

Palo Alto CAC Statement to the School Board about [D/F](#) and [A-G](#) reports

November 2, 2021 presented by Kimberly Eng Lee

There is often little feedback on IEP goals in middle and high school when everyone's attention shifts to letter grades. So disaggregated D/F reports and A-G course completion really are key metrics about Special Education students. They reflect not only content knowledge, but students' academic and task completion skills, their mental wellness, and their prospects for post-secondary education and employment. Earlier I shared that PAUSD has 1,118 students with IEPs, and more with 504 plans. 87% are identified with Autism, Specific Learning Disability, Speech-Language or Other Health Impairments like ADHD.

Earlier tonight we heard about [PAUSD's Focus Areas](#), prioritizing urgent and immediate needs for the 2021-22 school year within the PAUSD Promise, and prioritizations due to COVID. Palo Alto CAC is fully supportive of the comprehensive and integrated work being done by administrators and educators. So while this D/F report and the A-G report at the last meeting may seem routine, the staff has gone to great lengths to report these metrics to the board and to the community. For students and families, metrics matter, and subsequent actions to identify problem areas by school and by subject area matter.

At the last meeting, we saw staff express intention to take a "deeper dive into the reasons why students participating in special education do not meet the a-g completion at a similar rate to their peers", that's a good data-driven action step. But there was no discussion. It's logical to exclude students pursuing certificates of completion from the grade reports. But is there value in tracking students who exited from special education to see their trajectory, just as we might want to know how many special education students leave our district, when and why? How will SaFE specialists work with case managers? What kind of study skills and time management skills needs to be learned and how? Are students getting private instruction for Executive Functioning or Content Teaching or re-teaching, and why? **Can the Board please have a public discussion on this D/F report?**

Statement to the School Board about Career Themed Pathways

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Last month the Santa Clara County Office of Education passed two [resolutions](#) acknowledging October as Bullying Prevention and Disability Employment Awareness Month. Staff and students really did a great job recognizing our 9th Annual Unity Day, and we saw wonderful expressions of kindness, inclusion and diversity on our campuses.

“The [second County Office of Ed’s] Disability Employment Awareness Month resolution recognizes the 2021 theme...resilience in the face of adversity, “America’s recovery, powered by inclusion,” and [specifically] acknowledges the contributions of workers with disabilities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2020, 18% of persons with disabilities were employed. A decrease in the amount from 2019, which was at 19%. [PAUSD has 1,118 students with IEPs.] The passing of these resolutions demonstrates...[a spoken] commitment to equity, inclusion” but reminds us that there is much work to be done to ensure that students with disabilities also exit PAUSD advantaged for post-secondary opportunities.

The Career Themed Pathways work enables diverse opportunities for successful student engagement and employment. We appreciate that PAUSD has consistently pursued federal and state grants including Perkins V, partnerships and community outreach in this area.

However, according to Federal Perkins V CA State Plan, there **are** provisions requiring states to utilize a portion of their allocation in the recruitment of **special** populations to enroll in CTE programs. Perkins V provides the opportunity to re-envision how career pathways will be student-centered by aligning CTE to other local and regional education and training initiatives. California’s Guiding Policy Principles are focused on ALL students and on promoting equity and access by eliminating institutional barriers and achievement gaps for ALL students to realize their educational and career aspirations.

We are interested in knowing more about how the Career Themed Pathway efforts specifically serve students with disabilities, including those in the post-secondary programs.