SDUSD Teacher Advice: Speaking Up For Science

The time to speak up for funding of science education in San Diego county is now. Science is an equalizer, science must be a priority now, and it's time to begin the transition to the Next Generation Science Standards.

Community member input is desperately needed on the San Diego Unified School District's LCAP that is being decided right now. Currently, the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) does not show adequate support for science education. This is a great concern as President Kirst of the State Board of Education is advocating that it is time to begin implementing our new science standards (CA NGSS) (http://edsource.org/2016/time-to-begin-implementation-of-science-standards/563589).

It's time for our community to speak up because as of 2013, the State of California supports local control in district decision making and spending. This means the state no longer mandates how money is to be spent, rather individual Districts are allocated money from the State. Each district and has flexibility, given stakeholder input, on how to spend the money as long as spending supports the eight State priorities (http://downloads.capta.org/edu/e-school-finance/LCAP.pdf). The LCAP is how the district intends to do this.

Members of SDUSD California's Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS) Early Implementation Initiative team have drafted suggested changes to the LCAP to strengthen support for science and are attending cluster meetings throughout the district to stress the importance of science funding in upcoming LCAP funding decisions. Teachers, administrators, and district resource teachers that are on the CA NGSS Early Implementation Initiative team are hoping to reach out all 16 school clusters through the 6 Areas of SDUSD before the end of the this school year to raise awareness of the importance in providing adequate support for science education in the district's LCAP. This team of about 100 education professionals are local experts in CA NGSS, and are currently in year 2 of a 4 year grant initiative that provides leadership, content, and pedagogy training around the CA NGSS. Their work in CA NGSS is being widely shared across California as well as in other states adopting NGSS.

What you can do:

Attend a meeting: The May SDUSD Cluster Area meetings are where community members can learn more and give their input for putting science education funding into the LCAP. You can find your cluster area meeting infomration here: https://www.sandiegounified.org/clusters

Learn More: Go to https://www.sandiegounified.org/what-lcap for LCAP information for SDUSD

Provide your input: Go to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LCAP_Cluster to fill out a survey with your input

At the state-level,science advocacy groups including CSTA, K-12 Alliance, and California Alliance for NGSS are currently working at the state board level this week to fight for science to be explicitly called out as an accountability concern through LCAPs at the local level and in the state's accountability system. At the local level, we need YOUR advocacy.

Bringing awareness of these Cluster Meetings, providing community members different methods to provide input, and attending these meetings themselves, the Early Implementation Initiative team hopes to show that funding for science education and the newly adopted CA NGSS should be a priority in district spending. If it continues that adequate funding is not provided for science education in San Diego county, we are doing a disservice to our students and setting ourselves up for a continuing trend of inequity across schools in the district. We would be looking at a future where we have students graduating high school who are not college and career ready and, more specifically, are ill-equipped to meet the increasing number of science and technology jobs that the San Diego area prides itself in.

We urge you to support these specific recommendations to SDUSD's LCAP: https://goo.gl/sa5zX1