



Ask Dr. Rodriguez



Ten Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Edition #6 2023-24 School Year – Week of September 18, 2023

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

- 1. You mentioned at one of your meetings that you need to take care of staff in order for staff to take care of our students. How will you continue to do that? I see the admins and teachers wanting to do the best that they can every day, but I can see the burn out and everyone is struggling to just make it through the day.**

It is crucial that we take care of our staff, educators and administrators to ensure we can provide the best support for our students. Here are a few ways we can continue supporting our staff:

- **Educators Thriving Program:** We are committed to enhancing the well-being and resilience of our staff through the implementation of the Educators Thriving program. This program is designed to provide our educators with tools and resources to manage stress, build resilience, and maintain a healthy work-life balance. The six-part series will help our staff cope with the demands of their roles.
- **Development of Processes and Procedures:** We acknowledge the challenges our staff face daily, and we are actively working on developing more streamlined processes and procedures. These improvements aim to reduce administrative burdens, provide greater clarity in job roles, and enhance overall efficiency. By simplifying tasks and ensuring clear guidelines, we hope to alleviate some of the stress our staff is experiencing.
- **Clear Communication:** Effective communication is key to understanding and addressing the concerns of our staff. We will continue to encourage open and transparent communication channels through Conversations with the Superintendent, Ask Dr. Rodriguez FAQs and ongoing site visits where teachers and administrators can express their needs and concerns.
- **Focused Initiatives:** We understand the importance of preventing initiative fatigue. To this end, we will identify and prioritize a few key initiatives that align with our overarching goals. By concentrating our efforts on these initiatives, we can ensure that staff members are not overwhelmed by numerous competing projects. This approach allows us to make meaningful progress without straining our resources.
- **Encouragement of Self-Monitoring:** Each staff member's well-being is unique, and we recognize that one size does not fit all. We will encourage our staff, educators and administrators to self-monitor their own well-being. This means recognizing their limits, knowing when to seek support, and actively taking steps to maintain their physical and mental health. We will provide resources and information to help them in this endeavor.

2. I am a counselor. Can I attend the Educator Thriving series?

The Educator Thriving series is for all SUSD staff members. Due to the strong demand, the number of staff able to participate has been expanded to 100 people. If you would like to be part of the series, please register at the following [link](#) as the number of remaining spots is limited.

3. Why is it taking so long for the district to approve our Accelerated Reader license for Huerta Elementary? We purchase this every year, and it has never taken this long. We are a month and a half into the school year. Why would this take so long when it is a verified program that most of our schools' use?

Thank you for your patience as we are currently working to improve systems and ensure that requisitions and purchase orders (POs) move forward even when a staff member is out for an extended period of time. Cross-training, implementation of our new business management system Escape/Frontline and teamwork are key as we work together to improve in this area. Regarding Accelerated Reader, the PO was generated in August. As it went through the approval process it was pending approval from State and Federal at the beginning of September. After a period of time, it changed over to another staff member in State and Federal, from there, it continued to next approver. Your site received the final PO yesterday, Thursday, September 19 which means we can expedite the renewal of the license.

4. Your volunteering process is too much and inconvenient. Can you guys make it more convenient and offer the TB test at your school sites? Don't you also have nurses in the schools that can do the TB test. People want to volunteer but it's hard-to-find time and pay for the TB test. We want to help the school and go on field trips to help teachers but sometimes we can't because of too many steps.

Based on staff and community feedback, we are planning a Volunteer Fair where volunteers can come and take care of both fingerprinting requirements and TB screening in the same location. As we only have one mobile fingerprinting machine to process volunteers, the Volunteer Fair will be at the Department of Public Safety (DPS) so that we can use the fixed machine and the portable to have two fingerprint processing areas. We plan on having staff available to be able to have the TB screening done at the same location. In the meantime, the District has waived the fingerprint fee for volunteers, and we have eliminated finger printing appointments and allow walk-ins to make the process more efficient.

5. What is the status of the parking lot expansion at ACJ - District Office? Construction has been halted for quite some time now... what is the anticipated completion date?

We are currently working with the City of Stockton on the encroachment permit. The encroachment permit is for work outside of the parking lot but connected to the use of the parking lot. Once the permit is released, we will be able to resume the work and we will be able to provide a project completion date.

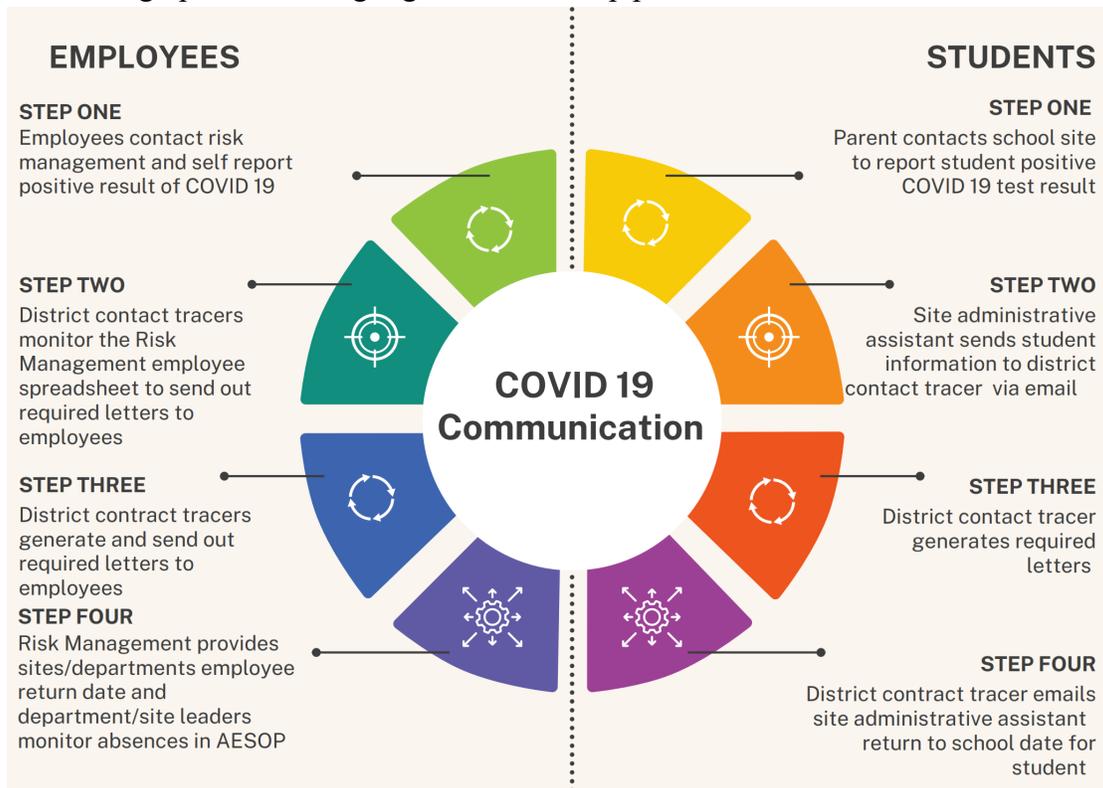
6. What is the role of a Social Service Case Manager and Social Work Assistant? How do they differentiate among departments? (i.e. CWA, Mental Health, Admissions & Family Services, ECE). It must be noted that they are not Social Workers nor certified in that particular area, so this is why I am asking.

The Social Services Case Manager position requires a higher level of education in comparison to the Social Work Assistant. With that said, Social Services Case Managers can be given a higher level of responsibility as it pertains to supporting our families and students.

Currently, Social Work Assistants in our district provide services such as home visits, home to school communication, and maintenance of a variety of records. The Social Services Case Manager can also provide those services; however, they must also participate as a member of the Positive Behavior Intervention Support Team (PBIS), and coordinate social services plans for enrolled families in the Families in Transition and for foster youth programs. In addition, Social Service Case Managers are expected to serve as a liaison for adjudicated foster and homeless/unaccompanied youth in a variety of settings. The Mental Health Department does not have Social Work Assistance; however, their Social Services Case Managers work specifically with students who exhibit indicators of mental health needs or a situation that suggests the student may need mental health services, or those who are experiencing a mental health crisis. CWA and Admissions and Family Services focus on providing supports to enroll our students in school and to ensure students are attending school in order to prevent chronic absenteeism.

7. With the influx of COVID-19 cases, are we still doing contact tracing for COVID-19?

We have a dedicated team of four contact tracers who follow OSHA guidelines for employees and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for students. Below is a graphic which highlights the four-step process.



8. How do I sign up for online classes?

For high school students, Stockton High School is a unique campus that offers a different approach to learning. We are a specialty high school offering an Independent Study program. Students are required to attend school daily for 2 hours and 20 minutes and must complete a majority of the work online and outside of class.

Parents and students interested in attending Stockton High School must attend an **Orientation** prior to applying.

If you are interested in attending an Orientation, please call the main office (209)933-7365 and ask to be placed on the list.

For adult learners, our Adult School is currently only offering in-person courses.

9. How do I register to receive free food for my children?

The SUSD Child Nutrition/Food Services Department will be participating in the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program for the 2023-24 school year. All enrolled students at SUSD schools are eligible to receive breakfast and lunch at school, every school day, at no charge to your household.

10. I was at Cesar Chavez today for professional development. I saw the new library furniture there. Are you going to do that at all schools?

Currently, we have completed approximately 75% of all K-8 schools' library updates with the new 21st Century Learning Environment furniture. We plan to complete the rest of the K-8 schools and the three other comprehensive high schools within the next several months. Below is a picture so others can see an example of the renewed space:

