



## **Comments on 1st Revision to 2018/19 Budget (December 2, 2018)**

*Delivered by Kimberly Eng Lee, Chairperson for the Palo Alto CAC to PAUSD Board*

Thank you Dr. Novak for your clear visual and verbal explanation of the [budget](#). We have here your recommendation to approve the 2018/19 budget revisions, including a net increase to General Fund Expenditures for Special Education. However, it is accompanied by concern that “Costs continue to rise at faster pace than state funding”. We know state funding formulas have also routinely underfunded Special Education. So rather than reporting year over year growth, perhaps the more appropriate to query is Special Ed’s budget relative to services documented in IEPs. And Special Ed’s budget relative to the inclusive education that PAUSD purports to offer. **There is not enough data here for us to discern what is driving the increase.**

It goes without saying that, the community expects district management to be effective and efficient in its use of resources. **However, in the case of Special Education students, we must ensure that finances alone do not determine the services warranted in the law.** When a district’s capacity to deliver committed services are not adequately funded, by no fault of their own, any families of students with disabilities who do not receive appropriate services and accommodations needed to access curriculum, are forced to awkwardly confront staff to request the equitable education due them. I hope this is not the intended design of our system. Last May, the Board reviewed and approved half of a \$2.4 mil Special Ed Vision Plan, where and how is that reflected? At the time, I recall concerns about recruiting high-quality personnel fast enough. Have we actually spent according to that Plan, is the remainder accurately reflected in next year’s budget or beyond, and do you commit to fully fund and deliver on that Plan? Likewise does this budget reflect the funds needed to implement the District’s Dyslexia Plan?

Finally, I’d like to comment on a new definition of equity offered at the most recent Board meeting, whereby “Parent education, socioeconomic status, zip code, ethnicity, and any combination of those things is no longer predictive of success in our district”. Well what about disability? The Palo Alto CAC had understood that students with disabilities were also accounted for under the district’s equity initiatives. So as we entered this school year, we did not expect changes in strategy, rather we seek renewed vigor for district priorities, delivery on approved plans, transparent data-driven decision-making, and ongoing examination of students’ academic, social and emotional outcomes. **Can you give us confidence that these commitments to Special Education remain?**