August 28, 2013

Dear Students,

Whether you are new to Alameda Unified School District or a returning student, I welcome you to the 2013/2014 school year! I am excited to begin yet another year as superintendent of schools in AUSD. During my time here, I have come to know many of you. I hope in this new year I get to know still more students and families. It is my love of students and education that gives me passion, hope, and enthusiasm for my job!

New Scores

As superintendent, I am so proud of the tremendous strides we are all making together. Last year was another year of improvement and achievement. While average state STAR tests scores dropped last year, for instance, AUSD’s results actually rose for the fifth year in a row. Across the district, and in all grade levels, Alameda schools improved the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in California Standards Test (CST) scores in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and History.

I am especially pleased that we were able to help close the achievement gap (a gap that exists across the state and country, by the way). Various scores for:

- African-American students increased as much as 15 percent;
- Hispanic/Latino students increased as much as 12.6%;
- Filipino students increased as much as 26.4%;
- English Language Learners increased as much as 7.8 percent; and
- Socio-economically disadvantaged students increased as much as 11.5%.

More work needs to be done to ensure that every student at every school achieves at high levels, of course, but our continuous improvement is definitely something about which we all should be excited.

New Graduates!

This fall our most recent high school graduates will be heading off to a wide variety of colleges and universities including: nearly every UC and CSU campus, Arizona State, Boston University, BYU, Brown, Colgate, Evergreen State, Fordham, George Washington, Hampshire, Harvard, Hofstra, NYU, Oberlin, Oregon State, Penn, Purdue, St. Mary’s, Smith, Stanford, Tulane, University of British Columbia, University of Colorado Boulder, University of Hawaii, Virginia Tech, Wellesley, Wesleyan, Whittier, and Willamette.

ww w.alameda.k12.ca.us
Many AUSD graduates are attending community college with the intention of transferring later to a four year college or university. Others are attending a community college seeking an A.A. degree, entering a two-year career training or vocational program, or heading straight to the workforce. And several graduates will proudly serve our country in the military, including by enrolling this fall at the United States Military (West Point) and the Air Force Academy. I hope this news inspires all of you to be the very best students—and young adults—you can be. There are many, many opportunities available to you if you continue to work hard and dream big.

New Facilities Work

Here’s more good news: You may have noticed that work was done on your schools over the summer. That work included painting, roof repairs, modernizing portables, re-paving, upgrading furniture, improving fields, tree-trimming, re-finishing gym floors, installing new lockers and water fountains, improving interior lighting, and fixing up the football fields. We hope you like this! The health, safety, and comfort of our students is very important to us; we are thrilled that all this work got done in the few short months of summer.

New Food

Since I arrived in this school district, one of my goals has been to improve the type and quality of food served to our students. I am so pleased to announce that our new director of Food and Nutrition Services, Rafaelita Curva, will be ushering in a whole new era of school food programs for our students—one that features healthier menus, less processed food, more fresh produce, self-serve open food bars, and professional development (including cooking lessons!) for FNS employees throughout the year. The program will be rolled out throughout the year; we’ll keep you up-to-date as it happens!

You can stay informed about district and school site news by regularly visiting our website (www.alameda.k12.ca.us). You can also sign up for email updates by clicking “subscribe” in the ”Stay Informed” box on our home page. And of course, your input is always welcome. You can contact me at 510-337-7060 or via e-mail at kvital@alameda.k12.ca.us with your comments or questions.

Again, welcome to the new school year!

Sincerely,

Kirsten Vital
Superintendent of Schools