



Santa Clara Unified  
School District



Braly Elementary School students on the school's  
new play structure

# SCHOOL DAYS

Annual Review | Construction Edition



# MEET OUR NEW SUPERINTENDENT



September 2019

I am thrilled to say welcome back to the 2019-2020 school year! As the new Santa Clara Unified School District superintendent, I'm extremely honored to serve in partnership with you as we continue to cultivate a world-class educational program for the children of our community. As I onboard in the district, I have been and plan to be out and about visiting you to learn about your contribution to the district and hear your ideas.

Our staff's work this past year brought progress on many fronts. Now, with the start of the 2019-2020 school year, we have new opportunities and challenges to improve the lives and futures of Santa Clara Unified's children. Your support is integral to ensuring that our schools are highly effective centers of learning. Shortly we will be launching a renewal of the district's strategic plan, along with the development of a Portrait of the Graduate, which will provide strategic direction for the overall educational experience for our graduates. An announcement will be communicated in late fall for those interested to join us in this important direction setting work. To receive our latest updates, subscribe to our monthly community newsletter at [www.santaclarausd.org/subscribe](http://www.santaclarausd.org/subscribe).

As we transition into the 2019-2020 school year, several important priorities for us include:

**School safety and attendance:** Safety is our very top priority. To ensure safe campuses, we are launching districtwide evaluation of our safety preparation and response program. School and department teams will receive training as we develop this system and there will be a districtwide exercise to test our emergency response protocols later this school year. This is in addition to our ongoing safety drills at schools. We wish that these safety preparations and exercises were not necessary, but this is our reality. Additionally, we are focusing on strategies to address chronic absenteeism. To be successful in our mission to prepare all students for success, we need our students to be in school with us every day.

**Quality instruction and timely supports:** We are steadily improving student achievement by supporting highly skilled teachers teaching the core content standards while enriching our schools with music, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) education, elementary physical education, world languages, and dual enrollment programs at the high schools. To continue to provide choice for our families, we will open a Spanish dual immersion program at Scott Lane Elementary School, a strong K-8 program at Don Callejon, and innovative programming at our new elementary and middle schools on the Agnews campus. We will continue to offer classroom and school-based intervention strategies and support services for all students who need them. Additionally, we have worked to bring in foundation funds for enrichment programs, raising over half a million dollars in the last two years from generous contributors including the Santa Clara Schools Foundation, Intel, Roche, GLOBALFOUNDRIES, Santa Clara Rotary, Santa Clara Firefighters Foundation, Silicon Valley Power, and the City of Santa Clara.

**Timely and effective communication systems:** Communicating effectively and providing quality service to our schools, families, and community benefits all of our children. We are developing standards for responding to concerns, formalizing and communicating processes, and providing quick access to information through traditional and modern communication tools.

This issue of the Annual Review focuses on our construction updates. We value communication, transparency, and fiscal responsibility and we hope you enjoy this special construction edition so you can see that your dollars are well spent. Since 2010, voters have passed over \$1 billion in funding to upgrade and construct new facilities. Santa Clara Unified School District has a Board of Trustees and a community that has repeatedly supported our students' learning by approving general obligation bonds. Upgraded, high-quality instructional facilities — through the financial support of our voters — allow us to better accomplish our mission to prepare each student for success in our ever-changing world. We are committed to our mission, and so is our school board and community. Later this fall, after our state assessment results come in, we will publish another issue of the Annual Review focused on our academic programs, achievements, and challenges. At the end of the school year, after extensive community engagement and planning, we will share with you our "Portrait of a Graduate" and new strategic plan.

This will be a busy year for us, and I look forward to meeting you as I get to know the district and our community. Santa Clara Unified is a wonderful place to be and I appreciate your ongoing pride of our district, students, and staff.

Sincerely,

**Stella M. Kemp, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

## SURVEY

Take part in our community survey at  
[www.santaclarausd.org/survey/superintendent](http://www.santaclarausd.org/survey/superintendent)

## OUR MISSION

Prepare students of all ages and abilities to succeed in an ever-changing world.

## OUR VALUES

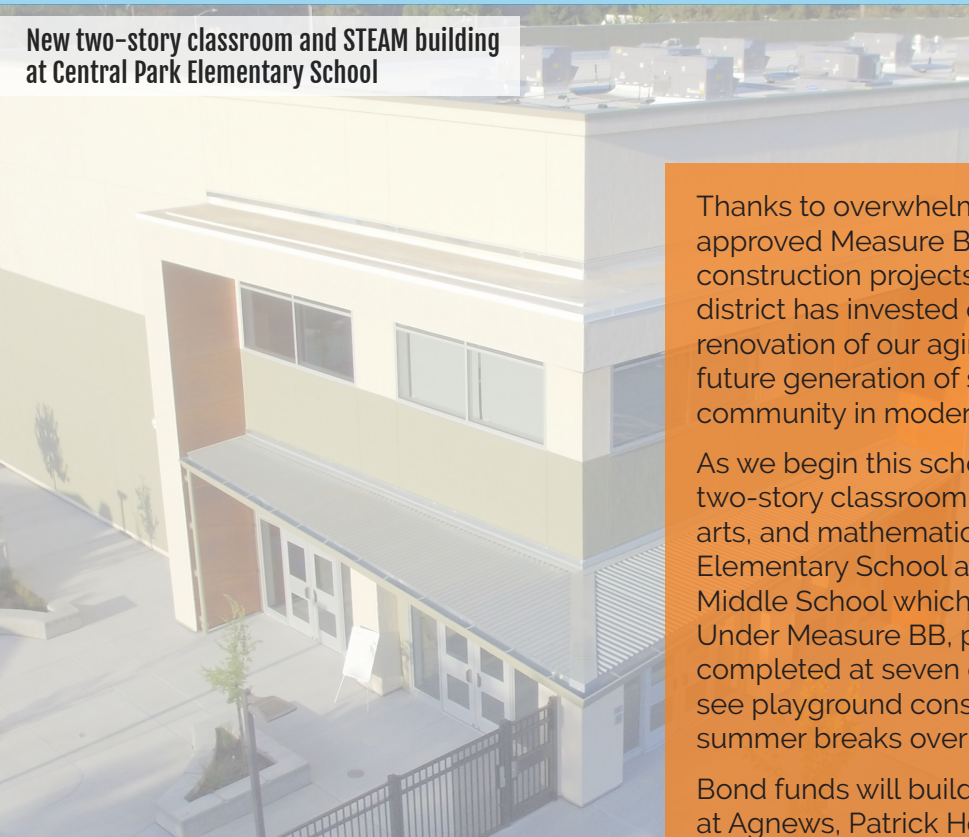
Bringing out the full potential in all students and staff, diversity, integrity, fiscal responsibility, parental support and involvement, and professionalism.

## 2 OUR VISION

Rising Above in Silicon Valley!



New playground structure at Haman



New two-story classroom and STEAM building at Central Park Elementary School



New shade structures at Central Park Elementary School

# THANK YOU

for Supporting  
Our Schools!

## Construction Program Update

Thanks to overwhelming community support, voters approved Measure BB in November 2018 to fund important construction projects throughout the district. Since 1997, the district has invested over \$1 billion into new construction and renovation of our aging campuses to prepare the current and future generation of students for college, careers, and the community in modern, safe, and technology-rich classrooms.

As we begin this school year, we are excited to open a new two-story classroom and science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) building at Central Park Elementary School and a new two-story building at Cabrillo Middle School which includes new science classrooms. Under Measure BB, playground improvements have been completed at seven elementary schools. You will continue to see playground construction projects completed during our summer breaks over the next few years.

Bond funds will build five new schools in the next few years at Agnews, Patrick Henry/Laurelwood, and New Valley High School to address enrollment growth in our district. New shade structure installation has begun at our schools and will continue in phases over the next three years. Other Measure BB fund projects include new artificial turf fields at the high schools, energy efficiency upgrades and new classroom buildings across the district, a new pool and locker room at Peterson Middle School, and major renovations at Bracher, Briarwood, and Westwood elementary schools.

School safety is another important priority in our facilities program. We completed upgrades to our surveillance system last year and are improving perimeter security from Measure BB funds. We are completing a comprehensive security review of our campuses and will be installing new fencing around our schools. Santa Clara Unified schools were built in a different era. We are moving toward better access control on our campuses and there may be inconvenience to staff, students, and the community. We can all agree, though, that the safety of our schools takes precedence.

For project details, visit [www.santaclarausd.org/bond](http://www.santaclarausd.org/bond)



# AGNEWS UPDATE

Rendering of the high school cafeteria and student union

## Coming Soon: Three New Schools

Our most exciting project is underway with the construction of three new schools at the Agnews site. Construction of the new elementary and middle schools began in fall 2018. Building the first Santa Clara Unified high school north of Highway 101 will begin in the 2019-2020 school year.

Crews have been working as quickly as possible on this colossal project to reach our original goal of an August 2020 opening for the elementary and middle schools.

We have unfortunately faced several complications that have impacted our schedule. First, the extraordinarily wet winter with over 80 days of rain caused a slow-down in grading and site preparation. Next, inspections and the state agency approval processes took much longer than anticipated. Finally, the unprecedented amount of local construction has stretched the resources of contractors and their ability to meet our timeline.

Due to these issues, Santa Clara Unified School District and our Board of Trustees are discussing the impacts to the construction timeline and when the school site will be fully ready for our students and families.

We invite you to attend an important, informational meeting with Superintendent Stella Kemp, Elementary School Principal Shehnaz Wadhwania, and Middle School Principal Dawnel Sonntag to learn more about the status of our Agnews campus. Please feel free to attend any one of these sessions for a full project update and to share your feedback.

### The meetings are planned for:

**September 18, 6 - 7 p.m. at Mayne Elementary School, Multipurpose Room**

**September 19, 6 - 7 p.m. at Montague Elementary School, Multipurpose Room**

**September 25, 6 - 7 p.m. at Hughes Elementary School, Multipurpose Room**

Visit our website at [www.santaclarausd.org/agnews](http://www.santaclarausd.org/agnews) to stay up-to-date on our progress at the Agnews campus. This is also where you will find more information about the boundaries, enrollment options, timelines, and community event announcements.

Rendering of entry to high school

Rendering of entry to middle school

Rendering of entry to elementary school





Agnews campus rendering: Yellow is the elementary school, blue is the middle school, and green is the high school

# MORE AGNEWS

## Naming Our Schools

In preparation for opening the elementary and middle schools, this fall we begin the process to name all three schools on the Agnews campus. The Board of Trustees will select a name for each school after seeking input from the community. That is where you come in!

See the box at right for details on how to contribute your ideas through October 15.

A board-approved committee with student, parent, community, teacher, classified staff, and school and district administrator representatives will review, research, and consider name options during October and November. In late October, the committee will poll the community on the top names being considered before making their final recommendation to the Board of Trustees in November. The poll will be posted on our website and we hope you participate in that as well.

Visit our website after December 13 to view the announcement of the newly named schools.

### Name Our Schools!

From September 15 to October 15, we are surveying our community for your school name ideas. We encourage you to submit as many names as you'd like for the committee and Board of Trustee's consideration.

Submit your ideas:

[www.santaclarausd.org/nameourschools](http://www.santaclarausd.org/nameourschools)

## Meet the Principals

### Shehnaz Wadhwanja, Elementary School

Shehnaz Wadhwanja joins the us from Bellevue School District in Washington. There, she was recently appointed as the director of teaching and learning after four years as the assistant principal of Stevenson Elementary School. During the course of her career, Shehnaz has worked on or been a part of paperless, fine arts focused, and one and two-way dual immersion schools. Her strengths are in project management and team trust-building.

Shehnaz received her Bachelor of Arts in labor law and her teaching credential from the University of Mumbai. She also received her master's in English teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University.

### Dawnel Sonntag, Middle School

Dawnel Sonntag first came to Santa Clara Unified in 1998 as an English teacher at Santa Clara High School where she stayed for seven years before being promoted to vice principal at Cabrillo Middle School. In 2008, she left our district to take a position as the principal of Monroe Middle School in Campbell Union School District. She spent ten years in that position before becoming the principal liaison for special education last year.

Dawnel received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of California at Santa Barbara in sociology, her teaching credential from National University, and her master's in educational leadership from San Jose State University.





Cement deep soil mixing at Agnews campus

# FINANCIAL STABILITY

The major credit rating agencies recognize the strength of our community and the prudent financial practices of the district. Our exceptionally high credit rating of Aaa (Moody's) and AA+ (Standard & Poor's) is better than the State of California and equal to that of the United States of America! This allows the district to sell bonds at more favorable rates than lower-rated issuers.

“The district saved taxpayers nearly \$3 million in spring 2019.”

The district saved taxpayers nearly \$3 million in spring 2019 by seizing the opportunity to refinance outstanding bonds at lower interest rates. This continues the district's practice of sound financial stewardship of community funds, which has saved the community over \$60 million in interest payments since 1997.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of our Independent Citizens Oversight Committee who ensure to our Board of Trustees and the community that all general obligation bond dollars are spent only on projects authorized by voters through the ballot measures.



Cement deep soil mixing at Agnews campus



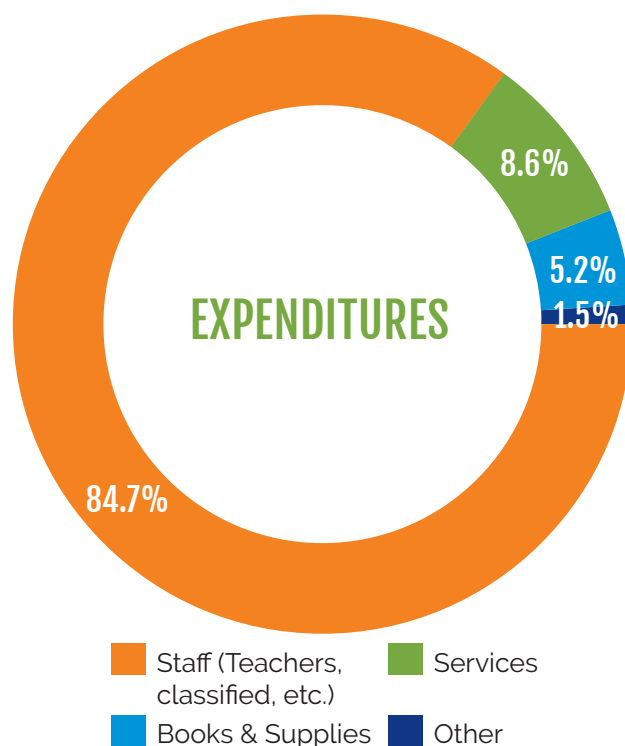
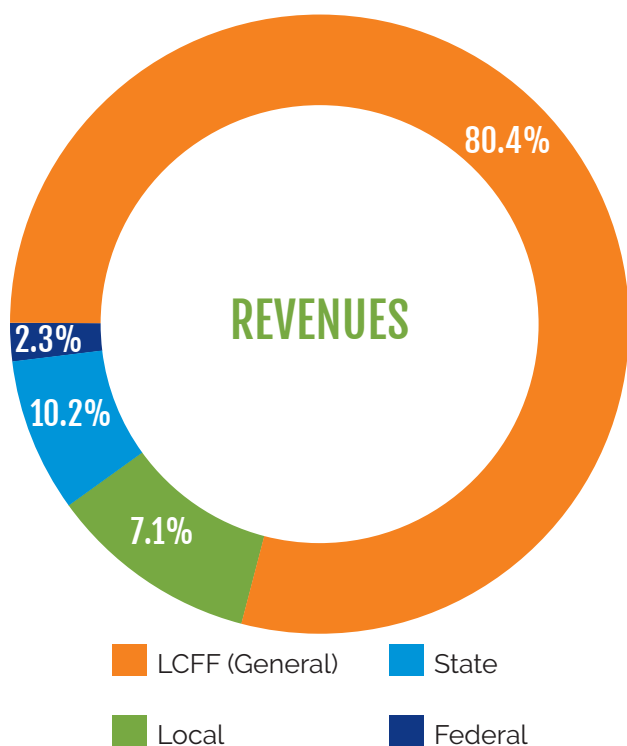
# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## How Did We Do?

Santa Clara Unified ended the 2018-2019 school year with another balanced budget.

As a community-funded school district, we must use our local resources to provide for all our educational programs throughout the district with very little assistance from the state and federal government.

It takes people to provide a quality public education, and most of the district's expenditures are committed to employee salaries and benefits. The district was able to increase salaries last year to attract and retain highly qualified teachers and staff while maintaining a balanced budget. The district was also able to complete its 1:1 Chromebook initiative, expand programs addressing student wellness, advance Title IX equity in athletics, and enhance student safety.



The majority of the district's funding comes from local property taxes rather than state funding which is tied to average student daily attendance rates. As such, the district must thoughtfully plan each school year to cover all of our expenditures with only preliminary projections on tax revenue that do not become certain until taxes are paid. Community-funded districts, like Santa Clara Unified, tend to carry higher than average reserve funds to guard against enrollment growth, to maintain positive cash flow between tax installments, and to manage unforeseen fluctuations in property tax revenue during recessions or as discussed below. These together allow us to maintain a balanced budget each school year.

An example of the risks community-funded districts face struck the district last fall. The refund of over \$13 million to the San Francisco 49ers in the 2018-2019 school year and the ongoing loss of over \$2 million per year due to the reassessment of the property tax for Levi's Stadium in the team's favor was a major setback. The district applauds the efforts of the County Assessor to challenge this wrongful decision to restore these public funds for the education of our students.

We welcome partnerships from our business community to fill the gap left by this loss.





SANTA CLARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
1889 LAWRENCE ROAD  
SANTA CLARA, CA 95051  
[www.santaclarausd.org](http://www.santaclarausd.org)

Non-Profit Organization  
US POSTAGE

**PAID**  
SANTA CLARA, CA  
PERMIT NO. 124

## IMPORTANT DATES

**September 28, 2019** | Santa Clara Parade of Champions | [www.scparadeofchampions.org](http://www.scparadeofchampions.org)  
**October 7, 2019** | Staff Professional Development | No School  
**November 6, 2019** | Santa Clara Adult Education Job and Resource Fair | 1840 Benton Street, Santa Clara  
**November 11, 2019** | Holiday | No School  
**November 18, 2019** | Santa Clara Adult Education Spring Registration Opens | [www.santaclaradulted.org](http://www.santaclaradulted.org)  
**November 27-29, 2019** | Thanksgiving Break | No School  
**December 23, 2019-January 6, 2020** | Holiday Break | No School  
**January 2020** | Registration and Open Enrollment Opens | [www.santaclarausd.org/registration](http://www.santaclarausd.org/registration)  
**January 20, 2020** | Holiday | No School  
**February 17-21, 2020** | Winter Break  
**March 13, 2020** | Staff Professional Development | No School  
**March 28, 2020** | STEAM Expo | [www.santaclarausd.org/steamexpo](http://www.santaclarausd.org/steamexpo)  
**April 13-17, 2020** | Spring Break | No School  
**May 25, 2020** | Holiday | No School  
**June 3, 2020** | Last Day of School

**Board Meetings** | With a few exceptions due to school holiday breaks, board meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. Refer to meeting agendas for start times at [www.santaclarausd.org/boardagendas](http://www.santaclarausd.org/boardagendas).

[www.santaclarausd.org/subscribe](http://www.santaclarausd.org/subscribe)

Follow us on social media



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jim Canova  
Vickie Fairchild  
Albert Gonzalez  
Jodi Muirhead  
Andrew Ratermann  
Mark Richardson  
Michele Ryan, Ph.D.