



January 16, 2026 Friday Memo

Upcoming Events

- January 19: Martin Luther King Holiday, No School and District Office Closed
- January 19: City of El Cerrito MLK Day Celebration, 9:00 am., meet at EC City Hall
- January 20: African American Site Advisory Team Meeting (AASAT), 6:00 pm, Virtual
- January 21: WCCUSD Regular Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 pm, DeJean Middle School
- January 22: Stege Elementary School Groundbreaking Celebration 4:00 pm., Stege Elementary School
- January 24: WCC Education Fair & Parents as Partners and Leaders Conference, 10:00am, DeJean Middle School
- January 28: WCCUSD Regular Board of Education Meeting, 6:30 pm, DeJean Middle School

Superintendent Update

This week, we were proud to celebrate the successful completion of Lake Elementary School with a community event that brought together students, families, staff, community partners, and local media to mark an important milestone for the District. Looking ahead, on Saturday, January 17, I will take part in a [Women in Leadership panel](#) focused on learning and dialogue with education leaders from across California, including Superintendent Enikia Ford-Morthel of the Berkeley Unified School District, as we continue to strengthen collaboration and shared leadership across our region. [Click here](#) to RSVP and join virtually. Additionally, On Monday, January 19, I will join the City of El Cerrito's 37th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration, "Mission 2 Possible—Building the Community: Uniting a Nation the Non-Violent Way," alongside students, families, and community members who will march from City Hall to El Cerrito High School to honor Dr. King's legacy of leadership, service, and unity. I have also been invited to serve as the keynote speaker for the event, commemorating this important day.

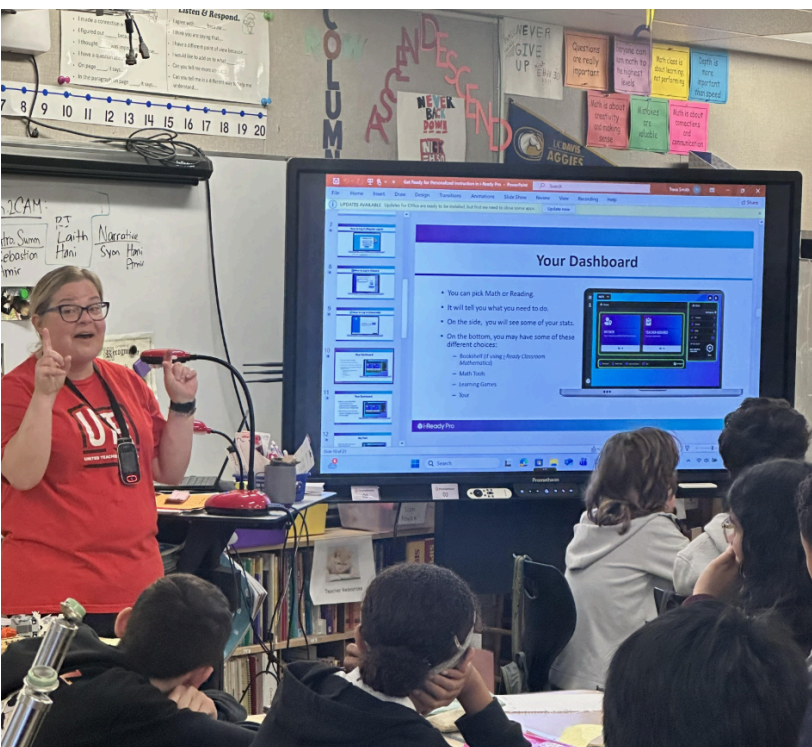




Educational Services/Teaching & Learning - Katherine Acosta-Verprauskus

i-Ready Updates

Recently, sixth graders at Olinda Elementary had a chance to dive into an i-Ready Pro session led by their teacher, Tresa Smith, alongside members of the i-Ready team. The collaboration gave students a closer look at how i-Ready works and highlighted the way the program is supporting both teaching and learning on their campus.



The team walked students through the purpose behind i-Ready and helped them see that their effort is visible and meaningful. They also learned how the i-Ready Pro lessons are developed with strong instructional design and real student feedback, which made the experience feel relevant and age-appropriate. Students were especially excited to see how the

updated lessons match their growing independence and learning needs.

Ms. Smith made clear connections between the work students do in their individual lessons and the goals they set through the diagnostic. She showed them how i-Ready gives each student a personalized path while also helping teachers monitor progress in a thoughtful way. Students left the session feeling more confident about navigating their lessons, checking their data, and taking ownership of their growth. It was a great example of how purposeful partnerships can strengthen classroom learning and keep students moving forward.

The i-Ready Diagnostic 2 testing window is Monday, January 12th - Friday, February 13th. During this period, students will **not have access to their MyPath personalized instruction** (for sites that use this feature) until they have completed their diagnostic assessment. Our goal is to reach **95% student completion** within the window.

To help ensure a smooth and successful diagnostic administration, here are several valuable resources:

- **i-Ready Success Guide - [Click Here](#)**
A comprehensive resource that supports preparation and planning for the diagnostic. It includes guidance on scheduling, proctoring, understanding reports, and more.
 - Helpful Pages
 - Page 44-45: Teacher Checklist for Administering the Diagnostic including Diagnostic Scheduling Information
 - Page 47: Setting Diagnostic Schedules
 - Page 59: Actively Monitor and Responding during diagnostic
 - Page 81: How to section: Show how to reset diagnostic
- **Diagnostic Simulator - [Click Here](#)**
This tool allows educators to experience the diagnostic from a student perspective. *Please note:* Only Grades 3 and 7 simulators are adaptive, providing the most accurate representation of the true diagnostic experience for students.
- **Preparing Students for the Subsequent Diagnostic - [Click Here](#)**
A student-level presentation designed to help learners understand the purpose of the diagnostic and how to approach it with confidence.

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment TK-12 STEM- Katherine Acosta-Verprauskus & Team

Update: Math Curriculum Implementation

Teachers, Math Teacher Leads, Site Admin, and Central Office staff continue to work together to implement both Eureka Math Squared (TK-6) and Amplify Desmos Math (G7-Alg1) across 52 school sites! Beginning of the year data has been collected and stored as a baseline as schools strive towards [their growth goals](#) for mid-year. Site admin will continue to collect classroom data through frequent observations.

Here is our BOY data of our four Implementation Look-Fors and our high-leverage priority instructional practice indicators, based on 541 classroom observations:

Look-For #1: Integrity	Look-For #2: Unit Pacing	Look-For #3: Lesson Pacing	Look-For #4: Exit Ticket	Weighted Avg of 75% Look-Fors
84%	74%	70%	56%	71%

Our BOY goal was 90% of classrooms meeting 75% of the **Implementation Look-Fors**. We hope to see an uptick in MOY data.

Core Action 2C	Core Action 2E	Core Action 3A	Core Action 3D
2.0	1.8	2.1	1.8

With this as a baseline, we hope to see at least 0.5 points of growth districtwide on these prioritized IPG indicators. Individual schools have selected at least one indicator to work toward increasing by 0.5 points of growth by end of MOY data collection. Math Teacher Leads and site admin will be trained on how to support teachers at their site.

English Learner Multilingual Achievement - Katherine Acosta-Verprauskus (Esaul Orozco & Team)

The ELMA Department and schools districtwide are gearing up towards the Summative ELPAC. The ELPAC is the annual English fluency assessment for English learners.

This year we are off to a strong start. In the last two weeks we recruited and trained 20 seasonal assessment technicians that support 1:1 testing. Principals have received essential resources to coordinate a successful ELPAC plan for 2026. An upcoming training is on Jan 29th. And teachers have received ongoing ELPAC training in the first semester, with a teachers community of practice (COP) meeting this Thursday, January 15th.

Most importantly, parents and students are becoming more aware of why the test is important for reclassification and are getting ready for the upcoming testing window which begins Feb 1st.

Get Ready for the ELPAC Test! A Parent's Guide

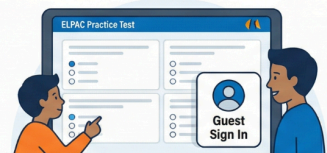
A guide to help your child understand, prepare for, and complete the English Language Proficiency Assessments (ELPAC).

3 STEPS TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD



1. Discuss the Goal: An English Fluency Award

Passing the ELPAC reclassifies your child as English proficient.



2. Practice Together Online

Use the official ELPAC practice test—just sign in as a guest.



3. Know the Testing Window

The district testing window is February 3rd - March 31st, 2026.

FIND SUPPORT

- Parent Guides are available in multiple languages.



Resources are offered in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, and more.

- Contact your child's teacher or school office.



Ask them for your child's specific test date.

TK-12 Schools - Katherine Acosta-Verprauskus (Jawan Eldridge & Jose De Leon)

El Cerrito High School

Congratulations to the El Cerrito High School football team on their first-ever state championship! A historic win for the Gauchos. See pictures 📸





Richmond High School Holiday Band Recital

Richmond High School's auditorium was filled with music and holiday spirit as students took the stage for their winter band recital. The recital showcased the students' dedication, talent, and hard work, making it a memorable celebration of music and community.



Highland Elementary - Winter Assembly

Highland Elementary students filled the auditorium with holiday cheer during our Winter Assembly. Wearing festive Santa hats, students performed together on stage for families and staff, spreading joy through music and smiles. The beautifully decorated stage and strong community turnout made this a memorable celebration of the season.



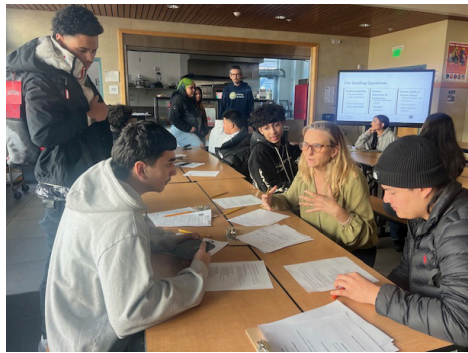
College & Career (CTE & College Readiness/DE)- Summer Sigler (Jessica Petrilli & Team)

Greenwood Academy Students Launch YPLAN Projects to Improve School Breakfast Participation

We're excited to share that students at Greenwood Academy have officially launched their YPLAN projects. This semester, students are partnering with two real-world clients—the school cafeteria manager and the community school director—who are seeking student-driven ideas to increase participation in healthy breakfast options among Greenwood students.

To kick off the project, students worked in small groups facilitated by guest speakers, engaging in thoughtful discussion and collaborative problem-solving. Together, they designed a school-wide survey that will be administered this week to gather student input and perspectives.

This marks an exciting and energizing start to the YPLAN projects, which will continue to develop throughout the upcoming semester. We're looking forward to the innovative solutions and leadership our students will bring to this important work.



Dr. Deb McKoy, Executive Director for UC Berkeley Center for Cities and Schools Facilitates and Small Group Session

Information Technology Update- Laurie Wong Roberts **Post-Phishing Incident Update & Security Measures**

🚫🔒 Update on the "Payroll" Phishing Incident

Following the sophisticated phishing attack on January 7-8 that used a fake "Payroll Communications" subject line, we have completed our impact assessment. While our security systems stopped the malicious process in many instances, 114 devices were compromised and required re-imaging—a complete wipe of files and the operating system—to ensure safety. This incident highlights that phishing emails are becoming increasingly sophisticated, often using a false sense of urgency and originating from the compromised accounts of people we know.

Our Collective Defense: 🛑 STOP 🧠 THINK ✅ VERIFY

We are urging all staff to adopt "healthy suspicion" as their new standard. The most effective tool against these attacks is the Hover Test: simply hovering the cursor over a sender's name to verify their job title and work location matches the request. For example, a payroll update coming from an elementary teacher is a clear red flag 🚩.

➡ Proactive Measures: Limiting 3rd-Party Software Access

To further secure our digital environment, our System Administrators recently audited third-party applications and discovered nearly 3,000 apps with access to user accounts. Many of these lacked necessary data privacy agreements.

- **Immediate Action:** We have limited these applications' access strictly to email addresses for Single Sign-On (SSO) purposes. Access to sensitive areas like Drive or Calendar is now blocked for these apps.
- **Next Steps:** A new, more stringent software approval process is being developed. In the meantime, all software using student data must have a Data Privacy Agreement in place.

Coming Soon: Enhanced Security Measures

- **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):** We are preparing to introduce Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) to add an extra layer of protection. Similar to online banking, this verifies identity using something you know (password) and something you have (like a code sent to a cell phone).
- **Retiring Old Email Distribution Groups:** We will be deleting the old email distribution groups. We have found that many phishing emails are using these to mass distribute phish. The new email groups limit who can send to them, thus eliminating most of the threat.

 **Since November, our team has removed over 154,012 phishing emails from the system. We continue to ask staff to forward any suspicious emails to unsure@wccusd.net—when in doubt, forward it out!**

Communications Department - Raechelle Forrest



During the past week, WCCUSD continued to see steady growth and strong community engagement across its digital platforms. Total followers **increased by 0.7%**, rising to **21,509** across Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and X, up from **21,360** the previous week. The highest level of engagement and community response centered on Sylvester Greenwood Academy Principal Phillip Johnson, who was recognized by the Golden State Warriors as an Impact Warrior, an honor celebrating individuals who make a meaningful difference in their communities. The highlight generated **more than 12,000 engagements**, reflecting strong community pride and support for Principal Johnson and Greenwood Academy. The District's YouTube channel also experienced significant growth, with **viewership increasing by 80% from the previous week**, driven by engagement with the Superintendent's welcome-back message following Winter Break and ratification update, and the January 9 Board meeting.

As new family enrollment begins on January 20, the Board and community can expect increased outreach encouraging families to visit the District website at www.wccusd.net/newfamilyenrollment to begin the

enrollment process, along with continued promotion of upcoming events such as the **Stege Groundbreaking Celebration on January 22**, the **West Contra Costa Education Fair on January 24**, and additional highlights showcasing student and school activities across the District.

News of the Week:

[WCCUSD Leaders Begin Discussing Budget Cuts after Ratified Raises](#) | Richmondside