

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 17, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Elizabeth Guillen
Comment:	

Speaking as: Community Member

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 9/17/2020 11:41:25 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 17, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Alina Cervantes
Comment:	<p>Our children deserve a distance learning agreement in place now! A member of the SCTA bargaining team publicly told our parent group Parents United to Restore Our Schools that one sticking point was around recorded lessons being required vs based on teacher's professional opinion. With all due respect, we can balance basic safeguards for children with academic freedom, and most professional educators understand that. Even my third grader understands this when I told her the issue. Her answers was "there should be some rules that everyone has to follow so it's fair for kids, but also the teachers can be free to teach in their own style". Why can my 8-year-old understand this and some adults can't??</p> <p>In the meantime we have teachers asking teens to record themselves doing exercises for PE and upload the videos. We have teachers giving children extra credit to upload selfies to social media websites, when all research indicates this is unsafe and developmentally inappropriate, and also a violation of privacy because the teacher is asking this be done on a public account and that they state their name and grade. These are the "professional judgements" preventing children with special needs from getting services??</p> <p>And let's not forget the other sticking point this bargaining member pointed to- essential standards being required vs used as much as possible. We need an agreement now that guarantees all children their right to a high quality education. We can't leave it up to chance and shame on any party that is pushing for that.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 9/17/2020 8:42:05 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 17, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Carl Pinkston
Comment:	The Community Priority Coalition recognizes that this is hard work but firmly believes that it is harder for parents/caregivers that have to partner with the District to make this Plan meaning. We are concerned about parents' complaints that amended IEPs are simply cut/pastes of prior IEPs and that an actual assessment is not taking place. We request that the District provide an update to the Board on the assessments for students with disabilities—which assessments are being used and when will they be administered. Last, our student needs clear guidance on how the plan will address learning loss and instructional support. Thank You

Speaking as: Community Member

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 9/17/2020 11:52:09 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 17, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Leana Sanchez
Comment:	Teachers and families need support accessing the resources for adoption in this plan. Correspondence, including meetings, emails, texts, and phone calls, need quality interpretation. If it is available in English, it must be language-accessible to our multilingual families. What is SCUSD protocol for accessing quality interpretation and translation? Other districts have clear protocol. San Juan Unified has Language Line and Natomas Unified has Language Link. SCUSD needs to build its capacity and availability. Also, when will MOC have a minimum of 2 interpreters per language to facilitate meetings, such as DELAC? One of our interpreters had technology issues at our last meeting and there was not a second interpreter to provide language-accessibility. How can teachers participate in Parent Teacher Home Visit? This service used to be restricted to particular school sites. Has this service been opened up to all sites across SCUSD?

Speaking as: Employee

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 9/17/2020 12:00:36 PM

Coalition for Students with Disabilities

Public comments for Sept. 17, 2020 SCUSD Board of Education meeting

9.2 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan Adoption (Vincent Harris and Steven Ramirez-Fong)

Joint public comment on behalf of Coalition for Students with Disabilities by Angie Sutherland, Alison French-Tubo, Renee Webster Hawkins, Sarah Williams Kingsley, Angel Garcia (sharing our time)

On Tuesday, the entire Special Education Community Advisory Committee was finally presented with an overview of the District's Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. Sadly, there was minimal explanation or discussion with input from parents on goals for students with disabilities. It was like checking a box on stakeholder engagement, even though we all would like the LCAP to robustly include students with disabilities. The presentation did not emphasize the importance of parent involvement for students with disabilities in the LCAP planning process. The presentation did not include the LCAP Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) members who are also members of the CAC which could have helped to give more context and relevance to the 50+ parents that attended the meeting. The CAC membership was not asked to help in defining the priorities of the CAC for students in the LCA Plan or upcoming LCAP Annual Update. The CAC leaders stated that they provided input to the LCAP Coordinator about the priorities of the CAC, but that list was not shared with the CAC General Membership. The lack of transparency is troubling. As Board members, please be aware that this plan lacks authentic engagement of mandated stakeholders and families of students with disabilities.

Good news is though, that parents are coming out in droves to attend recent virtual CAC meetings, and they need help! Director Bryant and CAO Beata have shown a willingness to and desire to assist. Parents are calling for plans to be set in place to stop the chaos they are experiencing with distance learning.

One of the major issues is that students who previously had 1:1 aides at school are not receiving that same level of assistance via distance learning and struggle to engage in or access learning. A veteran CAC parent mentioned checking with nonpublic agencies that are willing to provide 1:1 aides for the District in students' homes to give them the services they have rights to. However, Director Bryant says it is a two-fold problem. First, there is no contract with the union who represents the District's employees who provide this level of service, SEIU, to resume in-person work. Second, since students served by those staff aren't being served, students who receive the same or similar service provided by a contractor, some of whom are willing to provide these services now, in the interest of equity, no one can receive the services from either District employees or from outside providers. It is unconscionable that because we

lack a Distance Learning MOU, the result is that our students with disabilities are deliberately deprived of the services required by their IEP and federal law. Practically speaking, this leaves students and families in the gap in high crisis. Without the needed services, children are regressing educationally and emotionally. We don't know how many students and staff are affected by the issue, but in general our impression is that the highest needs students are most affected. Students with disabilities need help NOW.

Plans for assessments, both for purposes of progress monitoring for students with existing IEPs, and for students whose families have requested evaluation for possible special education services, are unclear. How the District plans to meet its obligations to identify all possible students with disabilities via distance learning, also known as Child Find, are also unclear. Discussions on the distance learning MOU between SCTA and SCUSD included disagreements about assessments and services provided to students with disabilities but it is unclear where the issues now stand. Additionally, the proposed MOUs are silent on how to conduct required comprehensive evaluations and develop transition plans for students approaching high school and graduation. The community needs clarification as soon as possible. Student's rights to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment should not be on hold because our community is in the midst of a pandemic. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is still in effect.



September 17, 2020

Superintendent Jorge Aguilar
Sacramento City Unified School District
Via email JAguilar@scusd.edu

Lisa Murawski, SCUSD Board Area 1
Via email Lisa-Murawski@scusd.edu

Jessie Ryan, President of the Board
Sacramento City Unified School District
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Via email darrel-woo@scusd.edu

Isa Sheikh, SCUSD Board Student Representative
Via email: Isa-Sheikh-Board@scusd.edu

RE: SCUSD Board Meeting Item 9.2: Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan Adoption

Dear Superintendent Aguilar and SCUSD Board Members:

The undersigned organizations in the Sacramento Community Priority Coalition submit these comments to the revised draft of SCUSD’s Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (Plan).

Items in the Plan that are “still being discussed in negotiations with bargaining groups” are important requirements. We request that they be clearly identified in the Plan.

This new statement in the cover page of the Plan makes it impossible for parents, students and community stakeholders to judge the credibility of the Plan and support their students or their learning. To say that something is a “plan,” but it is still “pending, still in development, or in negotiations” creates uncertainty, something our community does not need.

We request that 1) the Plan be revised to mark those actions and services that are uncertain as of its adoption and 2) the District provide a regular status update at each board meeting and on its website and communicate to parents and students on the progress of these plan developments. It is not fair to students, parents, teachers and staff not to know what the Plan is. We have endured too much uncertainty already. If there is no plan for a specifically required item, then the District should state clearly and characterize it as a proposal or still in development.

While we recognize and agree that “one size does not fit all,” it is very troubling that many parents still do not have a basic understanding of the expectations for their children’s schools and how best to support them in distance learning— from daily schedules, weekly communications, making up synchronous lessons, and discipline for not being able to log into synchronous lessons at the teachers’ schedule.

Some glaring examples:

- Families of students with exceptional needs still not knowing when their students’ IEPs will be revised to reflect the changed learning environment. (See more below.)
- Families of English learners do not understand why changes are being made to their schedules that are harmful and provide lesser opportunities to learn than were previously provided as in the example shared by the DELAC’s report at the September 3 board meeting in which a middle school is offering zero period for GATE classes but will not offer zero period for long-term ELs. This disparity in opportunities to learn within individual school sites is likely occurring throughout the district, and it will exacerbate inequities in student performance.

Students and their families, especially the most vulnerable in Sacramento—African American students, low-income students, English learners, students in foster care and experiencing homelessness, and students with exceptional needs—should not be subjected to the uncertainty resulting from the failed negotiations of the District and its employee bargaining units. The Plan should identify those actions and services that will be inconsistent because of the failure to reach agreement so that parents/caregivers can know what to expect.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

In the Community Advisory Council (CAC) meeting this week, it became clear that providing students with disabilities in-home services is not going to occur, even if it is included in the student’s IEP because District employed staff will not agree to enter students’ homes because of the pandemic and the District is encouraging physical distancing for the collective goal of reopening school sooner rather than later. Because District contracted aides are willing to provide in-home services, this has caused some confusion. This reality should be clearly communicated to all families/caregivers of students with disabilities, not just those who were in attendance at this week’s CAC meeting where CAO Christine Baeta provided a clear explanation of the current situation.

Support for Pupils With Unique Needs

1. English Learners

The Plan should clarify which planned actions and services are still in development or in negotiations, and what the current actual practice will be until these plans are finalized. We noted no changes from the Draft in this section for English Learners despite many comments submitted (by LULAC and the DELAC) and must ask: which of these planned actions and services are not finalized or in place?

What will the actual practice be for:

- integrated and designated English Language Development (ELD) during distance learning
- minimum amounts of time for designated ELD by grade levels

- how ELs will receive regular instruction during core coursework
- how ELs will be assessed for reclassification

2. Students with Disabilities

The timeline for revising student's IEPs should be stated. We request that the District report at each board meeting whether this task has been completed for all students with disabilities so that learning loss can be properly assessed and a program can be developed to mitigate and put the student back on track.

We are concerned about parents' complaints that amended IEPs are simply cut/pastes of prior IEPs and that an actual assessment is not taking place. We request that the District provide an update to the Board on the assessments for students with disabilities—which assessments are being used and when will they be administered?

The Community Priority Coalition recognizes that this is hard work but firmly believes that it is harder for parents/caregivers that have to partner with the District to make this Plan meaningful.

We understand that the district is required to submit the Plan to the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) within 5 days of its adoption. Therefore, we are copying SCOE and will be requesting SCOE to recommend that changes be made to the Plan¹ to address the shortcomings we identified, particularly noting and differentiating in the Plan the actions and services that are actual practice or still in negotiations. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about our concerns. We look forward to our continuing conversation on behalf of our students and families.

Sincerely,

Carl Pinkston
Community Priority Coalition

Duane Campbell
Education Committee,
League of United Latin American Citizens, Sacramento

Tere Flores
Sacramento ACT

Liz Guillen
Public Advocates

¹ The education budget trailer bill, SB 98, authorizes the county superintendent to recommend changes to the Plan: Cal. Educ. Code § 43509(c) (1) Not later than five days after adoption of a learning continuity and attendance plan, the governing board of a school district shall file the learning continuity and attendance plan with the county superintendent of schools. The county superintendent of schools may submit recommendations, in writing, for amendments to the learning continuity and attendance plan by October 30, 2020. The governing board of a school district shall consider the recommendations submitted by the county superintendent of schools in a public meeting within 15 days of receiving the recommendations.

Cc: Rose Ramos, Chief Business Officer
Christine Baeta, Chief Academic Officer
Tu Moua Carroz, Instructional Assistant Superintendent
Olga L. Arellano-Simms, Instructional Assistant Superintendent
Mary Hardin Young, Instructional Assistant Superintendent
Chad Sweitzer, Instructional Assistant Superintendent
Kimberly Mackey, Instructional Assistant Superintendent
Becky Bryant, Special Education Director
Azarel Iniguez, Multilingual Department Coordinator
Tara Gallegos, Chief Communications Officer
Vincent Harris, Chief Continuous Improvement and Accountability Officer
Steven Fong, LCAP/SPSA Coordinator
Cancy McArn, Chief Human Resources Officer
Cathy Allen, Chief Operations Officer
Dave Gordon, Superintendent, Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE)
Channa Cook-Harvey, District & School Support
Cathy Morrison, ESSA/LCFF, SCOE