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**January 28, 2026, Board Meeting
Trustee Agenda Item Questions & Answers**

Literacy Goal: L1: First Grade Literacy / Stretch Growth

Q: Why did first-grade stretch growth drop in the winter administration from last year to this year?

A: The data has not yet been disaggregated by on-grade-level versus below-grade-level students, and all students including those already meeting grade-level standards receive a stretch growth target; although the overall goal has increased and more students are now on grade level, fewer are meeting stretch growth, particularly among those who are already proficient, and the district anticipates not meeting the interim target even as overall reading proficiency continues to improve.

Q: Are there other root causes beyond those listed in the monitoring report?

A: There are multiple contributing factors, we are intentionally prioritizing stretch growth as the primary root cause because it has the greatest impact on outcomes. A key barrier is that we currently lack sufficient, frequent progress-monitoring tools. Without timely daily or weekly data, teachers cannot effectively target instruction or adjust strategies to meet individual student needs.

Q: Are we making progress toward the literacy stretch growth goal?

A: Yes. Performance has increased from 41% to 54% over time, showing meaningful progress. In recent years, winter-to-spring results have fluctuated. Last year, the district narrowly missed the target by 1.5%, and this year's current rate is 46%, though the spring assessment has not yet been administered.

Q: Is the interim stretch growth goal aligned with the main literacy goal?

A: Currently, supports are not fully aligned with the primary goal of bringing students up to grade level, as targeted universalism promotes growth for all students but may not best measure progress toward grade-level proficiency; therefore, the district is reconsidering whether this interim metric is the most appropriate one.

Q: Are increases in TK enrollment and potential reductions in early childhood funding affecting our data and projections?

A: We believe expanded access to full-day TK has contributed positively to early literacy growth. However, we are concerned about sustainability if external funding decreases.

Q: In the SOUL Charter School presentation, reporting focused on individual student progress. Are we looking at individual students or groups of students in our district reporting?

A: Both are necessary. Instructionally, our priority must be individual student progress, as that is how we tailor support, allocate resources, and accelerate learning. At the same time, we also analyze groups of students and cohorts for accountability, equity monitoring, and system-level reporting (such as SBAC).

Q: How are we supporting teachers with differentiated instruction, especially during budget reductions?

A: Despite budget constraints, the district is prioritizing resources that directly support first-grade reading, including: Professional Learning, Instructional Materials, and Coaching support.

Q: Are we concerned about being slightly off-track, even if the variance is small?

A: Yes, we are concerned. While the goal is centered on growth rather than proficiency, and we are seeing overall growth across metrics, being off-track signals that our systems need refinement.

Q: What specific extra supports are being provided for students significantly below grade level?

A: Teachers utilize i-Ready diagnostic data to pinpoint and address specific skill gaps among students, for example, foundational skills, comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. The supports offered to students are multifaceted. These include targeted small-group instruction tailored to individual learning needs, as well as participation in the i-Ready “Level Up” program, which supposed to meet a minimum 35 minutes per week of intervention. Additionally, the district is exploring the use of both in-day and out-of-day intervention times to further support student learning.

Moving forward, the district is shifting away from remedial “companion courses” and is instead investigating more structured intervention options to better serve students who require additional help. Despite these efforts, there is an acknowledgment that after-school support remains inconsistent and are not always accessible to all students.

Literacy Intervention Goal – LI 1

Q: Do teachers have enough real-time progress monitoring tools?

A: Teachers have indicated that while i-Ready is a helpful tool, its diagnostic administration is only three times a year. Additionally, there is a notable absence of multiple districtwide progress monitoring tools, particularly for first grade, which limits the ability to track student growth effectively. As a result, teachers are seeking access to more timely data so they can adjust their instruction and better meet students' needs in real-time.

Q: From an equity standpoint, which students are making the growth within this goal?

A: We are seeing growth across all identified equity groups; however, the rate of growth is not yet sufficient to close gaps at the pace we expect.

Q: Are parents made aware of how close/far students are before interventions are scheduled so they can also work with their students at home to make progress towards stretch growth?

A: Sites are provided with stretch growth data. There is currently variance between sites on how they review the data with parents.

Q: How will early identification of reading difficulties improve?

A: The district is implementing the M-CLASS (Amplify) K-2 Reading Difficulties Screener, which is required by the state. This tool will help identify issues such as dyslexia earlier than before, enabling earlier intervention and the creation of more individualized learning plans. To support this initiative, training and coaching will accompany the implementation.

Q: Why are 3rd–6th-grade stretch growth results not improving as expected?

A: In grades 3 through 6, there continues to be inconsistent access to targeted interventions, leaving gaps in support for students who need additional help. While the district's most recent investments have focused primarily on kindergarten and first grade, upper elementary grades have seen less attention, particularly in terms of instructional materials and professional development opportunities related to literacy. A further challenge is that students are often not identified for intervention until late September, which delays the start of crucial support services. This combination of factors delayed identification, limited resources for upper grades, and inconsistent intervention access has made it difficult to address literacy gaps effectively across all elementary grade levels.

Q: As we hire a new IT leader and rely more heavily on data, how are we currently using AI in the district to help us move faster with data analysis and decision-making?

A: Our current focus is on building adult capacity to responsibly use AI for data analysis, instructional planning, and strategy development. AI is not a replacement for educators, but it can serve as a supportive tool helping analyze patterns, identify gaps more quickly, and support students with math and literacy concepts. We are intentionally aligning this work with our Portrait of a Learner to ensure AI use is ethical, instructional, and student-centered.

Q: Given historical program outcomes and a constrained budget, how are we planning to pivot or scale quickly when something isn't working?

A: The ability to pivot quickly depends on three key factors: Clear professional learning needs, strong coordination across departments, and a focused accountability system.

What's different now is that literacy and student growth are no longer site-level initiatives they are districtwide priorities. This focus, combined with regular board monitoring, creates the conditions to fail fast and adjust strategies.

Q: Will there be new strategies or resources beyond the current curriculum?

A: Yes, the district has outlined a comprehensive plan to address current challenges in literacy instruction and intervention. As part of this effort, the district intends to provide additional professional learning opportunities for educators, ensuring they have the tools and knowledge necessary to support student growth. Instead of introducing an entirely new curriculum, the focus will be on implementing new instructional approaches that better meet the needs of all learners. These initiatives are backed by significant investments, as reflected in the 2026- 27 budget, demonstrating a strong commitment to improving literacy outcomes across the district.

Q: How will the district address teacher hesitancy to adopt new practices?

A: The district is focusing on two primary strategies to drive improvement in literacy instruction and intervention. First, there is an emphasis on teacher-led professional learning, where educators take the lead in teaching and supporting their peers. This "teachers teaching teachers" approach is designed to build capacity from within and foster a collaborative professional environment. Second, the creation of more teacher materials is central to the district's plan. These are groups of teachers who are actively involved in the process of selecting, piloting, and modeling instructional practices. By engaging classroom practitioners directly in these processes, the district ensures that changes are informed by those who understand firsthand what works best for students.

Experience has shown that teachers are generally more receptive to learning from their peers rather than from top-down directives. This insight has shaped the district's strategy, making peer collaboration and leadership a core value. Additionally, listening sessions with teachers revealed a strong desire to connect with educators from other districts, learn from their successes, and bring back best practices to implement locally.

Equitable Access / Guardrail EA 1

Q: Why are homeless student outcomes not consistently improving despite added resources?

A: The homeless student population within the district is highly transient, with membership in this group changing frequently. This instability often leads to students being identified only after academic struggles have already started to emerge, making it challenging to provide intervention in a timely manner. As a result, the district faces significant obstacles in responding quickly to the evolving needs of these students. Recognizing this, the district is actively working to implement faster systems for identification and response, aiming to ensure that support can be offered before academic decline takes hold.

Q: What are the root causes of uneven progress among targeted groups?

A: The district faces several challenges as it works to ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction and support for all students. One key issue is the inconsistency in progress monitoring, particularly for certain groups such as homeless students. Due to the transient nature of this population, it is often difficult to track their academic progress reliably, which can delay timely interventions and support.

Additionally, the quality of English Language Development (ELD) instruction varies across classrooms. This unevenness means that not all students benefit from the same level of instructional rigor and support, potentially widening achievement gaps. Another area of concern is the limited availability of culturally relevant instruction and engagement.

When lessons and activities do not reflect students' diverse backgrounds and experiences, it can hinder their sense of belonging and engagement in learning.

Project Access social workers play a critical role in this effort by closely tracking students who are off-track academically or who are frequently absent. These professionals intervene directly, offering support and resources to help students reengage with their learning and overcome barriers to success.

Q: What is the numerator for the number of first grade students that took the I-Ready test?

A: The numerator is roughly 4,800 students.

Q: What are we doing to evaluate the literacy programs in our district? How do we know what is working and where?

A: District leadership is working with school sites to track data and to track the fidelity of instructional strategies and curriculum. The department of curriculum and instruction is monitoring school data along with school leadership. Together, these departments will lead the merging of literacy plans with best practices, strategies, and materials that have given us the most progress.

Q: How can we break up the SPED group of students in the Equitable Access guardrail??

A: There is a possibility of district staff breaking down the Special Education group into 504, Speech Only, RSP, Special Day Class, and Moderate to severe. There is also a possibility of breaking down the data by student disability.

Q: Are we closing achievement gaps among student groups?

A: Yes, progress is evident, particularly for African American students, whose performance increased from 24.2% to 26.2% meeting or exceeding the district benchmark over two years. English learners are also improving, though at a slower rate.

Q: As cohorts change, are we analyzing age distribution and length of time students have been in the system?

A: Yes, this is an important consideration. Length of enrollment and age distribution are factors that influence outcomes, especially in early grades. While multiple variables are at play, we recognize the need to incorporate these analyses more intentionally to better contextualize growth data.

Q: How often are foster youth and students experiencing homelessness absent, and can social workers play a stronger role?

A: Data shows that students experiencing homelessness have higher absenteeism rates than foster youth. We already invest heavily in Project Access social workers, and we are exploring ways to further deploy school social workers to address root causes of absenteeism, including behavior, housing instability, and access to services.

Q: We bill Medi-Cal effectively, but what about private insurance? Are we missing revenue opportunities?

A: Currently, we lack a system/process to bill private insurance, which results in district resources subsidizing services for all students. Exploring additional revenue mechanisms, including private insurance billing models, could allow us to expand services more equitably and sustainably.

Q: What incentives might we deploy to reward teachers doing exceptional work in advancing literacy? Similarly what types of rewards might we use to motivate students?

A: Schools do have various student incentives. We will be working with teachers and other departments to identify incentives for teachers. We will bring additional information during a future meeting.