

Parent Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: January 21, 2016
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Location: PCSS Auditorium

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER

Rachel Greene, PAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10: 14 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Brent Anderson, PAC Member, led the Flag Salute.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Robak, Parliamentarian, determined that no speakers were requesting Public Comment.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Rachel Greene welcomed new members from Local District West. She provided an update: she, Juan Mongandi, Chair of DELAC (District English Learners Advisory Committee) and Kathy Kantner, Chair of CAC (Community Advisory Committee) attended the Early Childhood Education and Parent Engagement committee, where Mrs. Rowena Lagrosa gave a presentation. Of note, the next application process for schools to request bond money to fund Family Centers will open soon. There are 100 schools that will be prioritized if they apply. The Chairs will continue to attend this committee to help shape the conversation about parent engagement.

The Office of General Counsel seems to concur that consent votes should be possible. For the purposes of our minutes we will do roll call votes, so we can get faster at it. Reminder: PAC elections will be held on February 10, 2016 at PCSS at 10 a.m.

Ms. Greene read aloud excerpts of a letter of resignation from PAC member Susuki Figueroa, then reviewed topics to be addressed today and in upcoming meetings.

Diana Guillen referenced Ms. Figueroa's resignation and that of Karina Lopez. What are we doing to help parents feel engaged permanently and why is it difficult to reach quorum? Ms. Guillen requests a discussion about what strategies would create change.

ROLL CALL/ESTABLISH QUORUM

Kathy Kantner, PAC Secretary, conducted roll call and noted that 24 members are required for quorum. At 10:28 there were 24 members present; soon after two more members arrived. No alternates qualified to be seated at this meeting.

MINUTES

Quorum was not reached at the December 17, 2015 meeting, so there are no Minutes to approve from that meeting.

Brent Anderson made a motion to approve the Minutes of November 19, 2015, as recorded. Denice Lambert seconded the motion. During discussion, Maria Daisy Ortiz requested more time to review the Minutes. Ms. Greene allowed until 10:33 at which time a roll call vote was called. There were 19 who voted yes; 5 abstentions; and 1 no. (The fifth abstention was added last; the number on this member's badge was incorrect. Maria Daisy Ortiz requested a second roll call vote; Ms. Greene asked everyone who abstained to raise their hand and confirmed 5 total abstentions.)

PRESENTATIONS

SPECIAL EDUCATION INTEGRATION PRACTICES

Sharyn Howell, Associate Superintendent, Division of Special Education, provided a presentation. Ms. Howell noted that while enrollment throughout LAUSD is declining, the number of students with disabilities is growing: the previous year by 1,200, and last year by 700. These students mainly come from the general education program; this increase represents an average of 100 new special education teachers and other staff that must be recruited.

It was noted that information on the Power Point differed from that on the handout. PCSS staff agreed to photocopy the information from the Power Point and this was distributed later during the meeting. (See Handout).

In compliance with the Modified Consent Decree, LAUSD is working to integrate a greater number of students in Special Education into general education classrooms. Professional Development training is provided to staff and targeted funding is provided so that schools are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Another goal is to reduce the high number (38%) of African American students in segregated settings. African Americans comprise only 12% of LAUSD's student population, so the District is working to integrate these students as well.

Q: When students are integrated into general education classes, is there another adult staff member, aside from the general education teacher, in the class? A: Yes, in most cases, a Resource Specialist (RSP) teacher also works in the classroom.

Q: The money that is reserved to upgrade campuses and make them ADA compliant — who decides how it will be spent? My school lacks shade when it is hot, yet tries to get students onto the play yard. This is a problem, especially for students in wheelchairs. A: Principals are informed about the "Rapid Access" program. \$20 Million is set aside for rapid upgrades at campuses with urgent needs; talk to your principal about this.

Q: My daughter volunteers at Miller and loves it. Is the federal mandate toward integration new? I was an advocate for my younger sister, who was always in an integrated setting, which helped her. Did the mandate change? A: The original law from the 1970's stated that students with disabilities had a right to attend school. With reauthorization, they added that in addition to simply attending school, students must benefit. The research shows both general education and Special Education improve performance. The last reauthorization from 2004 related to integration. LAUSD has a long history of segregating students with disabilities. In the past, Special Education classrooms were in separate bungalows and parents had to supervise students themselves, then eventually teachers were assigned. Now, LAUSD is doing more than other districts.

Q: I have three girls with special needs in LAUSD. In general education classrooms they would receive Ds and Fs. In Special Day classes, their grades improved but it was too overwhelming. Is there any phase in between? A: Students in Special Day programs get better grades than general ed students yet they aren't achieving equivalent levels of proficiency. So we are redesigning how we train teachers, and how we provide services. We are studying what a "bridge" between the two options would look like.

Q: How is the District monitoring the academic progress of students in Special Ed who are integrated into general ed classes? Many parents say their students have fallen even more behind, teachers seem overwhelmed, and elementary school students are not getting specialized attention. A: I'm sorry to hear that your friends are experiencing that. It's a cultural change for our schools. Teachers now, unlike 20-25 years ago, are used to teaching at a norm. We have to change the culture. Many general ed students struggle too. What do schools provide to support them? In segregated classes, the students were receiving a different curriculum. We are working to provide the same curriculum and to provide teacher training.

Q: I would like data regarding those students who go to charters. We don't know what is happening to students with disabilities in charters. If the Broad plan is enacted, how will these students be served? A: Charters get ADA (Average Daily Attendance) and State funding; LAUSD does not provide services to these schools, they are independent. However, the Division of Special Education has an office that monitors the data, as much as we can legally get. We don't receive everything — not their monitoring data, interim assessments, etc. I am willing to come back again to provide a presentation related to charters, including how many students are served by charters, and the degree and types of disabilities these students have, etc. I'm not taking a stance on the politics. LAUSD serves more students with disabilities than anyone. If the school is an Affiliated Charter, then the District provides services.

Q: LAUSD has 68 alternate programs, I would like to know the data for the success of these programs. Also, when I volunteer in my school, I see students in second grade who struggle to read but they are not referred to Special Ed. Parents assume the teachers are referring students, but this isn't always the case. A: Everyone in 3rd grade

who does not read can't be referred to Special Ed. Otherwise 60% of students would be identified. General ed students need intervention and other programs -- 40% of students referred to Special Ed are English Learners, so they are being over-identified. Kids who struggle to read need interventions first before it can be determined that a student also has some kind of learning disability. Q: How does your office support parents so they know about the services you provide? Many parents are denied services and they don't know what their rights are. Parents have to turn to lawsuits, and this is burdensome, especially for low income parents. A: The district supports parents whether their students are general ed or Special Ed. We work with PCSS, and we continue to ensure that Special Education is embedded. At school sites there is a pamphlet that goes out; also we send brochures to Regional Centers. We get 15,000 new assessments every year, so if someone believes they are being missed, they need to speak to their school administrator.

Q: I used to work in a private Special Ed school. Now I volunteer in LAUSD and I see teachers over-refer when there are behavioral issues. I've heard that schools get more funding for these referrals. A: This isn't true, about the funding. However, our teachers do get overwhelmed. Referring kids to Special Ed is not a quick fix for every issue. Special Ed is designed to help students access the curriculum.

Ms. Greene reiterated data requests: we would like to see Charter data broken out by Affiliated Charter and Independent Charter, according to integration and service level and also student performance metrics for students who are located at special centers. Ms. Greene also had a question about whether there is an avenue for advocacy if students are not being handled at school sites. Ms. Howell noted that we can't respond about a specific child to anyone who is not the parent/guardian of that child. But anyone with specific questions is invited to speak to her privately.

Q: Who decided we are only going to take 5 questions? A: We have to allow time for all the presenters; we follow a timed Agenda.

UPDATE ON THE SUPPORTS AND OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS, STANDARD ENGLISH LEARNERS AND LONG TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS

Hilda Maldonado, Executive Director of the Multilingual Multicultural Education Department conducted an exercise with participants, then proceeded with her presentation. She explained that some data is broken down in accordance with State reports, Federal reports, how the schools track it — the data will be different. Context also matters: how you put the data together, who is in the group, who is not, at what point in time did the data get pulled, and how is it broken up. Today's presentation will focus on ELs and LTELs. Ms. Maldonado agreed to return in the future with the Standard English Learner data. (See handout).

Ms. Maldonado noted that in 2011, the new EL Master Plan was initiated. The District realized it was not in compliance but the Superintendent decided that LAUSD would fix it rather than go under a consent decree (as was the case for Special Education).

Every year, one-half to two-thirds of students make annual progress, improving at least one level per year, on the CELDT. The State goal is 60%. The criteria set by the U.S. Department of Education changed last year. Every district gets to decide how to assess proficiency; LAUSD uses DIBELS/SRI -- the State took CAHSEE away. SBAC may be used in the future. SBAC is a challenging test and is language-rich, so additional interventions are in place to help students. All English Learners are tested each year. Students in earlier grades make great progress; it is harder for middle grade students to reclassify. The Office of Civil Rights is monitoring the District due to the high number of students who are not progressing within 5 years. We made progress, then there was a drop, attributed to the number of LTELs. Ms. Maldonado has seen improvement. High School students lack access to college prep classes but can graduate. If they are not mastering reclassification with us, and they go to college, they must take remedial classes and this costs families more money.

The State was sued by the Department of Justice, so this month principals are checking every course with an English Learner enrolled, and what type of instruction is provided. The ELD standards have changed, we are transitioning teachers to the new standards. The test will not be in place until 2017/18.

Q: The data shows that the immersed language program students aren't doing well; why not? Is it the program, the monitoring, evaluation, or implementation/instruction?

A: Many factors. We don't have the kids all in one place. In some parts of the city we have lots of ELs, while at other schools there are few. Not every program has the same results. Look at the data for each separate school; some schools are better than others.

Q: LTELs are in a modified program, so you're limiting their access to the same curriculum and then we test them with their peers who are English speakers. You are finding a test that is the same. A: My personal story is that I came to this country in 5th grade and by 6th grade I had some mastery. My neighbor just arrived, but we are in the same class with the same instruction at the same level: beginning EL. Now we broke up the classes, any newcomer in Level 1-4 gets one class. LTELs are in 2 groups, they are working to master reading. The second group can read but comprehension is off. For the rest of the day they have math, etc. with everyone else. They don't get electives. If they aren't doing well in math, they don't have access to math remediation and AP classes. Q: When students take the CELDT they are not at the same level. A: You're right, it limits their access to honors classes, etc. Q: Why are we doing this? Dual language is the way to go. A: it's not recommended for LTELs because previously they haven't had Spanish and English instruction.

Q: DELAC is not receiving data and information about existing programs. We sent a letter requesting data for our next meeting, broken down by region, since there are different ethnic groups in each region. DELAC is not being taken into consideration. How will your office work with parents at school sites who need this information so they can support their students to reclassify? A: We have EL Coaches in PCSS that my office trains and they go out and train the LD parent coaches. We can bring you the data, we have been working with PCSS on the new EL standards. Mr. Alvarenga will schedule us to come back for DELAC. Your request was received 3 days before the meeting, there was not time. Q: The coaches have to be well trained, because they tell us our students can go to college but they don't tell us they will need remediation. A: They can go to college, but it is more difficult and more expensive because they have to remediate. We will clarify this message with the coaches. It is a misnomer in LAUSD, that students who can't read have a learning disability. It is a learning difference.

Q: LAUSD must empower and inform parents. Many students are bilingual in kindergarten and are identified as ELs even if the parents don't want them identified, but we don't know how to change this. When parents complete the survey indicating that they speak another language at home, parents don't know what we're getting into, that we're signing our child up for EL. A: The honest answer is we are not changing this. It comes from the U.S. Department of Education. If students are truly fluent, they can pass the test next year. In April I will attend a federal conference and will advocate for change. Q: Can we explain the consequences better? A: There is something called "Withdrawal From Program." The Federal Government says you still have to give them services and still have to reclassify. The parent informational meetings are supposed to explain this but we are not allowed to influence this decision. People value different things.

Q: The progress is very slow. I am an ELAC Chair for my school and asked the EL Coordinator to check what works and what doesn't work. Has your office done something like this? A: Not to that degree. The slides I'm showing you are what we sent to the Office of Civil Rights. But we don't break down what works and what doesn't. We gave a presentation to the Directors in each Local District, and I saw the urgency. I know the data looks poor on the surface, but it has everyone thrown in there. Get the data from your schools, there are schools doing great work, there are shining stars. Students are learning to read words when they don't understand what the words mean; it takes a very skilled teacher to do this. My job is to help these teachers understand the data when they have ELs in front of them. Every Local District has different needs and every Local District Superintendent is addressing it in a different way. There is no single silver bullet. I can come back and work more with Ms. Lagrosa on resources for parents.

Q: How are you monitoring the program implementation for LTELs? We are not seeing results. At my school I ask what we are doing for the LTELs and the answer was disappointing. Parents aren't informed and don't know the long term implications of labeling their children. I don't have resources to provide tutoring for my child. Sure they can go to college, but families can't afford tutoring. The information is not getting to schools. A:

We use an online accountability system where every principal has to certify what ways they are informing parents, we collect this from every principal all year long, Aug - June. Right now we are in January. (Ms. Maldonado mapped out a timeline on the white-board). The CELDT results given this time last year are coming now. So the kids take DIBELS twice/year and SRI 3 times. In elementary schools the grades are reported at different times than for secondary. So when we talk about reclassification, we inform teachers: this is a point in time when kids can reclassify because the CELDT is coming in or grades are coming in. If kids meet 2 but not 3 then we have to wait another year for the kids to reclassify. Lining all these things up, that's the criteria. Is it a kid problem? Or is it a system problem? It's the system. Before 2012, we used the CST and it took place in May, you got results the following year. Now we have MISIS and different ways to look at data, and we can track it better. If a student has these 2 areas met, we are going to pay for them to take the CELDT again, even though the State won't count it, and it is controversial to only offer this to some students.

Q: Parents, don't get excited if your kids aren't going where you want them to go. If you push them too hard and they don't do well, they will get discouraged. President Obama might make community college free - a degree from a Community College is the same.

Q: With the overall poor performance of our African American students, we need to look closely at the supports we are providing to students who are struggling.

THE ARTS PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Rory Pullens, Executive Director of Arts Education, Arts Education Branch provided a presentation. No handout was distributed to members.

This year, 30 additional teachers were hired to ensure that every school has one arts teacher. Last year, 20 Middle Schools had no art programs at all. This year every school offers art. Next year we will hire 80 additional arts teachers. The goal is to ensure that next year each cluster of schools will have the same arts disciplines so that when a child graduates from HS they will have had consistent exposure from K-12.

Professional Development trainings provided:

- working with students in Special Education
- urban arts program from New York City
- multilingual/multicultural strategies related to the arts
- to help general education teachers integrate the arts into science, social studies and math
- So far 1,500 teachers have been trained in 2 years
- Our goal is to train 2,000 teachers annually
- Elementary school teachers get PD 4 times per month, but secondary teachers receive little training, so we will focus on them.

Arts Community Network (ACN), partnering with community organizations, will work in schools in each Local District beginning this month, during the school day, after school,

on Saturdays. We also have a partnership with the housing authority, LAPD and LAUSD to provide music programs in housing projects to deter youth from negative activity.

The Arts Equity Index determined teacher placement. Central, East L.A. and South Central L.A. got the most support. There are underserved schools in each region, but we wanted the least affluent communities to receive the most support.

A flyer was projected on the whiteboard: on April 16, a District-wide arts festival will take place in Grand Park from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Every school is invited to perform.

The Creative Industry Adopt-A-School program provides resources and equipment to schools and professionals to talk to students in the schools. A diverse district like LAUSD should prepare students for these jobs.

New banners will be distributed to the 160 schools with a highly rated arts program, to promote community awareness.

Q: Is the Arts Equity Index on the web? A: We need to remove the password protection so that anyone can look. I will do it this afternoon.

Q: How does a principal request equipment? A: Email the Arts Education branch, Steven McCarthy. The list is not public, but we will put the list on the web.

Q: You say more teachers are hired; are the schools receiving more funding to cover this? A: Soon we will announce the schools that will receive extra services. They will not have to pay for arts teachers themselves.

Mr. Pullens left his card and welcomed people to contact him with questions.

Q: If a child is in MS, and they have a schedule already based on high honors classes, how can they get an arts class elective? A: Any student without space in their schedule can participate in our after school and Saturday programs.

Q: The arts are great, students benefit from being able to express themselves. All schools should have opportunities for students to perform, and not only during Winter holidays. A: I agree.

PARENT, COMMUNITY AND STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE

Rowena Lagrosa, Chief Executive Officer, PCSS, provided the update. A copy of the adopted school calendar for next year is in the packets. Representatives from School Operations will visit each central committee to ask for parent input on calendars for upcoming years.

A list of parent workshops was distributed to share. A list identifying the New Community Services Team and also a list of PCSS staff were distributed. An updated PAC roster was also provided.

The School Experience Survey was released this week, please complete it. The goal is to increase participation to 50%. Ms. Lagrosa noted that LAUSD's participation rate is higher than that of other big districts, yet we do not spend money to promote it.

Last fall an independent fiscal audit committee reported that LAUSD's fiscal health for future years is bleak. Ms. Lagrosa is part of a planning committee that has been asked to submit a plan about what LAUSD can do to help parents decide to enroll in our district? How can we improve the culture of schools? How are parents meaningfully engaged at school sites? How do we keep students enrolled? Ms. Lagrosa will develop this plan and will roll it out. We also are looking to streamline the way parents navigate various programs: Magnet, Dual Language, SAS. Enrollment timelines all vary so the PASSPORT will be used to make this uniform.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was a request that the new Superintendent visit the PAC. Ms. Lagrosa noted that Superintendent Michelle King has received the dates for all our meetings, but today she is in Sacramento for the State of the State address.

Another member noted that each time a member of this committee leaves, we hear a message that they are frustrated because we are following the protocols of a broken system. We are not being the leaders we should be. We did not make any changes today to improve the education for a single student.

Finally, another member noted that if you are on your school's SSC or ELAC, request that you receive a binder, the schools have money to provide these supplies.

ADJOURNMENT

Rachel Greene adjourned the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

There were no parking lot comments.

Members were invited to stay for Agenda requests after the meeting.

These Minutes are respectfully submitted by Kathy Kantner, PAC Secretary.