

Sacramento City Unified School District  
**Board of Education Meeting**

**August 20, 2020 Public Comments**

Name:	Monica Harvey
Comment:	<p>8-20-20 Item 7.1 Distance Learning Instructional Practices (Christine Baeta, IASs)</p> <p>On July 16, 2020, I asked you to reach an agreement with SCTA before the start of school in the fall, so that instead of wondering what the year entails, teachers and aides could begin training and lesson planning for the students. Students, including students receiving special education services, need equitable learning across the district. Now that it is two weeks before school starts is is unfortunate that an agreement still hasn't been reached.</p> <p>Special education teachers and related service providers need 3 to 5 weeks before or at the start of the 20/21 school year to schedule and hold meetings to completely and correctly finish IEPs AND distance learning paperwork. We need time to detail what the distance learning looks like for each individual student with special needs.</p> <p>The district has to be one in which teachers want to teach and students want to learn. Please bargain in good faith and reach an agreement with SCTA and SEIU before the start of the school in the fall.</p>

Speaking as: Employee

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 8/19/2020 10:09:00 AM



August 20, 2020

Superintendent Jorge Aguilar  
Sacramento City Unified School District  
Via email [JAguilar@scusd.edu](mailto:JAguilar@scusd.edu)

Jessie Ryan, President  
Via email:  
[jessie-ryan@scusd.edu](mailto:jessie-ryan@scusd.edu)

**RE: Board Agenda Item 7.1 Opening of Schools Update: Comments to District's Learning Continuity & Attendance Plan, August 20, 2020**

Dear Superintendent Aguilar and Board President Ryan:

The Local Organizing Committee of Sacramento ACT respectfully submits these comments to the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan V 1.5 (Plan) for your consideration in your discussion of Board agenda item 7.1 regarding the opening of schools update. Sacramento ACT is a powerful multi-racial, multi-faith organization advocating a transformation of our community rooted in our shared faith values. We equip ordinary people to effectively identify and change conditions to create justice and equity. Sacramento ACT's members include over 56 congregations, schools and neighborhood groups, representing 60,000 families in Sacramento County.

We appreciate the tone and tenor of the District's plan exemplified by the introductory description of the school community's situation, acknowledging the dire and inequitable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, its exacerbation of already existing inequities, compounded by the institutional racism that exists in our school system recently lifted up through the Black Live Matter movement. We thank the District for acknowledging the need "to deeply examine and understand our own implicit biases and positions of power and privilege, to build our cultural competence, and to integrate into our curriculum the teaching and learning of social justice, anti-racism, and social and emotional learning."

We agree and want to support the District in reaching its vision, especially to "disrupt" the status quo in a way that results, not just in mitigating learning loss, but increasing learning standards and accountability. In this spirit, we respectfully submit these comments and urge you to work harder with the other adults in the District to make your Plan real and go beyond the words on paper.

We support the expectations laid out in the Plan *but request that you include how to outreach and partner with parents and families in the professional development provided to educators.* Parents and families will need support in many areas of the new distance learning mode; educators should be prepared to provide that support, including through languages

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they can understand, which means that translators also need to be trained to provide this support.

### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT – Thank you for providing live participation through zoom at the board meeting!**

**Remote Participation Options.** While we appreciate the District's efforts to receive and consider stakeholder input at its virtual board meetings and town halls, we are disappointed that the District does not do better. We attach an infographic on the Brown Act prepared by Public Advocates, which calls out the District's practice of "creating early time windows or cut-offs for submitting written public comments and reading out loud those public comments without allowing for individuals to make comment during the meeting." The infographic highlights that Oakland USD and Los Angeles USD allow public comment during the meeting through phone, video conference, or in person. We urge SacCity USD to do the same. See attached: *Public Meetings During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Public Advocates Inc.)*

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING**

**SEL Lessons** – we appreciate and support the plan to include "SEL lessons" into instruction. Our understanding of this idea is that this is "canned" SEL curriculum provided weekly. *We recommend that deeper community building activity be planned on a daily basis, such as check-in circles, for students to actually make connections in the virtual setting. In addition, we would not want to see this responsibility fall only on teachers, but shared among other staff.*

### **Supports Focused on Racial and Social Justice for the SCUSD**

**Community** – The plan states these supports—specifically web pages on Social Emotional Learning for distance Learning and Beyond and Anti-Racist Classroom-- are "available." *How will the District ensure they are used by teachers and implemented if it is not required? This is a critical additional focus that our school community needs and all staff should be required to develop this capacity.*

**Student emotional engagement data** – This appears to be an expansion of the survey effort begun during the spring school closures. We appreciate the expansion of the survey questions. *Our biggest concern is the same as it was when we met in June: We know that follow up with students/families was spotty and there are likely many lessons learned as a result. Those lessons should be included in the Plan to ensure there is follow up with the student so that students/families get the support, services or referrals they need. We urge the District to include in the Plan any data it has collected to inform the implementation of this monitoring process.*



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**Indicators monitored by staff as emotional engagement metrics –** These indicators are fine, but it is not clear who will monitor and follow through and what *IS the follow-up*. It is very likely that teachers will be the only adults that students will have contact with. Thus, teachers need the learning on these processes, including where to refer students.

**Social Emotional Academic Integration within Math and ELA –** The sample actions shared on pp 43-44 of the Plan, followed by the Professional Learning Opportunities that the District will offer teachers looks good. *All teachers should be required to participate in this learning opportunity “to expand staff capacity” and use the resources, The District must also monitor to ensure it happens. Importantly, this learning must occur before school starts. We recommend that it occur as early as possible so that students are not lost to disengagement as early as day one.*

**Key Responsibilities to monitor/support mental health and address trauma –** We appreciate the District’s articulation of these important support practices. The Plan needs more clarity on how the District is addressing these questions under distance and hybrid learning. *The District must design and train staff on clear processes and resources for students and families who need additional support. These procedures must not only be routed through the Connect Center, as in the past, but more directly through school site staff. School social workers should be empowered and trained to work with students through these clear procedures. Particularly, for identifying children/families who need additional support: what are the resources and processes that educators will be provided to use?*

**Tiered Supports –** To us, these tiered supports appear to be the same supports the District has relied upon in the past. *It would be helpful to understand how this system of tiered supports has been effective and actually addressed the needs of students and their families during the spring school closures. What is the number of staff at the District and school site level assigned these responsibilities? Again, we are concerned about whether the Connect Center resources will be available at school sites or only at the District central office.*

**We recommend peer supports.** *At least 2 campuses (Burbank/Kennedy) have implemented peer supports/counseling in a pilot program with the county. These programs should receive additional resources so that peer support can be expanded to all schools and provided virtually. In distance learning, the likelihood is that students’ contact will be limited to teachers as opposed to the other adults students would connect with at a school site, such as librarians, yard monitors, principals. The Plan should be clear about how these relationships will be fostered during distance learning.*



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***We recommend the expansion of Parent Teacher Home Visits (PTHV)***

– Since this program was first established in SCUSD in collaboration with SCTA, we know it works. However, even with the support of additional resources after LCFF, it has not reached its full potential at the District. We believe this program should be given greater focus. *We recommend that the District and the PTHV program do community forums to draw more families and teachers into the program. We recommend that the program include a non-teacher adult in the visit so that an additional adult connection could be developed. PTHV has adapted its models to the stay-at-home situation. The District should leverage its relationship to pay for additional training for all staff about how to engage families while school sites as closed.*

Tier 1: Parent Outreach & Engagement Sessions – *The Plan should be clear who will be providing this resource. Since it is identified as a “universal” support, the District should be deploying sufficient, likely additional/new staff, to provide it. Is this something teachers will be expected to do?*

Tier 1: Wellness Warm-line – We appreciate the establishment of this resource as we recommended in our meeting in June. *We recommend that it be advertised more broadly through social media, emails to families and students and in first-week-of-school packets.*

Tier 3: School Attendance Review Board (SARB) process – ***We oppose approaches that result in disproportionately criminalizing already vulnerable students and families who are suffering.*** The SARB process is a punitive or hardening measure and inconsistent with supporting emotional well-being of students and families. Most families are familiar with this process as part of disciplinary procedures and see it as a punitive response. *We recommend that the SARB process be implemented differently as a Tier 3 strategy to address social emotional well-being, not simply absences or misbehavior. We urge the District to share the data on most effective processes to re-engage students initially missing last spring. We recall that the number was high – around 1200 – but through the District’s efforts, that number was greatly reduced. See this example in southern California where well-meaning law enforcement proposals to “knock on doors” of missing students was rejected as more harm than good. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-05-13/sheriffs-plan-to-checks-on-high-risk-kids-falls-apart-amid-opposition-from-child-protective-services>*



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## SUPPORTS FOR PUPILS WITH UNIQUE NEEDS: ENGLISH LEARNERS

**Designated and integrated instruction in English language development** including assessment of progress toward language proficiency and targeted support to access curriculum. – Thank you for articulating this requirement of SB 98 even though it is not clearly required by CDE's template. Education Code 43503(b)(5). We are aware that assessment for the reclassification of English learners is not done well in the District. DELAC comments on all prior LCAPs have expressed deep frustration with the District's failure to assess and reclassify English learners. *The Plan should be transparent about the changes the District will make in working with teachers and families to ensure assessment and reclassification of English learners. In addition, the Plan should articulate the District's plan for ensuring that English learners have the supports necessary to access the full curriculum. We recommend a presentation to the community on this process which includes the specific ways this is included in the District's Plan.*

**Council of Great City Schools' report (CGCS report)** – While we find a lot to like about the recommendations in the CGCS report, we are concerned about how they will be implemented generally and, in particular, to support students with unique needs. *Please explain to the community how the principles of the CGCS report will occur when there is so much disagreement with SCTA about how teachers conduct instruction.*

**English Language Development (ELD)** – We note that the District's 2019-20 Local Control and Accountability Plan Annual Update indicated that ELD was not fully implemented nor were instructional materials for ELD fully provided. *We recommend that the Plan clearly articulate how it will implement the state's ELD standards in English language arts, mathematics, science and social science if it does not have sufficient instructional materials and all teachers are not fully trained to provide it.*

\* \* \*



Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We recognize that the District's Plan is evolving, but also that there is limited time before it must be adopted. We wanted to share our early comments and will likely comment further. We look forward to continuing to partner with you to strengthen the school experience for Sacramento's neediest students and families.

Sincerely,  
On Behalf of the Sacramento ACT Local Organizing Committee

Grace Clark  
Lamaia Coleman  
Liz Guillen  
Donielle Prince

Lauren Wolkov  
Jason Weiner  
Bina Lefkowitz  
Sheri Rickman-Patrick

Tere Flores  
**Director of Organizing**

cc: SCUSD Board members:  
Christina Pritchett, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Area 3  
Michael Minnick, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Area 4  
Lisa Murawski, Area 1  
Leticia Garcia, Area 2  
Mai Vang, Area 5  
Darrel Woo, Area 6

Rose Ramos, Chief Business Officer  
Christine Baeta, Chief Academic Officer  
Tara Gallegos, Chief Communications Officer  
Vincent Harris, Chief Continuous Improvement and Accountability Officer  
Cancy McArn, Chief Human Resources Officer  
Cathy Allen, Chief Operations Officer

Carl Pinkston, Black Parallel School Board  
David Fisher, Sacramento City Teachers Association  
Alma Lopez, Brown Issues  
Rigel Spencer Massaro, Public Advocates

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**From:** SCUSD Public Comment  
**To:** DELAC  
**Subject:** RE: BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING: August 20, 2020

**From:** DELAC  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 20, 2020 1:09 AM  
**To:** SCUSD Public Comment <PublicComment@scusd.edu>  
**Subject:** BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING: August 20, 2020

**DELAC Council** consists of Llova Ayala-Santamaria, Leana Sanchez, and Velia Mercado. We are submitting public comment on:

- **Agenda item 7.1 Opening of Schools Update**

### **Agenda item 7.1 Opening of Schools Update**

On August 18, Opportunity to Provide Input on the Draft Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan was emailed to community members that have an active email address on file. Below the banner, there is a sentence, "Translations of this message are available in Spanish, Hmong, Chinese, and Vietnamese." This sentence should be presented in each of the languages listed and in every correspondence referring to translation or interpretation services. A quick note about website language-accessibility, the "learn how to translate this page" instructions on the district website need to be translated and presented in our top 5 languages because reading the directions in English is not helpful for viewers requiring language support to translate the directions to "learn how to translate this page." Providing this information in English without translation does not provide language-accessibility. Regarding the Opportunity to Provide Input on the Draft LCA Plan email, the format of the QR codes provided by language is not QR-friendly. The images of the QR-codes are displayed too closely to one another. When you try to scan a QR-code for the draft-plan or comment form by language, the QR-reader tries to process different codes at once and it is challenging to navigate to the desired document. The table outlining QR-codes by draft-plan or comment form and language, needs to be translated within the newsletter. Anything referencing interpretation or translation should have also been translated within the communication to include both the translated language and English for accessibility, such as "español (Spanish)" and "formulario de comentarios (comment form)." Also, while reading the Spanish draft plan provided, the language is unfamiliar. Who is translating these documents and how is quality-control ensured or is the district using Google Translate which we know to be unreliable? Finally, how is the technology divide being addressed and how are unreachable community members being engaged?