

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 3, 2020 Public Comments

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Comment:	

Speaking as: Community Member

Email

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Date/time Stamp: 9/3/2020 10:26:15 AM



September 3, 2020

Superintendent Jorge Aguilar
Sacramento City Unified School District

Lisa Murawski, SCUSD Board Area 1

Jessie Ryan, President of the Board
Sacramento City Unified School District

Leticia Garcia, SCUSD Board Area 2

Christina Pritchett, SCUSD Board 1st VP, Area 3

Mai Vang, SCUSD Board Area 5

Michael Minnick, SCUSD Board, 2nd VP, Area 4

Darrel Woo, SCUSD Board Area 6

Isa Sheikh, SCUSD Board Student Representative

RE: Item 9.1 Public Hearing: Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan

Dear Superintendent Aguilar and SCUSD Board Members:

Thank you for your efforts in engaging the public and seeking input on the Sacramento City Unified School District's (SCUSD) Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (Plan). Since the Local Control Funding Formula was enacted in 2013, SCUSD has continuously improved in this area of seeking stakeholder input. We are confident of your awareness that you can still improve.

We appreciate that the District's Plan acknowledges the dire and inequitable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, its exacerbation of already existing inequities, compounded by the institutional racism that exists in our school system recently lifted up through the Black Lives Matter movement. We thank the District for acknowledging the need "to deeply examine and understand our own implicit biases and positions of power and privilege, to build our cultural competence, and to integrate into our curriculum the teaching and learning of social justice, anti-racism, and social and emotional learning."

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and even though federal and state policymakers have modified certain legal requirements, such as the expectation of completing a Local Control Accountability Plan, most legal and regulatory requirements remain in place to ensure California students continue to receive their fundamental right to education during this time. For example, the California Constitution, *Williams* sufficiency

requirements, laws relating to English learners and special education students, and federal and state civil rights laws are all in effect during the upcoming academic year. **We attach for public record the letter sent to all school district superintendents in California from Public Advocates and the American Civil Liberties Union of California which explains some of the relevant educational requirements governing California public schools as the school year begins.** See Attachment, Aug. 27, 2020 Guidance to Public School Districts About Legal Requirements During the 2020-21 School Year letter from Public Advocates and the ACLU to all California Public School Superintendents.

Despite the pandemic, equal learning opportunities of similar quality, whether in-person or at a distance, must be accessible to all students. **First, all distance learning, whether through synchronous instruction with teachers working directly with students, through asynchronous learning using technology-based resources or assignments, or through other means, must be “[c]ontent aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.”¹**

Some of these obligations are existing and ongoing and some are new requirements and conditions of receiving COVID-19 impacts funding by the state and federal government in SB 98, an education budget trailer bill. Just this week, the State Legislature passed SB 820, another education budget trailer bill, which clarifies some of these obligations. We highlight some of these changes because they are part of the District’s Plan which are still being discussed.

- **Equal access to live instruction.** New law was just passed that clarifies that Education Code Section 51512 does not prohibit the District from adopting online instruction, including the use of synchronous or asynchronous video, as part of a Distance Learning program. Cal. Educ. Code § 435039(d). There was some question under existing law whether this would be permitted, but the Legislature clarified this is allowed as long as certain guard rails are maintained. We appreciate the Plan’s inclusion of this activity as there will be many students who will be unable to participate in online learning at the same time as the lesson is actually delivered and will need to rely on recorded lessons during the pandemic. **Without access to recorded synchronous instruction, many students will face the loss of their rights to an education. This is an issue of equity and we appreciate that it is part of the District’s Plan as a requirement that will be uniform throughout the district.**
- **Assessment and tracking of learning loss.** COVID-19 funds are specifically provided to school districts to assess and track learning status of each student. This is a crucial prerequisite to addressing the learning loss that English learners, low-income students, foster youth, students with exceptional needs, and students experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience as a result of COVID. School districts Plans must describe **how, with what tools, and at what frequency they will assess student learning status in English language arts, English language development, and math.**² LEAs must create a clear plan for they will use student participation and work completion, or failure to participate and complete work, in the calculation of grades and awarding of credits towards high school completion. Districts should consult with students, families, and educators in developing these plans. **We appreciate that the District specifically outlines this as an expectation that**

¹ Educ. Code § 43503(b)(2); *see also Butt v. California*, 4 Cal. 4th 668, 685 (1992) (a school district violates students’ constitutional rights if it fails to provide education that falls substantially below statewide standards).

² CDE, Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan Instructions (2020-21) at pp. 3-4, *available at* <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lc/documents/lrngcntntyatndncpln-instructions.docx>.

parents/guardians, students and the community should have for distance learning implementation.³ We urge the Board and district to ensure this is uniformly applied.

- **Students with exceptional needs** face many of the greatest challenges during the pandemic, and school districts must continue providing them with services consistent with their Individualized Education Programs, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and ensure equal access to educational programming for students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”). The federal government expressly declined to waive the special education requirements,⁴ and the California Department of Education has made clear that all school districts must “do their best in adhering to IDEA requirements, including federally mandated timelines, to the maximum extent possible” and “are encouraged to consider ways to use distance technology to meet these obligations.”⁵ We know that providing services for students with exceptional needs has been a challenge area for the District. We align ourselves with the comments submitted by our colleagues at the Disability Rights California, Equal Justice Society, National Center for Youth Law and Western Center on Law & Poverty.
- **Regular communication from teachers and schools.** SB 98 reinforces that each school must regularly communicate with parents and guardians regarding a pupil’s academic progress.⁶ We appreciate that the District’s Plan includes this weekly communication to students and parents on learning goals and student progress, including weekly teacher-student parent/guardian communication and report of student progress, as a baseline expectation. Students, parents and families need regular, clear communication from teachers and administrators on learning expectations and student support opportunities. This type of information and communication was severely lacking during the crisis education students received in the Spring. We are pleased that the district has developed a concrete approach for weekly communication with students and parents by teachers, as well as additional schoolwide and districtwide communication strategies, such as frequent texts, emails and robo calls with updates and resources. **We strongly encourage the implementation of a weekly email from teachers that outlines the instructional schedule, learning goals, opportunities for targeted structured support for struggling students and curriculum and assignment timelines.** Providing this information in a consistent and frequent way will help set clear expectations for each partner—the students, parents/family members and educators—to support effectively every student's success.

The overwhelming input of parents, students and stakeholders reflected in the Plan makes it clear that the community wants to take this opportunity of distance learning to improve its learning standards and accountability. We agree with that vision and encourage you to finalize a Plan that will ensure equitable access to high quality education.

³ Expectation 9. Assessments during learning and throughout the school year that evaluate how students are progressing both in the moment and over time to address learning loss before and after the school closure. SCUSD Draft Learning Continuity & Attendance Plan, p 4.

⁴ Carolyn Jones, *Federal special education law must stay intact during school closures, Devos says*, EdSource (Apr. 27, 2020), <https://edsources.org/2020/federal-special-education-law-must-stay-intact-during-school-closures-devos-says/630298>.

⁵ California Department of Education, *COVID-19 School Closures and Services to Students with Disabilities* (Apr. 9, 2020 & Mar. 20, 2020), <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/specialedcovid19guidance.asp>.

⁶ Cal. Educ. Code § 43504(g).

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions about our comments. We look forward to working with SCUSD and other stakeholders to improve the education that SacCity students are receiving.

Sincerely,

Liz Guillen
Director of Legislative & Community Affairs
Public Advocates Inc.

Samantha Tran
Education Policy Director
Children Now

Natalie Wheatfall-Lum
Director of P-16 Policy
The Education Trust--West

Attachment: Aug. 27, 2020 Guidance to Public School Districts About Legal Requirements During the 2020-21 School Year letter from Public Advocates and the ACLU to all California Public School Superintendents.

cc: Rose Ramos, Chief Business Officer
Christine Baeta, Chief Academic Officer
Tara Gallegos, Chief Communications Officer
Vincent Harris, Chief Continuous Improvement and Accountability Officer
Cancy McArn, Chief Human Resources Officer
Cathy Allen, Chief Operations Officer



Aug 27, 2020

Sent via e-mail

Re: Guidance to Public School Districts About Legal Requirements During the 2020-21 School Year

To all California Public School Superintendents,

Five months after causing abrupt school closures, the pandemic has only grown more severe, thrusting California schools into a prolonged crisis that is poised to affect education for the foreseeable future. As schools resume instruction, California students and school staff face immense and unprecedented challenges. The pandemic has disrupted all aspects of daily life: students are struggling to recover lost instruction from the previous year, teachers and families are adapting to completely different education models, and entire school communities are struggling with trauma and other mental health concerns. This pandemic magnifies long-existing inequities; as a result, those who were most vulnerable and most under-resourced before the pandemic are suffering the worst impacts. Black, Indigenous, and other students of color; low-income students; foster youth and unhoused students; English learners; students with exceptional needs; and many other student groups face acute and unique barriers that school leaders have an affirmative obligation to address.

Though federal and state policymakers have modified certain legal requirements, such as the expectation of completing a Local Control Accountability Plan, most legal and regulatory requirements remain in place to ensure California students continue to receive their fundamental right to education during this time. For example, the California Constitution, *Williams* sufficiency requirements, laws relating to English learners and special education students, and federal and state civil rights laws are all in effect during the upcoming academic year. This letter explains some of the relevant educational requirements governing California public schools as the school year begins, including districts' obligations to:

1. Provide high-quality, accessible, and free distance and hybrid learning, including services to English learners and services required by students' Individual Education Plans and Section 504 plans.
2. Provide critical mental health and social emotional resources.
3. Continue to use LCFF supplemental and concentration funds to increase and improve services for high-need students.
4. Implement meaningful community engagement practices when developing Learning Continuity and Attendance Plans.
5. Track student attendance, participation, and progress.

All Local Education Agencies ("LEAs") must implement and document these critical plans in the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plans ("LCPs") they must adopt by September 30.

While this letter describes the legal requirements for the upcoming school year, we also offer links to resources and best practices as an addendum to support school leaders to prioritize equity and provide the best possible education during these challenging times.

I. Distance and hybrid learning must be accessible, high-quality and free of charge

State leadership has made clear that distance or hybrid learning must be of equivalent quality to in-person instruction and be accessible to all students, particularly those who traditionally have been most under-resourced and have the highest needs during the crisis.

A. Equal learning opportunities of similar quality, whether in-person or at a distance, must be accessible to all

First, all distance learning, whether through synchronous instruction with teachers working directly with students, through asynchronous learning using technology-based resources or assignments, or through other means, must be “[c]ontent aligned to grade level standards that is provided at a level of quality and intellectual challenge substantially equivalent to in-person instruction.”¹ **LEAs must describe in the LCP how students will have access to a full curriculum and the instructional resources that will be used to ensure continuity if a transition between in-person learning and distance learning is necessary.**²

Second, if a school is providing instruction through distance learning, it must provide “access for all pupils to connectivity and devices adequate to participate in the educational program and complete assigned work.”³ Under the California Constitution and Education Code, schools must provide all technology and materials required to access instruction free of charge.⁴ Similarly, the *Williams* standards make clear that schools must provide sufficient textbooks or instructional materials—including distance learning technology—to use in class or take home⁵ and that such materials must be standards-aligned in the four core areas of mathematics, science, history-social science, and English/language arts.⁶ Accordingly, if a school provides instruction through an online platform, it must ensure that students have internet access and a device capable of running the requisite software and pay for these services if the family needs it.⁷ **LEAs are required to describe in their LCP how they are ensuring access to devices and connectivity and providing technological support, including their needs assessment process and how they are reaching students and families who struggled to get connected in the spring.**⁸ While the distance learning dialogue has understandably centered on closing the digital divide, schools must also provide free of charge any supplies necessary for learning (such as pencils, paper, art, and other school supplies).

Further, state and federal civil rights laws require school districts to protect certain student groups from discrimination.⁹ In other words, school districts must ensure that low-income students, students of color, LGBTQ students, and other protected groups have access to the same high-quality education as other students, including access to technology and high-quality instruction. **In fact, LEAs are required to describe in their LCPs their efforts to ensure that students and families with unique circumstances have access to devices and connectivity.**¹⁰

B. School districts must address the unique needs of English learners, students with exceptional needs, and other vulnerable students

LEAs are required to describe the additional support that they will provide during distance learning to support English learners, students with exceptional needs, students who are unhoused, and students in foster care and identify the targeted strategies that they will use to accelerate learning progress for these students.¹¹

School districts must continue providing English learners with targeted supports during the pandemic. As you are aware, federal and state law require districts to deliver effective language instruction to English learners and to eliminate barriers to core curricular requirements and equal educational opportunity.¹² Indeed, the Governor and legislature confirmed that these English learner requirements remain in effect and are more important than ever, mandating that distance learning include “[a]cademic and other supports designed to address the needs of pupils who are not performing at grade level, or need support in other areas, such as English learners,” among others.¹³ LEAs must describe these efforts in their LCPs.

Similarly, students with exceptional needs face many of the greatest challenges during the pandemic, and school districts must continue providing them with services consistent with their Individualized Education Programs, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and ensure equal access to educational programming for students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”). The federal government expressly declined to waive the special education requirements,¹⁴ and the California Department of Education has made clear that all school districts must “do their best in adhering to IDEA requirements, including federally mandated timelines, to the maximum extent possible” and “are encouraged to consider ways to use distance technology to meet these obligations.”¹⁵

LEAs should describe their plans to support other student groups as well, as the prompt in the LCP about support for students with unique needs must include, but is not limited to, the groups listed in the template. For example, even before the pandemic, Black students were experiencing educational barriers that have only been magnified by the crisis. We commend those LEAs that are specifically identifying in their LCPs how they plan to address unique challenges experienced by Black students and families during the pandemic. As you implement your plans to resume instruction in the new academic year, we urge you to commit resources specifically to support the unique needs of the students who have been impacted most severely by the pandemic, including Black, Indigenous, and other students of color, low-income students, English learners, and students with exceptional needs.

II. School districts must provide critical mental health and social emotional resources

It comes as no surprise that students and school communities are experiencing myriad mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and trauma arising from the pandemic. For many students, particularly low-income students and others with fewer resources, as well as LGBTQ students who are not out in their lives away from school, school-based mental health services represent the only supports available. **Recognizing the urgent need, the Governor and legislature have mandated that school districts describe in the LCPs how they will monitor**

and support the social and emotional well-being of students and staff during the school year, including professional development and resources to address trauma and other impacts of COVID-19 on the school community.¹⁶

The state has allocated additional funding for these purposes, including a block grant to fund existing community schools and the federal CARES funds, which may be spent on integrated pupil supports, including “the provision of health, counseling, or mental health services,” “programs to address pupil trauma and social-emotional learning,” and “[f]amily and community supports [including] . . . mental health resources to support pupil learning.”¹⁷ Given the magnitude of the need, LEAs should also collaborate across agencies, with their cities, counties and regions to ensure the well-being of students, families, and staff are being addressed during the public health crisis. The CA Partnership for the Future of Learning has prepared this checklist for LEAs to review its mental health and social emotional wellness response.¹⁸ Please see additional resources in the addendum.

III. LCFF spending & stakeholder engagement requirements remain in effect

A. School districts have a continuing obligation to use supplemental and concentration funds to increase or improve services for high needs students

Although there is no LCAP for the 2020-21 school year, districts’ equity obligations under LCFF remain in effect. **Districts must identify the “specific actions and expenditures the school district . . . anticipates taking to support its ability to address the impacts of COVID-19” in its LCP.**¹⁹ Action descriptions must provide sufficient detail for stakeholders to understand what the district is planning to do, including the intended impact, for the district and its stakeholders to track implementation and effectiveness.²⁰ **As with the LCAP, districts must describe in their LCP how they plan to increase or improve services for foster youth, English learners, and low-income students in proportion to the amount of supplemental and concentration funds they received.**²¹ Districts must also demonstrate how services provided districtwide or schoolwide are addressing the needs, conditions, or circumstances of these students and are effective in meeting the needs of these students in particular.²²

B. School districts must meaningfully engage students, families and other stakeholders in decision making and learning

More than ever, student success this year will be predicated on districts’ meaningful and ongoing engagement with stakeholders. To create effective solutions, families must be valued as thought partners and co-educators, particularly as they are called on to team with teachers and other school staff to support students in distance learning. **Engagement should include engaging and supporting families who speak languages other than English to partner in their children’s education and provide input into the LCP.**²³

The LCP is a valuable tool to engage stakeholders and identify actions and services that will most benefit the school community. As such, the legislature and Administration established robust stakeholder engagement requirements modeled after those of the LCAP, including soliciting recommendations and comments from the public about actions and expenditures listed

in the plan and notifying the public of opportunity to provide written comments.²⁴ Notifications should be provided in languages other than English as needed.²⁵ Further, the district's Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and English Learner PAC must have an opportunity to separately review and comment on the plan and the district must respond in writing to their comments.²⁶ The Learning Continuity Plan must be presented at a public hearing and the hearing agenda and plan must be posted at least 72 hours in advance and explain how to locate the Learning Continuity Plan.²⁷ The plan shall be adopted after the public hearing at a separately scheduled meeting by September 30.²⁸ **In addition, LEAs must provide remote participation opportunities at hearings and make efforts to solicit feedback from families and other stakeholders without internet access or who speak languages other than English.**²⁹ This process of soliciting feedback on your LCP should be well under way.

IV. Districts must track student attendance, participation, and progress

A. School districts must support students and families to engage in instruction

When schools across California suddenly closed last spring due to the pandemic, tens of thousands, if not more, Black, Latinx, and low-income students did not receive the support needed to regularly participate in distance learning.³⁰ **This year, LEAs must develop procedures to identify and support students and families who are facing barriers to participation in distance learning and are at risk of learning loss.**³¹ **These procedures and outreach plans should be described in the LCPs.** LEAs should bear in mind that certain student groups are at a higher risk of being disengaged, including youth in foster care, unhoused youth, youth in or transitioning from the juvenile justice system, newcomer students and English learners. These students require targeted support, which should be described in the LCP. Outreach strategies should consider the unique needs and barriers experienced by the student, particularly if they are in a high-risk group, and must include conducting outreach to students and their caregivers in languages other than English.

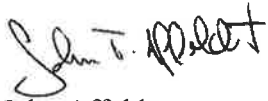
B. School districts must also evaluate and track the progress of each student

Assessing and tracking learning status is a crucial prerequisite to addressing the learning loss that English learners, low-income students, foster youth, students with exceptional needs, and students experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience as a result of COVID. **Therefore, the LCPs require LEAs to describe how, with what tools, and at what frequency they will assess student learning status in English language arts, English language development, and math.**³² LEAs must create a clear plan for they will use student participation and work completion, or failure to participate and complete work, in the calculation of grades and awarding of credits towards high school completion. Districts should consult with students, families, and educators in developing these plans.

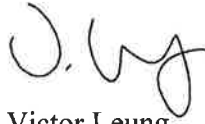
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We all share the same goal—to ensure that our school communities have the supports they need to endure through, and thrive following, the pandemic. Please ensure that you understand and comply with the legal requirements described above and reach out to Victor Leung at vleung@aclusocal.org or John Affeldt at jaffeldt@publicadvocates.org if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to serving as a resource as we recover from the pandemic.

Sincerely,



John Affeldt
Managing Attorney
Public Advocates, Inc.



Victor Leung
Deputy Litigation Director
ACLU Foundation of Southern California

Attachment

Addendum: Best Practices and Resources

The following are best practices we collected from partners, stakeholders, and families to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education this school year. Please continue to consult your communities to ensure that you develop and implement education plans that best support their needs.

Best practices to ensure that remote instruction is high-quality and accessible include:

- Ensuring structures for consistent two-way communication (a feedback loop) with students and families around the distance learning experience, including 1-to-1 outreach to every student and family at the start of the school year to assess their readiness and needs for distance learning.
- Capacity building for caregivers and instructional staff to ensure they have necessary skills to build successful partnerships to support children's learning.
- Loaning tablets, laptops, or Chromebooks to families without requiring them to pay, provide deposits, or sign liability forms.
- Providing families with mobile hot spots with sufficient data to access all learning opportunities.
- Providing synchronous instruction with teachers interacting directly with students in large and small groups through Zoom, Google Classroom, or other comparable digital platforms.
- Providing expanded learning opportunities to students most impacted by COVID and opportunities for small group instruction for all students, not only those with families who can afford private "pods."
- Defining minimum expectations for daily live interaction by grade span, including additional time requirements for English Language development, and specify the format for that interaction, e.g. through an online learning platform, phone calls, etc.
- Providing instruction in all content required under California law, including science, arts, social emotional learning, and comprehensive sexual health education at least once in middle school and once in high school.

Best practices to meet mental health and social emotional needs include:

- Having school counselors, social workers, and psychologists affirmatively reach out to all students to check in on their mental health through the phone and internet platforms.
- Providing systemwide ongoing and embedded professional development for all staff, especially frontline educators, on trauma-informed practices, anti-racist and culturally responsive education, and building social emotional connections so they can support students and their families and provide appropriate referrals.
- Investing in school-based mental health resources including FTE Pupil Personnel Service Credential holders in the areas of School Counseling, School Social Work, and School Psychology.

- Reaching out to LGBTQ students to develop protocols to safeguard student information about sexual orientation and gender identity, especially in communications involving parents and guardians, and to ensure digital platforms reflect students' chosen names and pronouns without requiring legal documentation.
- Ensuring technological resources, including laptops and digital platforms, do not use internet filters that might block access to critical health and support resources like LGBTQ hotlines.
- Leveraging Federal relief funds and state, county and local resources to invest in community schools, health, and other social-emotional supports in collaboration with other agencies and community partners.

See this Mental Health and Social Emotional Checklist tool from the CA Partnership for the Future of Learning for more considerations and resources: <https://www.publicadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/final-pdf.pdf>.

Required practices to meet the equity obligations for supplemental and concentration funds include:

- Identifying in the LCP all actions and expenditures that contribute to increasing or improving services for foster, English learners, and low-income students.
- Providing clear descriptions of each action in sufficient detail for stakeholders to understand *what* the district is planning to do, including at different schools.
 - For example, a generic action for “mental health supports” is insufficient; instead, districts should describe exactly what services they are providing such as virtual counseling, professional development on trauma-informed practices, SEL curriculum, or peer-led student spaces for mutual support, etc.
- Providing sufficient information in action descriptions, including the intended impact, for the district and its stakeholders to track implementation and effectiveness.
- Describing how the needs, conditions, or circumstances of unduplicated pupils are addressed by the action.

Best practices for spending transparency include:

- Identifying the total amount of funds spent on each action and specifying the specific federal and/or state source(s) of funds.
- Clearly identifying when more than one funding source is used to support a single action.
- Providing an appendix table of all actions and spending to make clear the total spending and funding sources accounted for in the LCP.

Best practices for stakeholder engagement include:

- Providing professional development to educators and staff in best practices for student and family engagement to ensure successful school-to-home partnerships.
- Conducting regular wellness checks and family outreach to assess needs, identify supports, and build capacity, especially while students are engaged in distance learning.

- Ensuring that students and caregivers receive training to effectively utilize technology required for instruction, including developing strategies to provide technology support for non-English speaking families or others who experience barriers to access and use.
- Reaching out to families using multiple modes of communication designed to reach even those families without internet and families who speak languages other than English.
- Seeking input through an array of interfaces including online town halls, online and telephone surveys, paper surveys for families who pick up meals, e-mail and telephone hotlines; teleconferences; and social media outreach.

Best practices for tracking participation and reengaging students include:

- Clearly communicating to students, caregivers, and other stakeholders how participation will be monitored and assessed, particularly where independent assignment completion is counted as instruction time.
- Tracking and reporting disengagement rates by student group and, where there is any disproportionality, describe the reengagement strategies that will be used for the unique needs of the identified student groups.
- Providing targeted professional development to ensure staff receive appropriate training on effective reengagement strategies, particularly in implementing strategies for student groups who are disproportionately struggling with or are absent from distance learning.
- Creating an alternative plan for students who lack a conducive learning environment at home, including but not limited to students lacking a device or connectivity. This is particularly important for unhoused and other vulnerable students.

Best practices for evaluating and monitoring student progress include:

- Specifying in the LCP how the district plans to assess learning loss of all students, including the timing and frequency of such assessments, regardless of the performance record or status of the student.
- Clearly articulating how and how often student progress will be measured. Measurement of progress should consider grading practices, credit completion, and credit recovery modifications due to distance learning.
- Providing stakeholders with sufficient information to understand how identified learning loss and/or inadequate progress will trigger interventions and connect students to necessary supports.
- Working collaboratively with stakeholders to identify available services and supports. Consider implementing credit recovery programs, after school programming, and other academic intervention programming.
- Explaining how strategies to address learning loss for particularly vulnerable populations will differ from strategies provided to all students.
- Clarifying in the LCP how the effectiveness of actions to address and prevent further learning loss will be measured irrespective of the instructional model utilized by the district.
- Reporting the assessment and progress of students to inform instruction and provide transparency to the public and policymakers.

Additional resources on many of these best practices are available in a recently released report from the Learning Policy Institute, *Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond* available at <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/restarting-reinventing-school-covid-report>, as well as Public Advocates' webpage at <https://www.publicadvocates.org/covid-k-12-resources/>. Additional resources from the ACLU of California about students' rights, including those during the pandemic, are available at <https://www.myschoolmyrights.com>.

¹ Educ. Code § 43503(b)(2); *see also* *Butt v. California*, 4 Cal. 4th 668, 685 (1992) (a school district violates students' constitutional rights if it fails to provide education that falls substantially below statewide standards).

² CDE, Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan Instructions (2020-21) at pp. 3-4, *available at* <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lc/documents/lrngcntntyatndncpln-instructions.docx>.

³ Educ. Code § 43503(b)(1).

⁴ Section 5 of Article IX of the California Constitution; Educ. Code §§ 49010(b)(3) ("educational activities [must] be provided free of charge to all pupils without regard to their families' ability or willingness to pay fees or request special waivers"), 49011(a) ("A pupil enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity.").

⁵ Educ. Code § 60119(c)(1).

⁶ Educ. Code §§ 60119(a)(1)(A); 1240(c)(2)(B).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *See supra* note 2 at p. 6.

⁹ Gov't Code § 11135; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d; Educ. Code § 220.

¹⁰ *See supra* note 2 at p. 6.

¹¹ *See supra* note 2 at pp. 7-8.

¹² 20 U.S.C. § 1703(f) (districts must take "appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in instructional programs"); *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974) (interpreting Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d, *et seq.* to require school districts to take affirmative steps to address language barriers so that English learners may participate meaningfully in schools' educational programs) *Castenada v. Pickard*, 648 F.2d 989, 1008 (5th Cir. 1981) (citing *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974)) ("schools are not free to ignore the need of limited English speaking children for language assistance to enable them to participate in the instructional program of the district."); *see also* Educ. Code § 440(a) ("A local educational agency shall provide instructional services to limited-English-proficient pupils and immigrant pupils in conformity with Section 6801 and following of Title 20 of the United States Code.").

¹³ Educ. Code § 43503(b)(3).

¹⁴ Carolyn Jones, *Federal special education law must stay intact during school closures, Devos says*, EdSource (Apr. 27, 2020), <https://edsources.org/2020/federal-special-education-law-must-stay-intact-during-school-closures-devos-says/630298>.

¹⁵ California Department of Education, *COVID-19 School Closures and Services to Students with Disabilities* (Apr. 9, 2020 & Mar. 20, 2020), <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/specialeducovid19guidance.asp>.

¹⁶ Educ. Code §§ 43503(b)(3) ("Distance learning shall include . . . [a]cademic and other supports designed to address the needs of . . . pupils requiring mental health supports"); 43509(f)(1)(D)-(E) (districts must show how they will "monitor and support the mental health and social and emotional well-being of pupils and staff during the school year" and "[w]hat professional development will be provided to staff, and what resources will be provided to pupils and staff to address trauma and other impacts of COVID-19 on the school community.").

¹⁷ SB 98 §§ 110(d)(4), (e)(4)(B).

¹⁸ This resource is available at <https://www.publicadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/final-pdf.pdf>.

¹⁹ Educ. Code § 43509(f)(1).

²⁰ See LAUSD CDE Decision, p. 22 (July 30, 2020).

²¹ Educ. Code § 43509(f)(3).

²² Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 5 § 15496(b).

²³ See *supra* note 2 at pp. 2-3; see also Cal. Educ. Code 43509(b)(5)(B).

²⁴ See Educ. Code §§ 43509(b)(1)-(2).

²⁵ Consistent with Educ. Code § 48985.

²⁶ Educ. Code § 43509(b)(3).

²⁷ Educ. Code § 43509(b)(4).

²⁸ Educ. Code § 43509(b)(5)(A).

²⁹ Educ. Code § 43509(b)(5)(B).

³⁰ Paloma Esquivel, et al., *L.A. Latino, Black students suffered deep disparities in online learning, records show*, LA Times (Jul. 16, 2020), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-16/latino-and-black-students-hard-hit-with-disparities-in-their-struggle-with-online-learning>; Paloma Esquivel, et al., *A generation left behind? Online learning cheats poor students, Times survey finds*, LA Times (Aug. 13, 2020), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-13/online-learning-fails-low-income-students-covid-19-left-behind-project>

³¹ Educ. Code §§ 43504(f)(2); 43509(f)(1)(F).

³² See *supra* note 2 at p. 8.

Angie Sutherland

Public comments for Sept. 3, 2020 SCUSD Board of Education meeting

9.1 Public Hearing: Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan

The Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan is the plan the LCAP PAC and other committees gave input on. I see that district staff met with CAC "leadership" but not the full advisory committee. I hope a full committee can provide input in the future.

Also, I am an appointed LCAP PAC member. When reviewing the plan, I noticed that there was nothing in the plan regarding bullying prevention and intervention. I mentioned the incomplete bullying data that was on the public records act request and the inappropriateness that the motivation in bullying incidents is not being tracked (e.g. types of discrimination, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, sexual harassment, disability, religion, etc.). I want to thank the district for adding in information about bullying prevention as part of the plan.

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 3, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Alina Cervantes
Comment:	<p>Dear Board members,</p> <p>If you are going to agree to the bare minimum standards for instructional time for our children, please ensure that those precious minutes count for something. I am of the opinion that you can have quantity AND quality, but if we are being forced to choose by those that think our kids can't have it all, please make sure there are safeguards in any signed MOUs with SCTA. We need clear language for what those minutes represent. My children attend a high performing school along with the children of the SCTA VP and our board member. Our kids have already zoomed with our teachers and we have links to the google classrooms. We will have daily, live, standards based instruction and while we know there will be kinks to work out, we are all excited to start school. Please make sure all children in this district have equitable opportunities for learning this fall. In the past, we have signed agreements this district could not afford. Please don't make any more deals our children can't afford to pay for.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

Email

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Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 3, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Manuel Buenrostro
Comment:	<p>I am writing to support and reiterate the importance of some aspects of SCUSD's draft Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. These include:</p> <p>Clear minimum minutes of daily synchronous instruction for all students, with additional time for targeted student groups. The clear guidelines that clarify how much daily synchronous learning time will be provided for each student is critical. In addition, the plan to ensure additional time for some student groups, such as ELs and SPED students is a must for equity. As it pertains to ELs, the clear guidelines for daily synchronous learning for ELD and doubling of time for newcomer EL students is something to be commended and protected.</p> <p>Ensure flexible access to lessons and materials, including recording of lessons. It is my hope that SCUSD's final plan provides for the recording of lessons while also addressing the privacy concerns. This should be accomplished through guidelines, policy, and more conversations with teachers. However, recording of lessons is important for some students, especially those that might not be able to log-in at the scheduled time and those that can benefit from the ability to revisit content. This access must be provided equitably throughout the district for all students.</p> <p>Ensure that all students have an adequate learning environment. One issue that is not addressed in the draft LCP (or maybe not as clear), is how the district will ensure that all students have a space to learn. Some students, including homeless students, might not have access to a learning environment. The district should explore solutions to ensure that students are identified for this need, and then provided with access to a space to learn. For some students, this might include providing them with a desk, for others it could be setting up a learning environment in a school facility.</p> <p>Thank you for considering these suggestions and please ensure that distance learning does not mean the lowering of access to the full curriculum for our students.</p>

Speaking as: Community Member

Email

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Date/time Stamp: 9/3/2020 10:56:57 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District

Board of Education Meeting

September 3, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Junior Goris
Comment:	<p>I am writing to support and reiterate the importance of some aspects of SCUSD's draft Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan. These include:</p> <p>Clear minimum minutes of daily synchronous instruction for all students, with additional time for targeted student groups. The clear guidelines that clarify how much daily synchronous learning time will be provided for each student is critical. In addition, the plan to ensure additional time for some student groups, such as ELs and SPED students is a must for equity. As it pertains to ELs, the clear guidelines for daily synchronous learning for ELD and doubling of time for newcomer EL students is something to be commended and protected.</p> <p>Ensure flexible access to lessons and materials, including recording of lessons. It is my hope that SCUSD's final plan provides for the recording of lessons while also addressing the privacy concerns. This should be accomplished through guidelines, policy, and more conversations with teachers. However, recording of lessons is important for some students, especially those that might not be able to log-in at the scheduled time and those that can benefit from the ability to revisit content. This access must be provided equitably throughout the district for all students.</p> <p>Ensure that all students have an adequate learning environment. One issue that is not addressed in the draft LCP (or maybe not as clear), is how the district will ensure that all students have a space to learn. Some students, including homeless students, might not have access to a learning environment. The district should explore solutions to ensure that students are identified for this need, and then provided with access to a space to learn. For some students, this might include providing them with a desk, for others it could be setting up a learning environment in a school facility.</p> <p>Thank you for considering these suggestions and please ensure that distance learning does not mean the lowering of access to the full curriculum for our students.</p>

Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

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Date/time Stamp: 9/3/2020 11:08:06 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 3, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Martha Zaragoza Diaz
Comment:	<p>My name is Martha Zaragoza Diaz and I am a member of the Sacramento community and advocate for English Learners, I thank the board and the superintendent for the opportunity to comment on the District's Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan (LCP).</p> <p>Upon review of the LCP, I am providing the following comments and recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Regular communication from teachers and schools. I support the weekly communications to students and parents on learning goals and student progress as well as a report of student progress. During this time of distance learning, parents and students need consistent, clear communication from teachers and administrators on learning expectations and student support opportunities to ensure the academic success of every student. It is recommended that communications to non-English speaking parents be provided in their primary language.2. Equal Access to live instruction. I support the District's plan to require recorded synchronous instruction. This is an equity issue for many students and parents. Students who are unable to participate in online learning at the same time lessons are actually given, will now be able to have access to lessons and missed instruction, enabling them to complete coursework.3. Assessment and tracking of learning loss. In order to address the learning loss of English learners and of other vulnerable students, the LCP must describe how and with what tools and how often, will the district assess student learning status in English, English language development and math. I applaud the district for specifically outlining this as an expectation that parents and students should have for distance learning implementation.

Speaking as: Community Member

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Date/time Stamp: 9/3/2020 11:28:40 AM

Sacramento City Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting

September 3, 2020 Public Comments

Name:	Sarah Lillis
Comment:	<p>I am writing to support some of the aspects of SCUSD's Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan and reiterate their importance. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clear minimum minutes of daily synchronous instruction for all students, with additional time for targeted student groups - The clear guidelines that clarify how much daily live synchronous learning time will be provide for each student is critical. In addition, the plan to ensure additional time for some student groups, such as ELs and SPED students is a must for equity. As it pertains for ELs, the clear guidelines for daily synchronous learning for ELD and doubling of time for newcomer students is something that should be protected.2. Flexible access to lessons and materials, including recording of lessons - It is my hope that the district figures out a way to ensure that key lessons are recorded while also protecting the legitimate concerns of privacy. This should be accomplished through guidelines, policy, and more conversations with teachers. However, recording of lessons is important for some students, especially those that might not be able to log-in the scheduled time or those that can benefit from the ability to revisit content. This access must be provided equitably throughout the district for all students.3. Clear, consistent, regular communication between teachers, students and families - Students, parents and families need regular, clear communication from teachers and administrators on learning expectations and student support opportunities; information that was severely lacking during the crisis education students received in the Spring. I am pleased that the district has developed a concrete approach for weekly communication with students and parents by teachers, as well as additional schoolwide and districtwide communication strategies, such as frequent texts, emails and robo calls with updates and resources. I strongly encourage the implementation of a weekly email from teachers that outlines the instructional schedule, learning goals, opportunities for targeted structured support for struggling students and curriculum and assignment timelines. Providing this information in a consistent and frequent way will help set clear expectations for each partner - the student themselves, parents/family members and educators - to effectively support every student's success.4. Increased investment and prioritization of professional learning - I appreciate the commitment and thoughtful approach to professional learning outlined in the Learning Continuity Plan. With an entirely new approach to teaching and learning, it is essential that teachers have the time and support to develop their skills in utilizing new tools, developing strategies in supporting the learning and SEL needs of all students, particularly our most vulnerable students. I also appreciate the prioritization of collaboration time, as it will be essential for teachers to work together to assess their progress and adjust practices as we all learn together.

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Speaking as: Parent/Guardian

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