Questions and answers from 9/1/20 PAC & 9/3/20 DELAC Meetings

Thank you for the work that goes into this, it’s very comprehensive. At the elementary level, how can they facilitate at home instruction for young ones, particularly ELs? We find that instruction needs to be in multiple languages.

Regarding the new counselor position at CHS, what background are you looking for in a counselor given the change in diversity?

We help parents support instruction at home through our Parent Workshops. Our Parent Liaison will share info on the workshops we have planned. We’ve found that offering these workshops is the best way to support kids. We filled the counselor position in-house and offered the position to a counselor who was working part-time for the Adult School.

We’re letting parents know what to expect by offering workshops to help parents. The district is hoping to offer these at least once a month throughout all the sites in both English and Spanish. We’re offering workshops on mental health, COVID, and distance learning in both English and Spanish. We are also working to offer these individually at the school sites.

CUSD is reaching out to each EL family. Our Parent Liaison coordinated the Canvas presentations in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic.

Could you provide clarification on the actions that are listed. Next to total funds it says that if it has an N it doesn’t come from supplemental. If that’s the case, what is the funding source?

Funding could be provided through areas such as general fund and COVID 19 learning loss, but the base grant and discretionary are the chief funding sources. It could also be capital funds. COVID funds have specific expiration dates so we wish to use those first. As we approach the expiration date, we may find the need to transfer from one source to another in order to not lose funds. It can always change as far as what is running out and what is expiring. The December expiration for most of COVID money could be problematic, we have to fund the rest of the year out of our funds. Anything attributed to distance learning or additional programs that are COVID related are tied to those funds.

I have two questions... I appreciate the comment that pupils need to be engaged, active, and logged in. We know kids will experience hiccups and may be on their own logging in, which could bring about high levels of anxiety. What should students do if they’re at home and having trouble connecting to synchronous and asynchronous learning online. How will this be addressed?

We have codes to clear attendance on a regular basis which is why follow-up phone calls from staff are important. If they’re having trouble with technology, we’ll work to suppress letters and clear them. We will work with families with special challenges. For example, I had a student with a broken arm who was going into surgery so we suppressed those letters for awhile. Also, we send letters asking students how we can help them as to not be punitive due to the learning environment they’re in.

What if they can’t check in when class begins online?

A student who shows up late to class won’t be marked late and our technical support staff will help them with their technology issues as quickly as possible. We include in our letters and on the district website where they can go to help resolve issues and to get students participating in school. We want to do the best we can to make our students successful.

My other question is about iReady, STAR Reading, DIBELS, etc. Will standards be adjusted to FY 2020-21 national benchmarks as compared to other distance learners or to pre-COVID grade level standards?

The tests are normed over multiple years’ worth of data, and the benchmarks will not change with one year of distance learning. The standards for meeting and exceeding grade level markers for Dibels, iReady, and STAR Reading are set by the companies through multiple years of norming and research. Student performance will be based on standards for pre-COVID measures.

How are you supporting the homeless students who may not be able to charge their iPads and tablets or are unable to access mobile WiFi along with providing any other support they need?

We’ve been providing cellular hotspots to students. Many of our homeless students are in a hotel situation so they have access to WiFi but its not always dependable. We’re ensuring they have mobile hotspots and iPads by delivering them directly to them to ensure they can be successful. Even though schools aren’t conducting classes in person, the schools are open. We have staff at sites and at the district office to assist students and ensure their success. Our staff members
are fielding phone calls to help students and families and to ensure they have the tools and support they need. If they need to charge devices at our office, they can contact us to do so.

*Can we get the slides?*

Yes, the LCAP Presentation will be posted on our website. ??

*Will the Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) provide data and will it be aligned with past assessments for this year?*

The Alternate ELPAC will provide data for teachers, parents, and IEP teams to use when making decisions about how best to support English Learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The test is a field test this year, and will be operational next year. It is aligned to the 2012 California English Language Development Standards.

*If we adopt this year, do we have to administer a field test?*

Administration of the Alternate ELPAC is a requirement from the state this year, and in years to come, for all English Learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This year’s administration is a field test. Next year’s administration will be operational.

*What is the main difference between the VCCALPS and Alternate ELPAC Assessments?*

The main difference between the two assessments is the alignment to 2012 California English Language Development Standards. Both tests provide information on student performance in the 4 domains of language acquisition including reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

*How will you know which assessment would be a better fit for my son in order to get the right data to work with him?*

The administration of the Alternative ELPAC is only for students with the most significant cognitive delays, and is decided upon by the IEP team. In Claremont this is a very small population of students numbering less than 20 districtwide.

*Is there a cost associated with iReady. What happens when we decide not to repurchase?*

There is a cost associated with iReady. If we decide not to repurchase, we can then remove the assessment from the reclassification criteria in our EL Master Plan. However, in order to use it, it must be written into the EL Master Plan. Since we have it this year, we want to be able to use it. If we decide not to renew, we can adjust if we need to.

*You said that iReady will be an additional assessment? So students will take both – both the previous and iReady?*

Students already take all the assessments listed in our EL Master Plan. In grades K-6, most of our students took iReady assessment last year. It’s one of our district benchmark assessments that we administer and every student will take it this year. It’s actually given three times per year, and it is a measure of academic progress in reading and math. It’s not a new test that we’re adding, we’re just adding it to this document so we can use the test because we’re already administering it.

*I love that we are focusing on reclassifying students in grades 3-12 but in my own classroom I had first graders now going into second and believe they would be ready to reclassify. Is there a reason the cutoffs begin at 3rd grade?*

Our focus is on higher grades because we have about 350 ELs and we only have one person who can administer the test. Our teachers cannot currently administer in-person tests and would need to be trained in order to do so. We have one test administrator who can give this test right now and she’s going to start with 12th graders. Should she be able to get through all the kids who can potentially reclassify by the deadline, we can then start looking at some of our younger students. Additionally, some of the recommendations from the state are for 4-6 grade with the idea that our K-3 graders who went out of school in March could potentially have more learning loss and would need that additional support. We’re going to start with the state’s recommendation and always know there are some special cases that we will look at. Olivia Vioral, who is our test administrator, will be contacting families to go ahead and administer those tests. Additionally, she is working on scheduling initial ELPAC. Any student who is coming to us brand new and who hasn’t been in a California public school has to take the initial ELPAC. We have quite a few students whose Home Language Survey indicated they need to take the assessment but have not yet been given the initial ELPAC. While students are waiting to take the test, they are listed as “To be determined” and need provided services until it is determined whether there is a need. We don’t want to provide services that aren’t necessary – we want to focus on the students who need them so we’re really looking forward to giving the assessments as soon as possible.

*Are all the iReady and Nearpod lessons being pushed out through Canvas?*

Yes, all of our teachers will push all of their lessons out on Canvas. Parents made it loud and clear that they wanted one learning management system so Nearpod EL and iReady assessments will go through Canvas. Students can log into iReady through Canvas or through their iReady App on the iPad but both will be pushed out through Canvas.
So are teachers going to let us know when we need to do that lesson?

Teachers will decide on that and build it into their lesson plans for the week and let the parent or student know when they’ll be doing the lesson using the iReady diagnostic. The diagnostic window opens on September 14.

Will the recording and slide presentation be posted to the CUSD website?

Yes, this will be posted on the EL page on our website.

With children and families in EL – is someone reaching out to them to help them understand the iPads rather than emailing IT? I’ve had a couple of moms ask me for help.

We are helping folks as quickly as we can through that process. Now that everyone is connected to their teachers we find that teachers are doing a lot of troubleshooting with families. If the teacher or the school site can’t help you, we do have the technology support form that students can fill out and one of our technology TOSAs will reach out to you.

Are we allowed to conduct EL instruction during class time? Because students needs to have time to understand instruction and I was wondering if any other families have the same issue?

Teachers have created a schedule that they’re sharing with families and that schedule includes Office Hours or ways to contact them. During the actual live instruction would not be the best time to contact them because they are working with students. If they are in the classroom we would not be able to enter during live instruction. They are here to help with anything you might need so they are definitely expecting families to reach out to them through that model. Check with the teachers and see what their schedules are.

Some of the teachers are able to speak Spanish but what about those who cannot speak the EL student’s language?

We have access to a service called Language Line that provides over the phone translations for any language. We have never had a language in Claremont that we have not been able to service through Language Line. This information has been sent with principals so they can get it into the hands of their teachers so we can ensure that every single family regardless of the language they speak are able to get the help they need in managing distance learning.

Can you share that number just in case anyone needs assistance? We would appreciate having that phone number to assist.

It is a service that has to be initiated by a CUSD employee. You would have to email the teacher and ask if they can call you using language line. However, the Language Line information can definitely be posted on the CUSD website.

Can we get clarification about our site ELAC meetings?

Guidelines and information will be send to all EL Facilitators and they will get information out about when those meetings are going to happen.

We are a new family this year. For online class do both parents and students need to check Canvas and class schedules or just the students? Is that enough? My house is closest to CHS, is that where I need to pickup meals at or elsewhere?

Parents are welcome to pick up breakfast from any of our school sites. For example, if you are a Claremont High School student and you are closer to Condit, you can go to Condit. Just check to see when they are distributing food.

For Canvas, it’s really up to you. You have parent access that allows you to view your student’s Canvas courses and your parent login for Canvas is the same as your PIN and password for Parent Connect. If you are having trouble logging on you can call us in Educational Services and we can help you. You can also log in as your student; it is up to you. I encourage you to look at Canvas to see what the assignments are; to get to know the teachers; to learn how to contact the teachers so that you can ask them the questions that your students will need to navigate the system. Because Canvas is our one system, spend the time in the beginning really getting to know it and checking in, then you’ll be able to allow your students to take that on themselves. On our district website we have a lot of information and support for Canvas and all of our technology concerns. Right up at the top of the page there is a red banner and on the right hand side of that banner there is a Canvas resource. There are webinars for parents, troubleshooting guides, and many ways to answer any Canvas questions you may have.

So you’re suggesting parents go to their Canvas and students go to their Canvas too?
I suggest you become familiar with it just as your students are getting started so that you can support them — it’s new for everyone. The more we know about it the better it is. Pretty soon our students are going to be much more proficient at it than we are and they won’t need our support but in the beginning I would encourage you to get to know it.

Question regarding actual support for my son. Since March, I’m afraid my son is losing his English skills because he doesn’t have enough one on one time. While he was in school, he was able to meet face to face and besides the teacher, he had time with another professional to practice English. Will there be any opportunities for him to meet with teachers while we are on Zoom?

All of the service time that students would have gotten in the classroom, they will continue to get. The CUSD recommendation is 30 minutes per day of dedicated ELD time per student. That could be in small groups with teachers or small groups with interventionists. It could look many different ways at different sites, but the actual supports will be there and it will be there in addition to the time they are getting on Zoom with their teacher. We don’t want to take them away from the exposure to English with teacher; we want to continue that because it’s that exposure that drives language acquisition for our students. In addition to that we’re going to continue to provide our ELD support.

I appreciate the effort that have been made for EL students. How can new families apply for group support for EL students? My son is in seventh grade. How can they apply for a teacher to support him one on one or in a class group? Actually you don’t need to apply, it comes with his education. Any students who come to us as English Learners get the supports from our teachers. It’s nothing you have to ask for — it’s built into the day.

If you have any other questions regarding English Learners and want to reach out to me, my name is Natalie Taylor and my email is on the website or at ntaylor@cusd.claremont.edu. I am happy to answer any questions or provide any support.