

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Department of Family and Community Services

Carol M. Pierce, Director



August 12, 2020

Timothy M. Keller, Mayor

Dr. Gabriella Blakey
Interim APS Chief Operations Officer
6400 Uptown Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110

Dear Gabriella,

Thank you for the conversations we have had over the last few weeks to see how the City can best support APS students and families. As you know, the City of Albuquerque provides youth programming for almost half of APS student population (~30k children) annually. APS students participate in before and after school programming as well as summer and holidays services offered through the city. From that perspective, we write to summarize our discussions on what working families need and are worried about with respect to this year's alternative learning schedules.

Administration

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The following recommendations and opportunities for collaboration are based on our analysis of health, safety, equity and effectiveness of City youth programs. These recommendations include input from our program parents, City staff, and City administration.

1. **Recognizing the unique needs of younger children.** Typically, younger children (e.g. 3rd grade and under) present the biggest challenges for working parents and for our City support programs as they need the most supervision and attention on new, complex educational platforms. Any online learning should be adjusted to accommodate the learning profile age of each child. If possible, in-person options should be weighted toward younger children to best accommodate their learning needs working parents' schedules, and the City of Albuquerque logistical/staffing needs for youth programming.
2. **Giving parents maximum flexibility.** The parents in our programs are juggling work schedules and multiple children of varying ages and abilities. Flexible, asynchronous schedules can help maximize learning time for students by providing blocks of time that are set and can be managed by parents who work. Realtime online learning throughout the day presents the biggest problems for working families and City programs. Any online learning be available in blocked schedules, or even better yet asynchronous learning overall.
3. **Record all learning sessions with teachers.** Live recordings can be used to review and can also serve as a safety net for students who do not have parental support/guidance and access to set real time learning. It also gives parents, students, tutors and childcare workers the ability to repeat and review lessons.

4. **Mobilizing a cohort of teachers to work with children in person.** While we understand that many or most teachers may not want to be part of in-person instruction, some teachers may feel differently. We welcome teachers to be on site at a City facility who can provide support for student's learning, especially for students in City programs with learning needs that go beyond what City staff can support.

5. **Managing for "before and after school" even though that may look different.** We hope to coordinate with APS and third-party providers to maximize before and after school opportunities for students, to support working parents. The City of Albuquerque can operate 10 playground recreation sites moving into the fall 2020 on APS property. Additionally, Community School funding is available to continue after school program options for working families.

6. **Facilities coordination.** In addition to our regular youth programming, the City of Albuquerque is looking for ways to support a larger number of children and working families. If the need arises, we are open to working with APS on the cost and feasibility of mobilizing large facilities to accommodate families who are experiencing the most adversity. This could include children of essential workers, children 3rd grade and below, children with special needs, or any combination thereof. The city stands ready to mobilize large facilities to accommodate large pod-based learning. This could include the Convention Center, Balloon Fiesta Park and Isotopes Park.

In each of these recommendations there is an inherent concern over equity for working parents. Our essential and front-line workers are too often people of color, single parents, and struggling to make ends meet. We would like to work with APS to mitigate the severity of tough choices our working families will face this fall.

We stand ready to work with APS to address the needs of students and families in our community.

In solidarity,



Sasha Pellerin
Senior Education Policy Advisor

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