

Dr. Jesus F. Jara knows our kids only have one shot at school. That is what drives him to help make the Clark County School District (CCSD) the number one choice for students and their families.

Dr. Jara has a unique perspective after moving to Miami from Venezuela and growing up as an English-Language Learner. Teachers invested in him as a child, and Dr. Jara has set a priority of ensuring equity and access for our historically underserved and under-resourced students.

Dr. Jara, together with the CCSD Board, has laid out a plan to ensure educational justice for every child. That plan is deeply informed by a listening tour he undertook. The result is Focus: 2024, CCSD's new five-year strategic plan approved by the Board of School Trustees.

The plan sets ambitious goals for the next five years, including:

- All schools will be 3 Stars or higher
- CCSD's graduation rate will be 90%, with a 100% increase in students graduating college and career ready
- CCSD will see a 100% increase in students completing advanced coursework such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, and career and technical education certificates

Focus: 2024 sets out the following priorities to reach these goals:

- **CCSD must establish a focus on instructional excellence to deliver on strong teaching and learning.** Our people drive our success. We must recruit, support and retain the people who help us thrive. We must then give them the tools -- curriculum, professional development, and reliable assessments -- to succeed in the classroom.
- **We must drastically improve our operations to support rich and rigorous learning.** This includes ensuring a safe working and learning environment.
- **We must ensure we have the resources to do what is most important.** We need to pay our employees a competitive wage and have the resources to put more adults on campuses.
- **We must make it easier for our families and our community to play a deeper role in our schools.** They are our bosses and the people we serve.

In his first year on the job, Dr. Jara also led an effort to resolve employee contracts with all five of the district's employee bargaining groups - a historic first for CCSD. The accomplishment helped stabilize CCSD's budget for the 2018-19 school year, and unite CCSD and its employee groups as they approached a critical legislative session.

During the 2019 legislative session, Dr. Jara and his team successfully helped advocate for the first modernization of the education funding formula since 1967, changing the education landscape for a generation of Nevada students. They also secured more funding than had been allocated for schools in years, including an average 5 percent raise for all CCSD employees in the 2019-20 school year.

Jara's first year on the job focused heavily on equity and access, initiating plans to expand access to Advanced Placement classes at all schools. CCSD has one of the highest transiency rates in the nation, and Dr. Jara's team chose a standard K-9 assessment plan to ensure the district is consistently tracking student success, including for students who move frequently.

That system will be integral in a new partnership with the Khan Academy, which will allow teachers to identify specific skills that each student needs to work on, and then utilize programming from the Khan Academy to support development of those skills.

Dr. Jara also advocated for various school safety improvements, including putting more officers on campuses and developing one of the nation's largest K-9 officer teams dedicated to sniffing out firearms.

Dr. Jara brings with him more than 20 years of experience serving public school students. He spent six years as the deputy superintendent for Orange County Public Schools in Florida. With his assistance, Orlando's achievement gap narrowed faster than 90 percent of major cities across the United States, according to the Education Quality Index.

He also increased performance in Advanced Placement and Algebra I in his two-year tenure as the superintendent and chief operations officer in Monroe County Public Schools (Florida). As executive director of the College Board's Florida Partnership, Dr. Jara was responsible for coordinating College Board services to provide equity and access to minority and underrepresented students across the state.

He began his career in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, where he was a bilingual biology teacher and coach, before moving to Springfield, Mass., where he served as assistant principal and principal.

Dr. Jara is an active member of the Clark County community, serving on the board of the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance.

He received his Doctorate in Education, Educational Policy, Leadership, and Administration from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Dr. Jara is married and has three children who thrived in public schools.