



June 8, 2022

Superintendent's Message: Administrative Announcement for JAMS and Samohi

Dear Samohi and JAMS parents, guardians, staff and students,

I would like to announce administrative changes for both John Adams Middle School and Santa Monica High School for the 2022-23 school year.

I will be recommending to the school board the promotions of both Dr. Steven Richardson, current JAMS principal, and Dr. Antonio Shelton, current Samohi principal, to the newly created positions of executive director. The school board will consider my recommendations at the June 23, 2022, school board meeting

Our school board approved the establishment of a new executive director position at the June 6, 2022, school board meeting, with the plan to appoint administrators to oversee clusters of SMMUSD schools. Dr. Richardson will oversee Santa Monica elementary schools, Dr. Shelton will oversee Santa Monica secondary schools, and Mr. Isaac Burgess will continue to oversee the Malibu pathway.

Student achievement

These new positions will support student improvement and achievement through the implementation of systems, structures, processes and practices aimed at eliminating academic disparities, advancing equity at all schools, and ensuring the implementation of key initiatives uniformly across our district. All students will benefit from this restructure.

Executive director responsibilities

In summary, our executive directors will serve to:

1. Mentor, coach, and evaluate school site principals as they lead their schools and communities in the implementation of systems, structures, processes and practices aimed at eliminating academic disparities, contributing to inconsistent and varied expectations for teaching and learning
2. Increase effectiveness of two-way communication between the district office and school site staff in order to better serve students' academic and social emotional growth
3. Increase efficiency and effectiveness of district office services to the school sites
4. Provide better evaluation and troubleshooting of what is successful and what serves as barriers and or challenges to the implementation of district initiatives throughout the course of the year
5. Provide better opportunity to build coherence with respect to operations and learning expectations from elementary to high school
6. Provide more support in the human resources and student services departments

Additionally, these new positions represent another step in my long-term administrative realignment plan. In the past few years, we have abolished three high-level district positions: elementary and secondary directors of curriculum, human resources director, along with other central office positions and these positions will alleviate some of the burdens felt with the absence of the abolished positions while taking on the new and needed responsibilities described above.

My decision to select these two leaders for the Santa Monica positions was made following careful consideration and evaluation. I have selected two collaborative leaders who bring a strong understanding of district operations and the Santa Monica community to this role. They will be strong mentors, coaches, and evaluators of principals and their work. Drs. Shelton and Richardson have extensive experience leading secondary and elementary schools, respectively. I am confident that they will do an excellent job of meeting and exceeding expectations.

New JAMS and Samohi principals

With this announcement, you may be wondering who will replace them as the new principals of Samohi and John Adams Middle School.

Please join me in welcoming Ms. Marae Cruce, current Samohi house principal, as the recommended new principal of Samohi, and Ms. Martha Chacon, current JAMS assistant principal, as the new principal of John Adams Middle School. Both promotions are pending school board approval.

Both Ms. Cruce and Ms. Chacon are well respected by staff and their respective communities and will competently continue the good work established at both schools, while also working toward building them to new heights. They understand their school cultures, are proven and dedicated leaders and have been instrumental in establishing and implementing the current vision of their sites.

One of the many benefits of this new structure is that Dr. Shelton and Dr. Richardson will mentor, coach, and evaluate our principals; therefore, they will continue to be involved in the growth and success of our Santa Monica schools.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Shelton, Dr. Richardson, Ms. Cruce, and Ms. Chacon to their new roles in SMMUSD.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent