

Re: Conversation with the Superintendent Follow Up Questions – Cesar Chavez Middle School

In an effort to remain connected to the sites and have frequent interaction, I have begun my Conversations with the Superintendent each Wednesday with different staffs during modified day.

Below you will see the questions and responses of questions from staff that were not able to be addressed within the allocated meeting time.

1. What opportunities are available to teachers with the district's partnership with Khan Academy?

Schools were offered the opportunity to join the MAP Accelerator pilot program for the 2019-2020 school year. Schools and teachers in grades 3-8 that opted in on the pilot have the opportunity to:

- Pilot the MAP Accelerator program with our students for an entire school year
- Provide general feedback via two surveys to Khan Academy to help improve the tool since it is still in beta testing
- Become a MAP Accelerator Co-Pilot Teacher, which allows the teacher and students to have early access to features that haven't yet been released publicly. Teachers will be trialing Khan Academy's most promising concepts to improve classroom learning – and your experience will help them refine those concepts before other teachers get ahold of them. As a co-pilot teacher, you have a direct line to the folks at Khan Academy who are defining and building the next version of MAP Accelerator for classrooms. They want to know what's working, what's not, and how you'd like to see MAP Accelerator evolve to better serve your classroom. Your voice will provide critical real-world perspective that Khan Academy can't get in the lab - and will influence their priorities for the coming school year.

If teachers are not part of the MAP Accelerator Pilot, then the opportunity to join will be after a decision is made in June to adopt this tool.

2. How can we continue to give online math tests but have a way to look at student work and not just the answer?

Illuminate offers a wide variety of opportunities for teachers to create assessments from prebuilt items in the Illuminate Item bank or to create your own items. These items include types of questions that capture student work and not just an answer. For example, there are items that allow students to graph on a coordinate plane (drawing response item), to explain their solution in detail (constructed response item), and to enter responses as math equations. As you know, in the past we have been administering mathematics performance tasks via paper and pencil. This year we are doing our best to have the performance tasks available for administration online so that our students have the opportunity to show their work online and our teachers can have a way to examine how this work looks like online.

3. I found BrainPop very useful to introduce and reinforce content. Why is it being phased out?

Sites may still use various other forms of digital programs in individual classrooms to meet their students' instructional needs. Due to the sheer volume of digital programs being used throughout the District, we have asked site techs to assist with the prioritized programs. Therefore, the Technology Department is only supporting programs that have a comprehensive data dashboard to reduce redundancy of learning and track student progress and programs that have been validated to improve student achievement.

4. It seems in SDC in our District there seemed to be a hodge-podge of literature. Some schools started My Perspectives two years ago, some schools thought it was not at our level for our students and tried Awards. Here at CCMS SDC we are doing Reads 180. We (District) are now being introduced to SIPPS. So we will continue at everyone (schools) do what they are doing? Where do we go from here?

Special Services is committed to working with teachers to ensure we find ways to bridge the gap between special education and general education. All students, including students with special needs, required to take state testing should have access to common core curriculum. Through our collaborative efforts with general education staff, students have access to high quality curriculum, assessment, programs, and services to support their educational growth in the least restrictive environment. Special Education teachers should be trained with the core curriculum and have the materials available for themselves and the students. We acknowledge that students with special services may need additional time and support in their learning.

In order to follow through with these objectives, all middle school mild moderate SDC and RS teachers received training in *My Perspectives*, the adopted ELA curriculum for middle school students. For all the students with special needs that need instruction in foundational literacy, we will now use the SIPPS Plus program meant for students in grades 4-12. Therefore, all Mild Moderate SDC teachers in the District are being trained in SIPPS. At the other Middle schools, we are using SIPPS for students that are testing at that level, and Rewards for students that still need support with multi-syllabic decoding. This would be considered intensive ELA support for these students and could happen in a pullout group in M/M or RS. At Cesar Chavez, since there has been increased achievement with the use of Read 180, that program will continue to be implemented in the current classroom. This is the tiered support system that we are putting in place at this time. To support the teachers, we have job-embedded coaching and professional development, which we started last year.

5. Could the new Administration Office money be switched to other things like band room or landslide?

Yes, the bond allocated dollars can be adjusted to other projects that fit the current needs of the school site. (e.g. Band Room and Track Area). The re-allocation process of project funding will need to be followed. The district will need approval from school site council, citizen's bond oversight committee in collaboration with Facilities staff and CBO.

6. When will the district repair the mudslide on the lower field?

PVUSD has an architect agreement request for approval at this week's board meeting on Wednesday. The plan is to have the Track Field area and slope repaired as soon as possible in the next couple of months. We need state approval prior to make any repairs and approved architectural plans.

7. We have several including sixth graders with incomplete SST's, some that were started in 3rd or 4th grade and never completed or follow up on. Why? Because we now are dealing with their inability to finish the job.

I know that elementary teachers feel a tremendous commitment to ensure that students receive the special services that they need prior to middle school. That being said, underperforming students have all taken different paths in reaching Cesar Chavez. Some of the students' families and teachers may have engaged in initial SSTs and began showing growth with the identified interventions. Due to that growth, although they did not reach grade level, the SST process was delayed to continue with the current interventions. Others may have had interrupted educational experience and therefore the SST was not completed. While others may not have been recommended for a follow up SST as needed. Through the implementation of MTSS, we will see more students receiving strong core instruction coupled with Tier II interventions as early as kindergarten. We know that brain plasticity decreases through childhood; therefore, it takes 4 times as long to intervene in 4th grade as it does in late kindergarten (Lyon & Fletcher).

8. What do you think would happen to: 1) teacher retainability and 2) test scores if you paid teachers and aides equitable, livable wages and benefits?

The entire county, including our staff and students, encounter the challenges of the high cost of living in Santa Cruz County. As with our staff, we had a significant decline in enrollment this year with many families moving out of state to find affordable living. There was a recent article on the cost of living for educators, which you can find at this link: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/06/20/santa-cruz-ranks-as-nations-least-affordablecity-for-teachers/> Over the past year, PVUSD has had the best retention rate and lowest amount of vacancies in part because of being the second highest take home pay in the Tri-County. Nationwide, if educators were paid more, we would see more people wanting to go into education and see people staying in the profession longer thus improving retention. On the other hand, higher wages most likely would not improve test scores. Past experience with national teacher bonuses for improved test scores and merit pay have proven to be ineffective.