



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE FROM: Mayor Chuck Reed

SUBJECT: SJ2020

DATE: November 12, 2009

Approved

Chuck Reed

Date

11/12/09

RECOMMENDATION

Add the attached SJ2020 resolution to the December 1st Council Agenda for adoption.

BACKGROUND

County Superintendent of Schools Chuck Weis and I have brought together a coalition of numerous stakeholders to develop a plan to close the achievement gap for all students in San José public schools by the year 2020. It is our hope that the City of San José, the Santa Clara County Office of Education, school districts, charter schools, colleges, business, and nonprofit community agencies join together to eliminate the achievement gap in San José by 2020. The “achievement gap” refers to the disparity in academic performance between two groups: lower-performing Hispanic/Latino and African-American students and higher-performing Asian and Caucasian students. In the city of San José, over 40,000 students are not proficient in their grade-level skills; that’s nearly *half* of all public school students tested. Our standard for success will be for all students to test proficient or advanced on grade level assessments.

Although the goal is ambitious, it is attainable. In our local schools, there are examples where the achievement gap has been eliminated or significantly reduced. We will take the strategies from these schools and implement them city-wide. Utilizing local best practices and findings from national research over the last three decades, we know what must be done to close the achievement gap.

Eliminating the achievement gap will take the dedication and commitment of the City of San José, the Santa Clara County Office of Education, school districts, charter schools, colleges, and business and nonprofit community agencies. As long as each agency is willing to play its role in addressing the issue and working together, we will help every child in San José achieve in school and in life. All SJ2020 partners will sign a *Compact to Eliminate the Achievement Gap* to affirm their commitment.

It is a bold vision, and it will take a bold commitment to realize it—a commitment to fundamentally change our culture, improve our practices, share and learn from one another, align resources, and work strategically to make San José the first large urban area in the nation to eliminate the achievement gap by the year 2020.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SJ2020 INITIATIVE TO ELIMINATE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

City of San Jose

WHEREAS, the education of our youth is vital to their future and to the health and vitality of our society; and

WHEREAS, in the City of San José, over 40,000 students – nearly half of all public school students tested – are not proficient in their grade level skills; and

WHEREAS, avoidable shortfalls in academic achievement impose heavy and often tragic consequences via lower earnings, poorer health, and higher rates of incarceration; and

WHEREAS, there is a disparity in academic achievement across the student population, resulting in a significant “achievement gap” in which Hispanic/Latino and African-American students are less likely to be performing at proficient levels in English-Language Arts and Mathematics than White and Asian students; and

WHEREAS, the economic losses to the city of San José due to dropouts are estimated to run almost \$400 million over these students’ lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, increasing college attainment in the San José metropolitan area by 12,052 graduates will result in an additional \$1.4 billion in aggregate personal income every year; and

WHEREAS, the achievement gap has personal, economic, and moral implications for a society committed to the ideal of equal opportunity; and

WHEREAS, there are local examples of schools that have eliminated or significantly reduced the achievement gap; and

WHEREAS, there are research-based strategies that have demonstrated their educational effectiveness at eliminating the achievement gap; and

WHEREAS, educators, parents, elected officials and governments, business leaders, and community organizations are joining the SJ2020 Initiative to Eliminate the Achievement Gap in San Jose by 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of San José supports and endorses the SJ2020 Compact to Eliminate the Achievement Gap.