

LAUSD Parent Advisory Committee

Chairperson's Report

December 10, 2020

Hello, colleagues!

We truly *are* colleagues. This means we must work together, even if we don't always agree with each other's point of view. Every one of us has our own beliefs and opinions, which are formed by every experience we've had in life, right up to this very moment. These beliefs and opinions form the foundation of who we are. The trick is to work effectively with others who are different.

It goes without saying that the past nine months have challenged us like nothing we've ever seen. The last pandemic in America, the ignorantly misnamed "Spanish Flu," happened in 1918. Our entire lives have been turned upside down, by COVID-19, from working to shopping to socializing. Public education, as we very well know, has been particularly hard hit. Expecting students to learn well by staring at a computer, tablet, or phone screen defies logic, and many of our kids are suffering learning loss, as well as anxiety, depression, isolation, and hopelessness. When our kids suffer, we suffer. Depending on which study you read, rates of these conditions have gone up so much that between 20 and 45 percent of both children and adults now report feeling anxiety.

Coming back to why we're all here, the purpose of the PAC each year is to review, and generate comments on, the District's draft Local Control and Accountability Plan or, as we call it, the *LCAP*. This familiar document has now been joined by something new, the Learning Continuity Plan (LCP), also called the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan, a second "LCAP." Confusing?

During this school year, we will be watching presentations by various departments within LAUSD. These include Instruction, Operations, Food Services, Special Education, Student Health and Human Services, and our friends at Parent and Community Services or PCS. These presentations will help us learn about the programs and services that are part of a school district and which go into writing both the LCAP and the LCP. Our comments are a critical part of assisting the District in writing and modifying these documents. Please note that the LCAP has been suspended due to COVID-19, so this year we are focused on reviewing and generating comments on the LCP.

To do this work together, we must be fully present and determined to make the most of what we learn. To be all we can be on the PAC, we need to do three things: Sign up, show up, and speak up. You've already "signed up" by being nominated and elected to this Committee or, if you're a "board appointed" member, because your own Board Member asked you to represent them on the PAC. No matter how you came to be here today, one thing is for certain: *You have a solemn responsibility to do your best.* You agreed to "show up" by being here. Now "speak up" and participate in our meetings. Please don't assume that simply attending is enough. It's not.

We are volunteers, and the only reimbursement we receive right now is to partially cover the cost of childcare while we're on these Zoom meetings. The reason we should be here is because we care deeply about not only our own children but about all LAUSD students. The PAC must be

a safe place for us to share our thoughts, our ideas, our questions, our concerns, and our suggestions. Each of us has a lot to offer, so let's try hard to partner and collaborate, for the kids.

Here are the priorities which I believe will allow us to be most productive in our work this year:

- TRAINING
 - In real estate, the three most important factors are, "Location, location, location." The three most important factors for us here are, "Training, training, training." To be the best version of ourselves on this Committee, we must be fully and properly trained. This is every bit as true for the PAC as it is for ELAC, SSC, or a PTA board.
- ATTENDANCE
 - We can only be effective as members here if we actually show up. Yes, we all have our family and work obligations, though these should have been taken into consideration before deciding to join the PAC. While an occasional absence is unavoidable, if we think it's all right to miss every other meeting, or to show up at the first few meetings and then drop out, then seriously, why bother joining at all?
- PARTICIPATION
 - This is the "speak up" part of being a PAC member: You took the time to show up, so you already know how important our work is. Now tell us what you think of the material we're seeing and hearing in our meetings. Ask questions; don't be afraid to say you didn't understand something. Even acronyms can be confusing if you don't know what they mean. There is no such thing as a "dumb question."
- ATTITUDE
 - We may look different on the outside, we may have grown up speaking different languages, and we may have different ideas about what it means to be a "leader." Still, no matter how different we might think we are, deep down we all care about the same thing: Supporting our children the best we can. Let's expand this to caring about each other, being respectful, being polite, and being good listeners.
- COMMITMENT
 - Our meetings are long, and a lot of material is covered. By now we should have a pretty good idea what we signed up for. There are over 600,000 students in the District, which means more than one million parents, guardians, and other adults who are involved with raising these students. Yet here we are, only 55 of us, representing all those kids and all those adults. What will our legacy to them be?

In closing, we have a lot of work ahead of us. If we keep our "eyes on the prize," and remember always who we are here to help — LAUSD students — we *will* be successful. It's up to all of us. As a favorite proverb reminds, "If not me, who? If not now, when?" Colleagues, the time is now.

Respectfully submitted,

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