

LAUSD Parent Advisory Committee

Chairperson's Report

May 30, 2024

Hello, colleagues:

This has been quite a year for our Committee. None of us would disagree with that statement.

I've been trying several years now to arrange for the three chairpersons of our CAC, DELAC, and PAC to request a meeting with the LAUSD superintendent. The former chairs of our sister committees had either declined to participate or asked why they should do this. In mid-March I brought up the same idea again with the current CAC and DELAC chairs; this time both agreed. I drafted a proposed letter to Supt. Carvalho, sent it to these ladies, and after they approved what I had shown them, an e-mail went out on March 18th. Two months passed but no reply. Without a follow-up from him, I had no idea whether the Superintendent had seen our request at all.

Then on May 17th I received a phone call from Antonio Plascencia. He said that Mr. Carvalho wanted to meet with the three chairs. After he offered possible dates and times, I contacted Ariel Harman-Holmes and Karla Franco to let them know. The CAC Chairperson chose one of these options; the DELAC Chairperson did not. Even so, I thought it wise to move forward.

As I mentioned in my message to Supt. Carvalho, the intended purpose of our meeting is to discuss concerns the chairpersons have around problems they and their committees have encountered in collaborating this year with LAUSD in general, SFACE in particular, and also the LCAP team. Our PAC officers and members alike have been frustrated with, and offended by, statements made by staff and admins while planning agendas, running meetings, communicating via e-mail, and taking phone calls. Not long ago, officers were told that we would not have any more meetings of our subcommittees, which last met on March 19th. When we asked for a PAC meeting in June, the answer came that this would not be done. The problem here is that our requests to SFACE were unilaterally denied, with no consultation at all, even though this process is specifically called for in our Bylaws, at Article VII, Section A. Here is one more example:

At our agenda-planning meeting on February 27th, Dr. Elward was asked when we would be given data responsive to the motion adopted at our January 18th meeting. His reply to us was that the District did not have the infrastructure needed to access this data, and suggested that we could submit a Public Records Act (PRA) request if we wanted to get it. This was downright absurd.

CAC, DELAC, and PAC share many of the same concerns about the way parents and families throughout LAUSD are engaged or, more accurately, *not* engaged. While each committee has its own list of issues, we shouldn't be surprised that everything can be summarized by saying that our committees don't feel they or their members are being respected by LAUSD. This is why we decided to take the step of reaching out directly to Supt. Carvalho. It's really as simple as that.

A few members believe this language in our Bylaws applies here. It's at Article VI, Section H:

*No officer shall participate in a closed-session, substantive meeting with any District employee or Board Member **on the subject-matter jurisdiction of the PAC** nor submit comments on the LCAP other than the comments generated in the review-and-comment sessions and ratified by the membership. (Emphasis added.)*

The key to understanding this passage is knowing what the phrase “subject-matter jurisdiction” means. It’s a legal term that’s easiest to think of as topics (*subject matter*) that a committee is charged with discussing and voting on as business items at its meetings. In the case of a Parent Advisory Committee, our subject-matter jurisdiction, as specified in the California Education Code at sections 52062 (a)(1) and 52063 (a)(1), is to review and comment on the Local Control and Accountability Plan or *LCAP*. That is our role, what we should be doing throughout the year.

Keeping this definition in mind, the question here is whether I, in my position as PAC Chairperson, would be meeting with Supt. Carvalho to talk about something that we are required by Ed Code to carry out as our duty — in other words, am I planning to discuss any LCAP comments we have already sent, or to give him any LCAP comments of my own? The answer to this question is no.

Again, as laid out above, the only reason I and the other two chairpersons asked to meet with the Superintendent is to bring up our concerns about difficulties we have faced in our interactions this year with SFACE and LAUSD. There is no conceivable reason for me to discuss a specific LCAP comment when we haven’t even started to create these yet, or to talk about the eight District LCAP Goals. The concern he does need to hear directly from me is that we have been extremely frustrated and disappointed with the process itself, namely, obtaining data and other information needed so we can *make* LCAP comments. I hope this explanation is helpful in providing clarity.

Another bit of feedback I’ve heard is that I should not go alone, but rather that Supt. Carvalho must agree to meet with our entire PAC, every single member and every single alternate, or no one. If we consider that it took nearly two full months to get a response from him to my asking for a meeting with only three people, I’d say the chance of him inviting our whole Committee at this point is zero. Because, you see, this is not about who is supposedly “more powerful,” Mr. Carvalho or us. This isn’t some ego trip or a political stunt designed to prove that we will “win” something. I see absolutely no point in refusing to meet with him now and demanding he agree to see all of our Committee at once. With much respect here, this notion is utterly nonsensical.

There’s nothing wrong with showing the LAUSD Superintendent of Schools that our Parent Advisory Committee, the CAC, or the DELAC, is willing to engage him, first with a chairperson and then by the full Committee. I trust you will agree and approve of my visit with him. Thank you.

At your service,

Paul Robak

Chairman, 2023-24

LAUSD Parent Advisory Committee

Website: lausd.org/PAC

E-mail: paulPACrobak@gmail.com

Phone: 310-997-5588