A WARM WELCOME

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are happy to share that our district continues to partner with the Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators (SCCABE) to support the needs and interests of our African Ancestry school community. Our interest is to intentionally collaborate and connect with our African Ancestry students and families to support student success. To this end, we would like to introduce Ms. Vanessa Knight, who will be serving as a liaison in this effort.

Ms. Vanessa Knight is the Vice Principal at Huerta Middle School and has experience as a Special Education teacher, Special Education Program Specialist, and most recently served as a High School Associate Principal. She also teaches to prepare future special education teachers at St. Mary’s College. Vanessa coached competitive cheerleading and dance for 12 years and has traveled with her teams throughout California and out of state. When Vanessa is not working or teaching, she is immersed in educational research as she is currently working to earn her doctoral degree. On the weekends, she spends her time actively engaged in community service as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Vanessa is new to the Silicon Valley/ South Bay Area and is excited to serve the students and families in Santa Clara Unified.

Email: vknight@scusd.net

We look forward to joining together in support of student well being at our first Parent Connection meeting on January 9, 2023 from 6:30-8pm. This first virtual meeting will focus on networking and discussion of areas of interest for the year.

In the meantime, please take some time to review our newsletter for important information about activities and events.

Happy holidays!
Brenda Carrillo, Ed.D.
Director of Student Services

NOTABLE DATES:

Parent Circle Meetings:
- December 12, 2023
- January 9, 2024 - Confirmed
- March 5 or 6th, 2024 - TBD
- April 3, 2024
- May 7 or 8th, 2024 - TBD

The Family Resource Center
SCUSD’s Family Resource Center (FRC) serves as a resource for all district families, providing food, school supplies, parent education events and other key support. SCUSD families are eligible to participate in the monthly food drive, which takes place at 1840 Benton Ave., Santa Clara, from 1:00-3:30pm on the following dates:
- December 12, 2023
- January 9, 2024
- February 13, 2024
- March 12, 2024
- April 9, 2024
- May 14, 2024

Please visit the FRC Calendar for a complete list of events and upcoming classes.

The Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators (SCCABE) remains in partnership with SCUSD for this 2023-24 transitional year. We are grateful for the cooperation of the district and support received from our African Ancestry (AA) parents for three years. AA Parents will continue to receive an invitation for each Parent Circle meeting. The first Circle will provide an opportunity for input from parents regarding strategies to increase the academic performance of our AA students. SCCABE wants to know the most effective avenues to increase your participation. What are your children communicating to you regarding their attendance at school? SCCABE is in the district to serve our AA youth, AA teachers, and assist AA parents in navigating the educational system.
Silicon Valley African Film Festival

On October 13th, 35 middle school students attended the Silicon Valley African Film Festival. The day began with viewing several short films specifically selected for a young audience. These films gave students new perspectives on lifestyles and customs quite different from their own. In addition, a filmmaker provided insight into creating and rendering a story into a film. The presentations were followed by small group dialogue where students explored the underlying meaning of the films and how they might apply to their own lives. The topics included self and racial identity, family traditions, and personal responsibility. This approach reflects African traditions of storytelling and collective learning.

College Readiness Summit at San Jose State University

This event provided an opportunity for sixty SCUSD high school students to attend the following workshops: Upgrading Your Academic (9th graders), Leveling Up Your Achievement and Success (10th graders), Exploring Your Ideal Future (11th graders), and Achieving Your Goals (12th graders). During the workshops, students had an opportunity to ponder what they valued, make friends from another school, understand what it takes to get to college, understand some of the challenges they may experience and the benefits of attending college.

Attendance Reminder

As the holidays approach, please remember that maintaining positive school routines has a significant impact on a student’s academic success. Consistent school attendance reduces stress, makes it easier to connect with friends and teachers, and supports learning.

Following are some practical tips to help support engagement and attendance during the busy holiday season.

- Make sure your student keeps a regular bedtime and establishes a morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Ensure your student goes to school every day unless they are truly sick.
- Avoid scheduling holiday vacations or other appointments when school is in session.
- Talk to teachers and counselors for advice if your student feels anxious about attending school or needs mental health support.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.

Mental Health Spotlight

During the busy holiday season, it is especially important to attend to personal and family well being. Please take a moment to review the following resources for tips to promote strong mental health:

- Mental Health Matters Poster
  Tips to Cope with Holiday Stress and Depression