

**DATE:** September 23, 2020

**TO:** **Members of the District Advisory Committee (DAC)  
and  
District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)**

**FROM:** **Marian Kim Phelps, Ed.D., Superintendent**

**SUBJECT:** **Responses to DAC AND DELAC's August 26, 2020 Review of Poway Unified School District's 2020-2021 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan**

Dear DAC and DELAC Members,  
On behalf of the PUSD Board of Education, I want to extend my deepest appreciation for the time and attention you have spent reviewing, providing feedback, and helping us finalize our District's 2020-2021 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCP).

The District Advisory Committee (DAC) and District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) play a vital role in the LCP process. Your thoughtful input represents the best of what our involved parent community contributes and helps us refine and strengthen the focus of our work.

California Education Code 43509(b)(3) states: The Superintendent of a school district shall present the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan to the parent advisory committee and the English learner parent advisory committee established pursuant to Section 52063 separately for review and comment. The Superintendent of a school district shall respond, in writing, to comments received from the parent advisory committee and the English learner parent advisory committee.

In fulfillment of that requirement, the following are my responses to the questions, comments, and suggestions you provided at your 8/26/20 meeting:

## **General Information:**

### **DAC/DELAC GENERAL COMMENTS:**

- It is also a positive pivot that PUSD decided to go to a site-based reopening plan, as opposed to the District wide plan. Each of our schools are unique and to implement a plan that comes from the district seems totalitarian, and contrary to our approach to learning in a community focused environment, with disregard of the uniqueness of each school and its students.

- We also need to be aware that all schools in the district are unique and have their own 'DNA'. Any plan (re-opening, virtual learning, etc...), needs to be site-based and not a district wide mandate. We need to recognize that each school plays an important role within our community ecosystem and serves a purpose. If we ignore that, we dilute and homogenize the needs of our students. It is of critical importance that the sites be able to implement a plan that fits with their school and within their micro-community. That is, we have five (or six), high schools in PUSD, and each is different and unique in their own way, and each serves their population in the best way possible that resonates within their own ecosystem.
- With the large majority of both parents and teachers wanting to return to in-person learning, I think it should be done as quickly as possible. Especially considering how well our county and district have done in limiting the spread of the virus.
- Since most people desire in-person learning, based on the survey results, it would be prudent to add language as to PUSD's plans to open our campuses, especially since the county has suspended the processing of school-opening waivers and is allowing the schools to open, since SD county will most likely pass the 14 day wait time without any issues.
- These are good ideas. I like the efforts being made. While I understand the logistical challenges, the staggering of breaks and the keeping of kids in as small of "pods" as feasible is a simple and wise approach. As far as seat separations go, this seems superfluous and unlikely to provide significant benefits.

#### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:**

- Are there criteria and mechanisms that would enable a transition back to some level of normalcy?

**RESPONSE: We will continue to monitor the guidelines from the California Department of Health and San Diego County Public Health. As the county and state authorities adjust the public health orders, we will work to make adjustments to return to school to the degree possible. However, for this school year, we will need to continue to provide virtual learning options as required by SB98.**

- I'd like to see how PUSD is providing additional support to the students identified as special education, English learners, low income, homeless and/or foster youth. Specifically, is there an opportunity to create an environment where these students (and limited others who might be considered at greater risk of learning loss) may be eligible for in person instruction (whether full time or occasional tutoring)?

**RESPONSE: We are currently providing on campus, in-person assessments, related services, and instruction to small, stable cohorts of students in accordance with the CA Department of Public Health (CDPH) directive received August 25 and updated September 4:**

**<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/small-groups-child-youth.aspx#>**

**Assessments and related services are scheduled by staff and occur by appointment. On campus, in-person instruction tends to follow the Virtual Learning Academy schedule.**

**Whether or not schools are allowed to reopen in San Diego County, we have permission from the CDPH and Health and Human Services Agency in San Diego County to provide these services for our students who struggle making academic progress learning virtually.**

- We may need to look at the re-opening plans again, since the county is most likely going to allow schools to open. Several San Diego schools have already announced that they will open in-person. Most of these are private schools that received a waiver. However, in light of the fact that after SD remains off the monitoring list for 14 days, the county will allow for all schools to open with safeguards in place. Of course, we don't want to see a spike in Covid cases, so the opening needs to be planned out and done in phases, which PUSD has alluded to. What will the transition look like for the families who opted for in-person instruction vs. the families who opted for VLA?

**RESPONSE: Our schools have developed schedules that reduce the number of students on campus at one time. Our elementary schools will utilize an AM/PM split schedule to ensure our students have face to face time with their teachers each day. Our secondary school schedules continue to be refined. Students, parents and staff will be updated regularly as will the Reopening page on the PUSD website. As outlined in our Guidebook, wellness checks will be conducted for everyone entering the campus and cohorts of students will be kept together as practicable.**

## **Stakeholder Engagement:**

### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:**

- Please keep the “2-week survey” or a stakeholder input process/platform open year-round. Whatever additional cost might come with this will likely be paid for multiple times over by better identification of problems. Getting that data and honest input is essential for PUSD self-analysis, and it also offers a very useful communication tool for the community, improving goodwill. Being open to criticism and suggestions is how we can improve and build bridges.

**RESPONSE:** It is necessary for us to have a finite survey window when we are using survey results to inform specific work, for example, our Local Control Accountability Plan, due to specific deadlines we must meet with the California Department of Education. However, ongoing stakeholder input is valuable and we are looking at ways to include Thoughtexchange surveys for different topics or themes for feedback throughout the school year.

- Was there an opportunity for those who asked questions prior to the Town Hall meetings to respond to whether PUSD adequately answered those questions? Without closing that loop, the reach-out for feedback loses importance.

**RESPONSE:** District and School Site Staff have been answering any follow up questions they received following the town hall meetings, to address parent or staff concerns on a case-by-case basis.

- The plan describes many site principals having gathered input from parents, etc. What system is being used to ensure that all of these comments are gathered and tracked? Not everyone could attend the Livestream, etc. Are teachers logging and reporting specific input from students and families as part of the feedback that principals are gathering? Are principals requiring teachers to log any communication with their students? Ensuring they at least check in with each student/family once per semester, month, week?

**RESPONSE:** Our site principals have been using parent input to inform their staff meetings and professional development. Just like any school year, teachers and administrators continue to have conversations around best practices and how to refine and improve them based on parent and student feedback. Attendance taking procedures are in place for virtual learning. Attendance includes verifying attendance and/or participation daily. Students are monitored for attending daily Zoom lessons as well as logging in to Canvas and engaging in assignments and learning tasks. Both attendance and participation are documented in Synergy. Teachers and counselors will use Office Hours for outreach to any and all students that are missing learning.

- I applaud PUSD's use of ThoughtExchange, surveys, etc.; however, I felt the wording of the surveys was rather poor. As an attorney, I find proper use of language is paramount for effective communication. When seeking parent input, greater thought should be put into the phrasing of each question.

**RESPONSE:** Thank you for your input. Staff works closely with the survey specialists at Thoughtexchange to formulate questions that can elicit a wide range of responses and help us understand not only our stakeholders' opinions but why a stakeholder holds that opinion. We strive to keep the language simple, keep questions broad, and encourage our participants to find common ground. We will continue to refine our survey language, as we believe good questions are the foundation for the most successful conversations.

- PUSD is really falling short of good governance best practices through its choice to make it difficult for the public to provide input on board meetings and agenda items. Listing a narrow window of time when comments can be submitted is highly problematic, not to mention requiring comments in writing ahead of time have already led the Board to remove problematic agenda items and ignore the public comment submitted for that agenda item. Other local agencies allow the public to call in and PUSD should offer the same opportunity for honest public input. In addition to a comment form that is only available for a few hours, the address field on that online form is marked as “required” by a red asterisk in order for people to submit their comment to the board. I understand that it is not legal to require a member of the public to provide their home address, as this may act as a form of intimidation that discourages public input. It is OK to request the address but not to mark it as required. An improved process needs to be implemented ASAP, as some may feel intimidated by the current process. Therefore, vital feedback might be getting missed.

**RESPONSE:** We believe our current process allows for public input in an open and convenient manner that also ensures the safety of our meeting attendees. In fact, this process of submitting comments online in advance of the meeting, allows for many more public comments to be submitted to the board members than normal, and does not appear to have inhibited public comments at all (and instead, has encouraged it). For example, for the Racial Equity Resolution (Item 8.4 at the June 25, 2020 meeting), we received over 80 comments via the online form. The Surplus Property Resolution (Item 7.3 at the September 10, 2020 meeting) received 65 comments via the online form. These are many more comments than we would see at an in-person meeting. The online nature of the submission process has increased accessibility to many more stakeholders. Normally, if members of the public wanted to comment, they would have to show up in person within an hour of the start of the 6pm meeting; we expanded that time frame online to two hours leading up to the meeting (4pm to 6pm). The required address field has been adjusted to an optional response.

- I'm hoping that the final version of the LCP is pushed out to the general parent population and not just us very lucky DAC and DELAC parents with enough time for them to digest and be able to respond to.

**RESPONSE:** The Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan will be posted on our website for the public.

## **In-Person Instructional Offerings:**

### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:**

- Are school hours going to be the same each of the 5 days of the week?

**RESPONSE: Yes, under Senate Bill 98, instructional minutes must meet or exceed the minimum instructional minutes each day. Our schedules leverage in person and asynchronous learning and exceed the minimum instructional minutes.**

- What level of enforcement is expected from the staff on the students to maintain distance and where are examples provided of what could happen (has happened in other school districts) and how each instance would be handled?

**RESPONSE: Our Guidebook outlines the decision tree for positive cases and exposures to positive cases. PUSD Guidebook 2.0 has been updated. [Click here for English](#) [Click here for Spanish](#)**

- What are the latest thoughts on student pods on campus? Each student would have to have the same bell schedule, right?

**RESPONSE: At this time, we are planning for reopening elementary campuses for students that elected on campus learning. Secondary schools will be planning for small groups of students to return based on learning needs.**

- In the “distance learning” section, it indicates that principals and counselors now are responsible for reporting potential COVID cases. What are the testing procedures on campuses? What will testing entail and how will it be enforced and monitored?

**RESPONSE: We are working with San Diego County Office of Education to provide testing sites for families. We will not be conducting COVID testing on campus at this time. We will work with San Diego County Public Health for monitoring reported positive cases.**

- How will PUSD manage the dispersal of teachers as class sizes change (increase or decrease) due to changing comfort level with the COVID situation, while at the same time adequately managing the different curriculum needs of each student that change their learning environment? For example, if one student goes from on-line to in-person learning, does she keep the same teacher? If not, how is the curriculum maintained between teachers?

**RESPONSE:** At the elementary level, students were placed with teachers that align with on campus or virtual learning choices to match teachers and students. This supports the smooth transition from all virtual to on campus. Students that opted for on campus learning are placed with teachers that selected on campus, therefore, the transition is smooth. At secondary, due to the complexity of students having multiple teachers, and a desire to honor student's Course Request Forms, placing students with teachers that selected the same option is more challenging. Students do not move from teacher to teacher/course to course in consistent cohorts and therefore, we did not match students and teachers. It would have resulted in students not getting all of the courses they wanted and changing teacher assignments based on their credential. Curriculum is common across grade levels and teachers, regardless of on campus or virtual.

- Instead of an "either/or" hybrid model where some students do in-person learning and other students separately learn the same curriculum in an on-line environment, why can't a "both/and" hybrid model be used, whereby each class is taught simultaneously (via a live-stream) for those on-line and those in-person? If there are some cases where there are not enough teachers who agree to teach in-person for a certain course, perhaps these same teachers could teach remotely to the classroom (with live-students in them) and can be projected to the screen in the front of the class. When this is the case, these classes could perhaps be grouped together into one specific building, and then school staff members can monitor the building to make sure that students are behaving. Given the July 26-Aug 1 survey results, it seems that there may be an adequate number of teachers to teach in -person.

**RESPONSE:** Our middle and high schools may leverage a blended learning model for some classes as needed. An example we have discussed is potentially a band teacher working remotely and supporting students both virtually and on campus. There may be other situations as well. We are in the process of working with teachers to consider a blended model of on campus and virtual learning.

- The part above that states "On-campus Learning will include daily in-class instruction where students will be on campus five (5) days a week with their classroom teacher(s)" obscures the fact that a particular student may not be on campus 5 day(s) a week. Although about a paragraph later it states sites will use A/B or AM/PM staggering - I don't think it is going to be clear to parents who read this and at first think "students will be on campus 5 days a week" but then later learn that their student will only be there 2 days a week if their student is a high school student on an A plan/ B plan and the other three days are at home. So I think this needs to be made more clear.

**RESPONSE:** Our site principals have communicated to their families, through their School Reopening Plan for Learning, Health and Safety, details about the on campus plans. Once we are prepared to open, additional parent meetings will be held to provide site-specific information.

- Perhaps we can include some language as to the plan and time frames to re-asses the in-person option. It seems that most parents and teachers desire the in-person option so to include a bit more detail would be prudent.

**RESPONSE:** In addition to the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan, we are providing monthly updates to the Board of Education and Public. Following the Board meetings, we post the presentations on the PUSD Reopening Site so the public has access to all of the updates. [PUSD Reopening Web Page](#)

- Regarding maintaining physical distance, how developed are the contingency plans with regard to details on signage, training, enforcement and communication to students, parents and staff?

**RESPONSE:** Signage has been placed around our campuses and decals are placed on the sidewalk in areas such as lunch courts to ensure physical distancing. Supervisors will monitor and teachers will review with students when on campus.

- One thing that will be crucial is for each teacher to have a headset microphone system that will amplify their voice via speakers installed in the classroom. This was necessary before the pandemic but is essential if teachers are going to be masked.

**RESPONSE: Not all schools are equipped with this system and it would be a significant expense. We have prioritized our COVID funding to support curriculum, student technology, professional learning and staffing. On campus classes will be smaller than typical so that will support students being able to communicate with their teacher easily.**

- Will masks and/or face shields be required for teachers and/or students when/if in-person learning returns this year?

**RESPONSE: At the September 10 Board meeting, the Board voted that all students, preschool through 12 will be required to wear masks on campus. All teachers and staff are required to wear face coverings.**

## **Distance Learning Plan:**

### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:**

- Regarding the virtual bell-schedule, while it makes sense that parents want enough content to be certain their children are learning, my perspective as that of a younger student (going into second grade) is that I prefer she have less "screen time." We try to keep her to 2 hours a day.

**RESPONSE: We recommend that individual parents work with their child's teacher to make alternative arrangements as needed.**

- A rigid bell schedule will be very challenging for parents to oversee. The more pre-recorded, watch when you can, type of content the easier it will be to work around parents' schedules.

**RESPONSE: While we understand the need for flexibility we also need to ensure confidentiality for students and recording every lesson is not feasible. We recommend that individual parents work with their child's teacher to make alternative arrangements as needed.**

- Again, this looks like a reasonable plan. I think an unfortunate but necessary bi-product of this situation is that students with unique needs will excel better in individualized/specialized classroom settings. For example, the ESL students will probably do best with a teacher who speaks their primary language and in a class with other ESL students of the same language. It doesn't seem beneficial to anyone to try to force ESL students into a class where they are overwhelmed. The same could be said for the several other unique needs.

**RESPONSE: Sites work to create clusters of students within classrooms to support small group differentiated learning opportunities.**

- Are there clear, specific and consistent grade level lesson plans? And if so, will these be district wide, site based, or vary from class to class?

**RESPONSE: Sample lessons were developed for grades K-8 in core subjects such as math and English Language Arts. Teachers across the District collaborate on lesson development and use common curriculum to ensure cohesion of learning opportunities.**

- Are all teachers trained to adequately teach in an online environment? How does the District measure training retention and competency from each teacher?

**RESPONSE: All teachers were provided specific and targeted training between August 17-September 1, 2020. In addition, many teachers participated in voluntary sessions during the summer. Site administrators provide onsite support and team time to deepen online pedagogy. Principals also visit virtual classes to observe and provide feedback to teachers.**

- It is very important that given the long period of school closures basic instruction in accessing learning needs to occur before teachers dive into substantive instruction. Kids don't necessarily remember how to login, what their passwords are, how to access certain applications, and certainly for those students whose online learning platforms have or will change (such as from google classroom, to all canvas) they might be drowning in a sea of change. I think that "Student Orientation" should not be the job of the classroom teacher. Site Administrators should be offering walk-throughs of the virtual learning site, much as they would offer new families a tour of the physical school. Or some other district leadership or IT program needs to provide basic orientation to the online space.

**RESPONSE: Each teacher sets up their Canvas site based on their grade level and content area. Just as teachers devote time in the beginning of the year to review in class procedures, time will be dedicated to this during virtual learning. The relationship between teacher and student and the content specific information is best provided by teachers. The District has provided some common guidelines for Zoom and Digital Citizenship as examples.**

- Does the teacher's union agreement allow for both refusals to teach both 'in-person' and 'online'? I've heard concerns that some teachers do not want to teach from home because they don't want people to see their background in their home space as they may feel that is an invasion of privacy. How is this being addressed? Is the District or the Union (PFT) working with teachers to show them how Zoom settings can easily be changed to address that issue, etc.?

**RESPONSE: Zoom training was a required session for ALL teachers prior to September 2 to ensure a foundation of safety and best practices were provided to all staff. Teachers may also work from their classroom if they choose.**

- What type of guidance is being provided for potential exposure teachers and students could have to the environment in student's home setting presented via Zoom? This could be disturbing language or visuals overheard during a Zoom class, dangerous conditions observed, cyber bullying or inappropriate side chats/screen grabs, etc. Again, describing scenarios and being clear with all parties - teachers, students, parents - can help to avoid issues or be prepared on what to do if they happen.

**RESPONSE: Zoom Guidelines were provided to all teachers to address these type of concerns. Teachers communicated this to students on the first day of school and will continue to reiterate. Teachers have control of the screen and mute and close video as needed. Discipline will occur for students not adhering to Digital Citizenship guidelines.**

- If Zoom or the internet crashes (on a large scale, or for a class, for a teacher, or for a whole school, etc.), do both the IT department and the teachers have an understanding that they have some backup plans (non-tech. for instance) that students will be prepared to turn to, if the distance and remote tech aspect of distance learning is temporarily interrupted?

**RESPONSE: Students have picked up instructional materials and textbooks from school. Alternative assignments can be provided if there are technical issues.**

- This part: "Students will be following a virtual bell schedule to attend live instruction and required classroom conversations. Regular office hours, homeroom, and opportunities for students to ask questions will be provided. Virtual Learning will have specific Physical Education classes for all students. Currently, we are considering having virtual learning students join the on-campus music class via video to participate. Attendance in Virtual Learning is required." Just making sure that there will be a variety of ways for students to be considered marked present based on their individual needs and abilities. For instance, a student with anxiety problems and issues may have huge obstacles to attending a class on zoom, but could still work with the teacher for support and checking in and working remotely on their studies. As long as the student is turning in work and reporting on their progress, they should not be required to attend zooms, if there are other ways to engage them. Also, zooms may crash or have various drawbacks, but the telephone is usually available for most students to also call or receive calls. This also applies to in-person learning in the aspect of the remote instruction for partial days or for the remote days if a student is on A/B.

**RESPONSE:** Through the passage of SB98, student attendance procedures include daily participation and may include, but is not limited to any of the following:

- \* evidence of participation in online activities (Canvas/Zoom)
- \* completion of regular assignments (Grade book/Canvas)
- \* completion of assessments
- \* contacts between employees of the LEA and the student or parents/guardians (Office Hours)

**Teachers will record attendance through participation with assignments and engagement in Zoom lessons.**

- Concerns about testing - if the learning model is kept distance learning for a large portion of the year how will testing (academic testing) be conducted in a way that is valid (as far as results) and also conducive to a good and standardized testing environment. For instance if kids are tested at home, the home setting may not be even calm enough to conduct a test. There are also technological glitches at times and it would be a shame for that to effect a student's academic scores. So the question is about, if distance learning lasts a long time, but if some very limited in-person appointments are allowed, perhaps, small cohorts of students, very widely spaced out, can be brought in for formalized and standardized testing. (This is especially for CAASPP)

**RESPONSE:** Some testing such as iReady and Lexia can be done at home via student login. As we begin to open for on campus learning, testing may be organized for cohorts on campus. ELPAC testing is currently being organized for small groups in person.

- The assessment plan needs more detail. What type of academic testing will be implemented and at what time frames? Are we still using the MAPS math score to determine 6th grade math placement?

**RESPONSE:** We have drafted a Testing Calendar for the 2020-21 school year which will be posted on the LSS website. We have suspended MAP testing this year. We will be using iReady assessments this year to monitor student achievement and provide personalized learning for students.

- We saw the College Board conduct online AP tests this past spring, and the CB is regarded as having one of the strictest proctoring programs to ensure validity of the test scores. What will testing look like at PUSD?

**RESPONSE: We will be working with teachers to utilize assessments and processes that are secure.**

## **Pupil Learning Loss:**

### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:**

- If learning loss is identified, “coordinators will collaborate on best practices.” Aren’t those best practices already generally determined? Are specific steps identified? And follow up steps?

**RESPONSE: Yes, teachers are prepared to differentiate student learning. In grades K-8, we have purchased iReady and Lexia to support personalized learning pathways for students. Due to the unique needs of our students, collaborating and sharing strategies and best practices is an ongoing effort.**

- This generic type of language was exhibited in PUSD site-specific safety plans (some of which included dates that did not even exist and vague descriptions that were similar). It is crucial to have clear language and planning as this vague information amplifies general confusion when people are asked to review, comment on, and implement a plan without specific details.

**RESPONSE: Planning to meet the needs of individual students or groups of students is best done by classroom teachers and site teams. A District plan is a high level plan that outlines big ideas. Our school teams will utilize data and resources to plan for specific learning needs of students.**

- We should also consider the needs of our GATE population. Being an at-risk group, the current plan does not account for our GATE identified students. These students are at significant risk if our on-line instruction does not keep them engaged at the appropriate level. What are we doing to identify this group and ensure they don't get left behind in this new learning environment?

**RESPONSE: We have students that perform at a variety of achievement levels. Our teachers are trained to provide differentiated learning opportunities to support and engage students. We expect teachers to provide open-ended learning tasks that allow students to be challenged and achieve their greatest potential. iReady will provide individualized learning for students.**

## **Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-Being:**

### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:**

- The opening paragraph of this section is disturbing in its efforts to try to check all of the agendas. Rather than having your administrators read *White Fragility*, a book that the Atlantic describes as "condescending" and "talking down to black people." Instead, you should have them read *The Coddling of the American Mind* by Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt.

**RESPONSE: We will take this recommendation into consideration for the future.**

- Through our partnership with PureEdge, our PUSD educators will learn about the neuroscience of stress and its impact on the body. \*This section mentions training and support for educators however are there discussions/plans to provide a similar training to PUSD staff as well? (section 5, paragraph 7)

**RESPONSE: The sessions were provided and available for all staff. Additional sessions will be provided throughout the school year for all staff.**

- The Pure Edge, Inc. website does not seem to list anything about educating regarding the current issues related to implicit bias and race relations. How, specifically, will this be taught? What is the curriculum?

**RESPONSE: PureEdge is not focused on implicit bias and race relations. Our work with the San Diego County Office of Education Equity Departments will provide professional learning on these topics.**

- The efforts you are making rely upon untruths that children are fragile and need their feelings protected. Social emotional health is not a matter of protecting our children from a difficult world but rather preparing them for how to live in a difficult world. I'm afraid your entire objective is wrong and therefore your efforts will only result in emotionally immature children becoming emotionally immature adults. The type of "adults" who shout down any speech they disagree with. The type of "adults" who burn down their own cities when injustice occurs.

**RESPONSE: We recognize that this is a personal perspective; however, it does not reflect the goal of our efforts.**

- It has been reported in multiple local news segments, with PUSD comments provided, that a Westview PUSD teacher admitted to sending sexually explicit text messages to a student, and despite the evidence and admission, this teacher has not been removed. Please provide an update regarding the response actions taken on this and any other similar situation. Please also provide a list of similar incidents involving teachers acting inappropriately toward their students or other youth in the community and list how each instance was handled.

**RESPONSE: This question is not related to the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. If you have a question related to personnel matters, you may contact Personnel Support Services, Associate Superintendent James Jimenez at [jjimenez@powayusd.com](mailto:jjimenez@powayusd.com)**

- What is the status of the District-wide well-being survey? What form is the draft in, or when will a first draft be provided? Who is developing and reviewing it? When will it be published?

**RESPONSE: The District well-being survey is actually an internal effort that our Personnel Support Services Department is directing toward staff. This would be created to gauge how our staff is doing during this time of COVID and the results would be used to inform staff supports moving forward.**

- I am also deeply concerned for the emotional well-being of our students and I fear counselors may be stretched thin as parents and children are struggling.

**RESPONSE: We are able to provide support through our counselors and our Student Support Specialists/Assistants. We also have access to some outside agencies such as Elizabeth Hospice for specific support as needed.**

- This is a very important topic and school counselors will play a more vital role this year. There should be a tight integration between the counselors, teachers, students, and parents. The social/mental well-being topic will also apply outside of school, as families struggle to cope during this pandemic.

**RESPONSE: We will continue to meet with our counselors and support coordinated efforts across our campuses. We will also continue to provide parent workshops to support families.**

## **Pupil Engagement and Outreach:**

### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:**

- I think this is good and should be expanded as much as possible throughout the district. I would do my best to create as many opportunities as possible to support parents.

**RESPONSE: Thank you for your ongoing support! We cannot do what we do without parents as partners.**

- Students who are not attending should not be penalized for non-attendance if they are turning in work and are otherwise engaged in some manner. I feel like the importance of taking attendance works for most students, however, I fear that we are still in a pandemic, there are still very serious impacts on student's social emotional well-being and that just because the schools' need to meet average daily attendance there will be so much pressure on students who can't show up in every single way that they may be asked to, based on technological difficulties, based on home environments, based on social emotional deficits and also based on the very long break from school. Many kids have forgotten their passwords, how to log in, how to access educational applications, etc. etc. As soon as possible, the district really needs to be able to identify those

students for whom distance learning AT HOME doesn't work, and instead of penalizing those students, they should be invited to specialized laser focused study hall opportunities. So that any obstacles to distance learning can be solved in-person, but of course with masks and social distancing and only for as long as it takes to walk them through what is required. Also if the issue is at-home internet access, instead of buying more Wi-Fi hotspots, having at least one day a week that those students can just come in for supervised study hall space at their school site, or a learning center, or maybe even they could be matched up with a family near them that is willing to form a small "learning pod" I think we need to do this as soon as it is allowed by the county public health order, even if we are not rolling out large scale hybrid programs for most kids.

**RESPONSE: We share the goal of ensuring students have what they need for learning and not penalizing any child for situations outside of their control. SB98 includes clear guidance for this concern as well. Students will not be counted absent if they miss a Zoom meeting but rather, attendance is counted by contact with a teacher, via Zoom or email OR completing work for the day. We have already begun to bring in small groups of students that have specific needs to support them and will continue to expand this opportunity.**

- Perhaps sending out regular surveys at various levels (district, school, classroom), will give us a better gauge as to where the gaps might be. It seems that ThoughtExchange has allowed many more parents to engage than in our previous forums.

**RESPONSE: We agree that Thoughtexchange has increased parent engagement and can be further utilized at both the macro and micro levels. For example, as we move forward with our reopening phases, we could use the platform at the macro level (i.e. a Districtwide conversation on health and safety measures), as well as the micro level (i.e. Principals using it at staff meetings or teachers using Thoughtexchange in class).**

- We also need to develop awareness among the teacher community that we may have students who are not on an IEP, but who might benefit from being identified as someone who requires an IEP. How are we ensuring that those students don't get left behind? Identifying these students will become more challenging in a digital world.

**RESPONSE:** In August, we were granted permission to recommence in-person assessments. This was great news for PUSD! Since schools closed in March, we have hundreds of incomplete or overdue assessments required by staff to determine special education eligibility. Our team is acutely aware that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees the rights of children to a free and appropriate public education. Among other things, IDEA requires that schools assess student learning needs within prescribed timeframes necessary to determine special education eligibility as well as to ensure educational growth. The United States Department of Education and California Department of Education have instructed local education agencies that they are required to adhere to the mandates expressed in IDEA throughout the course of the pandemic. In reviewing the state and local health orders, it is clear: *There is no stated, explicit, or implied prohibition in state or county orders that prevents school districts from conducting assessments on campus when virtual means are inappropriate.*

So we have been conducting in person assessments ever since. Our team of psychologists, related service providers, and teachers are working diligently to complete pending, incomplete, and overdue IEP's in earnest.

## School Nutrition:

### DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:

- I saw that the school meals will be given out at 12 sites, but for the elementary schools where there are children in ESS, doesn't it make sense to have a free / reduced lunch delivery to those schools for those children who are in ESS? Because those families who need childcare to make ends meet and might also be in the free/reduced lunch program, can't get out of work to go take their kids over to the school lunch site near them ... and back ... and not to mention to ensure that they are keeping their kids attending the morning school at home.

**RESPONSE: The 12 Food and Nutrition (F&N) distribution sites are strategically located at schools with the highest Free and Reduced Price student enrollments. To make school meals more convenient for families, F&N is currently distributing breakfast and lunch (together) twice every school day, Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This schedule was developed primarily to accommodate working parents. Finally, parents, guardians, or caregivers may pick up meals without the student being present.**

- I question the cost effectiveness of expecting a family qualifying for free or reduced meals to be forced to drive to one of 12 school sites each day for said meal. Is it possible to contract with meal delivery companies or create a delivery driver (possibly parent volunteers?) to ensure meals are being provided directly where needed (ESS, student's home, etc.)?

**RESPONSE: Based on an 18% Free and Reduced Price (F/RP) student enrollment population, Poway Unified currently has more sites distributing meals than most of our neighboring school districts. For example, Vista School District has 6 sites supporting 63% F/RP students, Escondido Union has 8 sites supporting 75% F/RP students, and Oceanside School District has 4 sites supporting 63% F/RP students. The current distribution system at Poway Unified allows parents, guardians, or a third party to pick up meals for students. To date, F&N has not received any complaints from ESS parents about the current meal service.**

- It seems rather difficult to implement, but we should be aware that certain students are not going to be able to make it to campus for a meal pick-up. How will kids get to school to pick up their lunch, if parents are at work away from the home?

**RESPONSE:** The current Poway Unified Food & Nutrition meal distribution program was implemented for this reason. The recent USDA waiver that allows a third party to pick up meals for students should also help this situation. This means that a caregiver or babysitter may also pick up meals for a student. Most importantly, when schools open for in-person classes, students will be able to pick up meals at their own school. Virtual learning students may pick up meals at their home school or at one of the remaining secondary school distribution sites.

## **Increased or Improved Services for Foster Youth, English Learners, and Low-Income Students:**

### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Suggestions:**

- Unfortunately, the issue of technology access also applies to families who do not fall into an at-risk group. With three kids taking online classes, the need for a higher bandwidth broadband connection is necessary, so we are seeing an increase in monthly expenses just to implement internet connectivity so our kids can engage online. Are there programs that would allow families to receive financial support to pay for this cost increase?

**RESPONSE:**

**San Diego County Office of Education and PUSD have multiple options for connectivity available to families. Many internet service providers are offering low cost internet to families which are listed below. School sites will work with the family/families to review these options.**

- **COX Connect 2 Compete**  
<https://www.cox.com/residential/internet/connect2compete.html>
- **Spectrum Internet Assist**  
<https://www.spectrum.com/browse/content/spectrum-internet-assist>
- **AT&T Access program**  
<https://www.att.com/internet/access/>

**PUSD is able to provide hotspots to students when low cost internet is not an option or when service is not available. T-Mobile hotspots are being checked out. Families need to complete the hotspot checkout form.**

- As a former dependency attorney, my heart goes out to all the foster youth and other displaced or at risk children. In my years as minor's counsel, it was obvious that mandated reporters saved countless lives by reporting concerns of possible abuse. In times of high stress, instances of violence rise. What protections can PUSD put in place to ensure students are given access to free and open communication (i.e., not monitored by potentially abusive caretakers)? For example, will counselors be available for in person sessions? Once CPS is involved, social workers provide welfare checks; however, how will CPS know to get involved if mandated reporters are not able to see victims without potential abusers over their shoulder?

**RESPONSE:** This has been a concern for all educators throughout the closures. Counselors are able to make home visits and now we are able to bring students on to our campuses for individual or small group meetings. Our priority will be our vulnerable students and reaching out when we have concerns. All teachers and staff participate in Mandated Reporter Training each year to support identification.

## **Other Comments:**

### **DAC/DELAC Questions/Comments/Suggestions:**

- What actions are being taken to follow up with the racist threats made on campuses? From nooses placed at schools, to swastikas and KKK graffiti, as well the N-word and homophobic slurs on multiple occasions. Please provide a list of each of these instances over the past ten years as well as an update regarding the response to each of these instances and threats. I'd expect that PUSD is keeping track of these types of events, as they might portend future violence.

**RESPONSE:** These incidents are documented and investigated thoroughly. This is not the format to provide a ten year history of racial incidents in PUSD and we know we have had too many. Our schools have been working on creating inclusive cultures that value all students and fighting racism is one of the reasons we have partnered with the Anti-Defamation League. Several of our secondary schools engaged in anti-bias training and 21 of our schools have been designated as No Place for Hate campuses. This is ongoing work that we need to continue and take deeper. Changing racist behavior requires our collective commitment and the commitment of our community. Our Board of Education passed an Anti-Racism Resolution in June and our site and District leaders are committed to leading this effort. In October, the Board will review a comprehensive plan for Racial Equity and Inclusion. We will continue our efforts to address and reduce incidents of racism on our campuses.

- As far as racism goes, Do you really think it wise to embrace "anti-racism", a fairly novel doctrine, when almost no research about this dogma even exists? Look at google trends and see that this phrase skyrocketed in June of this year. There's literally no research, no background and no idea about what potential harm this pursuit could have, and yet somehow you plan to make a full commitment to it? The above mentioned Atlantic review of the book White Fragility describes it as "a prayer book of a cult." I hardly think it is wise to use such a book as a "foundational text."

**RESPONSE: Thank you for sharing your perspective. We will also be working with the San Diego County Office of Education Equity Department. Their work is grounded in research. You may learn more from their [website, click here.](#)**

- Indeed, it is critical that our children learn to respect and value each individual regardless of the color of their skin, the language they speak, the clothes they wear or the size of their house. We need our children to understand the each person is deserving of dignity and honor, and I am reluctant to believe that they can learn this if they are taught that the default of how they view the world is as inherently racist. Perhaps it would be wiser to source our foundation in more timeless truths of virtues rather than values? Perhaps there is ancient wisdom that we can draw from rather than contemporary trends?

**RESPONSE: Thank you, we will look into this as well.**

- Also, please keep in mind that students who are multi-racial, students who are from native American backgrounds, and students who come from recently immigrated households - whether from Asia, Latin America, the middle east or Africa, or Europe, or really anywhere - that it would be really good if teachers would be trained around how to bring out the best in these student's stories and how to not aggravate existing societal traumatic issues when having conversations or lessons with children.

**RESPONSE: Identity work is a critical component of all equity work. We will continue to engage in this work with staff and students.**

- I feel more attention needs to be placed on the recently voiced issues of racism within PUSD. I would like more specific information on how PUSD intends to focus on equality and social justice issues.

**RESPONSE: We are developing a comprehensive plan, Racial Equity and Inclusion that will be shared with the public at the October Board of Education meeting.**

- The @BlackInPUSD Instagram profile has compiled an extensive list of disturbing, race-related incidents (i.e. racists comments and/or threats - some from teachers), with thousands of engagements from students, teachers, and community members. Please provide a list of these incidents over the past ten years and an explanation of how each instance was handled. Please make a point to seek and collect this data, and then take appropriate action.

**RESPONSE: We have reviewed the @BlackinPUSD posts and they are clearly a strong call to action. When incidents are reported, they are documented and investigated thoroughly.**

**This is not the format to provide a ten year history of racial incidents in PUSD and we know we have had many. Our schools have been working on creating inclusive cultures that value all students and fighting racism is one of the reasons we have partnered with the Anti-Defamation League. Several of our secondary schools engaged in anti-bias training and 21 of our schools have been designated as No Place for Hate campuses. This is ongoing work that we need to continue and take deeper. Changing racist behavior requires our collective commitment and the commitment of our community. Our Board of Education passed an Anti-Racism Resolution in June and our site and District leaders are committed to leading this effort. In October, the Board will review a comprehensive plan for Racial Equity and Inclusion. We will continue our efforts to address and reduce incidents of racism on our campuses.**

- Regarding social justice issues, there is a reference to a controversial book and that it will have influence our conversations...and that is it...seems insufficient, and perhaps there is more to come, but just saying so does not seem enough.

**RESPONSE: We are developing a comprehensive plan, Racial Equity and Inclusion that will be shared with the public at the October Board of Education meeting.**

- I see that site administrators will be working on anti-racism efforts. I am wondering when the teachers will be asked to do some anti-racism and elimination of bias training? A lot of teachers I have been exposed to in my experiences in PUSD as both an employee and a parent, have "grown up" in the PUSD family so to speak. While this is great for community morale generally, it unfortunately has the unintended effect of causing our school systems to be symptomatic of "doing it (school) the way we always have" which can exacerbate systems of conformity rather than celebration or valuing of diversity. Diversity includes many things such as life experiences, living in different areas, coming from different countries or areas and so the very many teachers that have loved Poway and stayed here to teach, while wonderful, probably need to be open to new ideas and valuing diversity and those who question why things are done a certain way.

**RESPONSE: We are developing a comprehensive plan, Racial Equity and Inclusion that will be shared with the public at the October Board of Education meeting. This plan will include deep work with our teachers and all staff.**

- I attended the virtual town hall that the "small and mighty" parent group from D39 hosted with their principal on Racism within the District and responding to the issues of educational disparities and educational issues of racism in our own student bodies and schools, staff, and communities. During the town hall, someone from the community, zoom bombed the event and kept saying the "N-word" to be offensive and triggering for what was supposed to be a healing and productive conversation. Also, a parent at the town hall, shared how they moved here from Bonita, south of I-8 freeway, and it was so their child could have a better education. They knew that they would have to deal with the lack of diversity in the Poway school district, but they didn't realize that they would have to deal with it from their child's teacher, in second grade. The triggering instances the parent described were things that the District should be teaching Teachers NOT to do. In second grade the teachers asked the students and families to research their heritage and the "country they came from." Being black, you may not know the exact country, only that your ancestors were brought to this continent in bondage from Africa against their will. Also, second graders may not be ready for that conversation, and teachers need to be ready to deal with this REALITY for many of our American families and not teach that unit with the nearsightedness of a European centric immigration assumption. Further, the parent shared that when she shared her concerns with the teacher, especially about the lack of knowledge of what country to pick, the teacher didn't understand the gravity of the concern and told both the parent and the student "just pick any country in Africa" and then when the teacher and PTA had a "multi-cultural" night for the culmination of the school year second

graders heritage projects, there was no planning for a table of African countries and the students with African countries were just lumped in while the other students each had tables. I share this on behalf of an observer of that parent's story at the town hall, feeling very sad and embarrassed about our District. I feel like we can do SO MUCH BETTER than this. And furthermore, I think that training for teachers needs to be rolled out as soon as possible, if it is not already in the pipeline, so that "educational racism trauma" is not heaped on students of color such as what this parent had described.

**RESPONSE: Please know that immediately following the D39C Town hall, principals at two schools where the family that shared their experience called the parents to address the issue. In addition, we shared that clip from the Town hall with all principals so the system can learn from this and change our behavior immediately.**

**We are developing a comprehensive plan, Racial Equity and Inclusion that will be shared with the public at the October Board of Education meeting. This plan will include deep work with our teachers and all staff.**