

LAUSD Parent Advisory Committee

Chairperson's Report

March 14, 2024

Hello, colleagues:

All eight of our subcommittees met for the third time on Friday, February 16th. We will be receiving updates a bit later today from our subcommittee Chairpersons. The next round of subcommittee meetings is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th, from 10:00 to 1:00. We are told these will be the final sessions! This is one of several problems that have come up with SFACE.

Remember the motion adopted at our January 18th meeting, the one that stated we want to see funding amounts allocated and spent on each LCAP Goal and each Action within that Goal in our presentations? Well, wouldn't you know, these dollar amounts were conspicuous by their absence in the LCAP presentation given by Dr. Erik Elward. So then, our colleague, Maria Palma, again brought that same motion, and again our Committee adopted it. Guess what happened?

At our agenda-planning meeting on February 27th, Dr. Elward responded to an e-mail I had sent him a few days earlier. He informed us that with regard to our motions asking for funding amounts allocated and expended for each Action within an LCAP Goal: (1) Providing this "granular" data is not possible since we are now in the middle of a school year and it would only be available after June 30th; (2) this data is not collected by his department, the Strategic Initiatives Office; and (3) if we on the PAC wished to obtain this data, we would need to submit a request through the California Public Records Act. *Oh no, my dear, that's **not** how this works.*

Dr. Elward did say that if I sent him an e-mail message asking the Office of General Counsel (OGC) to tell me whether the information he gave us reflects the District's position, he would pass it along to whomever is advising him. I did, and he did. Yesterday I received a response signed by Antonio Plascencia, though reading this document it sounds like something a lawyer would write.

I sent this letter to all of you for whom I have an e-mail address, so many of you have now seen it. One thing we parents can do when we're able to get in touch with each other outside a PAC meeting is to receive helpful information that LAUSD may possibly not want you to see. If you're not already on our list, feel free to drop your name and e-mail address in the Chat. If you are here in the room with us, write your contact information on a piece of paper and pass it to me.

It's worth noting here that DELAC, one of our two sister committees, is experiencing the same issue we are with missing LCAP Action data. In all fairness to Dr. Elward, though, I do understand he is not a decision-maker on this topic; he's only passing along what he's been instructed to do or, in this case, *not* to do. That said, Dr. Elward is the person in front of us at our meetings, so naturally we must direct any questions or concerns about these LCAP presentations to him.

On a related note, for the past two years, our Committee has hosted Board Members as our special guests at meetings. SFACE administrators, first Diane Panossian and, more recently, Reina Diaz, had taken care of informing Board leadership about our meeting dates, communicated with

Board staff, and scheduled Board Members to join us throughout the year. In each of 2021-22 and 2022-23, we hosted all seven of these leaders, along with the Student Board Member. Going into this year, then, I naturally assumed that this PAC tradition, which has been much appreciated by not only our members but Board Members too, would continue into this year and beyond.

You can imagine my surprise when, in an agenda-planning session earlier in the year, I asked SFACE staff how this process was moving along. Reina replied that no Board Members had been contacted. This reply sounded odd and so I inquired further. Since our Board knows who I am, the best way to make sure Board Members were invited was to do it myself, so I did. Then about two weeks ago, Reina sent me a message stating that SFACE would no longer be doing this work and further, since I had already reached out to the Board, I should continue doing so on my own. The only thing SFACE would now do to support this effort was to receive information from me as to which Board Member wanted to appear at which of our meetings, and send their staff the Zoom login details. This decision was made without the courtesy of prior notice — nothing at all.

This year all three District-level parent committees have experienced various conflicts with staff, when in general this had not been the case previously. While we as parents cannot know what LAUSD leaders say about us when we're not in the room, the inescapable conclusion is that someone above Antonio Plascencia is calling the shots on how our committees are to be handled.

CAC, DELAC, and PAC share many of the same concerns about the way parents and families throughout LAUSD are engaged, or not. Since the vast majority of our experience as parents and guardians in this District comes from interactions at our children's school sites, when we participate in committees and other groups within LAUSD, we bring with us the memory of how we're being treated at school. When this experience is negative, we want to speak out about it. If we discuss concerns with School Site Council, ELAC, volunteering, parent-teacher conferences, how dirty the school is, either we are heard or we're not. When we don't feel understood and validated, either we stop talking about these experiences or we continue speaking out, louder and louder. Then we find the PAC and realize that we are among others who understand us.

Our Parent Advisory Committee is mandated by the Education Code to review the LAUSD draft LCAP each year and generate comments on it, then deliver these comments to the Superintendent for a response. We must continue to speak out for what we need to do our job — no more and no less. Having survived ten years now, this is the least our Committee can do.

In the words of anthropologist Margaret Mead, *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

At your service,

Paul Robak

Chairman, 2023-24

LAUSD Parent Advisory Committee

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