



January 30, 2018

To: PAUSD School Board Members and members of the Dyslexia Working Group:

The Palo Alto CAC acknowledges the good work that went into creating the Dyslexia Plan which incorporates research, guidelines, and best-practices. The proposed Plan addresses the District's goals for High Quality Teaching & Learning, and Equity & Access. And while we expect that sound RTI (Response to Intervention) should minimize misidentification and increase earlier targeted interventions, we also caution that RTI **not delay** explicit, sequential, multi-sensory intervention for Dyslexics if needed.

Nearly one third of PAUSD's Special Education students have a specific learning disability (SLD). Most will likely have dyslexia. The CAC recognizes the complexity and challenges and opportunities of sharing teaching responsibility between generalists and specialists. Professional development and partnering on how to deliver instruction to students with learning differences like dyslexia is critical. In middle and high school, with multiple teachers and a tight master schedule, a coordinated effort is needed to provide a Multi-Tiered System of Support so students can access the curriculum.

We would like to more clarity around how specific, structured interventions will be delivered for secondary students. Special Ed services for most middle and high schoolers are offered during one of two elective periods, as a single class. But the secondary consequences of dyslexia may also include problems in comprehension because reduced reading experiences impedes growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. So specialized support may also be needed when students struggle with fluency, comprehension, organization and writing in non-ELA classes like math, science and social studies.

Finally, we want to like to hear details about how the district will address student Wellness and Safety. Namely,

- Promoting a cultural shift among staff and students to acknowledge and promote neurodiversity, multiple intelligences and strengths-based learning, and
- Considerations for students with disabilities who are at higher risk for mental health challenges

Thank you for your good work. We look forward to hearing more.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Eng Lee

On behalf of the Palo Alto Community Advisory Committee for Special Education