique over and over again without feedback not only practice and make permanent incorrect letter formation, but do not receive the positive academic benefits for the brain and may cause students to dislike writing.

- 3. Hi, I am currently a SUSD classified employee, I am in school to become a teacher and would love to teach at my current site when i am finished with school. Is that possible or**

would I have to be randomly placed at a school? Also, are there any resources to help with the cost of school being a SUSD employee who wants to become a teacher?

Principals interview and select teachers for their individual sites when they have a vacant position, thus they make the recommendation of who they would like to hire for their site. A Classified district employee or outside applicants would need to submit their application through the EdJoin Applicant Pool (2024-25) for the teacher position they are interested in. HR is currently working on posting the Applicant Pools for teachers for the 24-25 School Year

At this moment, SUSD does not provide resources to help cover the cost of college/teacher programs. There are some grants that may help cover the cost. One that is commonly applied for is the [Golden State Teachers Grant](#) as it covers up to \$20,000.

4. I saw that you all did a resolution for Black History Month. But the question is what are you doing to actually celebrate it?

The Stockton Unified School District recognized the importance of Black History Month as it honors the invaluable contributions, struggles, and achievements of Black people throughout history, fostering greater awareness, understanding, and respect for their diverse experiences and ongoing fight for equality. Various departments have been conducting events in recognition of Black History Month. Our African American/Black Parent Advisory Council and our Expanded Learning Opportunity Program held an incredible Martin Luther King Jr event. On Friday, February 2, 2024, the Expanded Learning Opportunity Program is hosting the School Yard Rap field trips and evening concert which will focus on teaching our students, families, and community about Black History through music. In addition, the Curriculum Department is providing ideas and opportunities to bring the accomplishments and struggles of African Americans to the students in our classrooms. Throughout the month of February specific emphasis will be directed to the contributions that African Americans have made in the Arts.

Provided below are curricular lessons and activities to expose students to the individuals who have shaped the United States and the communities that we now live in. Specific teacher guides have been provided through Discovery Education for Grades K-8. High School materials have been linked to our existing Houghton Mifflin curricular resources.

[Black History Month Library Resources](#)

[Black History Month - Local Events Around Stockton](#)

[Black History Month Materials and Links K-8](#)

[Black History Month Materials and Links 9th-12th](#)

[Scrcencastify Walkthrough](#)

- 5. I see when at Marshall the playgrounds do not have shade for the students, in particular the area designated for special needs students. It gets extremely hot on the playgrounds, and blacktops. The district should provide shade coverage for the safety of the students and to allow them to play outside even when the temperatures are hot. I would love to see the playgrounds updated. Can we see some money go towards the playground for our students and faculty that have to be in the elements with them?**

During my site visits I too have noted the need for shade structures for our students and staff. Due to this observation and feedback during our Facilities Town Hall, I included shade structures as one of the priority recommendations. The majority of the sites will have their new shade structures for the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

- 6. Hello, My two children are under a Hardship Transfer for the school year 2023-2024. When do I have to submit a request for the 2024-2025 school year? Please get back to me at your earliest convenience. Thank you!**

You do not need to fill out any additional paperwork. If a SUSD student is accepted to and placed at a SUSD school through the intra-district process, that student is allowed to remain there until aging out of that school. In our TK-8 elementary schools, any time a student is accepted at any grade level, he/she can remain there until the end of their 8th grade year. No additional/annual intra-district or hardship request is required unless the parent is seeking to change schools to include a return to his/her school of residence based on the parents' address, OR if the parent moves out of SUSD. They must then apply for an inter-district transfer with their new district of residence. This applies to intra-district transfers also known as hardship requests, not inter-district requests or out of district transfers into SUSD. Below is the Board Policy:

"the accepting school becomes the student's school of attendance; for the duration of the time that the student remains at any grade level offered at that school.

The District *does not* provide transportation for students who reside outside of their home school. Parents/guardians are responsible for transportation.

Students who wish to return to their neighborhood school must reapply during the open enrollment period. Some grade levels may be impacted due to class size limitations and space availability in our schools, impacting the number of approved applications"

If the student is in high school and is accepted on an intra-district for any grade 9-12, they are allowed to remain there through the completion of the 12th grade. Just as with the elementary example, no annual intra-district application is required to remain at said school. Only the SARB Board (for chronically absent students) or an expulsion would undermine and potentially change a high school intra-district approved assignment.

- 7. I've been trying to book an appt. for typing certification on February the 2nd. If someone can please help me get an appt. I'm trying to apply for 911 dispatch thank you for your time.**

Our typing tests through School for Adults are on Monday and Friday mornings at 8:15, 8:45, 9:15, 10:15, 10:30, and 10:45. There is a \$10 cash only fee you pay at the front office, and you will need to show ID. These tests are primarily for in-district job seekers, but anyone can schedule a typing test. Those interested in scheduling a typing test can call our

office at (209) 933-7455, or email Brian Canepa @ bcanepa@stocktonusd.net if you have any questions.

8. Do our high school students have to complete community service hours to graduate?

There is not a high school requirement for community service hours here in SUSD as in the majority of school districts. I am currently working with my Superintendent's Student Advisory to create the criteria for the Seal of Civic Engagement which may include a community service requirement.

9. What funding source are you using for the \$5,000 retention bonus?

The District is using allowable one-time ESSER funds to ensure that we are recognizing our valued employees throughout the District.

10. At the start of the school year, the district requires all new teachers to SUSD to attend a 5 day orientation with the district. Many new teachers express frustration with this process because many of the items presented during these 5 days could be condensed. At least 2 of these days should be given to the sites to provide their own orientation. Many new teachers would prefer to have time with their site admin and department chairs to get acquainted with systems and processes at the site. This year, teachers were only given 2 hours during the in-service week, this is not adequate or fair. Teachers need at least 2 days to review the PLC process, get familiar with school wide teaching strategies, policies, behavior matrix, understand learning management systems such as Synergy and Jupiter, and all relevant instructional systems. Is there a way to make an adjustment to the 5-day new teacher in-service because without more time at the sites, new teachers are essentially isolated when starting at their new site. Are there tweaks, changes we need to consider for next year?

As a Professional Development Department, we reflect and refine our structures and services each and every year in response to the needs of our incoming educators. This past year, new teachers were provided two days (August 1 and 2) on site before the first of school which was August 3. The purpose of the initial site orientation that occurs is to serve as an overview of site procedures and to obtain necessary technology to engage in the content sessions throughout the remainder of the week. Sites then continue to build on this initial orientation through the PLC process and staff meetings. Many sites offer additional opportunities for new teachers to learn systems and processes beyond what is required contractually.

In addition, all SUSD school sites have had ongoing professional development opportunities, especially in terms of PLC's. They are receiving on-site job-embedded coaching and leadership team academies as well. This support will continue next year.

The Curriculum and Professional Development Department and New Teacher Support team will continue to modify the orientation week based on participant feedback each year. Efforts are already in place to refine this professional development opportunity for new teachers for 2024 from feedback that we received earlier in the year. Feedback is always valued and welcomed so we can better serve our community.