



3 Comments for the School Board on Return to Learn, August 11, 2020

Read/submitted by Co-Chairs, Kimberly Eng Lee, Rika Yamamoto, and Christine Baker

The pandemic has not impacted all children equally. This is especially true of those who experience the world through sight, sound and touch, our students with more severe disabilities such as our kids in Therapeutic and Futures classrooms. For them, in-person instruction is essential, and for many of them Distance Learning does not work. These parents report that children are not making progress on IEP goals. Their children are not receiving FAPE, and they see regression on hard-earned skills.

The brief opening of ESY provided opportunities for those students for whom in-person instruction is essential, although not all students can attend in-person due to them being medically fragile. While those secondary students who couldn't participate in-person this summer, received no services. As we "Return to Learn", we hope that the district will provide a continuum of services for the special needs of ALL students, be it **essential** in-person or a robust distance learning.

"Kids with IEPs and 504s are not ALL OK right now."

First of all, I appreciate the letter from both directors which states that students will receive the support he/she requires to be successful in this environment and related services minutes written into the current agreed upon IEP will be implemented fully.

With that, one question left is related to Learning Loss. The CA budget trailer, SB 98 requires the district to adopt, by September 30, 2020, a learning continuity and attendance plan for the 2020-21 school year.

This plan requires What additional supports will be provided for students with exceptional needs served across the full continuum of placements in order to address student learning loss or accelerating progress into the school year "particularly in the areas of English language arts, English language development, and mathematics". So I am looking forward to hearing information related to how the district will address the Learning Loss.

The PAUSD Promise statement for Special Education & Inclusion says that Students with disabilities will be provided with appropriate identification and high-quality programs and services, in the least restrictive appropriate environment. I would like to ask the district to continue to implement this goal while working with each family and student to determine what FAPE looks like for each student and family during COVID-19.

"Kids with IEPs and 504s are not ALL OK right now."

For many parents of students with moderate to severe disabilities, distance learning was exceptionally hard this past spring. Parents had to essentially function as their child's full time aide so that students could access their education. In this scenario, since a parent is an essential partner in the learning process, a good amount of communication has to take place between teacher and parent to make distance learning work.

The CDE recommends schools communicate with students and families frequently to reassure them that support is available.

- Related service providers and case managers should have regular contact with their students and families
- 1:1 sessions (for both academic and mental health) will help provide students with support
- Amendments or addendums to IEPs* are based on communication with families and changing needs of students because of their distance learning experience

SB 98s Learning Continuity & Attendance Plan requires PAUSD to include descriptions of meaningful stakeholder engagement and what additional supports will be provided for pupils with exceptional needs during Distance Learning. When can we see a copy of this plan and give input? Will there be ongoing Special Education parent surveys? I believe checking in with parents frequently about students' needs and challenges is an essential part in making distance learning more robust and accessible.

“Kids with IEPs and 504s are not ALL OK right now.”

** "there may be instances when amending the IEP to reflect the change to distance learning might be necessary and/or appropriate. LEAs may convene an IEP team meeting, or propose an IEP amendment without a team meeting, particularly where it is deemed necessary to address unique circumstances related to alternative service delivery. (See 20 USC 1414 (d)(4)(A); 20 USC 1414 (d)(3)(D); 34 C.F.R. § 300.324.) Parents too may request an IEP meeting or propose an IEP amendment, pursuant to Education Code § 56343, subdivision (c). Some LEAs and parents have agreed to amend the IEP by incorporating a distance learning plan outlining the special education and related services being provided to the student during the temporary, emergency situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic." ([CDE Guidance Posted April 9, 2020](#))*