

Tucson Unified School District

Office of Secondary School Leadership

July 9, 2015

Memo To: Dr. Adrian Vega and Ms. Martha Taylor

From: Abel Morado

Ref: Notes for RFI, Desegregation Budget, ISI, DAEP

I reviewed the RFI submitted by Mr. Rubin Salter, sent this past week. In it he has a series of questions regarding our District Alternative Education Plan and the In School Intervention program. The following are my responses to the issues relevant to DAEP and ISI.

In #7: What percentage of ISI/DAEP budgets comes out of desegregation dollars? How is the use of desegregation funds justified?

\$421,070 for DAEP comes from desegregation dollars. This sum reflects tutoring support and the additional staff (8 FTEs) necessary to ensure that students with Level 4 and 5 offenses (who would otherwise be subject to long-term suspension or perhaps expulsion) are both continued in a classroom setting with highly qualified teachers and provided needed academic/behavioral supports. However, related costs that arise from this program being housed at Project More are covered by that school's M&O budget. The cost for ISI in the 15-16 SY desegregation budget is \$902,037.50 Both programs are closely aligned with drop-out prevention and the USP mandate to limit exclusionary discipline/suspension and are designed to keep students, who otherwise would be assigned home, in school and continuing their core subjects curriculum.

In #7: Mr. Salter makes a statement about ISI being the new In School Suspension and that we have run these programs for decades. He also states that the name change is a way of funding a pre-existing program. Lastly, he makes an assertion ISI programs are a way of segregating African American and Hispanic students.

ISS programs have been around for decades, but not as a District initiative. Individual schools have been allowed to run these programs if they could secure the FTE within their school's allotment. Only a handful of TUSD schools have offered an "ISS" in recent years. As a result, schools have relied on short-term out-of-school

suspensions which remove students from the educational setting. Even for those sites that have had ISS, some have used classified staff to simply supervise students rather than offering continued curriculum or targeted academic/behavioral supports.

The ISI programs we are proposing are District initiated and will have consistency of training across the programs. We have also selected schools that have the most need for ISI programs. These are eight comprehensive high schools, nine middle schools and two K-8 schools. We call this concept "In School Intervention" both because it continues a student's regular core curriculum in a classroom setting and because a strong component of our ISI programs contain counseling, PBIS and a emphasis on Restorative practices. The ISI programs are for all students and not intended solely for a sub-group of students. Additionally, with no ISI programs in place, administrators have been suspending students home for level 3 violations. Under the ISI programs, all of these students would continue their education on campus. Students will be able to maintain their academic studies and receive counseling services related to the reasons they are suspended from school. The assignment into ISI will range from two to five school days. We definitely are not organizing a program to segregate students but rather to better serve students with the purpose of continuing their education.

In #11: What is the length of assignment in ISI?

As stated above, the assignment for students would be based on the severity of their violation, but in no case could assignment to ISS be longer than the length of short-term suspension permitted under the GSRR (10 days). However, it is our intention that no student would serve more than five days at a time. Also, students would not be assigned only one day given the effort to access the student's work and intervention services could not be provided in time. Therefore, the length would be two-five school days.

Leadership offices will work with the Office of Student Services to set criteria for building principals. ISI would not be permitted for Level 1 and 2 violations, consistent with the GSRR.

What are the qualities and certification of the teacher in ISI?

The ISI teacher at all of our schools will be highly qualified in their content areas. We are seeking teachers who are relationship oriented, and who will advocate for their students. At the same time, we need teachers who have experience working with students in different settings and who can establish and maintain excellent classroom management.

The administration is responsible for requiring teachers to submit for students the work they are missing in class. Although there is no way to exactly duplicate a student's regular schedule with four different core content teachers, students will be provided appropriate work, and they will be supported in their academic progress by a highly qualified teacher. If school-work is not available for students (field trip,

school assembly, etc.), administrators will return students to classrooms and reduce or eliminate the suspension.

Math Instruction

Math instruction is critical as this is the content area where students can fall behind and struggle to catch up. To support students in this crucial area, principals will assign a class period to one of their math teachers for ISI to deliver math instruction, provide tutoring for students, and provide support while they are assigned to ISI.

What about Exceptional Education and English Language Learners?

Students who require exceptional education services or English language services will receive the learning mandated in their IEP. Principals will assign appropriate staff to ensure the student's IEP is met and fully implemented. It is possible these students will serve abbreviated time in ISI to ensure continuation of services.

In #7. DAEP. If the District has an LSC/Drop-out and Student Success Specialists, why are they not incorporated into programs instead of going with Behavior Intervention Monitors and Tutoring?

LSC and Drop-out prevention officers will participate within their schools as the administration works with students who are being assigned to DAEP and especially when students return from DAEP and transition back into their home schools. The Behavior Intervention Monitor assists directly in DAEP classrooms assisting teachers and making sure students have a safe and secure environment. These duties are not related to what we expect of LSCs, drop-out prevention staff or student success specialists.

We know that many students who transfer into DAEP have academic challenges. Many will need access to tutoring to keep up with their academic studies. Tutoring is an essential component of DAEP and will contribute to each student's academic success.

Questions from body of email sent by Mr. Rubin Salter:

The GSRR does not allow for students committing Level 1, 2, or 3 offenses to be removed from class. However, the guidelines for ISI state that a principal can place a student in ISI for repeated offenses at those offense levels.

Students are not removed from class for violations at levels 1 and 2. Level three violations can result in exclusionary consequences, if there are prior offenses and unsuccessful attempts at intervention. Level two violations that are repeated and where students are not responding to interventions could be subject to the level elevation process, which requires appropriate documentation and approval of a director or above. Level three violations may result in ISI, but the alternative would be sending the student home with limited access to their school work.

In creating the DAEP proposal, did the District review the number of students in 2014-2015 who served long-term suspensions for Level 4 or 5 offenses? How was the predicted number of 75 determined to be the maximum capacity?

The District did review the number of students and have that data. We are capping DAEP enrollment at 75 because we believe with the ISI program and the criteria set for DAEP there will be fewer suspensions. Also, we expect to exert more control over the program, which means students can return to their home school if their behavior and work habits, along with the socio-emotional services students receive from staff, shows they would be successful in their home schools. With four teachers working together, students will be in smaller class settings and will receive individualized services.

Once again, DAEP is for students who have committed level 4 or 5 violations and would otherwise be serving their suspensions at home.

Respectfully submitted, Abel Morado.