

Comments from David Fisher, President of the Sacramento City Teachers Association to the Sacramento City Unified School District, February 18, 2021.

Agenda Item 8.0 Public Comment, "Report of Unions"

By the collective bargaining agreement, SCTA has up to 15 minutes for this report.

Good evening. I'm David Fisher, president of the Sacramento City Teachers Association.

Reports regarding the California State Budget continue to get better and better.

In January, with revenues to the state between 13 and 20 billion dollars higher than expected, Governor Newsom announced the 2021-22 California budget that included the highest spending for K-12 education in California.

Since then, the news has only gotten better. More recent estimates are that state revenues will be \$10 billion more than the projections in January.

The new revenues coming into SCUSD from both the federal and state government enables us to have a discussion about increasing resources to students, not cutting them.

SCUSD has already received \$59 million from the federal government as a result of the first CARES Act, and will receive another \$69 million shortly. That's \$128 million. This does not include the \$1.9 trillion package being finalized by the new Biden Administration and Congress that will provide tens of millions more for SCUSD.

In addition, Governor Newsom's state budget includes an additional \$100 million in revenue for Sac City, a number expected to go up significantly when the state budget is officially passed. In fact, the governor and the legislature along with CTA are negotiating now over an immediate funding package for K-12 schools.

Often overlooked, the California budget is so robust that the State Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) recently noted that the Governor's Budget will exceed the 3% threshold in the Proposition 98 reserve fund for state K-12 financing in 2021-22. As a result, school district reserve funds will be automatically capped at 10% in 2022-23. Sac City's reserve fund is currently \$93 million, or 17%, which means SCUSD would be required to spend down approximately \$28 million in its reserve fund, in addition to the more than \$225 million in new revenue from the state and federal government.

To put things into perspective, according to the Legislative Analysts Office, there are 1037 school districts in California. But only 130 school districts currently have reserve funds that exceed 10%. SCUSD is one of those 130 districts.

Again, SCUSD should be discussing how to improve services to students, not cutting them.

The need to improve services to students is especially critical in light of the recent report on SCUSD released by the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence. We don't understand why the Superintendent hasn't organized a school board workshop on its findings, but we would encourage the board to do so.

The California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) systemic instructional review (SIR) regarding SCUSD and recently released provides several insights regarding "Equity, Access and Social Justice" as a kind of mission statement and its lack of substance in operation.

For example, the CCEE report notes that: "While there is a theory of action, strategic plan, and vision around equity access and social justice, there is not yet a road map or comprehensive strategy for schools to engage in this work beyond the redesign of the SPSA and the beginning of MTSS implementation."

We concur with CCEE, Superintendent Aguilar has not provided a road map or comprehensive strategy.

We would go further and say that we are unaware of a theory of action, strategic plan or even a "vision," beyond the often-repeated slogan.

The CCEE report states further "While there is an understanding that the superintendent's overall vision and mission is to address existing inequities in SCUSD utilizing continuous improvement, there remains a need for the district to articulate the instructional vision, strategies, priorities and outcomes that will be taken to accomplish this." More than three years into his tenure, Superintendent Aguilar has yet to articulate the District's "instructional vision, strategies, priorities and outcomes that will be taken to accomplish this."

The CCEE report notes that the District's model of "equitable" inclusive practices "is not evident." We should be discussing how to vastly improve Special Education by providing additional resources that would allow staff to move forward on special ed assessments virtually, including the availability of test kits and other easily accessible supplies.

With regard to special education, many of the CCEE conclusions are brutally honest: "There continues to be a lack of inclusive educational environments and quality instruction and support for students with disabilities."

And: "The special education department's organization is not staffed or structured for maximum effectiveness. This continues to be a significant area of need."

The report is equally critical of the District's shortcomings with regard to English language learners: "There is a perceived lack of support from district staff regarding English learners (e.g. currently no full-time director for the Multi-lingual department). And yet tonight you will be asked to lay off several bi-lingual aides.

The CCEE report notes that Priority Schools model "is incongruent with the vision and mission of the district regarding access, equity and social justice." And yet more than three years into Superintendent Aguilar's tenure, Priority Schools continue to be funded by cutting resources from

other title 1 schools, while critical services like Child Development are deprived of the limited District funding that will enable the programs to survive.

Our students deserve better.

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

February 18, 2021 Public Comments

Name:	Regina Cresci
Comment:	<p>As a teacher and advocate for early childhood development, I would like this board to reconsider any cuts to their early childhood education programs. Research has shown that for every dollar spent on programs to preschool reduces the dollars spent on the prison system threefold. (Perry preschool project - 25 year longitudinal study). While it is expensive to operate preschool, it is an expense that is well-worth the positive outcomes. Many students in the SCUSD are disadvantaged. These students are behind long before they begin school. Preschool is one way to help narrow this gap. Federal government dollars assist our district to assist young disadvantaged youth by enriching their formative years and offering an them edge toward success in school. It is my hope and belief that this district would cut its administrative costs and frivolous law suit fees before furthering devastating the most vulnerable preschool-aged students and their families. Every educator knows that a cut to preschool is a cut toward success in school to our most vulnerable population! Cutting in the direction of early childhood education would put this district back in the wrong direction.</p>

Speaking as: Teacher

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 2/15/2021 6:08:32 PM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

February 18, 2021 Public Comments

Name:	Eric Richards
Comment:	The community sees you are planning on laying off dedicated school employees. The community also sees that this is the same old song and dance we go through every school year. The community is tired of the constant stress this places on the employees in question. Get your act together- we all know you will be begging them to come back when thousands of students end up starting next school year with substitute teachers. The community thinks this is a shame. The community also thinks this is a sham. Perhaps cutting perks like travel expenses and such for well-heeled superintendent types would be a better source of savings. The community is tired of the incompetence. The community deserves real leadership, not contrarian naysayers.

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 2/16/2021 5:06:55 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

February 18, 2021 Public Comments

Name:	My-Lien Olsson
Comment:	<p>Dear board members and superintendent,</p> <p>For the third year in a row, I am urging you not to cut the Parent Participation Preschool program. Last year, after hours of meetings and discussions, it was agreed that tuition for this program would be raised to make it self-sustaining. After all that, it is extremely disappointing to find out that this program may be on the chopping block once again. Early childhood education is vital for kindergarten readiness, and the Parent Participation Preschool program provides preschool access to middle income families who do not qualify for subsidized programs and cannot afford private preschools. This program also benefits school age children. Our schools are always in need of parent involvement. The parent participation aspect of this program gives parents familiarity with classroom settings, and provides the schools with parents of incoming students who are more likely to volunteer and be involved in their children's education. For preschool parents with older children, such as myself, this program can also free up time to volunteer in those older siblings' classes.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 2/17/2021 5:29:57 PM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

February 18, 2021 Public Comments

Name:	Jonny Rogado
Comment:	<p>Thank you for taking the time to read my comment. Although I think it's very important to work on the long term goal of kids returning to on campus learning, it appears that other parents have that covered. Instead I'd like to highlight something that can be done now that can greatly impact our students and community. Let's open the school fields to the public. Currently our school, Sutterville, is administratively closed to the public. To my knowledge other schools are too because it's the Districts risk averse approach to school site liability. It makes sense that this policy be put in place at the start of the pandemic, but it's 11 months since our school closed. It's time that we revise this policy now.</p> <p>As a Sutterville PTA board member I interact with the parent community as frequently as I can. The goal is to check in on families and get a pulse on their school related needs where I can incorporate their feedback into our PTA decisions for positive impact to the students and the community. A common type of response is concern for the loss of community and social interaction. It's affecting both the students and the families. After much thought on trying to solve this problem within our school's and PTA control, we can only do so much and have reached a limit.</p> <p>Please consider changing the school closure policy immediately to at least open fields up for public use. This will allow rule-following families to have a local, meaningful communal space with high probability that they'll interact with more of our school community while social distancing, which may immediately address mental health isolation issues and move us in the right direction. The school is a beacon for community. Take a step now to repair our Sutterville community, and possible many others by making this a district wide change.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Jonny Rogado, Sutterville PTA Board Member</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 2/18/2021 6:42:40 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

February 18, 2021 Public Comments

Name:	Alina Cervantes
Comment:	<p>This comment is directed to the leaders of SCTA. Stop dismissing the expertise of national and international scientists and health experts. John Borsos, David Fisher and Nikki Milevsky- you are not public health experts and your litmus tests are not based in science. It is embarrassing that an organization that represents teachers regularly presents their own set of “facts” at these school board meetings that are no where near facts. Your last presentation was not even in the neighborhood of a fact. I truly hope your presentation tonight is focused on a reopening plan and not teacher layoff notices. You know that layoff notices are required by California Ed Code and the district has a legal obligation to issue them by March 15. So please surprise us and avoid playing your games tonight. We don’t have time for it!</p> <p>You were already running this district in to state receivership with your refusal to acknowledge our structural budget deficit. Then, amidst a global pandemic you refused to even agree to basic distance learning standards for all children. You continue to treat children with disabilities like second class citizens. You should be sued by the families of this district but because you are not responsible for providing education we are only able to sue the district that is hamstrung by your actions.</p> <p>We know from good data that all we need to safely reopen schools are mask mandates, reasonable distancing, minor and affordable upgrades to existing HVAC systems, and teachers. Plenty of Sacramento schools have already been doing this and SCUSD children do not deserve to be left behind.</p> <p>If you are a parent listening tonight, start writing and calling every media outlet. Write to all of your representatives, and ask them to put on the pressure. Tell them they will lose your votes if they don’t help fix this mess. It’s going to take you getting publicly loud. We all agree we want to keep teachers and children safe, and other schools in Sacramento have been proving there is a way to do that. After all they have been through, our children deserve a concrete plan and a signed agreement for a safe return.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 2/18/2021 8:11:13 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

February 18, 2021 Public Comments

Name:	Alison Alexander
Comment:	<p>Thank you to the board and Sup. Aguilar for listening. It is beyond time that we, as a community, put our foot down, and demand that preschool and early childhood development is essential. Our district should be doing whatever is necessary to save preschool and child development; in fact we should be increasing and devoting more resources to these programs. My son has been attending Edward Kelly preschool over zoom. Although Distance Learning can never replace the in person preschool experience, Mrs. Chapman has created a stellar, engaging, and valuable preschool experience. Last year, after facing elimination, the program raised tuition and created a system that paid for itself. Over the summer, the program was fully enrolled for Fall 2021, and even had a waiting list. As fall approached, and it became clear that preschool would still be on Zoom, enrollment plummeted. This is not the fault of the program. This is a direct result of a global pandemic and the detriments of distancing learning. I implore you to use Covid relief funds to supplement this program during this challenging time. Once we are back in person I have no doubt there will be more than enough demand for exceptional, affordable preschool, and the self sustaining model of parent participation preschool can continue. Thank you.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 2/18/2021 8:49:10 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

February 18, 2021 Public Comments

Name:	Lori Merritt
Comment:	<p>It amazes me and breaks my heart that once again I am speaking to the board about saving parent participation preschool!</p> <p>My now high school 9th grader and middle school 7 th graders are graduates of the program, as am I. One of the great things about this program is that adults learn as much, if not more, than the preschoolers!</p> <p>This was the only preschool my family could afford.</p> <p>Even though the program is now self sufficient it's again threatened!</p> <p>Why? Why does Sac City take programs that help kids, families, and the community and threaten to gut them?</p> <p>If you're new to the board, let me help you visualize what veteran board members what a prepandemic meeting would look like when this beloved program was on the chopping block-imagining the board room full of preschoolers holding up signs and playing on the floor, people coming up the podium to address the board wearing babies-</p> <p>Please save this program! I can't imagine a reason why the district would want to kill such an amazing program!</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Email

Tel:

Date/time Stamp: 2/18/2021 11:57:41 AM

From: Lisa Wunsch <
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:49 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Board of Education meeting comment

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Hello,

I am writing this email because I am a parent of a child who attends an elementary school within SCUSD. I feel it is important to convey my thoughts and feelings on the reopening plans since parents and caregivers should be viewed as major players regarding this issue.

I believe SCUSD should not take the route of the exceptional case as to not reopen like our surrounding districts. I understand there's a difference in the size of our district and our surrounding districts, however I feel if we look to these districts and districts around the country and see the data of transmission cases of Covid within schools there will be strong support that SCUSD can re-open safely.

It is crucial that our children get back into the classroom for their psychological and emotional well-being. My child is lucky in that he has a strong supportive family, but my heart breaks for those children who do not, and are forced to stay home when they should be able to go back to school, which is their safe place.

It is imperative that districts and unions look at the data. No one should make decisions in a bubble. We need to think of all of the players in this situation and work together.

We need our children back in school.

Thank you
Lisa Wunsch

From: Marie <
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:53 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Fwd: Proposed Budget Cuts

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Marie <
Date: February 1, 2021 at 9:19:31 AM PST
To:
Subject: Proposed Budget Cuts

The truth of the matter is that this supposedly great country has been dummying down its populace since the 1960s. Anyone remotely related to the educational system in this country and this supposedly great state should know this and if they don't they either are not well informed, don't want to know, or worse choose not to know. Tragically, the Board of Education and Sacramento City Unified School District Board and those who rule over its proposals and decisions have the choice to do the right thing and support the best educational interests of its students, but intentionally choose to destroy it by syphoning funds to support their own best interests. In your positions, you should be educated enough to know better. As stewards and knowing that you have consciously chosen to persist in defunding the education of children is not only appalling but disgraceful and you should be ashamed if you have a conscience. If you are successful at accomplishing your goals and proposals to close schools and remove programs that benefit and serve the best interests and education of all its students, it would be evident that you d

February 17, 2021

To: Superintendent Aguilar and Member Pritchett, Member Murawski, Member Woo, Member Garcia, Member Garcia, Member Villa, Member Rhodes, and Member Phillips,

My name is Jan Arai-Phillips. I am a recently retired 3rd grade teacher having taught in SCUSD for 46 years.

I am writing about a matter of grave concern to many. My understanding is that the administration at John F. Kennedy High School is planning on closing the auto shop class because there are no designated funds. Apparently, this is due to an accounting "error." If a certain part of the school budget can be reformulated, there would be money to underwrite this program. (It was formerly under the auspices of the ROP program.)

Looking into this matter is SO, SO important because it directly impacts the educational lives of a lot of students and could possibly impact their lives post high school. Keeping this program going could make a difference between finding school a positive, relevant experience or a burdensome obligation, (if they choose to attend at all).

Everyone needs to feel successful at something. If auto shop helps them feel successful, we should do EVERYTHING we possibly can to keep this program afloat.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help. My cell is: (916) 438-1111 and my email is: janarai@scusd.net

Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Jan Arai-Phillips

From: Robert Whitehead
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2021 8:57 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment

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Dear School Board,

The Superintendent's priorities are all incorrect.

Cut his salary by 50% and bring back ALL the teachers in all areas.

He found money to hire a lawyer or two but not fund the teachers. That is all wrong.

I am a retired teacher from the SCUSD and a voter in the SCUSD.

Sincerely,

Robert Whitehead

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From: Rebecca Gross
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:59 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Parent Participation Preschool

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Please reconsider cancelling this amazing program. Forgot about the time cut off

Rebecca Gross

Sent from my iPhone

From: Red Brown ·
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:14 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment

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Our children need preschool for growth & learning. We teach them ABC's 123's, how to write the first & last name. They learn to share, to serve their own food. We teach them to be polite & how to treat their friends. Preschool is very important for our little ones. Before they go to kindergarten they know how to write they know site words how to sit during learning & story time. They learn how to calm themselves when they are having a bad day. We love teaching them & learning from them. Thank you.

From: chakhoyan.sarah <[redacted]>
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:09 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Abraham Lincoln Elementary School

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.

Good Morning Sacramento Unified School District,

My name is Sarah and I currently have both of my boys attending Preschool via Zoom at Abraham Lincoln Elementary School.

I just heard that there might possibly be more cuts in the Child Development Department. That truly makes me very upset not only for my boys but for the staff.

I don't know if you realize the damage that would be caused by making such cuts. Not only for the students/families but for the teachers.

My older son is 5 years old, this is his second year in preschool. The first day he attended school he was almost not talking at all. I was very concerned with his speech delays but within a few weeks of him starting school I began to see changes in him. Not only in his speech but also behavior and social skills. If it wasn't for preschool he wouldn't be where he is today. And that's why this year with distance learning things have been much more difficult because children aren't able to socialize and learn together.

My younger son is doing his first year or preschool and it has been the most difficult thing I've ever had to do. He does not understand what school is yet because he has never attended in person. Yet I have to try and get him to pay attention and focus over the computer. He is lacking a lot of knowledge, behavior and social skills that my older son gained while being at school in person because kids learn a lot from one another. I am trying my best at home but children and everyone need in person class to learn and grow. At this point I'm just furious as to why the schools are not opening. Why are schools in nearby cities only miles away open yet we can not be open? My friends son is the same age as my older boy and live in Folsom and he has been in a public school since November. He has learned so much because he has been attending in person preschool. Every school should be open.

Although the schools are closed i must say I am truly grateful though for the amazing teachers my boys have had these past two years. Ms Kin and Mrs Jennyfer. During the year my older was in school in person they were amazing with him and very patient as he was a bit difficult to communicate with. They always let me know every single day how he was doing and the new things he was learning. I was always so thrilled to bring my boy to school as was he. He would wake up every day and grab his backpack and wait by the door to go to school. This year with distance learning had been very challenging for me because my boys do not care or want to pay attention on zoom. But I'm not upset with them for not wanting to pay attention. They are in preschool how can you expect them to sit down and pay attention to class over a computer. Fortunately though the teachers have been so patient and kind with me and my boys. They try to adjust the class in ways that would make the boys more interested in paying attention. By doing things like playing songs they like and doing activity that they like to try to get them interested. I never expected them to do things and go out of their way and adjust the class

for each child's needs but that's exactly what they do every single time because they realize it is difficult and want to help.

It's during the difficult times in life when you truly see the people who care for you. And Ms Kin and Mrs Jennyfer have been have done their best and went above and beyond to do everything they can to help teach my boys. It had truly been a blessing for me and a weight lifted off my shoulders knowing I have people who care about the boys and want to help them learn and grow as much as possible.

Ms Jennyfer is absolutely amazing she drops off so many fun activities for the boys that I can work on with them because she knows the boys love cutting painting and doing activities. She always checks in to see how we are doing and see how the activities/homework are going. She dropped off Christmas presents and a lovely card from her and Ms Kin.

If teachers did not care they would not go out of their way to do so much. They could easily occasionally drop off a little bit of homework and leave it at that. But my boys teachers go out of their way to make class interesting for my boys and all the students and make homework assignments things that they would be interested in. I could probably go on and on about how great they are.

The reason I wrote this is because you need to know how amazing Mrs Jennyfer and Ms Kin are. As well as knowing the importance of opening up the schools. These children need to be in classrooms with students learning, socializing, playing together just like they did in the past. Not with masks and staying far away from each other.

(I apologize for all the grammar and spelling errors)

Best Regards,

Sarah

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S9+, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone

From: Kaitlyn Dawidczik
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 12:01 PM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Save Parent Participation Preschool

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.

Dear Board Members,

My name is Kaitlyn Dawidczik, and I am former of Parent Participation preschool at O.W. Erlewine from 1996-1998. I was actually in Ms. Anita's first class at Erlewine and though it has been many years since I was in preschool, I can tell you first hand how impactful that program was to me and my parents. It taught both me and my parents so much and has meant so much to me even after all these years.

Since then, we had referred so many families to SCUSD Parent Participation Preschool because we know the importance that it has on a child and parents. I can tell you, every single one of those families who we referred to the Preschool program, only say fantastic things about the program, and continued sending all of their kids to that preschool. I was even lucky enough to go back to Ms. Anita's classroom in 2014 as a participant for a little girl that I used to Nanny. It was not only fun to revisit preschool once again with the amazing Ms. Anita, but also being able to experience it from an adults perspective. Though I am not a parent, I learned a lot about children and parenting and will someday take what I learned when I do become a parent.

It greatly saddens me, that, what seems to be almost every year now, SCUSD threatens to eliminate this program. When in fact, it has been proven to be an extremely beloved/important program for children and parents. It's also, some people's only option for affordable preschool in the area. How many more emails, letters, phone calls, will it take to keep this program alive and well for years to come, not just year after year having it up for discussion?

I really do hope you take into consideration how beloved this program is and listen to the people who are willing and wanting to save it. I have faith you will do the right thing and keep the program alive, but not just do it for this year, do it for all future years to come so we don't have to keep fighting the same fight. We love this program and we know it works.

Best Regards,

Kaitlyn Dawidczik

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Kaitlyn Dawidczik

From: Amy Sanchez
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:54 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Parent Participation Preschool

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Good Day SCUSD BOE,

My name is Amy Sanchez. I am a mother of three, and a Parent Participation Preschool alumna. I am writing today to urge you to keep the program funded and running.

As a preschool teacher myself, I can attest to the fact that this program clearly embodies the goals of any early education program. Children are provided ample opportunities to develop physical, linguistic, literacy, cognitive, mathematical, and the ever-important, social-emotional skills necessary to achieve academic success in Kindergarten, higher education, and interpersonal relationships. It teaches them to be the best person they can be, both in school and in the community.

But it doesn't stop there.

Through this program, parents develop the skills needed to become advocates for education, advocates for their children, and advocates for their community. Much like the BOE seeks to accomplish. The parents, teachers and students of the SCUSD Parent Participation Preschool are your allies. Hear their voices and pleas to keep the program running. It matters to the population you serve.

Today, as you look at budgets and funding and you seek to determine the importance of this program you will see charts, and paperwork with dollar signs, numbers and costs. Replace every one of those dollar signs, every number and every cost with the face of a student, a parent, a teacher who has benefited from this program. It will be then that you see the true value of this program. And it will be then that you will recognize, in your heart, what the right and just course of action is.

Keep the program running. Your early learning allies need your representation and your vote.

Kindly,
Amy Sanchez

From: Izara Sanchez _ Student - OberlinMS ·
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:11 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: parent participation preschool

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Hello,

I am a 13-year-old who has moved to North Carolina from California. My mom recently told me that the preschool programs are at risk of being removed. The reason I have an interest in this is because I was one of the people who went to a preschool program like those, and it changed the way I function in my everyday life.

The first thing that helped me and the other kids in my preschool class were the parents that came in. About every day, a parent of one of the kids in class would come in and bring in an activity. It makes a lot of sense why the program did that. I believe it was because at that age kids are dependent on their parents. So, if their parent/guardian came in and did an activity, I think that there will be a higher possibility of the kid listening and paying attention to their parents than to a teacher. The kid feels safer because the parent is their caretaker. I feel as if no matter what, a teacher will feel like a stranger compared to the kids' teachers. It's good for the kids to be present at school, but their parents being there as well is a huge impact. It's like a combination of school and home life.

The next thing that helped me was the way that the teachers talked through things with their students. For example, I accidentally hit a kid with a toy because I was waving my arms around. I felt like it was my fault and that I was a bad kid. When my teacher came up to me and the other student, she asked what had happened. The other student told her that I hit her with a toy. My teacher took the other student aside to a parent volunteer, then came up to me and said something like, "Was it an accident?" and "How do you feel?" These kinds of questions let the student tell their story and their point of view. And my teacher told me that accidents happen, but it's also good to learn from them.

The last thing is the fact that the preschool I went to had a stuffed animal that someone got to take home every Friday and keep it for the weekend. Why this was important is because the kids learned two things from this. The first thing is that the kids learned how to write better. The stuffed animal came with a journal that the kids had to write in about what they did with the stuffed animal over the weekend. Later, that would help them with writing and drawing neatness. The second thing was how to deal with disappointment. When I wasn't chosen to take home the stuffed animal, I always cried. Even though my teacher tried to help, the change did not happen immediately. But as time went on, I started to stop crying. Without that, I would feel as if I'm being more criticized than I really am.

Overall, the preschool program has helped me build up important life skills and a base education. If the kids didn't have that kind of base education, they would have a very hard time with a lot of things later in life. Maybe try to reconsider removing the program.

Respectfully,
Izara Sanchez

From: Naomi Vioria <
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:20 AM
To:
Subject: Why the Parent Participation Preschool?

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Good morning,

I am a Sacramento resident, wife and mother. Last year as a 1st time parent in the SCUSD I was excited to start this educational journey with my first born. I quickly found out how unorganized the SCUSD was within a few months in the district. I found that finding a program with the same small town feel -everyone knows everyone- is really hard to find. After months of looking into state programs and private programs I started to become very discouraged. The classes were overcrowded. Teachers seemed irritated, and drained. Students looked more like farm animals stuffed into rooms with little or no interaction/no direction.

I knew there must be a small program here in Sacramento. I knew there must be a morning time program. I had the opportunity to work at a program called Miss Betsy's, but she retired out. The church decided to make a profit off of their community by raising their prices, by becoming a religious day care drop off center... instead of keeping a local program for the neighborhood. I knew a parent participation class was in West Sac, but why not in Sacramento? I called Child Action and they were able to help me find Mrs Tamara with Tahoe. That is when everything changed for my daughter. This program is more than just that -a program. I entered this program with an open heart knowing that I would be giving my daughter the best hometown local school where she would not get lost in the system. The best part of the program is the tool bag - decades of education and knowledge - that would be offered to parents. This was a community that supplied children with a great educational program and supplied parents with an outlet of information towards how to benefit your family and children at home. It was wonderful... until February of 2020.

February 2020: Parents found out with very little notice that the parent participation program would be on the chopping block to be discontinued. By March 2020 parents of all 7 programs gathered together and started having meetings to figure out the budget for the district. We, the parents and teachers, found ourselves fighting for a program with little or no help from our leaders. We presented them with many different approaches to keep our programs up and running from removing ourselves from the Adult Ed program to our own umbrella underneath the SCUSD to even becoming our own identity becoming a non-profit with our own taxID number. With all of the parents and teachers combined we were able to save the program and were given time to generate a running budget for the next years to come.

What is sad...or what I am most upset about is that Jorge Aguilar who has a salary of \$415,000 in February of 2020 accepted a \$35,000 pay raise in March 2020, which he also received a 2nd income/salary from UCMerced, decided to cut programs in the Sacramento School district.

This raise or pay increase could have been used to save a program, used to help teachers who were let go because of covid layoffs, or used to help low income families provide insulin to their loved

ones...this \$35,000.00 could have been used in a time of pandemic for good...NOT for someone who is receiving 2 salaries.

Now with that being said... fast forward a year later.

February 2021.

24 hours ago Parents found out that their Parent Participation Program is on the chopping block again in the SCUSD.

We were given 24 hours till noon today 2/18/2021 to write and express how important our school is for our children.

I feel that each member of the board has been through a school program for their children and they have had great memories of their child's program.

I feel that each one of you should know deep down in your core that Early Education is so very important not only for the child but for the parent.

I feel that the SCUSD is failing our students.

I feel that the SCUSD is failing our families. I feel that we are being dismissed again for the departments failing of their budget not ours. I do not feel this is the parents fault, teachers fault, but SCUSD fault for not being able to budget correctly.

I can tell you all of the benefits of early education for lower income families, but SCUSD will or will not listen. I can tell you all of the wonderful things educators are doing in the time of pandemic, but SCUSD seems not to care because 1 year later nothing has been done. I can tell you how frustrated I am as a SCUSD parent, and my child has not even stepped into a classroom in over a year. I can tell you that if in a month parents find out that you cut another program so staff members can take business classes or that you cut a program so the superintendent can have another pay increase...Parents will be upset.

I am frustrated that the district is thinking so little of such a HUGE program that has touched so many of your city's families. I am frustrated that only 1 year later with less than 24 hours we are asked to plead and fight for our program which we pay for out of pocket to stay. We are constantly struggling and yet we are still fighting for this program.

"Vote to continue the program, as you've done many times, and vow to make it a permanent component of any education in the SCUSD. Do the hard work, find a way to fund now, make a path to fund it always." - Mark Warmack "Mr. Anita"

Please do not allow this program to be terminated. This is a need in our local community and it would be a devastating loss of opportunity to our children.

Thank you,
A Sacramento Resident, Tahoe Parent Participation Parent,
Naomi Vilorio

From: Dolores Garcia <
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 10:31 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Save PPP

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Good Morning SCUSD Board Members,

I am shocked to hear that again this board is thinking of eliminating the Parent Participation Pre school program. It seems like we just fought to win the victory not long ago of keeping this program going and I guess we are back again in a place hoping to see results that benefit our children and families.

We were honored to be part of this program when we first moved to Sacramento a few years ago with Ms. Anita as our daughter's teacher, my teacher. I had no idea that in the short time I was in this classroom with my 4 year old, it was going to have such a great impact on my life forevermore. Even though I had already been an active parent involved in my older children's education, this program taught and reminded me of fundamentals that I so needed to learn and relearn.

I think I was at a point where I was losing some of my enthusiasm for primary education and this really brought my light back. This was the first class my husband and I put a child we had together in(our older children are from different marriages so this was our first act in parenting together). My husband was a former pre k teacher and I used to run a childcare. Our love for children is probably the main thing that brought us together. But because of the brokenness in our divorces, the differing parenting styles of our exes, I think we lost touch of the idea of coparenting. We knew we needed some kind of parenting classes or something that we could both agree on(when your used to parenting on your own for years it's hard to work with a partner). This program was such a blessing in resetting and restoring the parenting issues I was having in my mixed family.

PPP teaches the basics of positive parenting in a real environment with other parents so that we can learn, make mistakes, be supported by others and improve in our parenting methods. We were able to use each other for fresh ideas and solutions. Ms. Anita was especially amazing at gracefully solving any behavioral issue in a positive way. I needed this example in my life at this time, and I am so thankful I had this chance to relearn some needed parenting skills. I have two little ones at home that should have been in preschool this year, not a day goes by that I don't think about this program and what Ms. Anita would do. I really hope the board stops thinking of eliminating this program.

Parents continue to need help with parenting solutions. We all have different ideas of what parenting is supposed to look like. I would guess that a good majority do not know first hand what a healthy parenting model looks like and need daily support to get started. I know for me, I was raised in an alcoholic household. Parenting was authoritative and punitive, there was a lot of yelling and screaming and emotional discipline. I could only imagine the many parents that want to do it another way but may not know how that other way looks. This program offers that example to anyone that participates. It acts as the foundation for parents to make a healthy connection with their children from the first ever so impactful years. Please do not take this needed recourse away.

Thank You!

Dolores Garcia

From: Sarah Ross
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:28 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Board Meeting Public Comment

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.

Dear SCUSD School Board Members,

How are we fighting for this program again? We came to an agreement last spring regarding a self-sustaining model for the Parent Participation Preschool program. Of course, COVID has thrown us for a loop, but there was federal funding given to support the district and alleviate Covid-related issues, wasn't there? What is a better use of this money than saving amazing programs like this one?

I have high hopes that my fourth child will be attending Ms. Tamara's class next fall (my older three have all been in her class!), and that the district will do everything it can to save this program. Ms. Tamara and her peers create a classroom community that is valued not only for what it provides to the children, but to the entire family. Clearly, there are passionate, involved parents that are working hard to save the preschool-- don't you want this passion to carry over when their kids are older? Remember, parents know what is best for their own children, and the public school system is here to support them.

Do the right thing, and keep this program alive!

Sincerely,
Sarah Ross

From: Eri Brooks ·
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 2:24 AM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Comment for parent participation school@Tahoe elementary

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.

I am a mother of two daughters: one is four years old and the other one is 13 months old.

I really appreciate for the parent participation preschool at Tahoe elementary location for the following reasons. First of all, it is affordable and open. We are one income family, so it is hard to pay tuition like other preschool ask. Since Sacramento does not have this type of preschool a lot, it took me a few months to find a preschool program affordable and open.

Secondly, it is well organized program even it is held virtually. This program get my daughter prepared for kindergarten how to behave at school, how to interrupt people, how to listen and question to others, how to hold a pencil, and how to use a scissors and so on. To be honest, I did not realize how important it was for my daughter to enroll in a preschool to learn the above matters until I met the teacher, Miss Tamara. She is a wonderful teacher who can really get children prepared for the next level, kindergarten.

Actually, My daughter had tried another preschool virtually for a month but it was only 30 minute class four times a week. It was a good to interact with other children but I didn't see her a lot of improvement because the class was too short each day but also forced on speaking development not like Miss Tamara provides.

It would be really tough and stressful to watch two daughters, and get my older daughter prepared for kindergarten without this program. Neither my husband nor I have family live close by to support and help us. Therefore, I really hope that this preschool keeps open.

From: Tamara Toby
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:01 PM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Cutting PPPP

Dear Board Members,

My name is Tamara Toby and I'm a teacher in the parent participation preschool program. Some of you may know me I fought very hard to get our program to be self-sustaining. I am disappointed that we are in a position of getting cut once again. The teachers and I worked very hard and came up with a proposal for the school district to have our program self sustain. This fight was done by the teachers and not our upper management leader. As you know our dear Miss Anita who passed away last year carried this program for 35 years to keep it going in our district. Anita knew the benefit of this amazing program along with thousands of parents who have put their children through the parent participation preschool program. If you were to look at statistics of the children that have attended the preschool program you would find that all of them had the foundational skills to start kindergarten and more so. Not only that, parents that worked in the preschool classroom have become board members, teachers, leaders in the district and a board president.

The district always talks about equity and this program provides it. There are no other preschool programs that are affordable in the Sacramento City Unified School District. We have several teachers that have went through our program that would not have been able to afford preschool for their child. Our program prides itself on being inclusive in EVERY aspect.

We have several Sac City teachers that have children that have attended the preschool program that would not have been able to afford private preschool. Our cost of \$185 and \$225 is a quarter of what some of the private preschools are. How can the district eliminate a program that helps our working teachers.

Now I would like to talk about the parent education piece of our program. Imagine being a parent, and I know some of you are parents and having your child enrolled in a preschool program that also provides valuable parent information. Our parent nights provide a variety of education from positive discipline, sibling rivalry, nutrition, Kinder Readiness, speech development, CPR training, sleep issues, UC Davis comes to talk bout death and dying, Self-care, developmental milestones, potty training, how to access special ed. services in the school district, sexuality, brain development, social emotional development and several more topics. Imagine having all of these tools in your "parenting toolbox." You would feel so much more confident as a parent.

Secondly, I would like to talk about foundational skills. We get our preschoolers ready for kindergarten. Our children are masters with scissors, have proper pencil grips, know their letters and their numbers, know all of their shapes, colors and can write their name. Our children also have social emotional skills such as knowing how to share, take turns, regulate their emotions, be empathetic, being able to listen and follow directions. We also work on character development. If you were to talk to any kindergarten teacher they would tell you that preschool is essential before a child starts kindergarten. I've been in kindergarten classrooms where there are children that don't know how to even hold a pencil, draw a circle, sit still and follow directions. There is no denying how important early childhood education is.

I ask you to please not cut our program and deny several parents the opportunity to have their child in early education and provide parents the tools that they need to be better parents.

Warmly,
Tamara Toby

Smiles from my iPhone

From: Nicole Freedman <
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 10:18 PM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment Re. Parent Participation Preschools

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.

I write to express my concern about the potential loss of affordable high quality preschool in Sacramento. Sacramento is plagued with both academic and economic inequality. Affordable preschool lessens these inequalities by nurturing early childhood development and kindergarten readiness.

I am the mother of two children in SCUSD. My youngest currently attends the parent participation preschool at Tahoe Park Elementary. It has come to my attention that the parent participation preschool program is on the verge of being cut by the district. This would be devastating to the many families who rely on the program.

When the pandemic began, my daughter attended Tiny Tots preschool at Coloma, run by the city. After Covid-19 caused the Tiny Tots Program to close, we enrolled our daughter at PPP at Tahoe Elementary. Affordable preschool options are limited, especially for families that do not qualify for either head start or TK. The potential loss of one of the few remaining affordable, high quality preschools in Sacramento will be devastating to families, young children, and SCUSD as a whole.

The pandemic has greatly impacted schooling and cuts are necessary, but the parent participation preschool cannot be another covid sacrifice. Cutting a much needed, high quality, and affordable program for early childhood education will have lasting effects on young children in SCUSD.

Sincerely,

Nicole Freedman

From: Kate Lloyd <
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 9:29 PM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Parent Participation Preschool

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Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to ask that you keep the parent participation preschool program at SCUSD.

I am a parent of a 4 year old and this is our second year in the wonderful preschool program. Last year we were fortunate to have Miss Anita Womack as our teacher. While it was terribly painful that she passed away, I will always remember the love and care she gave to each and every child and parent in her class. The most important part of this program was the support from Miss Anita and the other parents, to help us navigate the development of our children and ourselves as parents. I don't know what I would have done without this program.

This year, we are fortunate to have Tamara Toby as our teacher. I don't know what I would do without her zoom preschool. My daughter greatly benefits from the academic and social experiences in Miss Tamara's class. This is the ONLY social experience she gets with children her own age because of COVID-19.

I am currently a stay at home parent and this is the only preschool program that our family can afford. I know that many families choose this program both because of the excellent education for their children and because it is affordable.

I am an educator with a Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education. This is truly a wonderful opportunity for families to have their first school experience as parents and children. There is a volume of research that shows that exposure to high quality, early childhood education is directly related to success in school.

Please don't take this program away. I hope that you will continue to support parent participation preschool at SCUSD.

Thank you,
Nate Lloyd

Sent from my iPhone

From: howrads <[redacted]@scusd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:33 PM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Parent Participation Preschool at SCUSD

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To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to advocate for the Parent Participation Preschool in SCUSD. My son was enrolled, and he isn't the only one who received an education. Under the teacher's guidance I learned the value of giving children a voice. I learned to value a three-year-old's story as he is processing life in the classroom. I was challenged to build relationships with others not like me. In this age of learning empathy for others, this preschool program is invaluable as it teaches the parents empathy for those of a different background. Not every parent has the same belief system, and in the time in class, we must all work together for the greater good of caring for children, giving them challenges, providing a safe space for discovery, and building friendships. This program is unique in that the mandatory nature of parent participation allows the growth and education for the parents as well as the children. Please keep this program alive. Building empathy for others starts in parent participation preschools.

Sincerely,

Emily Howard
(

From: Jennyfer Childs
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 1:30 PM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Board Letter Child Development 2/18/21

Dear Members of the Board,

How many of you can honestly say that you love your job? Well, I can. I teach preschool at Abraham Lincoln Preschool. Let me tell you a little about our class. We had 16 children last year with a wait list; this year because of distance learning we only have 6. We have a mixture of English speakers and English learners. All of the children in our class live below the national poverty level. All 6 of our children are considered marginalized because of their race or ethnicity. In our past classes you could find foster children, children with incarcerated parents, immigrant families, and families who need our help. I love working with families of such varied backgrounds. We learn about each other as we grow together.

Working with low-income families is important to me because I believe in paying back. My three children were in Head Start at SCUSD many years ago. The teachers over at Isador Cohen encouraged me to get my education. I do not know if you are aware that the Early Childhood Department programs have a parent component. They help parents get schooling, find medical help, with emotional health issues, nutrition counseling, special education assistance for our kids, and even high school diplomas if parents do not have them. Anyway, I got my education and here I am, an Instructional Aide in SCUSD preschool and loving it. I do have my Teacher Permit with CTC; I love where I am so I don't want to go to another school distinct even though I can teach at other schools districts.

The problem is Jorge Aguilar wants to cut preschool. He is working on gradually dismantling the program altogether but chipping away at it little by little. What a disgrace for our parents and our children. I am sure you have heard about the research and how it connects preschool attendance with higher levels of emotional intelligence, lower dropout rates, lower levels of incarceration, and higher high school graduation rates. Children need preschool. So do their families. If it were not for preschool my kids would not be where they are today: proud, successful, high school graduates, attending college, in the workforce, and contributing to society.

Please consider the consequences of your vote tonight. You have the power to close the learning gap. Do not let Jorge Aguilar hurt preschool children any more than he already has.

Jennyfer Childs

Child Development Aide, Abe Lincoln

From: Suzanne Gonzales <suzanne.gonzales@scusd.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 7:00 PM
To: SCUSD Public Comment
Subject: Letter to the board from my 4 year old activist Granddaughter

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.

I was discussing what is happening in the district with my son. His 4 year old granddaughter chimed in and said she wanted to write a letter too. The following is mostly her words and I think her voice needs to be heard.

Serenitys letter to the board

Nana told me that children like me might not be able to go to preschool anymore. I am sad about that. I learn a lot at school. I miss my friends because we can't go because of the sickness, but I get to see my friends every day on Zoom!

I can tell you the things I have learned at preschool. When I am at school I get to make stories, dress up in the playhouse and build stuff in the block area and even write my name in crayon and other stuff and do other activities. I get to sing songs with my friends. I like to sing songs. My teacher has a whole bunch of fun songs we get to sing and it sounds really funny on zoom but last year it was better. We learned how to wash our hands on Zoom last week. Teacher says we get to go back soon and she wants us to be ready by practicing washing our hands at home. I am so excited to go back and see all my friends. I love to learn our big words. We learned words like responsibility, empathy, expectations, and variations. Big words are fun to learn and practice using. Preschool is so fun I love to go every day.

My favorite part of school is circle time when we learn to be kindergarteners and listen to stories and play games like we will play in kindergarten. Another favorite part of preschool for me is writing time. We get to write stories because we are authors too. Teacher tells us to tell our stories because the world needs to hear them. I love my teacher and I know she loves me too.

Please do not take preschool away from kids like me. We love to go and learn how to be big.



Serenitys letter to the board

Members of the Board: Nana told me that children like me might not be able to go to preschool anymore. I am sad...

Members of the Board:

Nana told me that children like me might not be able to go to preschool anymore. I am sad about that. I learn a lot at school. I miss my friends because we can't go because of the sickness but I get to see my friends everyday on Zoom.

I can tell you the things I have learned at preschool. When I am at school I get to hear stories, dress up in the playhouse and build stuff in the block area and even write my name in cream and other stuff and do other activities. I get to sing songs with my friends. I like to sing songs, my teacher has a whole bunch of fun songs we get to sing and it sounds really funny on zoom but last year it was better. We learned how to wash our hands on Zoom last week. Teacher says we get to go back soon and she wants us to be ready by practicing washing our hands at home. I am so excited to go back and see all my friends. I love to learn our big words. We learned words like responsibility, empathy, expectations, and variations. Big words are fun to learn and practice using. Preschool is so fun I love to go every day.

My favorite part of school is circle time when we learn to be kindergarteners and listen to stories and play games like we will play in kindergarten. Another favorite part of preschool for me is writing time. We get to write stories because we are authors too. Teacher tells us to tell our stories because the world needs to hear them. I love my teacher and I know she loves me too.

Please do not take preschool away from kids like me. We love to go and learn how to be big kids.

From,
Serenity

P.S.

Nana wrote these words but I told her what to write and she helped me get it right.

Members of the Board:

Study after study has shown that quality preschool programs, like we have here at Sacramento City Unified School District, are not only beneficial to the low income, high-risk children we serve but also the families we connect with. Rachel Larimore in her 2020 study entitled *Preschool Science Education: A Vision for the Future* states that preschool is the prime time for letting children explore in a structured setting the world of science to an extent they will never get again. Heather Long found in her 2017 study that rich children get to go to school while poor children stay at home with grandparents and the educational gap starts at age 3, unless children are able to attend programs such as Head Start. Programs like we have here at SCUSD. You could learn a lot from a study released in 2001 on one of the nation's most comprehensive urban preschool systems. Published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, the study found that early-intervention programs like Head Start help poor kids stay in school and out of jail. I could go on but, I think you can see where I am headed with this.

In the 2018-2019 the child development program here at SCUSD was gutted. We lost teachers, aides, nurses, social workers, and even managers. All of those do not matter so much as the fact that we lost 595 slots for students. Not just students. Poor students. High risk students. 595 children who could have benefited the most from our services were sent the message that Sac City Unified does not care about them. Why did we lose those students? Because the board was under the false pretense that Child Development would encroach on the general fund to the tune of millions of dollars. Did it? Nope!

This year Superintendent Aguilar intends to cut another \$553,000 from Child Development. I am writing to implore you not to let that happen. Preschool children need a place to feel safe, to learn, to grow, and develop to the fullest of their potential. Ask any kindergarten teacher and they will tell you that they see the difference in a child who has gone to preschool and a child who has not. High-risk students who have gone to preschool exhibit healthy social emotional skills, make friends and keep friendships, show confidence, can resolve conflicts, manage stress and anxiety, make appropriate decisions, resist negative social pressures, learn strengths and weakness and best of all they have an awareness of what others are feeling. Children learn this in preschool here at SCUSD. We prepare them for kindergarten, elementary school, and life beyond that.

What a shame it will be when the children of SCUSD no longer have preschool programs to give them the head start they need to succeed with peers who have the means to go to private-for-profit preschools. They will not be able to compete. We have the ability to close the achievement gap before it starts to widen. It is just not right to cut their programs. Please do not allow Superintendent Aguilar to cut any more student slots from our wonderful program. The kids are depending on us.

Thank you for your time,

Suzanne Gonzales

Suzanne Gonzales

Child Development Teacher