

WRITTEN/ORAL QUESTIONS
STAFF RESPONSES
SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDY SESSION
10-7-2021

PUBLIC INPUT AND QUESTIONS IN BLACK
PUSD RESPONSES ARE IN BLUE

What is the SEP/Special Education Plan and when is a copy going to be made public?

The plan is now posted on the [Special Education Website](#).

Did the District collaborate with the four parent members of the CAC in creating the SEP Plan and this presentation?

The SEP plan did not have a requirement of CAC/parent input. The plan requirement was to have district and site personnel review the data and develop the plan.

For the Special Board Session - some components of the Powerpoint were shared at the CAC parent meeting on September 20, 2021.

Why does PUSD have two Executive Directors on this presentation? Only Dr. Jacobs is on the district organizational chart. [Dr. Jovan Jacobs is the only Executive Director; this was a typographical error on the presentation.](#)

General Fund dollars pay the difference between dedicated special education funding and the actual cost of special education. I believe that is called encroachment. This report states that PUSD had 2,478 Special Education students in the 2020-2021 school year. Is the ADA money put into the General fund? [Yes, the ADA allocated funds \(Local, State, Federal\) are all in General Fund but in unique Resource Codes to segregate the sources of funds](#)

How much ADA money does each PUSD student generate?

1. If you are referring to LCFF, then it would be "Total LCFF divided by Total district ADA" and it would amount to about \$10,500 but if using Enrollment, the amount will be less. For AB602, the "Base rate" in 20-21 was \$625 and the base amount is the district enrollment multiplied by the base rate. However, the "total funded AB602" is made up of the "base amount" plus other calculated components, for example PS/RS, Low Incidence, out-of-home care, etc.
2. It is important to recognize that the first funding to support [all students](#) comes from the LCFF, and it applies in the same manner as the primary funding source for SWDs. Supplementary funding for SWDs is provided through both federal and state funding sources, but the [combined funding doesn't adequately address](#) the requirements of state and federal mandates to provide services, hence the encroachment or contribution.

3. As generally accepted State-wide, General Fund contribution to SPED is basically the total cost of SPED students, less State, Local and Federal direct allocated SPED funds. This summary is always provided in every "official financial report: provided to the board.

What was the amount that was not funded by special education dollars for 2020-2021? Contribution amount. - \$26,702,570

How much did each of the 2020-2021 2,478 special education students cost the general fund? Contribution amount. - \$26,702,570

Why is there no mention of the Low Incidence Funds the district receives each year? (Multiple disabilities or severe disabilities. Orthopedic impairments (physical disabilities) Visual impairments or blindness. Hearing impairments (hard-of-hearing) Deafness.) The low incidence, in addition to (PSRS, Out of Home Care, base, etc.) funds, are embedded in the AB 602 allocated funds.

Could you please share the number of students who receive the Low Incidence funds and what that dollar amount is per student? Then also how is that money being spent?

Based on CDE P-2 Apportionment Schedule for 20-21 FY, we had 117 students at \$3,050.43. All low incidence funding is spent on low incidence students with involvement of the low incidence committee

How is the Assessment Center staffed? District personnel or NPS?

The Assessment Center is currently staffed by district personnel.

Staff includes:

- PUSD District School Psychologists
- PUSD District Assessment Teacher

Assessment Teacher - who/what is this and is this position District or NPS? District hired teacher.

Where is District getting the psychologists? PUSD advertised on Edjoin and interviewed candidates.

How Many Assessments have been completed for 20/2021 school year and current year?

2/3 of all assessments have been completed from the 20-21 school year to current.

What is the number of Initial vs Tri annuals? The number of completed IEPs are constantly changing as they are held and as timelines deadlines approach.

Are there any outstanding assessments? There are outstanding assessments as some parents did not agree to record reviews but wanted to wait for in person assessments.

Does the Board review the OAH, ADR and CDE complaints monthly? If the answer is no, why not? Yes, the board reviews as they are settled.

On the 4th tab of the Strategic Plan, there is a link to a spread sheet. Can this information be shared with the public? The overall themes and initiatives can be shared but the document itself is a working/task oriented document.

How many cases are open, how many are closed and what methods were used to close them? The number of cases fluctuate and some are closed but pending board approval, mediation and/or ADR are used to settle the cases.

What is the District's legal budget? For 2021-2022: Our Adopted budget for district-wide legal fees is \$1,488,424. Special Education's portion is \$700k.

Where can the public find the legal budget and expenditures? Information can be requested from the Fiscal Department.

Does the \$550 million for Learning Recovery really need to be spent in two months? That is the state amount of \$550 million not PUSD amount. PUSD has 2 years to spend our share.

Is the district reaching out to families or waiting for the families to ask for assistance? There is clerical support that will begin to reach out to families.

How will the Certificate of Completion students who have aged out be compensated? They have lost out on community and work experience; how will it be made equitable? The students can go through the ADR process.

Will the data and dollars spent on Learning Recovery be made public? It will be included in the Financial Reports presented to the Board.

Who is in charge of ADR? Who are the ADR staff members?

- Executive Director is overseeing ADR
- Neutral ADR facilitator
- ADR clerk
- coordinator that is connected to the student

How is the district reaching out to families? The district has monthly meetings with the CAC. The district has a monthly newsletter to parents.

What is an IEP Facilitator? The IEP facilitator helps keep members of a team focused on the development of the IEP while addressing conflicts and disagreements that may have occurred before or during the IEP meeting.

Who is the point person after there is resolution? The special education coordinator.

Who will be held accountable for implementing the resolution settlement? The special education coordinator oversees and each settlement has various components that various team members must implement.

Please provide public data on how many ADR resolutions that are not implemented result in OAH cases filed against PUSD? Data is not tracked in this manner.

Can the public see some data on how many ADR resolutions and lack of implementation result in OAH cases filed against the district? [Data is not tracked in this manner.](#)

Is there an ADR Budget and can that be made public? [All of the funding is part of the overall fiscal reports.](#)

1. [2020-2021 Alternate Dispute Resolution COVID-19 - \\$73,557](#)
2. [2021-2022 Special Education Dispute Prevention and Dispute Resolution Grant - \\$320,976](#)
3. [2021-2022 Special Education Alternate Dispute Resolution Grant Budget - \\$16,410](#)

MTSS has been in place for years. Is there a comprehensive report on behavior and academic MTSS? [MTSS was implemented at a number of school sites with a grant from LACOE; there was not a comprehensive report done.](#)

Which sites have MTSS intervention programs? [All sites have implemented MTSS to various degrees. All students receive Tier 1. Some students are on Tier 2 getting targeted interventions. A small number of students get Tier 3 intensive interventions.](#)

Does MTSS fall under Special Education or General Ed? [Although MTSS is not an initiative for special education, it does support all students which includes students with disabilities. Thus, special education should play a role in its design.](#)

How many district personnel are assigned to each program? [This number is difficult to calculate. For example, the single teacher \(1 FTE\) of the Orthopedically Impaired can be part of the preschool program, secondary programs, adult student programs, Home Hospital program, Assistive Technology Program, and Non-Public Schools all at the same time.](#)

Are these credentialed staff, classified staff, behavior intervention staff, school psychologists, counselors, etc.? [This includes administrators, credentialed staff, classified staff. For some programs, such as Prek at Roosevelt, special education also pays for the custodian.](#)

Who determines exactly what the specific needs of each MTSS student are? [All students will receive instruction in Tier 1. Some students will receive targeted, group interventions in Tier 2. A small number of students will receive intensive individualized interventions in Tier 3. The teams at each site and tier can determine the specific needs of each student.](#)

What is the duration of an intervention? [An intervention will last as long as needed. This can dramatically vary for different students.](#)

How often are parents informed regarding their student's progress or lack of progress? [Parents receive progress reports on IEP goals at the same time gen ed students get their report cards.](#)

Who determines what interventions/curriculum are used for each child? Accommodations, modifications and other supports are determined by the IEP team. Generally, students in RSP and in mild/moderate Special Day Classes use the general education curriculum. Students in our functional skills (mod/sev) classrooms have an alternative curriculum designed for students with significant needs.

How often and for how long do students receive intervention? Special Education students receive services as long as they continue to display need.

What is Student Support Services and the Division of Curriculum? Are these new departments and who is the staff? Student Support Services is part of Child Welfare, Attendance and Safety.

Helen Hill is the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. Nadirah Nayo is the Coordinator of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. Dr. Jodi Marchesso is the Coordinator over Professional Development.

What is the current number of overdue IEPs? There is a higher percentage of overdue IEPs due to COVID and distance learning. Typically, the overdue IEPs range from 2% to 3%.

What is the District Process to improve the learning gaps and student outcomes? Is there a document that can be made public? Special Education Staff will be trained to measure learning gaps and provide remedies/interventions/additional support through the IEP process.

Comment: Utilize Ortman-Gillingham program for dyslexic readers. The district purchased a Orton Gillinham reading program in 2019. Teachers were trained on October 1, 2019 in the program.

Does Brunson Educational Consulting contract with PUSD to offer direct services to our students? There are no direct services to students.

Why is PUSD paying a consultant when we have failure to provide services, supports, resources to students with IEPs? You can't service the students but yet spend a lot of money on a consultant and a person who already has a full-time job in an agency? The contract is for the consultant to provide professional development if needed.

Why is the district paying three admin positions for SPED students and not fulfill serving students with IEPs, when we had only one before? There was a typo on the number of directors for special education. There is only one special education director.

Comment: Invest in a position for inclusion specialist or coach to allow adding experienced person to support families, IEP teams and staff to bridge the connection gap.

The district invested in a TOSA I for Willard/Webster to support the teachers on the site. These two sites have a significant number of special education students.

Why isn't PUSD investing in direct services for students? [The bulk of special education costs are direct services for students. These include special education services from the teacher, speech services, occupational therapy and other services.](#)

Comment: Importance of early intervention and social-emotional learning. [The district has both ReThink Ed SEL curriculum and Second Step Curriculum. Teachers were trained during "A" Mondays during 2020-2021.](#)

Comment: More evidence-based dyslexia screening and intervention for struggling readers. [The district uses the iReady dyslexia screener. The district uses an Orton Gilliam dyslexia reading intervention program.](#)

Comment: Common techniques and social-emotional curriculum taught at every grade level. Teachers should be trained. [The district has both ReThink Ed SEL curriculum and Second Step Curriculum. Teachers were trained during "A" Mondays during 2020-2021.](#)

Comments: Poor communication between teachers and SpEd coordinators. Teachers need to feel safe and need more training for SpEd students. Need clear protocols on last program sent out. ADR resolution contact is not Stephanie Cosey, who is listed as such. [The website has been corrected.](#)

Comments: Improve systems to track process from identifying students with learning disabilities to the first IEP meeting to the start of intervention. Offer flexibility for student's capabilities versus production. Offer executive function support for all grades, such as AVID, using strategies for identification. Electronic dashboards should be standardized across the district. [The district uses the SEIS system to track from when a parent asks for a special education assessment, to the time the initial IEP is held to determine if a student is eligible. The SEIS system continues to track what services the student receives to ensure educational benefit. The program has a dashboard to inform users of information from their caseload, what IEPs are coming up, and what IEPs needs to be addressed.](#)

Comments: Consider demographics of students receiving SpEd services and the issue of disproportionality especially black males. Study liabilities and SpEd formerly being used systemically for expulsion of black males. [This topic has been discussed in the special education SEP plan and is a monitoring area on the Dashboard.](#)

Comment: Parents shouldn't have to fight so hard for SpEd services. [Services are delivered based upon need. In order to determine need, students are given assessments.](#)

There are 4 pages of the PUSD Settlement Agreement Action Plan and Progress Monitoring – 5-year plan. It appears the dates are primarily through 2022. Was this created to document to Urban Collaborative the progress PUSD has made in promoting inclusive supports and services for students with behavior and mental health disabilities? [Yes, along with the focus of LRE for all students with disabilities.](#)

Who were the PUSD stakeholders that participated in the creation of the Settlement Agreement Action Plan and Progress Monitoring document? [Participants included district administrators and the Urban Collaborative.](#)

Is Special Education funding MTSS? [Special Education is not funding MTSS.](#)

How is it that Dr. Marco Villegas, Associate Superintendent, Special Student Support for the Special Education Local Plan is in charge of MTSS? *As many division leads - individual expertise will provide opportunities to support additional initiatives in PUSD.*

At the bottom of slide 21, it states that *Transportation revenue is no longer shown as a state revenue funding source because it was rolled into the LCF.* At the bottom of slide 20 it says *California State Special Education Funding System Study, Part 2 from West Ed.* Are you all aware that this study proposes to put Special Education dollars under the Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control Accountability Plan? *PUSD is aware, and the study is authorized by CDE.*

If this is allowed to go forward, there will be no accountability for special education funds! You may not approve of the cost of special education. If special education dollars are moved under the Local Control Funding Formula, you won't have to worry anymore about the costs because it will be impossible to keep track of what the cost are.

BOARD INPUT

Is LRE part of IDEA? *Yes.*

When students come from out of state with an IEP from another location, do we start from that and recreate what fits into our system? *We must provide comparable services and placement to the prior IEP.*

Is the IEP process in other states similar? Do other states have SELPAs? *California is the only state that requires SELPAs for school districts. California has additional regulations and educational codes higher than the federal regulations therefore some components of the IEP process are different in California.*

Do we have SpEd staffing ratios? Is there a range? How do we determine how many students are assigned to case carriers, how many students are in the different class levels? *There have been different guidelines throughout the history of the department. Currently we have a range based on the needs of the students.*

How many SpEd teachers are not fully credentialed? *We have nine interns, three short term, and one provisional for a total of 13 not fully-credentialed.*

Comment: Total SpEd employees are 593 – one-quarter of all PUSD employees and one-quarter of the PUSD budget.

Comment: Would like more information on dyslexia with new state guidelines.

School psychologists can diagnose dyslexia which falls under specific learning disability. Psychologists administer a number of tests, such as the CTOPP-2 to test for this disability. The academic test that teachers give, the KTEA-3, has a number of subtests that help with dyslexia determination. These include Phonological Processing, Nonsense Word Decoding, Writing Fluency, Associational Fluency, Word Recognition Fluency, and Decoding Fluency. These tests have been norm referenced.

How do we screen for dyslexia and once we identify, what services can be provided?

iReady screens students for possible dyslexia using assessments. A student scoring low can receive classroom interventions through the workshop model. Students not responding to the intervention can be referred to the SST process. Some students may need to be assessed for special education.

How many students does this find regularly and what is the follow-up?

This process was on pause due to COVID, we have begun this assessment process this year and will follow up with the data.

Comment: High schools need more support which must be identified.

On the year breakdown, you have 2212 SpEd students in TK-12 in 2019-20, 2223 in 20-21, and 2478 in 21-22. The higher number includes preschool and private school students. Do these also include students who have 504s but not IEPs? Students with 504s are not included in these counts.

When and where will these answers be posted? They will be posted on the SpEd web page by next Friday.

Will there be a follow-up to this meeting? Part 2 of the Special Education Board Meeting will include a deeper dive with hard enrollment numbers. After that, we can schedule a follow-up to track our progress.

Is early intervention happening? Why are we hearing that it doesn't exist?

The prek services department regularly assesses students for special education services. These early intervention services are important for developing children.

I hear about systemic improvements; please give an example. Does this include staffing or a process improvement with staffing staying the same? Some improvements are process based. The district is using a program to improve tracking of service delivery. Some improvements are staffing based. For example, the district hired a Teacher on Special Assignment for Willard and Webster (schools with high amounts of special education students) to assist teachers.

Can data be provided in the next study session, like how many assessments are we behind?

We can provide updated percentages.

Can we accommodate working parents' schedules by starting meetings later in the afternoon?

Yes, each school site can work with their families.

How does staff follow-up on public comment complaints of lack of communication, safety, etc.?

We will arrange for the coordinator or site to call the parent(s) to discuss the situation.

Can a metric be provided for staff responsiveness? We have a partnership with K-12 Insight which includes a website feature called "Let's Talk." HR is piloting this and then SpEd will access it. Questions and concerns from the public will go to designated personnel in the specific area and a response will be expected in 48 hours. The superintendent can then review weekly the results and can monitor which departments are not following up.

On the slide showing SpEd population has increased while overall student population has declined, there are 332 SpEd students increased from 2015 until now – a 15% increase – but overall student body

decreased 865 (10%) since 2015. Data should be disaggregated to see which student groups are being identified in SpEd. [The state provides this information and it is embedded in the SEP Plan. The 14 indicators will be reviewed at the part 2 session.](#)

Our expenditure on SpEd is \$25,093 per student. Is this a reasonable investment? How do we know if we're spending the correct amount? [The state average is \\$27,000 per student. Special Education is based on each unique student's needs, so the correct amount varies based upon the populations that are being served by that district.](#)

Comment: Highlight on the SpEd webpage all of the special services we provide, such as iReady to identify dyslexia with details of process. [All special education services are listed on the special education website in the SELPA Local Plan and Services.](#)

Child Find is part of IDEA which obligates the district to find children who need SpEd services. How do we find these students? What is the penalty for not finding them? 45% of all students attend charter and private schools; how do we find them? [Staff meets with private schools by hosting meetings and informing them of our resources. Schools may reach out to us. Meetings are held twice a year regarding services available. Brochures are delivered to doctors' offices.](#)

Is there extra money to provide these services? [It is mandated to provide assessments; this also includes home schooled students.](#)

What does "unfunded mandates" mean? [This also happens in GenEd. New ideas are legislated and we are expected to make them happen with no additional funding.](#)

How are agency staff being notified when there are positive COVID cases? [The district is working on strengthening the process to ensure that all agency staff are consistently notified of positive exposures.](#)

Is it a requirement to have a parent attend an IEP? [The district strongly encourages parents to attend, however there is an option for extraneous circumstances that they can consent for the meeting to occur without them present but must always consent to the IEP.](#)

How many IEPs move forward without parent participation? [Parent consent is required for an IEP to be implemented.](#)

Are you considering virtual participation in IEPs? [Parents always had the option to participate in an IEP by phone. During COVID, teleconferencing became more popular and is now a very popular alternative. This option is listed on the IEP invitation for the parent to choose if it better suits their needs.](#)

Indirect costs have fluctuated – why the large increase? [Indirect cost charge to AB 602.](#)

For fiscal year 21-22, our revenue shows \$60m. We approved the budget in June which showed SpEd at \$76.4m for both revenue and expenditures, which equals \$16 million more than on the slide. Why are there two such different numbers?

[Revenue of \\$60m did not include the following revenue amounts:](#)

LCAP	\$3.40m
Transportation	\$6.50m
Classified School Employee Assistance Program (CSESAP)	\$0.12m
PARS	\$0.13m
Sub-Total	\$10.15m
One-time Funding:	
ESSER II	\$1.27m
ELO	\$3.38m
ELO - Paraprofessionals	\$0.72m
Sub-Total One Time Funding	\$5.37m
Total	\$15.52

How much one-time funding is included in the \$76m? Clarify ESSER funding.

Refer to the table above.

Transportation is inefficient and expensive. Buses are picking up riders who are not interested and some buses hold very few passengers. Buses are costing \$100,000 for a four-person wheel-chair bus. Can students be contacted regarding transportation needs so that the routes can be reviewed to save costs? [The district contacts parents who are not using transportation to determine if services can be removed or not.](#)

In reviewing the Recovery Plan list of items, are most of these funded by the one-time COVID funds and if so, are they sustainable beyond this year? [Most of this is funded by COVID or ESSER funds. Unless we prioritize the need, many items may not be sustained.](#) Do we need to prioritize these items? [Yes, the data will help identify our most successful practices.](#)

NPAs – what are they, how do we use them, how many are there, who pays for them? [These are non-public agencies that help us provide human capital which we don't have access to; e.g., speech pathologists are difficult to find but agencies can provide them. Typically, the cost is higher through agencies. Usually this is due to a labor shortage in specific fields. We also use these agencies for aides.](#)

Since email is our primary method of contacting parents, perhaps complaints of unresponsiveness may have to do with parent emails falling into spam. Also, how do parents know an employee is no longer with the district? [The special education org chart is now posted on the website.](#) What steps are we taking that our communications are being tracked? Do we track other methods, such as texts, etc.? [The district does not have a current method of tracking communication.](#) Does technology get in the way of

communications? Should parents add “receipt required” on their emails? [That is an option for them.](#) Should they be trained? [Training can be offered.](#)

On contracted services, the decrease is transportation and substitutes – can you repeat the \$6m drop? [\\$3m transportation and \\$2.4m of NPAs.](#) Will this continue to increase over time with no control? [SpEd has increased with more complex needs, there is the rise of autism, and identification has increased over the years. We don’t know the effects of COVID and what additional services may be required.](#) Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requires the expenditure of \$1 over the previous year.

Do Educational Rights Holders substitute for parents? [Yes, especially for foster youth.](#)

Comment: There is a natural 3% increase and increases in staff salaries. We can only decrease expenditures. On our ITS website, there is a chart which shows the “Expenditures Over Time”. In breaking down the teaching staff from 2013 to 2020, salaries went up 5%, NPAs went up 160%. We need to delve in deeper.

Disproportionality can be attributed to lack of a culturally relevant curriculum and classroom environment. Are SpEd assessments culturally relevant or status quo? If not, how effective are they? [The Mindful Leaders training specifically goes to the core of dealing with our ability to evaluate. It addresses our own biases. The training has started with teachers and in January will start for psychologists. It is highly intensive. Where is the accountability? Do teachers have a choice to implement the training? This is the introduction year for this type of training. The district will decide in the future on what aspects need to be implemented by the teachers.](#)

KTEA assessments may be culturally biased and may be out of date. What other districts are using the same assessments we are? [There are two different assessments – teachers assess academic achievement and the psychologists use several different tests depending on need. The Woodcock-Johnson is the basic assessment; we also have a battery of psychological tests. All of the tests, including both the Woodcock Johnson and the KTEA, go through intense scrutiny for cultural relevance and are normed on different populations.](#)

Focus Point is switching to a short-term placement. Can we hear about this at a later time? How does this impact school sites? [Focus Point was always a short-term placement. Students are continuously monitored to determine when they should be placed at a comprehensive site.](#)

On the assurances page, on the Learning Recovery Plan, it states that we must document the required cash match that authorized the grant. [CDE is providing additional information. We will provide additional information.](#)

Who has ultimate responsibility for overdue IEPs? Is there a consequence? Does it appear on personnel evaluations? [The case carrier is ultimately responsible for their caseload. Administrators will support them. The coordinators support the sites needing additional help.](#)

Comment: The SEP Plan does not show classroom teachers as part of the teams. They were initially left off the collaboration slide. We need to value their input on what is working. Instructional Aides are there every day and their input need to be valued.

Comment: It is beneficial for GenEd students to spend time with SpEd students in inclusion classes.

How are we dealing with IEPs, given the possibility of service interruption? Are we putting contingency language in our IEPs for students who miss class because of quarantine? Are the parents aware? [Each IEP has an emergency circumstance plan.](#)

The Urban Collaborative Report from 2017 – can this be sent in a confidential Friday communique for the new board members' instruction? [Yes. This was sent to the board as a confidential document via email on Monday, October 11, 2021.](#)