

Comments of David Fisher, President of the Sacramento City Teachers Association to the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education, July 16, 2020

Agenda Item: 8.0 Public Comment.

Under the provisions of the SCTA/SCUSD Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 18.12, SCTA is provided up to fifteen (15) minutes to provide a report to the board.

Good evening. I am David Fisher, the president of the Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA).

First, we want to express our appreciation for the Sacramento County Office of Education and the Sacramento County Department of Public Health for their leadership in ensuring that the commencement of in-person classes on September 3rd will be delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Since June 3rd when we began meeting with District representatives concerning the reopening of schools, we have urged the District to work WITH teachers on developing a more robust distance learning program for the fall.

The distance learning program SCUSD unlawfully implemented in the spring has rightfully been criticized as badly designed, poorly administered, and --despite the best of efforts of teachers to make it work—largely inadequate. This fall, we can and must do better.

From our perspective, that means having true decision-makers directly involved in discussions.

In the complaint recently issued on the District's unlawful distance learning implementation, PERB found that:

“The [SCUSD] bargaining team members lacked authority to bargain, as they were repeatedly countermanded by [SCUSD] Superintendent Jorge A. Aguilar, who had declined to participate in the actual negotiations, resulting in [SCUSD] contradicting and backtracking from proposals, including but not limited to those addressing student learning standards, in-person meeting requirements, and technology issues. . .”

“[SCUSD] provided [SCTA] with incorrect information and misrepresented the bases for its bargaining positions, as when the [SCUSD] rejected [SCTA’s] proposal to protect day-to-day substitute pay on the grounds that it needed to use these monies to purchase laptops for students, even though this was not true;”

We have urged Superintendent Aguilar, Board President Ryan and SCOE to participate directly in our negotiations--to work directly with us to create a new climate of constructive cooperation. We reiterate our request tonight.

Yesterday’s decision by SCOE and the Department of Public Health gives SCUSD the opportunity to work with teachers to significantly improve the distance learning program that will be offered to students and to do so in a way that creates a climate of trust between the District and SCTA. We again urge you to take advantage of this opportunity.

Unfortunately, we remain concerned that the District continues to mount a concerted campaign against teachers in what has been described as the administration’s effort to take back the District. Recent events suggest that the campaign has now been also extended against classified staff represented by SEIU. Together, SCTA and SEIU represent 95% of the SCUSD staff. Such divisiveness is exactly the opposite of what is needed during these turbulent times.

After six weeks of refusing to respond to our proposal, the District informed us on July 10th that SCUSD was rejecting the joint SCTA/SEIU proposal to use potential health plan savings this year to create a \$16 million reopening fund. The fund would make it more feasible for the District to reopen, including through distance learning. It would allow for the immediate hiring of more school nurses and custodians. In addition, the fund would help to combat institutional racism in SCUSD by providing for implicit bias training for all staff, while allowing for the purchase of books and other learning materials that recognize the accomplishments of African-Americans.

Instead, SCUSD reiterated its massive health insurance takeaway demands including only providing "appropriate" health insurance (as unilaterally determined by the District) while forcing educators to pay from \$1,500 to \$17,000 per year for health insurance, setting the stage for major labor conflict in the District at a time when we should all be working together.

The District still has provided no response to our other proposals, including our proposed revision to Article 11, Health and Safety, in response to the pandemic, as well as our proposals on Restorative Practices and implementing MTSS.

It is also worth pointing out the District is on the verge of another major staffing crisis among certificated staff, with approximately 150 to 200 current certificated vacancies with less than eight weeks before classes begin on September 3rd.

The significantly improved budget, including an additional \$39.8 million from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) and Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), and the protection of LCFF revenues as a result of the recently approved California budget provide some economic relief. This is in addition to the \$15.9 million CARES act dollars previously allocated to SCUSD.

We continue to believe there is a better way.

July 16, 2020

Superintendent Jorge A. Aguilar
Sacramento City Unified School District
5735 47th Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95824

**Please submit the following for public comment on behalf of the Community
Advisory Committee's Executive Officers**

- **Kenya Martinez**
- **Rose McAuliffe**
- **Al Hernandez Santana**
- **Lisa Arnold Fernandez**
- **Dr. Dennis Mah**

**Re: 1) Parent Concerns and 2) Recommendations on Labor representation in the
Community Advisory Committee for the Special Education Local Plan Area
(SELPA)**

Dear Superintendent Aguilar:

Thank you for taking time to meet with the SELPA Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members June 30th regarding the reopening of schools in the Fall. We appreciated the opportunity to hear directly from you, in addition to sharing our thoughts and concerns as parents.

The main parent concerns were as follows:

- **Access to Education** – Continued usage of Chromebooks for all students, including access to high speed Internet.
- **Health and Wellness** – Students or their caregivers with compromised immune systems will have the option to participate in full distance learning or a hybrid model. Students will receive mental health services in the form of wellness checks, mental health assessments or referrals if applicable. Smaller classroom sizes, viable dedicated “sick rooms”. Safety precautions which follow public health guidelines which limit the exposure of COVID-19.
- **MTSS Implementation** – A commitment to implementing services outlined in student’s IEPs, as well as students who have 504 plans. Focusing directly on students at risk, i.e. students with disabilities, homeless and foster youth, socio-economically disadvantage students and English language learners.
- **Best Practices** – Professional staff development for administrators, site leaders and teachers with an emphasis on distance learning. Training for students and parents including Google Classroom - Zoom or other used technical applications students which may be utilized.

Beyond that discussion, we reviewed an advance copy of the SCTA collective bargaining proposal, which called for the appointment of “[a]t least three representatives to the CAC” and other related provisions.

The language above may sound neutral and reasonable at first glance, but we would like to underscore that teachers are already authorized per our Bylaws and encouraged by CAC to become general members. The fact is that we have an open membership process in accordance with section 56192 of the California Education Code; moreover, our "active" membership is fluid and cyclical, partly by design, to make it as simple as possible for parents to participate in decisions. For instance, two main eligibility requirements are to attend two meetings in a school year and to fill out a membership form. For that reason alone, the Executive Committee believes it is important to maintain a balanced representation among parents and teachers within CAC and use caution when introducing changes to its makeup.

We take care to reassure parents that the voice of the CAC membership is not tilted by another particular group. Indeed, according to the Education Code parents of students with exceptional needs must remain a *majority* of the CAC membership (§ 56193). In the case of teacher representation, the SCTA proposal treats this function as an official release from regular duties, thus authorizing daily compensation to be negotiated in the labor contract. On the other hand, parents are strictly volunteers and often find it hard to attend the meetings regularly. Such a dynamic is compounded when you consider that many of our parents are taking care of the special needs of her/his child at home and aren't able to leave the house during the evening or have time to be present for a Zoom meeting.

In sum, the Education Code does not contemplate an opportunity for union representation on the CAC. As a result, the union could *encourage* members to join but they cannot dictate who is appointed or what the individual teacher or paraprofessional will advocate for.

The more troubling aspect of the overall SCTA proposal, however -- and we are seeking guidance from you and other experts in the field -- is the request to form a **Special Education Committee** with equal representation from SCTA and the district (with block voting). This presents a challenge from our perspective. In brief, why would the district engage with the SCTA through an ad hoc committee or in such an extra-official role, when there already exists a body like CAC mandated by the California Education Code? Section 56190 et seq. of the Education code lays out a governing structure that may consist of parents, students, teachers and other school personnel. Furthermore, the SCTA proposal clearly falls outside the scope of collective bargaining as it intrudes into policy making. Our main concern is that if a Special Education Committee is allowed to form and begin work similar to ours, such a committee has the real potential to work against priorities that are voted on by the CAC, or worse yet make the work of the CAC irrelevant. It is our wish that a better and mutually agreeable solution is relatively simple to attain. As the CAC, there is an open invitation to any community stakeholder group and individuals who wish to have a cooperative relationship with our members. Special Education is a service and we honor the belief of anyone who chooses to put students first.

This letter was written in full collaboration and input of the Community Advisory Committee Executive Officers.

In Solidarity!

Lisa Allen

From: Kenya Martinez <kenyamartinez95@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:53 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: CAC Public Comment
Attachments: CAC Public Comment 7.16.20.docx

Warning! This message originates from OUTSIDE the District's email system. Please verify the sender and contents before opening attachments or clicking any links. Contact the Technology Services Help Desk at 916-643-9445 with any questions.

Please find the following attached. There are five individuals for this item, which means there should be 10 minutes available to read this letter.

Thank You!

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All the best,
Kenya Martinez

Please excuse typographical errors, I am a person with Learning Disability.

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting
July 16, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Stevie Cook
Comment:	<p>Good evening Superintendent Aguilar and Board of Education members.</p> <p>I wanted to let you know that as a teacher here in the district I have been devouring workshops via Zoom since the start of summer break to prepare for the upcoming school year. I have also seen many of my colleagues representing SCUSD in these virtual meetings.</p> <p>This morning I got out of a second session of free Zoom training from the UC Davis History project on, "Tools for Online Teaching". It covered resources that Social Science and other subject matter teachers could be using to plan their distance learning lessons. I am so thankful the UCD HP exists and that the workshop was totally free since the district has given us teachers no leadership or clear training directions on how to successfully build out online learning tools for the 2020/2021 school year and the summer is nearing half-over. Additionally, SCTA is offering training at a virtual conference on the 22nd of July. The trainings will be by teachers and for teachers on technology and instructional practices.</p> <p>These tools are going to be critical for keeping DL students engaged both asynchronously and synchronously and will be essential for meeting the needs of our most marginalized students. Why haven't y'all pushed out trainings yet? This has got to be a priority and we need to be hearing from teachers who have been using these tools on how best to use them.</p> <p>Additionally, many of these tools have free services but they also have "Premium" services which are the ones most needed and of course cost money. I am wondering how you are going to address the district purchasing premium access for us teachers to use so that we can do our very best job providing for our students in these unprecedented times.</p>

Speaking as: Employee

Date/time Stamp: 7/14/2020 3:05:14 PM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting
July 16, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Renee Phillips
Comment:	Rename Sutter Middle school now. My siblings and I attended Sutter Middle School. It's location in a predominantly white, East Sacramento neighborhood coupled with the disproportionate underrepresentation of Black and Brown kids just perpetuates the racist symbolism. As an SCUSD graduate we demand change. We have over 1000 signatures to support this change. Our community and children deserve better. Equity is in our actions, not just our vision and mission statements.

Speaking as: Former student SCUSD grad

Date/time Stamp: 7/15/2020 4:19:43 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting
July 16, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Junior Goris
Comment:	Good Evening School Board and Superintendent Aguilar. I am a parent at MLK K-8 School and extremely concerned about proposed cuts to MLK staff to part time, basically eliminating our middle school program. I understand as a district we are all a family and we must all tighten our belts financially but are these cuts being applied equally to all neighboring schools? I have asked this question previously and been unsuccessful in getting an answer. Our kids at MLK should be the only ones facing these types of cuts. I respectfully request an answer to my question. Thank you for your labor to the district.

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Date/time Stamp: 7/15/2020 7:37:02 PM

Lisa Allen

From: Tamara Toby
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 7:59 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Preschool teachers

Dear Board Members and Superintendent,

We are the teachers from the Parent Participation Preschool Program. Thank you for listening to our preschool families and teachers regarding saving our program. Thank you for recognizing the value in our program and the importance of early childhood and parent education. Our community will be stronger and we hope to grow our program in the district after we recover from the pandemic.

Sincerely,
Tamara Toby
Paul Landahl
Amanda Chapman

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

July 16, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Erin Duarte
Comment:	Please prioritize K-3 students learning to read - ideally including students who are older but behind and English learners. They must have physical books in their hands and plenty of time being read to or reading to others. The adults would also have the same book while “meeting” with a student over a screen. In addition to class instruction by a teacher - aides, yard duties, volunteers, board members, high schoolers needing community service hours - all could be utilized to help young students within this window of time to acquire vital skills. Children should NOT be learning to read on a screen. This can easily be done - but not doing it will result in these children being behind the rest of their academic career and throughout their lifetime.

Speaking as: Employee

Date/time Stamp: 7/16/2020 11:44:22 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting
July 16, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Renee Webster-Hawkins
Comment:	<p>[This is a non-agendized item.] Dear Boardmembers and Superintendent, In listening to many teacher's concerns about doing their jobs, whether we "return together" or teach remotely, it strikes me how debilitating it is that teachers are either tasked with or unsupported in figuring out the many planning, procurement and technical obstacles that get in the way of doing their jobs, which is teaching our students. When I put on my military veteran hat and observe this dysfunction, I want to scream "Logistics!" In the Air Force, the top guns in the Strategic Air Command focus on being the very best fighter pilots, while the engineers in the Logistics Command design, plan, procure and deliver the infrastructure and materials that are need to carry out the strategic mission. Where is the Logistical Education Command that should be springing into action to design and implement schedules and systems to plan, procure and deliver the textbooks, distribution, licences, PPE, and other resources that teachers and students need to effectively engage with each other? This is an engineering problem that can be solved. Is there a way to re-deploy the busdrivers (transportation engineers), maintenance (facilities engineers) and other classified staff (Mr Rogers' Helpers) that may not be fully utilized since our campuses will be empty, to support teachers with the scheduling, planning, building and deployment of resources they need? That would relieve teachers from these tasks, and allow teachers and admin to prioritize and mutually collaborate on the professional development and multi-tiered instructional methodologies necessary for the Robust Learning and Educational Equity that the Sac City community has overwhelmingly demanded.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Date/time Stamp: 7/16/2020 11:48:00 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

July 16, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Gloria Lomeli
Comment:	<p>Good Evening Board Members and Superintendent Aguilar,</p> <p>As a parent of a daughter at MLK, the new realities of education are scary. While I have all the faith in Superintendent Aguilar and staff to the best very best for our children, distant learning on a full time scale is something new to us with very little data. Parents will now need to be engaged as ever and with this I respectfully request the forming of a Parental Advisory committee to the district on distant learning. Just like the District's support staff, parents are an invaluable tool behind the scenes cast members that can help meet the district's and our children's academics goals. I respectfully request the board and the superintendent's office to make this part of the plan as we rapidly approach our opening day. Ladies and gentlemen, I am awake at night by the idea am I doing enough for my daughter, am I giving her the best opportunity to acquire the skills to become a responsible adult. I know many of my fellow parents also feel this way, this committee would allow for the proper forum for participation and recommendations to the district in the new educational landscape. I believe in SCUSD, I believe we can make it but we it will take us all, TOGETHER. Thank you for allowing me to participate in the process and for all you do for our children of Sacramento.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Date/time Stamp: 7/16/2020 11:56:18 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

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Name:	Jame Vaca
Comment:	yes

Speaking as: Community Member

Date/time Stamp: 7/16/2020 10:12:43 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
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Name:	Emily Warmerdam
Comment:	<p>My eyes are wide open. When our living rooms became our classrooms, the performance of our teachers was on full display. The disparity between teachers--within the same schools and even across the same grade level--was appalling and unacceptable.</p> <p>Nobody could have been prepared for the closure of schools in April. But we had our trial run in spring, and a summer to make preparations, and come September I expect that we will hit the ground running with a robust system to keep our children learning. I realize it is a tall order, but we have no choice but to succeed.</p> <p>Parents are fed up. There is no equity without accountability. Now is our time to act and put children first. I hope that the leaders of the SCTA and the District are listening, because we will not tolerate mediocrity anymore.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Date/time Stamp: 7/16/2020 10:23:17 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
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Name:	Tammy McCarley
Comment:	<p>Dear Board of SCUSD ~</p> <p>On June 24th, East Sac Little League (ESLL) submitted a Return to Play safety plan to the district for review and approval for use of the three baseball/softball diamonds located behind Phoebe Hearst Elementary for Youth Sports Conditioning programs of 10 individuals or less. The permit for use of these fields by ESLL was active at the time of the shutdown in early March. A request for permit was also submitted in early March for the fall months.</p> <p>The ESLL Return to Play plan was reviewed and approved by Dr. Peter Beilenson, Director of Public Health for Sacramento County, on June 24th and confirmed again by phone on July 2nd, 2020.</p> <p>The youth of our community are suffering from a complete lack of physical and psychological stimulation during this time. With the recent cancellation of in-school instruction for the fall, the need is further amplified.</p> <p>East Sac Little League, acting as a completely separate non-profit entity from the Sacramento City Unified School District, seeks to offer a safe, outdoor, distanced opportunity for our youth to exercise their bodies and minds. We have built and installed hand washing and sanitizer stations, and constructed distancing areas and entrance and exit protocols at the fields per the guidelines implemented by Sacramento County. We are very prepared and cognizant of the safety measures necessary to implement these programs, and have qualified adults ready to operate this program.</p> <p>At this time, we are requesting permission to utilize the outdoor ball fields at Phoebe Hearst Elementary as soon as possible, under our permit, to offer youth sports conditioning to the children of our community. We feel this program is essential for the well-being of our children, and will be of immense benefit. The league has worked tirelessly this spring to discuss and review safety with our government officials and Little League International in the development and approval of our plan.</p>

We respectfully request the approval of SCUSD to regain access via the M Street entrance to the field complex at Phoebe Hearst specifically, and only, for use by ESLL for Youth Sports conditioning.

We sincerely hope you will approve our request and thank you in advance for your consideration.

In health ~

Tammy McCarley

President, East Sac Little League

Speaking as: President, East Sacramento Little League

Date/time Stamp: 7/16/2020 11:09:28 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
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Name:	Rich Vasquez
Comment:	<p>Good evening President Ryan, Superintendent Aguilar and members of the board. Thank you SCUSD for your efforts to get our schools to Return to Together. I was not hopeful as we do not understand Covid completely but did not want to accept the reality that we will be returning to distance learning because distance learning SUCKED and no more gyms, fields, auditoriums, events, meetings means no more safe haven. I must now do so. I understand it is the right decision. Thank you for letting it be known that families do look at school sites as safe havens. I know my family does. It sure has been a place of refuge and security for my children and I over the years, most importantly good leadership needs to be in place. I don't need a roof over our heads or free dinner(just lunch) but what I do need is the access to educational influences, the positive relationships created, the after school opportunities to learn and grow, get support and support others, get a wide variety of experiences that as a single parent being in poverty and uneducated, I could never give them on the home front. I have seen from others that education can play a big role in the quality of life a person leads, no education here, I desperately want better for mine, where would I get educational influences? At the school site. If you are educated, have all the resources, two parents, I know all this doesn't matter but for us it does. Speaking of safe havens I would like it to be known that West Campus, your segregation of all the most high achieving kids of the district selective school site, has not been a safe haven for us since the departure of Principal Rodriguez. He knew what he was doing. He could say hello. He could interact with his students, parents. I do not believe West is a place for a student that is "the first person in their family that has the potential to go to college." There is to many kids on campus that have had everything as far as resources growing up. To many admin kids, superintendents kid went there, teachers kids, many kids that we know had resources growing up. My kids had no sports, no music, no arts, no after school programs, no library, generational poverty/single parenting/uneducated, we had nothing in elementary. We can not compare to families that had resourceful upbringings. How many opportunities did my child get attending West Campus? I believe she could have attended her neighborhood high school Hiram Johnson thrived and got into hp/ap classes and ended up more prepared for college. She didn't get a whiff of anything like that at West. She will be at community, um that is where many Johnson kids end up. 60% are socioeconomically disadvantaged at West but where are they? Do they get opportunities? How many kids attend West that are from local area elementary schools? How many from Tahoe, Mark Twain, NJB, Nicolaus? Why is it in the middle of all these schools then? What about Pheobe, Lubin, Crocker? Quit the segregation and splitting up families, well that is what happened to us and a few other families that live in the neighborhood. Trying to get two kids into a selective school site with no resources from the neighborhood elementary school. Not any easy task but I do see many others have more than one student at West. How did they do it? What did I do wrong? Why couldn't my</p>

kids attend the same high school? I know this is the least of your worries at the time but I need to SPEAK MY TRUTH in hopes that the next single father living generational poverty, being uneducated , wanting so bad better for his girls to not be treated in a way that a school site does not feel like a safe haven. It is about leadership and mcweakin has not impressed and I am sure he could careless. I got more experiences to come from West and they are not positve. If your mission is about equity then SCUSD should not have one selective school site. Let me see you get more socio economically disadvantaged sites to thrive, that is when we know people are earning their money. We have seen the survey results, if SCUSD struggles to get results for the most needed help students in in person instruction, What can I expect this time around for distance learning? Everyone has had their trial run, let's get some coherence and consistency. Give our kids an education. Don't go back to what was previous. Service all kids in the same manner. Can we get better already? For many this is your career, you will still be with SCUSD years down the road but this is my kids life, we only got one chance, and that chance is almost up. GET BETTER. SHOW US SOMETHING.

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Date/time Stamp: 7/16/2020 11:32:33 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
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Name:	Maria Rodriguez
Comment:	President Ryan, Superintendent Aguilar, and Members of the School Board, thank you for your work and dedication to the students of Sacramento.

Speaking as: Community Member

Date/time Stamp: 7/16/2020 11:39:58 AM