

# LAUSD Parent Advisory Committee

## Chairperson's Report

*January 21, 2021*

Hello, colleagues:

Happy new year! I do hope you and your families enjoyed a healthy and restful winter break. Everyone is talking about how bad 2020 was for us all. I pray that 2021 will be better, sooner or later. For the moment, we survive one day at a time. The sky is darkest just before the dawn.

Now that we've had our first real meeting as a committee, here are a few thoughts on what I believe we should be looking at, along with our main work to come up with comments on the District's draft LCAP and Learning Continuity Plan or *LCP*. I ask you to consider these points:

- LEADERSHIP TRAINING
  - PAC is a bit like SSC or ELAC, but much more intense. We're all parents here, no principal or coordinator running things, telling us what to do and what to say. It's all up to us to get through our work as best we can. However, as we've already seen, this thing called "parent leadership" can be frustrating, time-consuming, and messy. So the more training we get on how to be *true* parent leaders, the more we will understand how to collaborate with each other as equals, keep in mind why we're here and, maybe most important right now, *leave our egos outside the meeting*. Sadly, a few among us seem to think it's entertaining to use Robert's Rules as a weapon, slowing down our meetings just because they know which words to say. This is **not** right, and it **must** stop. The PAC is no place to play games.
- SUBCOMMITTEES
  - With meetings of around three hours each, there's not enough time to do all the things we need to complete in a regular PAC meeting. This is why our Bylaws have *standing subcommittees*, to dig into topics that are important but which we aren't able to cover during regular meetings. We have five of these subcommittees, with requests from members for three more. Obviously we can only work with so many of these groups at the same time. I do believe we should create at least one more, beyond these five, to continue the crucial advocacy begun last year around establishing two-way communication between the PAC and parents at schools.
- REVIEWING COMMENTS FROM PRIOR YEARS
  - One concern our committee has expressed for several years now is how many of the LCAP comments we've given the Superintendent were put in place — not just added to the LCAP but actually become part of District practice. We've tried to do this review in years past, but it's never been carried out in a deliberate, thoughtful way. If we don't have some process in place for tracking implementation of LCAP comments from year to year, then we might as well just "copy and paste" the same comments each year. This would not be fair to us or helpful to students.

One of the things we're encouraged to do at the start of each year is to come up with a "New Year's resolution" — at least one good habit we promise ourselves to undertake going forward, to improve us as people, as parents, as members of our community, or in our relationships with others. Honestly, I fail as often as anyone else at keeping those promises! No matter how good or bad we may be at it, perhaps we can try making a resolution as members of the PAC. How about approaching our work here with a renewed enthusiasm, a renewed commitment, and maybe even a promise to be the best version of ourselves? As the saying goes, "One definition of insanity is doing the same things you've always done but expecting different results." If you see that something done in the PAC is not working, then let's make a resolution to stop doing it.

This is part of a philosophy known as *Start-Stop-Continue*. We should be looking on a regular basis at how our committee operates, to decide what new practice would be helpful to start, what old practice that's not been helpful should stop, and what we may already be doing that we should keep doing. Any organization that follows this philosophy will usually be successful.

Our five standing subcommittees held their first meetings last Thursday. Wow, talk about rich discussions — I sat in on four of the five, and the conversations I heard were truly inspiring. Kudos to the chairpersons: Mary Lee, Daisy Ortiz, Sharnell Blevins, Mayra Zamora, and Geraldine Hernandez-Abisoror. Their next meetings are scheduled for Thursday, February 11th, at 10:00.

Listening to comments in the Legislation Subcommittee, I was reminded, once again, that in so many ways, at their kids' school sites, countless parents feel "left out." I now ask PCS to co-create and co-present, with parent leaders, a series of workshops on parents' rights. The time has come.

Finally, what would you like your legacy as a member of the PAC to be? We're not accustomed to thinking in such grandiose terms; we more or less do what needs to be done in the moment, without trying to "connect the dots" and work toward a few major goals as we go. A legacy doesn't have to be something especially grand, like becoming the best soccer player in the world or the first trillionaire in history. A legacy might be something simple, such as having a reputation for doing your very best in those pursuits which are important to you. *We all have a legacy in us.*

Perhaps your legacy to this committee could be advocating for positive changes to allow the PAC to function more effectively, to be welcoming to its members, to produce LCAP comments we all can be proud of, to serve as a model for parents in leadership positions at school sites or, above all, to support LAUSD students achieving to their full potential. Any of these would be a valuable legacy. I invite you all to imagine a legacy you would like to leave for future members of the PAC.

At your service,

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