Thomas Hehir and Associates LLC
137 Pembroke Street, #3
Boston, MA 02118

October 29, 2015

Dr. Holly Wade
Chief Student Services Officer
Palo Alto Unified School District
25 Churchill Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94306

Re: Review of Special Education in Palo Alto Unified School District, Phase 2

Dear Dr. Wade:

Attached is a proposal with budget for Phase 2 of the review of special education in the
Palo Alto Unified School District.

For Phase 2, we propose to (1) conduct statistical analysis of student and district level
data to identify patterns related to the identification, placement, and achievement of
students with disabilities in the Palo Alto Unified School District; and (2) design,
implement, and analyze a set of surveys exploring respondents' beliefs about students
with disabilities and attitudes toward more inclusive practices in the service delivery of
education to students with disabilities. Our research will lead to a set of findings and
recommendations for improving policies and practices pertaining to the education of
students with disabilities at the school and district level.

Analytic Plan

Drawing on both (1) available student, district, and state data, and (2) new data that we
will collect in our proposed surveys, our team will employ a variety of statistical
methodologies (described below) to provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of
the child and school level factors associated with the identification, placement and
academic achievement of students with disabilities in the Palo Alto Unified School
District. These analyses will provide an overall picture of practices related to the
education of students with disabilities within the district.

Part 1: Using the most recent year of PAUSD data:
We will use the most recent year of PAUSD data to identify patterns for identification,
student placement, and achievement outcomes in the Palo Alto Unified School District.
This information, which will enhance our understanding of the landscape for the
education of students with disabilities in PAUSD, will guide the study into its second
phase. Specifically, we will:
   • **Fit a series of models to:**

- o Estimate the probability a student is a) identified as eligible for special education and related services in PAUSD, and b) placed in inclusive or substantially separate settings, and
  - o Determine factors related to achievement on relevant outcomes (e.g., proficiency on the CAASPP/CAHSEE/CELDT tests)
- We will control for factors including disability category, relevant student and family-level characteristics, and relevant school level characteristics.

Part 2: Collecting new survey data, online

2.1 Developing and implementing a set of surveys for parents, teachers, and school leaders to:

- Understand attitudes and beliefs about students with disabilities
- Assess the Palo Alto Unified School District's readiness and capacity to improve inclusive practices in the education of students with disabilities
- Identify key obstacles that may stand in the way of improvements in the education of students with disabilities

The surveys will be administered online and will further examine contextual factors in PAUSD that are related to the education of students with disabilities. Topics that may be covered include:

- Modifications and accommodations provided to students with disabilities
- The range of curricular offerings for a diversity of students with disabilities
- Types of technology used to meet the needs of students with disabilities
- Professional development offerings for special and general education teachers, school administrators, and parents
- The integration of services, such as special education, EL Programs, and career and technical education
- Communication with the Palo Alto Unified School District central office

2.1 Analyzing survey data to:

- Identify areas of strength in the education of students with disabilities.
- Identify areas of weakness in the education of students with disabilities
- Inform our recommendations for the improvement of education for students with disabilities in the Palo AltoUnified School District

Analyses, findings, and conclusions from Phases 1 and 2 of the study will be included in our final report and will play a critical role as the evidence base for our policy and practice recommendations.

<u>Data</u>

To conduct these analyses we request use of California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) data for the 2014-2015 academic year. We request that these data include information on all PAUSD students, including those educated in out-of-district placements such as charter schools, Educational Service Centers, and Juvenile Detention Centers. We request that these data be provided with a masked identifier for students, which will allow for the tracking of individual students across data files without disclosing the identity, either by name, address, or initials, of individual students.

Outcome data
We request data on general and special education students' performance on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), and the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) for the 2014-2015 academic test year administrations. This should include both students who receive standard administrations of these tests and those tested using alternate and/or modified versions of the test(s).

Child/Family Characteristics Data
We request all available data on the characteristics of children and their families from the 2014-2015 academic year. The success of regression analyses discussed above will depend on the availability of a rich set of covariates with which to model the probability that a student will receive a special education designation, have access to services, be educated in an inclusive placement, and/or score proficient or higher on standardized tests.

School Characteristics Data
Although not a data request (we plan to construct school-level characteristics by aggregating the student level data provided by CALPADS), we include this section to preview the types of characteristics we will use in our analyses. We will aggregate from student-level data school characteristics such as racial composition, percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged, percentage of students who are first-generation Americans, and percentage of students who speak a language other than English, and these will serve as important covariates in our quantitative analyses.

Research Products and Proposed Timeline

Work start date	November 1, 2015
Quantitative data analysis	120 day period beginning on date of receipt of data
Internal presentation of preliminary quantitative findings	150 days after receipt of data
Parent survey ready for distribution	January 15, 2015
Teacher and Principal survey ready for distribution	February 15, 2015
Internal presentation of preliminary survey findings	May 15, 2015
Submission: First draft of expert report	June 15, 2015
Submission: Final draft of expert report (after round of feedback)	20 days after receiving PAUSD feedback

Please don't hesitate to contact Monica Ng at 510-282-3273 if you have questions about this proposal or budget.

We thank you for the opportunity to work with you and we look forward to spending more time learning together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tom Hehir

Proposed Budget for Phase 2 of PAUSD Review of Special Education

Labor

Name	Activity	Hourly Rate	Total Hours	Total Cost
Dr. Tom Hehir	Analysis and oversight, report writing, presentation by video/phone	$375	55	$20,675
Monica Ng	Survey development, Project management, phone meetings	$200	40	$8,000
Dr. Hadas Eidelman	Survey development and analysis, report writing, presentation by video/phone	$200	150	$30,000
Dr. Laura Schifter	Quantitative analysis, report writing, presentation by video/phone	$200	100	$20,000
			Budget TOTAL	**$78,625**