

## **SCUSD Form B: Project Abstract – 2022-23 CCSPP**

### **Vision**

The Guiding Principle of the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is that “all students are given an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options.” To actualize that directive, five SCUSD schools in South Sacramento formed a Community Schools network, applied for, and were awarded a Community Schools grant in 2020. In 2022 SCUSD was awarded a Community Schools Implementation grant for three of the schools named in the 2020 application along with three new school sites. The schools represent a K-8, middle school, high school feeder in high-need neighborhoods of South Sacramento. Each school site serves as a community hub within its neighborhood and shares many resources among all schools. This new grant application proposes funding for 12 elementary schools that feed into and share resources with many of our existing Community School sites.

The vision of all SCUSD Community Schools is to create welcoming community hubs which engage, support and strengthen students, families and neighborhoods -- hubs that are sustained by strong family, schools, and community partnerships. Our Community Schools will work toward elevating the assets and meeting the needs of children by building a positive school climate through trusting relationships, combined with rich learning opportunities that prepare all students to succeed in life.

The Community Schools model strongly supports two of SCUSD’s LCAP Goals: Goal 3 - *Provide every student the specific academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and mental and physical health supports to meet their individual needs so that all students can remain fully engaged in school and access core instruction;* and Goal 5 - *Parents, families, community partners, and students will be engaged and empowered as partners in teaching and learning through effective communication, capacity building, and collaborative decision-making.*

### **Participating Sites**

The proposed Community Schools for this grant application include 12 elementary sites. The majority are located in the neighborhoods of South Sacramento, although one school (Abraham Lincoln) is at the far east end of the SCUSD boundary (95827). Five school sites are in the 95822 zip code, three in 95820, two in 95824, and one in 95823. Schools range in size from 231 students (John Sloat) to 689 (Pacific). Each of the sites has Unduplicated Pupil Counts of over 80%.

Schools are identified as having the highest need based on the Student Services Equity Index. The Student Services Equity Index uses school data with a weighted formula to identify the schools most in need of student support services. Factors used are school enrollment, number of students identified as socio-economically disadvantaged, at risk of students being commercially sexually exploited, chronic absenteeism rate, and

suspension rate. Using the weighted formula with each of these factors, schools are ranked in most need to less need for support services.

SCUSD Community Schools networks will align with the four pillars of the Community Schools model. Each network already serves as a community hub within its neighborhood and shares many resources among its feeder schools. This funding opportunity will provide resources needed to more fully implement each of these pillars.

**Integrated Support Services:** SCUSD has a quarter-century history of a well-established District and school-based system for referring students for mental health screening, assessment consultation, and/or treatment. Site-based Student Support Centers provide school-based mental health services and case management to link students and families to local resources for a myriad of basic needs and physical/mental/behavioral health needs. Services include basic needs assistance; case management and home visitation; crisis intervention; mental health counseling; suicide prevention; mentoring and tutoring; LGBTQ support services; homeless student services; school climate and bullying prevention; Social and Emotional Learning supports; foster youth services; targeted programs for young women and men of color; targeted programs for unduplicated student groups. Staff works closely with site administrators, staff, Expanded Learning providers, students and families to provide an array of services specific to each network's needs and interests.

**Family and Community Empowerment (Engagement)** is included as one of the goals in the Sacramento City Unified School District's (SCUSD) LCAP. The focus of the District's Family and Community Empowerment (FACE) Department is to provide SCUSD parents/guardians with the knowledge and tools needed to be active and equal partners in their student's education, District and school site decision making. Community schools network school sites are building the capacity of parents and staff to support student achievement by providing education, tools to navigate the system, and relationship-building strategies. Included are actions that provide increased access to bilingual staff, translated materials, and SCUSD staff who are well-versed in effective models for parent engagement who will enable and develop parent leaders. Nearly all sites also participate in the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project (PTHV), a high-impact family engagement strategy designed to build trusting home-school partnerships centered on shared hopes and dreams. Recent studies reveal that PTHV's model for relational home visits strengthens relationships, shifts mindsets, improves teaching, and bolsters student outcomes.

### **Collaborative Leadership Practices:**

Each school site will develop a Community Schools Collaborative (CSC), inclusive of parents/caregivers, students, staff and community partners, with established meeting times. The school-based CSC will be coordinated by each school's Student Support Center Coordinator. These site-based teams will share the responsibility for assessing school needs and assets assessments, make decisions about grant resource distribution focused on addressing identified needs and continuous improvement of these efforts. These collaborative leadership practices strengthen connections between

stakeholder groups, ensure all voices are heard and all perspectives are taken into account when designing interventions or supports. Representatives from the CSC, including the SSC Coordinator, will also attend School Site Council meetings.

The Coordination of Services Team (COST) at each school site (in collaboration with school staff) identifies the student's academic, social/emotional, and attendance needs and assists to develop educational plans to meet those needs. The COST is a multidisciplinary team approach (many values, perspectives, ideas) that utilizes shared problem-solving strategies to help support students/families with complex needs. The team requires shared responsibility and open communication in the form of collaboration and coordination. The team consists of administrators, Student Support Center staff, school counselors, Expanded Learning program staff, school safety personnel, parent advisors, community partners and other members as needed. The team is school- and community-based with flexibility to adjust the team in response to the perceived needs of referred students, families and the community.

All school sites named in this application have trained staff in Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). The development of systems to coordinate behavioral intervention and discipline is a key aspect of MTSS implementation. An effective MTSS is enabling sites to proactively address identified behavioral needs, develop common language and practices, and conduct holistic reviews that encompass a student's behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and other needs. Site leaders are supported by district leadership to set specific goals within their school plan to improve their school's culture and climate. These goals are set following a needs assessment process and can include targeted reduction of Suspension and/or Chronic Absenteeism outcomes.

District schools also practice Universal Design for Learning, a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process.

To actualize equity, access, and social justice for all students, especially those who are most marginalized and impacted by systemic racism, SCUSD aims to provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for all staff. Professional learning that deepens self-awareness and anti-racist capacity will ensure that there is common district messaging, understanding, and approach to dismantling systemic policies and practices that perpetuate disparate and disproportionate student outcomes. Anti-bias/Anti-racism professional learning to include, but not be limited to the following topics: Racial/cultural identities & stereotypes, implicit bias, microaggressions, dynamics of privilege & power, cultural competency and cultural humility, dismantling systems of oppression and racism, and restorative justice principles & practices. Learning will leverage existing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills (empathy, perspective-taking, respect for diversity, and growth mindset) & restorative practices (community and relationship-building) as a grounding for entering brave spaces of sustained discomfort and allowing professional learning on Anti-bias/Anti-racism to go much deeper and serve as a catalyst for systemic change.

The district's Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) staff have worked to support the implementation of best practices within classrooms and site-based efforts to implement Restorative Practices/Justice systems. District staff have participated in Epoch anti bias/anti-racism training. All teachers were provided Compassionate Dialogue training as part of preservice training at the beginning of the year. Each site has also participated in a deep-dive following their initial training. This deep dive engaged them in dialogue with peers and a trainer.

This grant opportunity will allow school sites to identify or hire a Community Schools Coordinator who will oversee the overall management, coordination, development, and implementation of the Community Schools program. An important role of the Coordinator will be to organize, participate in, and/or conduct family involvement programs focused on such issues as health, literacy, parent engagement, school programs, and community resources; manage community outreach activities to engage low-performing and at-risk students, parents, and other family members.

### **Community Engagement**

Current Community School sites have been engaged in a needs assessment process over the past school year, together with trusted community partners Youth Forward and Sacramento Area Congregations Together and the SCUSD Youth Development and Family and Community Engagement departments. Community Schools Site Coordinators and district and community partners have held listening sessions with students, staff, parents and caregivers, as well as presented during staff meetings, department team meetings, parent nights and parent coffee chats. Parent/caregiver, student and staff surveys in multiple languages are also being distributed this spring. The needs assessment also includes mapping existing data points for each school community. The needs assessment results will guide the implementation phase of the initiative. We anticipate that this model of assessing needs and assets will be utilized with the sites named in this application.

Beyond supporting a full-time Coordinator, site-level Community Schools funds will be directed by the shared-leadership Community Schools Collaborative who will determine the allocation of funds based on the results of the needs assessment. It is anticipated that funds will be used for contracts and services with community partners to provide services to students to help address poor academic outcomes, to offer additional programming during out-of-school time, and to provide professional learning opportunities for school staff.

SCUSD and the schools participating in the Community Schools program have deep partnerships within the school and Sacramento communities. Partnerships and services are coordinated through Student Support Center staff at each of the school sites. County and community partnerships for resources and referrals include Sacramento County Behavioral Health Services, Child Protective Services, Stars Behavioral Health, River Oak Center for Children; Another Choice Another Chance; La Familia Counseling Center; WellSpace Health school-based health center; WEAVE; Sacramento Children's Home, Capitol Star, Dignity Health, and Stanford Youth Solutions. Community partners

such as Capital Christian Center and Elevate Church, Shoes that Fit, Sacramento Food Bank, and River City Food Bank provide food, clothing and household items for families in need. Early Smiles Sacramento offers dental screenings.

Students receive mentoring and academic assistance through City Year, Pro Youth, and the District's Men's and Women's Leadership Academy programs. Improve Your Tomorrow, a local non-profit, provides personalized mentoring and college-guidance services to high school students. Students and families receive additional mental health mentoring and case management support through a long-standing partnership with a number of local universities, such as Sacramento State University and a host of other universities, providing internship placements for college students earning a Bachelor or Master's degree in Social Work. School staff and teachers connect with families in becoming equal partners in their students' education through the non-profit Parent Teacher Home Visit Project.

MOUs are in place with community partners providing Expanded Learning Programs at the 12 school sites named in this application. These include Sacramento Chinese Community Service Center, Boys & Girls Club, Leaders of Tomorrow, Center for Fathers and Families, and Rose Family Community Empowerment Center.

The Sacramento County Office of Education provides ELD/ELD intervention for Woodbine Elementary students while Dream Enrichment offers STEAM activities. Pacific Elementary has an MOU with the UC Davis Regents, California State University Sacramento and Woodland Community College to supply volunteer Fellows to offer learning supports for students.

Professional development opportunities and programmatic support for SSC staff and COST team members on evidence-based strategies will be offered to develop trusting, inclusive, and collaborative relationships with families and community members. In addition to the impacts and trauma our SCUSD community has experienced due to COVID-19, many of our students, families and staff continue to experience ongoing trauma as a result of systemic racism and violence. All Student Support Services staff participated in over 20 hours each of professional development in Healing Centered Engagement (HCE) through Flourish Agenda, an asset-based and culturally-rooted approach to healing and well-being for young people of color and their adult allies. Student Support Services staff have been certified as Healing Centered Engagement practitioners. Staff have also been trained in Mindful Schools mindfulness curriculum and the Family Development Matrix, as well as through EPOCH on the Recognize, Interrupt & Repair (RIR) protocol & Compassionate Dialogue. Additionally, they have received training through Kognito on At-Risk Suicide Prevention, Emotional & Mental Wellness for Educators and Staff, Trauma Informed Practices and & Step-In, Speak Out (supporting students who identify as LGBTQ+).

### **Reflection and Assessment**

The District and school sites utilize an Early Identification and Intervention system (EIS) to identify students who are struggling as early as possible so that we can take action to

directly support them. This is the core of the District's equity, access and social justice guiding principle of ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to graduate with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options. In partnership with UC Merced and SCUSD's Continuous Improvement and Accountability Office, SSSH's Student Support division created a "Student Support Database" within EIS to document all student support referrals, assessments, contacts and interventions, merging the principles of continuous improvements with the ethics of confidentiality and evidence-based practice. Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected by the SSCS Student Support Center Specialist and entered into the Student Support Database. The COST team at each site in the Community Schools networks will meet weekly to review data.

SCUSD will contract with an external evaluator to evaluate our work and assess progress towards program goals. Throughout the five-year grant period, Community Schools networks will monitor and assess how effectively and meaningfully they engage students, teachers, families, and community partners; establish and expand partnerships, supports, and services that intentionally address locally-defined needs; expand student-centered teaching practices and enrichment opportunities during and out of school time; enhance positive, supportive, inclusive, and racially just school climates through relationship building, positive behavioral supports, and restorative practices; demonstrate collaborative leadership and shared decision-making (inclusive of students, families, teachers, site administrators, and community partners); and develop the systems and practices necessary to maintain the positive outcomes of the CCSPP.

Evaluation staff will work with District staff to identify quantitative and qualitative data to represent both process and outcome measures, and data collection strategies. The Evaluator will include interviews or focus groups with key staff, stakeholders, and program participants (if possible) to help understand and interpret quantitative data findings and help with meaning-making and understanding nuances in the data.

The Evaluation team will provide an evaluation work plan that will include process and outcome research questions, the logic model, identified data needs and strategies for collecting this data, interview and focus group protocols, and a comprehensive work plan outlining tasks and a schedule for completion. In addition, Evaluation staff may develop a simple data tracking system in Google to gather data collected for this evaluation.

The Evaluator will develop a system for standardized reporting, enhanced by the use of visual graphics to illustrate trends and communicate with a variety of audiences. The reporting frequency and format will be determined during the evaluation planning phase and may be refined over time as needed. The Evaluation team envisions semi-annual or annual data briefs at site level, that use visuals to share findings, as well as an annual report that includes cumulative findings from data collection to assess progress toward process and outcome goals. These data briefs and reports will be designed in an easy to read and understand, shareable format, using data visualization processes to translate findings. These methods will assist the collaborative in an ongoing

understanding and assessment of the school-wide continuous improvement through the Community Schools initiative.

Community Schools networks will fully engage their respective communities by providing opportunities to discuss data and program reports and offer feedback on activities and services. Implementation plans will be updated each year of the grant year. Sustainability plans will be developed during the grant program's first year and updated as needed.

### **Initiatives**

Existing district initiatives that will transform the school climate, deepen authentic relationships, implement student centered instruction and/or share power through legitimate collaborative decision making include:

**MTSS:** SCUSD has used the implementation of MTSS as an anchor for the development of a holistic, culturally responsive educational service delivery model. The district is obligated to design and provide a framework for effective instructional delivery based on 'whole child' data and assure that every student has access to high quality instruction and support at their home school, alongside their grade-level peers.

**Transformative SEL Support for Schools:** Training specialists are supporting school sites based on goals focused on culture, climate, and emerging SEL needs, including positive behavior interventions and supports and trauma-informed care.

**Antiracist Materials:** SEL, ethnic studies, and anti-racism/anti-bias efforts are being aligned through the district's K-12 History-Social Sciences curriculum.

**Safe Schools:** The district is working with community-based organizations as part of the model for student engagement and violence prevention. "The solution to the issues that students bring to school can usually be found at the community level," said SCUSD Safe Schools Director, "which is exactly why we need to work with the community to help solve problems and support our kids." Three grassroots non-profit CBOs – HOPE (Helping Our People Eat), United & Guided Recovery, and SAR (Self-Awareness and Recovery) – established MOUs with SCUSD to assist school sites with conflict mediation and violence prevention.

**Targeted support for Foster and Homeless Youth:** Staff coordinate support and services including, but not limited to, mentoring, social skills, mental health counseling, academic tutoring, independent living skills, recreation, and youth development.

**Student Ambassador program:** This program, operated by Youth Development and Support Services (YDSS), pairs participating elementary and middle schools each with two, trained high school ambassadors to implement relationship-building activities.

**Engagement & Empowerment:** SCUSD is developing and offering capacity-building opportunities through the District Parent Resource Center; building relationships

between home and school through Parent Teacher Home Visits; providing information to parents in home languages through Translation and Interpretation services; engaging family members as partners through the use of Family Communication Tools; promoting student voice, advocacy, and action through the Student Advisory Council; and providing adult professional learning to facilitate supports specific to Special Education.

**Existing initiatives at the specific school sites named in this application include, for example:**

**PBIS:** The PBIS framework is being utilized at Earl Warren, Parkway, Cesar Chavez, Pacific, John Sloat, John Bidwell, and Woodbine.

**Trauma-Informed Schools Practices:** Ethel I. Baker staff have partnered with Dr. Martha Merchant and the HEARTS team at UCSF to deliver ongoing trauma-informed professional development and consultation.

**Restorative Practices:** includes community and harm circles at John Bidwell. Oak Ridge integrates social justice and social emotional learning into monthly lessons and quarterly assemblies that focus on character strengths and social justice principles. John Sloat offers Tier II services for conflict resolution and behavior support using restorative practices. Cesar Chavez offers restorative and healing-centered circles.

**Leader In Me:** Cesar Chavez practices this model that builds leadership and life skills in students, creates a high-trust school culture, and lays the foundation for sustained academic achievement.

**Peer Mediation:** Students at Pacific are trained as peer mediators by YMS Peer Mediation (CALawyers for the Heart organization). Woodbine also offers a 6th Grade Peer Mediators program.

**Attendance Team:** The Attendance Team at Woodbine monitors school attendance, triages attendance interventions, and provides incentives for students with positive or improved attendance.

**Family Nights:** held monthly at many of the school sites. Oak Ridge holds coffee and community night meetings monthly as an opportunity to get feedback about important school topics such as safety, technology, school improvements and cyber safety. Woodbine parents are invited to attend monthly Family Coffee Chats with the Principal.

**Staff Book Studies:** Book Studies at Cesar Chavez focus on equity, social justice, and antiracism