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April 8, 2021

Via E-Mail: dfisher@saccityta.com

David Fisher, President
Sacramento City Teachers Association
5300 Elvas Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95819

Re: District-wide Assessments for Students

Dear Mr. Fisher,

This follows my letter to you of February 19, 2021 regarding scheduling a meeting between SCTA and the District to discuss District-wide assessments following the January 11, 2021 decision by Arbitrator Carol Vendrillo. As you know, Arbitrator Vendrillo found enforceable an agreement between the District and SCTA (“Testing MOU”) signed by my predecessor, Superintendent Banda, on November 30, 2016, that required the District to obtain agreement from SCTA prior to implementing any “District initiated/District-wide” assessments of our students.

Given the Covid-19 Pandemic and school closures, it is more important than ever that we appropriately assess all of our students in order to effectively address student needs moving forward. Indeed, in sharing the State Board of Education’s March 16, 2021 decision concerning this spring’s state required assessments, CDE recognized that *“Diagnostic and interim/benchmark assessments help teachers identify student learning gaps and progress and adjust instruction throughout the year. As a condition of funding this year, districts were required to use such assessments and identify them in their learning continuity plans filed last fall.”*

As referenced above, the California State Board of Education recently voted to give California school districts the opportunity to use either state tests or other standards-aligned assessments to gauge student learning this spring. Specifically, CDE stated that:

The Board is seeking to allow districts to use the best assessment tool available for the local context this spring, as many of them are still providing distance learning and working to reopen schools. Options include the state’s Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments and California Alternate Assessments for English language arts and mathematics, the Smarter Balanced interim assessments, or other diagnostic, benchmark, or interim assessments that:

- *Are aligned with California Common Core State Standards for English language arts and math.*
- *Are available to assess students in grades 3-8 and 11.*
- *Are uniformly administered across a grade span, school, or district.*

- *Provide results that can be reported to parents/guardians, educators about individual students, and to the public by school and by district and are disaggregated by student group.*

Despite all the demands stemming from our efforts to reopen our schools for in-person instruction and services, we have not lost sight of the important work related to addressing the needs of our students as informed by ongoing academic assessments to help us identify student learning gaps and progress and adjust instruction throughout the year. We have previously offered twelve dates to SCTA for this work to begin, but SCTA has not agreed to any dates thus far. Over two and one-half months have now passed since the arbitration decision and we have not made any progress regarding reconvening an Assessments Committee. Our students demand that the District provides common assessments in order to offer them the full educational rights to which they are entitled (see [Board Presentation Item 7.5 of February 18, 2021](#); [Power Point](#)).

It is critically important that these important discussions begin soon so we can move this work forward. The District's representatives are available to meet with your assessments team on Friday, April 16, on or after 3 p.m., Monday, April 19, between noon and 3 p.m., and/or Wednesday, April 21, on or after 2:30 p.m., to engage in these critical discussions. Please let me know by Tuesday, April 13, 2021, by 5 p.m., which of these dates work for SCTA.

We genuinely hope that the parties can move forward together in developing an assessment schedule that includes formative and summative assessments to understand, monitor and support all of our students in their learning.

Sincerely,



Jorge A. Aguilar
Superintendent