

Subject line: ACE Exec Cabinet update: current COVID surge, SPED IAs and CUSD's fiscal health in light of January Budget proposal

We have to admit that these past few weeks back in the classroom have been some of the most exhausting times we've experienced as educators. While we know there is light at the end of this tunnel, we can't ignore the unprecedented challenges we are all facing as a community and as a district. At ACE, we know there are no easy solutions, but we are calling on our school district to acknowledge the momentous challenges we're facing, recognize the burden we take on as educators to get us all through it, and take the necessary and appropriate steps available to keep students and staff safe and supported. We believe that at the very least, our experience as classroom educators should be respected and our concerns heard.

The ACE Executive Cabinet Committee recently met with the CUSD Executive Cabinet and heard from them the steps they've taken to address the challenges of the pandemic. Our own experiences – and what we are hearing across the district – don't always seem to match what CUSD administration has stated. If you have specific examples or concerns, please contact an ACE leader at your site or in your area ([or email us here](#)) so we can reach out to you, learn more, and figure out ways to work together to develop solutions/improve conditions.

[Click here for a video update from our meeting.](#)

Here is a summary of our conversation:

1. In regards to the current surge in COVID cases:
 - We discussed the dramatic increase in workload for educators having to prepare independent study packets. The good news is that there is discretionary money for that extra work-time; ask your site admin.
 - Contract Tracing – CUSD leadership assured us they are conducting contact tracing and testing on campuses.
 - N95 masks have been made available by the county and will be delivered soon
2. Instructional Aides:
 - Robyn Castillo stated that each SDC (Special Day Class) program will have one full time IA and that the increased hours would not be deduced from the overall program hours. We are excited about this development and believe it is a solution that will help our SPED students and colleagues!
 - We know there is inconsistent information being presented by other SPED admin since our meeting on January 12th. We are seeking clarification and straight answers.
3. CUSD Fiscal Health
 - Good news! The January budget proposal has a 5.33% COLA and since LCFF is fully implemented there will be no deferrals or late payments to CUSD.

- There are concerns about enrollment (this is a statewide issue, not just CUSD) but we're hearing that the legislature might take steps to "hold harmless" district school budgets on this issue. We will keep you posted!

Here at ACE we believe that educators know education and that our students thrive when we are an integral part of the decision making process. Last year, the ACE Fall Forward Vision Statement called upon CUSD to do the right thing and implement some common sense solutions. On several of the issues, our solutions have been adopted by CUSD, such as an extension of Covid leave and increasing substitute pay. We're glad that we've been able to make some progress but there is still more to do to make sure these improvements stick and that attention is given to the remaining issues.

Over the next few months, we're going to again collect our shared experience and build consensus regarding important issues impacting our students and colleagues and seek solutions we all see are best for CUSD. Stay tuned to learn more about how we can all be a part of the conversation and how we can work together to give our students the learning environment they deserve.

Sincerely, ACE Executive Cabinet Committee

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Sent by Teresa on behalf of ACE Organizing Committee