

*All Youth Achieving*

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Superintendent Deasy's Update for September 12-16, 2011

On a weekly basis, I will be providing an update on our progress toward implementing our four core strategies that will help us ensure all students graduate college-prepared and career-ready.

Deasy's Download

This year, as in the past, the joy and optimism that accompanies the beginning of school is tempered by the realization that cherished employees on every one of our campuses will lose their jobs before the end of September. Next Friday, the District will be forced to institute another 832 layoffs and 1,424 reassignments, as well as bump 1,150 employees to positions in a lower classification or with fewer hours. Once again, principals have been preparing parents, teachers, and students for the sad inevitability that a valued member or members of the school site family will be leaving due to massive budget cuts. On top of these numbers, the District currently has nearly 1,000 teachers who have remaining Reduction-in-Force (RIF) notices for 2011-12. All this comes at a time when the federal poverty rate has just reached a 50-year high—California's rate rose for the fourth straight year—which will inevitably put a greater burden on many of our schools. Many of you have heard me say the State of California funds public education at a "pathetic level." While that's certainly true in terms of straight numbers, the human dimension of Sacramento's appalling record of failing the children of this state is much harder to put into words. For every one of our valued employees who loses his or her job, it makes it that much harder for us to realize our promise of providing all students with the highest quality education. That's something we must never forget as we digest the grim news of yet another round of extensive layoffs.

1. Using Data to Drive Standards-Based Instruction

Use data to drive standards-based, effective instruction for all students, coupled with support and intervention, when students need extra assistance or accelerated learning.

Formative assessments are a powerful tool for gauging student learning before, during and after instruction. Formative assessments are "assessments for learning." They provide "just-in-time" information and serve as a tool for giving feedback to students to help them improve learning, and offer a reflection tool for teachers to enhance teaching.

Formative assessment is effective when teachers and students:

- are clear about the learning target,
- know what quality work looks and sounds like,
- have an understanding of where they are in the learning, and
- recognize when and where a gap in learning may exist.

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When both the teacher and the learner understand and share the learning target, formative assessment is most effective.

Using formative assessments before instruction seeks to find out what students already know about the topic and provide information to predict possible confusions or misconceptions. In planning for instruction, teachers use existing data, including language proficiency, work samples, pre-tests, K-W-L charts, and more for this purpose.

Formative assessments during instruction may include various methods to check for understanding, explore strategies to make student learning visible, provide specific feedback to students on how to improve their performance, and use self-checking techniques.

After instruction, teachers use formative assessments to reflect and plan next steps. As you can see, formative assessment is used in a cyclical fashion to drive instruction and intervention.

One formative assessment tool that supports all three parts of the cycle are the progress monitoring assessments found in CoreK12. These are short, one standard assessments consisting of 10 questions or less in all content areas. These assessments can be found at <http://lausd.corek12.com>

2. Supporting All Employees

We are accountable for our students' success. We will use data to personalize the supports that all of our employees need to serve our students, from professional development and training to creating measurable performance goals.

As you know, this summer, we conducted trainings for teachers and school site leaders who volunteered to participate in the "Initial Implementation Phase of the Educator Growth and Development Cycle." These intense, two-day teacher and five-day observer trainings familiarize participants with the LAUSD Teaching & Learning Framework and the research foundations of the framework; understand the observation process; hone observation skills and become comfortable using the rubric criteria.

This week, to continue providing on-going support, we kicked off monthly-training sessions that will continue for the school year with our school leaders and second observers. This cohort-style model not only creates a small learning environment, but will also help foster collaborative relationships across Local Districts. I appreciate the on-going commitment of our teachers and school leaders to implement this work and provide feedback on the process.

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I will be speaking at a 'Teach Plus' event on Thursday, Sept. 22, at 5:30 p.m. Teach Plus is a community partner that host interactive forums for LAUSD teachers. Among the topics we will cover next week are: how to ensure that our policies translate into meaningful opportunities to further develop and effectively retain high performing teachers. Please RSVP at: <http://www.teachplus.org/page/t-network-50.html>

3. Budgeting for Student Achievement

We will make the District budget more transparent, align resources for greater impact and equity, and give schools the ability to target resources to meet their specific needs, bringing funding and decision-making closer to schools and classrooms.

On August 26, 22 Americorps*VISTAs (Volunteers In Service To America) began working with LAUSD on the VISTA Community Partnership Program. VISTAs, who commit to serve one year as a full-time volunteer, work to build the capacity of programs seeking to eliminate poverty. The VISTA Community Partnership Program, developed in conjunction with the Parent and Community Services Branch, and the Budgeting for Student Achievement initiative, focuses on increasing parent and community engagement and student attendance at participating campuses.

Specifically, VISTAs will work to increase parent understanding and involvement in making decisions based on student data, planning and developing budgets tied to academic data. They are also focused on increasing awareness of the importance of student attendance and graduation. Ultimately, these activities lead to better academic outcomes for students, and as a result, greater numbers of students who go on to college and careers that lead the way out of poverty.

These activities support the Budgeting for Student Achievement project by increasing training opportunities and professional development for School Site Council (SSC) members, making them stronger members of their SSCs. VISTAs also seek to increase community engagement around academic and fiscal data, leading to greater transparency and understanding of the progress and on-going needs of students. Additionally, focus on attendance and student retention not only benefits students but also contributes to the allocation of funding to campuses by improving both enrollment and attendance. Both are used to determine per pupil resource allocations. Finally, VISTAs will be working with schools to build or increase the capacity of existing school community support networks. These networks are comprised of volunteers, businesses, community-based organizations and others supporting the school with services, volunteer hours, sponsorships, donations, supplies and enrichment activities.

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We welcome our VISTAs to LAUSD and thank them for their commitment of time and energy, and working with our schools. We look forward to a productive year ahead supporting our schools and our students' successes.

4. Creating and Supporting Quality Schools

We will analyze multiple data points to differentiate the service and support we deliver to schools. In addition, we will capture and share best practices across all of our schools regardless of school models.

In light of the Los Angeles Board of Education's decision to change the Public School Choice (PSC) 3.0 application process for new schools, we are adjusting the timeline for PSC calendar events. However, the revised due date for all proposals (from internal and external applicant teams) for both new and focus schools has been set and is due on **Friday, November 18, at noon**. The revised timeline will be finalized in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, I encourage all applicant teams to attend one of the Family & Community Engagement Update meetings outlined below.

Applicant Team Workshop Series

PSC 3.0 Family & Community Engagement Update

Monday, September 19 or Thursday, September 22

LAUSD Headquarters, Room 19-123, 4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.



All applicant teams are invited to attend one of two sessions scheduled to review the updated parent, student and community engagement process approved by the Board of Education on August 30. Applicant teams will be provided with information about the workshop series, called Regional Academies, for parents, students, and community members.

Detailed information regarding registration, location, and visitor access to the building can be found on the PSC website at: <http://publicschoolchoice.lausd.net/calendar>. Applicant team members can also register directly by accessing the Event Reservation Form at the following link: http://publicschoolchoice.lausd.net/event_reservation_form.

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