



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #1 2024-25 School Year – Week of August 5, 2024

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

1. Why did the district decide to launch an online Parent Handbook?

As a result of parent feedback, the district decided to launch an online Parent Handbook. In addition, the Parent Handbook forms will streamline the student data collection processes, improve the efficiency of data capture by decreasing errors, and provide access to forms on multiple devices such as a phone, iPad, and computer.

2. Where can I access the online Parent Handbook?

The online Parent Handbook link has been emailed to all parents/guardians with an active email on record. Please get in touch with your school site and update your email address if you have not received an email with the link to access the handbook.

3. What is the status of the Arts becoming an elective since Prop 28?

Prop 28 aims to provide Arts experiences for PreK-12 students, with site flexibility. PreK-5 students must have this experience within the school year, while middle school students should have the opportunity to choose an Arts elective throughout the year.

In our K-8 system, 7th and 8th-grade schedules typically include 90-minute blocks for core subjects and one 50-minute elective period per day. This single elective period is also used for ELD, AVID, PLUS, Project Lead the Way, and other non-core classes. Only schools with a full-time Arts teacher can offer Arts electives to 7th and 8th graders. Currently 10 schools have a full time Arts teacher and SUSD has the goal to continue expanding over the next several years to additional schools.

The focus of the newly hired Prop 28 teachers is on TK-6th grades to build a foundation in the Arts, as these grades have lacked Music, Dance, Theatre, Visual, or Media Arts since 2006. Most new Art teachers are assigned to two school sites, preventing them from teaching 7th and 8th-grade electives.

For the 2024-2025 school year, through music teachers from some high schools, we can now offer instrumental music to 6th-8th graders at Adams, Bush, Cleveland, Montezuma, and Wilson during this school year.

- 4. I have noticed many students do not like the water at school and bring bottled water, my own children included. We have one filtered water bottle station in our cafeteria, but students are not allowed to go refill their bottles throughout the day. Can we have more filtered water systems put in our schools or classrooms?**

This week, we started installing additional water bottle filling stations in all schools and buildings. These stations are equipped with advanced filters to ensure improved water quality, providing students with access to clean, filtered water at all times. Promoting better hydration and health is a priority, and we must work together to ensure students have uninterrupted access to these stations. This initiative marks just the beginning of our efforts to enhance overall water quality within our school community.

- 5. Did the school sites get to choose the color of their shade structure?**

Site administration was able to select the color of the sail between six approved Department of State Architects (DSA) colors including blue, desert sand, green, silver, terra cotta and yellow. They also were able to select the color of the poles between nine colors including black, blue, cobalt, dark brown, forest green, light ivory, gray, white and yellow.

- 6. Hi there! I was wondering when we will see the new Certificated Pay Scale. I know it's been approved but it's not on the SUSD website. Thanks so much ;)**

The vetted salary schedules, which include an approved total of 8% raise, have now been solidified and will be presented for final approval at the Board Meeting on August 13, 2024. Once approved, the updated salary schedules will be posted on the Human Resources website.

In the meantime, you can view the proposed salary schedules on Board Docs at <https://go.boarddocs.com/ca/susd/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>.

- 7. An E board member on 821 keeps telling us that massive layoffs are coming at the end this year. Is this true? There is also a rumor about a golden handshake. Is that true?**

There are no plans for massive layoffs at the end of this year. Our budget is healthy and prepared for future declining enrollment and reduced state funding. Additionally, there have been no discussions about a Golden Handshake program. Districts generally only implement Golden Handshakes when they are overstaffed, which is not a current condition for SUSD. We understand the importance of stability and reliability for our staff and are committed to maintaining a secure and supportive work environment.

- 8. We have had CASSPP and CAST scores by early June and yet nothing has been posted on Illuminate. Other districts had their scores in May. Do we have a date as to when those scores will be available? We really need this data to see how we are doing as teachers and how our students are doing.
Thank you.**

Embargoed state testing results for students are currently available in Illuminate. Test results were made available in mid-July when it was confirmed that 95% of scores had been received. Teachers should note that although the CAASPP scores are available in Illuminate that this is pre-embargoed data which may vary from final scores. Families will receive the children's results once the scores are finalized and non embargoed by the State.

Principals received training on accessing their state testing results at Admin Launch. Teachers and staff members who need help in accessing state testing results in Illuminate are encouraged to take advantage of training materials found on our [Staff Resources Page](#). Staff members may also submit a [Help Desk Ticket](#) and one of our staff members can follow up with help accessing state testing results.

The release of the test data is affected by the District's size and length of testing window. Therefore, not all sites receive their results at the same time. For example, SUSD's testing window extends through the end of May. This affects SUSD not getting most of its results back until mid to late July.

- 9. I do not understand why we need to use Sown to Grown. It seems like a waste of instructional time and invasive. Can you tell me why?**

SUSD's work with Sown to Grown is designed to support one of the district's LCAP goals (LCAP Goal 3): Support of the Whole Child, where the district commits to provide equitable and healthy learning environments that enhance the social-emotional and academic learning for all students utilizing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Sown To Grow's platform is the MTSS Tier I system that ensures every student is seen, supported and learning at their best. Every student has the opportunity to check-in in a short weekly protocol (similar to an interactive journal). When challenges or stressors arise, schools are able to proactively respond with MTSS Tier 2/3 supports -- for example, a touch point with a counselor, resources to help their family, etc.

Sown To Grow is funded by the US Department of Education and the National Science Foundation, and completes extensive research alongside implementations. There is ample [academic research](#) that demonstrates the importance of social-emotional wellbeing and skills in relation to academic performance. Recently their work in Metro Nashville Public Schools (Nashville, TN) was studied by a team at Harvard's Graduate School of Education; [please click here to view the results](#). There have been similarly positive outcomes in large scale implementations throughout California as well, including in

Oakland Unified, Delano Union School District, and many more. In SUSD we began piloting Sown To Grow last year and the [initial results](#) proved very powerful.

The Sown To Grow platform is a simple online check-in where students are invited to share how they are feeling each week, very similar to a journaling protocol. Students have full agency to share as they see fit and feel comfortable -- there is no aspect of the program that monitors students without their knowledge or agency. We are simply asking how they are doing so they can let us know if there are any challenges they are facing that we can help with. They have found that when they invite students to share, they often do -- especially our more internalizing learners who may not feel as comfortable raising issues in a public format.

Sown To Grow fully recognizes the challenge of time in the classroom and has intentionally designed a protocol that typically takes 3-5 minutes per week for high school students. In many comprehensive high schools, the check-in happens once a week as a quick do-now or bell ringer, as students are walking in and in parallel with attendance. We would encourage teachers to [reach out](#) to our PD and training team for support as needed; their Director of Training is a former high school teacher herself, and is happy to connect on classroom strategies that can facilitate this process seamlessly. While the time to check-in is brief, they have seen direct results in [improved academic performance](#) as a result.

Our shared goal is to support all students while also amplifying relationships between students and adults at school. The short online check-in tool takes just a few minutes a week. Further, it allows for every student to engage in a check-in each week, which can be very challenging to complete in-person for every teacher. Lastly, their research has shown that offering different modalities for students to engage is very powerful. [Click here](#) to view a high school student's comments at a Board meeting from a different district on how the online check-in process is more accessible and effective for him and his classmates.

Ultimately, our hope is to support students in feeling at their best in school so they can learn at their best, and having an easy and accessible place to share is an important enabler.

10. **Good morning,**

Where can I locate SUSD written grading policy for High Schools? I want to find out how often teachers are required to input grades in the platforms that have been assigned by the district. i.e. ParentVUE, StudentVUE, Google Classroom. I am concerned because I have been searching through your website and it is nearly impossible to find. Your help in locating the District Policy/Requirements is greatly appreciated.

To ensure that families receive ongoing communication about their child's academic performance, all staff should adhere to the progress report and grading calendar outlined below and aligned with our Board Policy. Last year, we initiated discussions about implementing a common report card for high school using Synergy and Synergy Gradebook, along with establishing consistent expectations. If there are specific concerns regarding performance in a particular class, I encourage families to reach out directly to the teacher or site administrator to address these concerns and improve communication.

STOCKTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
 PROGRESS REPORT & REPORT CARD SCHEDULE
BLOCK SCHEDULE
2023-2024

+ Fall Term, Semester 1: August 3, 2023-October 6, 2023 (44 days)

	Student Progress Report	Report Card
Grading Window Opens to Teachers	August 30, 2023	October 4, 2023
Grading Window Closes to Teachers	September 6, 2023	October 16, 2023
Registrar to Finalize/Verify Corrections	September 8, 2023	October 20, 2023
Info Services Mail to Parents	September 12, 2023	October 26, 2023

Fall Term, Semester 2: October 16, 2023- December 22, 2023 (43 days)

	Student Progress Report	Report Card
Grading Window Opens to Teachers	November 8, 2023	December 20, 2023
Grading Window Closes to Teachers	November 15, 2023	January 10, 2024
Registrar to Finalize/Verify Corrections	November 17, 2023	January 12, 2024
Info Services Mail to Parents	November 28, 2023	January 19, 2024

Spring Term, Semester 1: January 8, 2024-March 15, 2024 (46 days)

	Student Progress Report	Report Card
Grading Window Opens to Teachers	January 31, 2024	March 13, 2024
Grading Window Closes to Teachers	February 7, 2024	March 27, 2024
Registrar to Finalize/Verify Corrections	February 9, 2024	April 2, 2024
Info Services Mail to Parents	February 14, 2024	April 8, 2024