



Read by Alison Guan, on behalf of the Palo Alto CAC, June 8, 2019

The CAC believes PAUSD continues to place students with disabilities and co-teacher pairs into classrooms with inadequate support to serve students through instruction. We find there are no checks and balances, and insufficient capacity to ensure quality and consistency in the Special Ed program.

The district is tackling operational controls. But 6 years of prior review point to the fact that Special Ed's problem is not lack of control, but lack of measurable outcomes, evidence-based instruction, and staff collaboration. Improving controls is independent and CAN NOT STALL REFORM that is warranted and was already promised. Communiqués on the budget give no indication how the district will deliver on this First Promise. Special Ed is characterized as an out-of-control cost center, rather than an opportunity to support site-level instruction. District-level decisions and their stated rationale just aren't matching reality for students and staff.

We believe the concerning spike in NPS, mental health, settlement and litigation expenses is due in part to secondary students not receiving sufficient instruction early. This trajectory will not abate without investing where we failed to spend when 'Full Inclusion' was first implemented. Our resources are wasted in a cycle of triage and angst, rather than deliberate intervention. Our students and staff suffer.

FIRST off: Co-teaching serves students with IEPs, and is a Tier 2 intervention for 504s. Sites know the instructional minutes written into IEPs and communicated these needs for (1) staffing allocation, (2) training new co-teaching pairs, and (3) collaboration time. However, the published budget may not meet our high school needs next year,

SECONDly: most IEPs are for SLD's (Specific Learning Differences) like Dyslexia, so getting more students reading is a game-changer. Last year a new program helped 50 high schoolers with dyslexia. This instruction is now in jeopardy. Where is the budget for screening, dyslexia instruction, and general educator on-boarding?

Finally: We face teacher shortages exacerbated by high housing costs. The Special Ed pool is even more limited, and ongoing instability in strategy and budget leaves the door wide open to turnover, inexperience, and insufficient staffing.

The Board assured us that Special Ed was a priority. But absent explicit actions we continue petitioning for

- Recommendations in the "VISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION"
- Transparency in decisions that impact students and staff
- Money to reform Special Ed

CAC foreshadowed the need to secure funding and buy-in in [February 2018](#), in [December 2018](#), and again in [mid-May](#). Still, our community's concerns go unaddressed. We strongly recommend that you approve "additional Special Education Funding". And rather than piece together announcements, we request a forum where stakeholders and decision-makers can dialog. For now, it feels like we're stalled at best, reversing course at worst. Thank you.