

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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CCSD Superintendent Dr. Jesus F. Jara delivers his first State of the Schools address

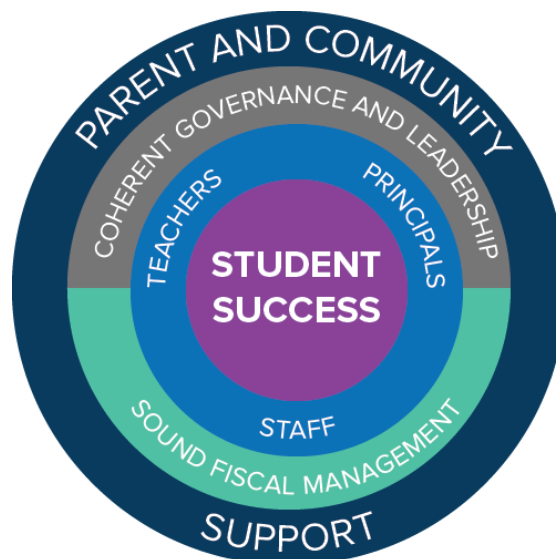
CCSD's core business is student success

LAS VEGAS – Clark County School District (CCSD) Superintendent Dr. Jesus F. Jara delivered his first State of the Schools address alongside Governor Steve Sisolak, members of the CCSD Board of School Trustees, Nevada System of Higher Education Chancellor Dr. Thom Reilly, and hundreds of community members.

Jara said he has listened to thousands of people in his seven months on the job, and he has heard from the community the need for change in the district.

“We know we have work to do, and that is the state of our schools today,” Jara said. “But it’s my intention to stand before you five years from now and tell you that the state of our schools is that we are the most improved district in America, thanks to the work of our team, our students, and our families.”

Our Core Business is Student Success



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Jara announced that he and his leadership team have been working on a draft five-year strategy for the district called Focus 2024. It outlines a plan to achieve the goals the Board of School Trustees have laid out for the district over the next five years:

- No 1- or 2-Star schools
- 90% graduation rate
 - 100% increase in college and career ready diplomas
- 100% increase in participation and performance on the Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, Career Technical Education

“What I want you to hear today is that we are building a clear, strong, disciplined plan to bring the change our kids need,” Jara said. “What it boils down to is this: Every single thing -- every activity, every task -- that we do in this district either supports rich and rigorous learning for our kids that sets them on a path to success, or it’s a distraction that we need to stop. It’s the kind of discipline that, candidly, we haven’t always had. But we will.”

Improving teaching and learning conditions

Jara noted the need to improve recruitment and retention of staff, including teachers and support professionals in hard-to-fill areas such as bus drivers.

He announced a new pilot program in partnership with the Clark County Education Association and the Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees to provide a \$10,000 incentive to teachers and principals at eight at-risk, Title 1 middle schools. Successful principals at these schools will also be eligible for a \$5,000 bonus. The district will utilize federal Title 1 funds for the program, which will start in the 2019-20 school year.

Jara also vowed to put more adults on campus to address concerns about large class sizes, and to pursue funding to provide more professional development, as well as new instructional materials.

Focus on Achievement and Equity

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While CCSD has made progress in many measures, the majority of students are not at grade level in math and English across grade levels, Jara noted. Additionally, there are major opportunity gaps between subgroups of students.

New PreK-20 Partnership and Additional Public-Private Partnerships

Jara announced a new first-of-its-kind partnership with the Nevada System of Higher Education to offer more dual credit programs, reduce remediation rates, and increase pathways into the workforce.

This is a preK-20 partnership designed to support Nevada students from the time they enter pre-kindergarten through whatever postsecondary path they choose, Jara said.

Jara also recognized 11 businesses that are working with CCSD to train potential employees while they are in high school so they can be immediately hired after graduation, many of them in the automotive sector.

Jara announced that he is meeting with labor and construction leaders on January 30 to discuss how to train more students to be ready for apprenticeships, vocational training, and other post-secondary education. Jara noted there are currently 15,000 unfilled construction jobs.

“Every young person who leaves our schools will have a diploma and a plan for how they will continue their education,” Jara said. “They should have the preparation to succeed, without remediation, in postsecondary education.”

Focus on operational efficiency

Jara noted a recent report from the Council of Great City Schools, which is an association of the 74 largest urban school systems in the country. The report, which the Council did for free as part of CCSD’s membership with the group, found that CCSD needs to make major changes to operations.

“Not only do we lack transparency, but we’re decades behind in areas like the efficiency of our facilities operations,” Jara said. “I appreciate that the report gives us clear recommendations to address our challenges.”

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CCSD's top legislative priority is to fix the funding formula

The district's top legislative priority, as outlined by the Board of School Trustees, is to fix the state education funding formula, which was created in 1967. Also, the formula was designed so that new money that goes to education, such as the funds from recreational marijuana, don't increase the funding going to schools.

"Every time I do a public event, people ask me where the marijuana money went," Jara said. "I tell them that the funding formula is broken. It's like a leaky bucket. Sure, the marijuana money went in, but other money just went out. Let's put a plug in these leaks this session."

During a presentation to the Board of School Trustees on Jan. 10, Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) Executive Director Michael Casserly said they have done more than 300 reviews of districts around the nation during the past 20 years. He noted that CCSD is one of the lowest-funded districts of all of the 74 urban school districts in the Council.

Looking forward

Jara has been gathering public input on the draft strategic plan in five town halls across the county, plus multiple speeches to business and community groups. He will present the full draft strategic plan to Trustees on January 18.

While the challenges ahead are large, Jara said he has hope.

Video of the full speech will be posted next week on ccsd.net.

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