

PRESS RELEASE



February 15, 2023

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CUSD Staff Share Best Practices From Equity Conference

Twenty five Coronado Unified School District employees, including teachers, counselors, administrators, and education specialists, attended the San Diego County Office of Education's annual Equity Conference held at the Town & Country Convention Center on January 19-21, 2023.

"Our staff have opportunities throughout the year to attend professional development experiences on topics of relevance to their responsibilities," said CUSD Superintendent Karl Mueller. "In the case of the recent Equity Conference, content presented covered topics which are identified as goals in both our State Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and Long Range Plan."

"Strategically, staff members who attended also serve on the district Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Committee and/or our Special Education Committee so the influence will be felt throughout our entire school community. We know that our students arrive each day with unique backgrounds and challenges, and in order to support academic achievement, we must create and nurture conditions for every child to thrive. Good educators are always seeking new strategies and practices to build their own capacity in order to best support each child within their care," Mueller added.

Mueller also noted that 25 attendees was more than usual for a conference, but he was pleased that so many staff members were interested in attending, as topics presented directly align with district initiatives. In January, the Governing Board approved \$11,500 for staff to attend the event.

According to San Diego County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paul Gothold, the annual conference is an opportunity for "county offices, districts, schools, community college and university partners, community partners, and parents to collaborate."

Superintendent Mueller noted that feedback from attendees was very positive and staff brought back ideas and best practices to their respective schools and departments. "Our staff members are reflective practitioners and focused on continuous growth. As a practice, those

who attend professional development opportunities come back and share new ideas and information with their peers; whether it's math concepts, instructional technology, systems of support, our staff collaborate and share on how to best achieve our objectives," he said.

CUSD English Language Arts/English Language Development Teacher on Special Assignment Julia Braga often works with CUSD students who speak languages other than English in the home. She was inspired by student speakers at the conference, "Attending the student panel was a powerful experience and I was struck by one student who spoke about how devastating it is when educators ignore issues or make excuses for discriminatory behavior. She called for educators to believe us, hold people accountable, or at the very least simply say that behavior was not acceptable. This reinforced how we react or do not react to situations sends a message to children. They are relying on us to model brave behavior and protect the vulnerable."

The Equity Conference featured speakers and learning sessions focused on making school campuses "safe spaces for all students, staff members, and families, where they feel honored and valued."

Jillian Arnold, an Education Specialist at Village Elementary shared, "The conference reminded me how important it is to continue to be a voice for our students and to continue pushing for what's right and what they need. I also came to a great realization (with the support of a speaker) that fear, stress and anxiety are all connected, it's important to know the difference between those emotions and how we can use them to our benefit in education."

CUSD's Special Education Coordinator Ryan Keller, who oversees special education services for students at all grade levels at all four school sites tied his experience to his work with special education students, "I appreciate the opportunity to dive deeply into our educational systems and how they impact vulnerable learners," he said.

Keller summarized the knowledge gained at the conference, "Developing support structures for at-risk and historically underserved communities benefits all students who need support, and as things get busy in our work and personal lives, it's so important to be reminded of the ultimate goal of serving every child, every day."

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