



May 14, 2019

We begin with sincere thanks to Lana Conaway, Alma Ellis and Clarisse Haxton for completing the district's internal Evaluation for Special Education Improvement. Their skills and tenacity to analyze and report to the public, has resulted in a positive momentum never achieved by any outside consultant.

We are 6 weeks away from a final budget, and are learning that Special Education will be impacted. Last year, PAUSD's Special Education Council presented "A VISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION", with recommendations for improving student outcomes while bringing litigation and NPS spending under control. The plan was only partly funded, and there are intentions to "belt-tighten" and "only fund strategic initiatives".

So we ask you, "is Special Education still considered strategic"? How would we know this? Special Education was restructured without notice to the community, or discussion by the Board. And cuts are now proposed that affect the inclusion of students and their success in school.

Poor student outcomes and any resulting litigation are not only due to improper structures and systems. PAUSD's self review point clearly to a lack of resources, and insufficient support and training for general educators. The 2018 Vision Plan described the investments required upfront, for better academic, emotional, and legal outcomes. This Board asked for a needs-driven approach to budgeting -- for Special Education that means effective spending for longer-term savings.

It is frustrating, to say the least, that teachers need help with learning differences and challenging behaviors in their classrooms, yet these topics are still not in the training line-up and push-in consultation is insufficient. Reducing special education staff at sites only exacerbates problems.

We ask, "Why bother to review ourselves ad nauseum, if we won't fund and implement our own recommendations"? Individual education goals, drive services, which drive funding needs. Period. Special Education is about delivering instruction so students receive educational benefit. This isn't just nice to do, this is the law.