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PACE Statewide Homeschool

October PACE Correspondence School Board Report

Enrollment: At the time of this writing the enrollment count for PACE is 295, well below what we excepted or were hoping for.

This month I met with PACE staff and had a discussion with the Superintendent of IDEA to discuss causes. I've bulleted the major findings below.

- PACE saw a rapid increase in enrollment during the Covid-19 pandemic. In FY19 PACE enrollment was roughly 43% of CCSD. By FY 2022, it was about 62.5%. Currently, with the 295 enrollment, we are back to about 58%. Please see Appendix A.

I went through every PACE enrollment record for FY26, 441 entries, and recorded the non-returning students. I then looked into what that data could tell us. The major points are bulleted below. Please see Appendix B for the pie chart. I have the spreadsheet on my computer if anyone would like to view it.

- We do not know where roughly 38.1% of the roughly 170 entries left to, or for why. I say roughly as there are some logs indicating a reason for not-reenrolling, but nothing concrete. As a precaution I left those entries as "unknown".
- What we do know is 26.2% left for brick and mortar schools, 9.5% went to IDEA, and 7.1% were "not-renewing". I think those last two categories should be combined for a total of roughly 17%. They should be combined as I suspect the 7.1% will move to another correspondence school for reasons below.

- That non-renewing group represent our private school families who enroll for two core classes and at least two electives to receive the complete allotment. Since the state does not provide allotments to private school families, they can enroll simultaneously with PACE and receive the full allotment from the state.
    - There were about 21 families that did not re-enroll who were using this model, most from Grace Christian School in Anchorage. When these families do not renew, and since the state does not track them to private school, they are recorded as dropouts by the state. To prevent this, we would need a records request from those private schools to code them as transfers. But since they are mainly using our program for electives, they do not request those records from us. This in turn, lowers our graduation rate.
    - After speaking with PACE staff, it appears that most of these private school families left over changes to the allotment reimbursement regulations. Before the parameters were set, these families were spending their allotment on things like skiing, hockey, horse riding, and other electives for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade.
    - This is not unique to our private school families though. Others who left for IDEA cited the changes as a motivating factor in contact logs with teachers. The Superintendent of IDEA informed me at our meeting that their program loses a large group of people when they make large changes. He stated about 100 families leave from big changes to their program, but that impact is much less on their enrollment of nearly 8,000. I would like to follow up with him about those numbers to see if it was a legitimate estimate.
- Moving forward I expect the values in Appendix B to change as we ask PACE staff to reach out to these families directly. Some PACE staff keep their own records which I need to cross reference with my list.

To summarize my findings, it appears that this years enrollment decrease comes from two factors. The first, a natural progression of students back to traditional brick and mortar schools after a Covid-19 driven enrollment increase. The

second, a response to the necessary changes made to bring PACE into more stable and liability safe practices.

SIP: The PACE staff reviewed the school improvement plan at our 10/13 meeting. Our first step was to complete the "Four Big Conclusions" document which allows us to write the official plan.

Our four conclusions were: an increase in in communication could help our graduation rate, our program is not inherently the cause of our low graduation rate, our families feel disconnected from PACE, and there is a need for an MTSS-RTI system to address credit deficient students and those undergoing hardships.

The last two points were added at the meeting. It is the opinion of the staff, and in last year's notes, that some students use PACE for credit recovery. When they leave we do not always record the reason why, as evidenced in Appendix B. Some of these are the result of our practices, but most are a loss of contact with families. We simply cannot make families respond to messages if they do not choose. Additionally, families undergoing hardships such as medical or housing issues do not have the time or means to respond. We lost contact with several of those families.

An MTSS system would allow us to identify these students early and put into place more supports for communication. Hopefully this would prevent the dropouts and lead to better record keeping. I am planning to reach out to a professional who works in this area to help create a system that PACE could use.

Finally, we are still creating our community leadership team that is required by the state. We have recruited one local family to join and PACE staff is seeking out a family in Anchorage. We are not required to have two families, but it would be more representative if we gathered families from all over the state. We hope to have that completed with our first meeting in November.

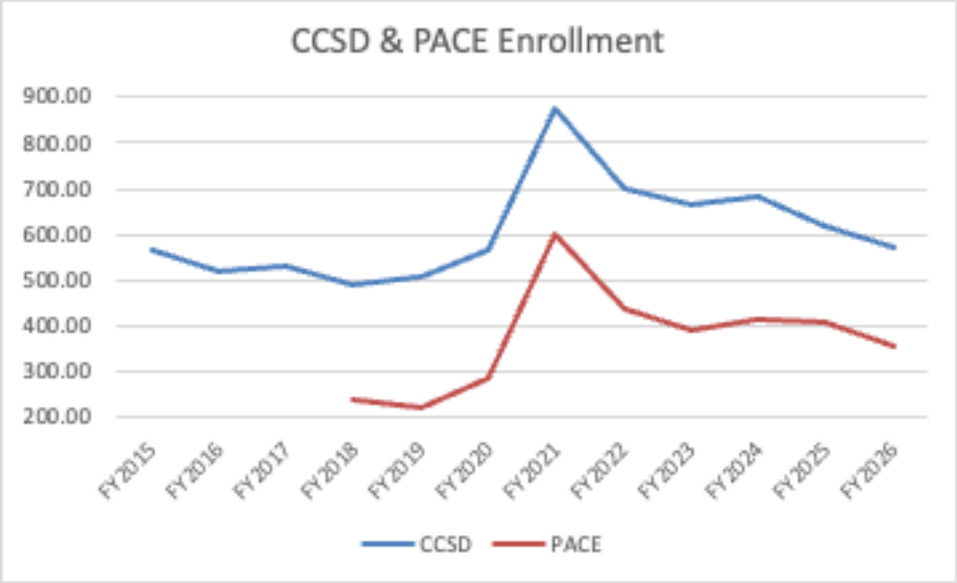
PLC: Part of the meeting on 10/13 was to get our PLC teams set. Staff have signed up for groups and we are working on setting up meeting times. They were briefed about the work to be done and we hope to start meetings in November.

Looking Ahead: Now that enrollment count is over we are looking ahead to the PowerSchool transition. The administrative turnover in PACE created gaps in

institutional knowledge. Some of the work Jared and I did to prepare the transition was already done years ago. However the changes in protocols, file organization, and overall understanding of PACE has made it difficult to know what already exists.

Appendix A: CCSD Enrollment

There are some issues comparing enrollment from FileMaker with the Average Daily Membership information provided by the state. But currently they are the best data sets I can find.



DISTRICT	CCSD	PACE	CHS	% PACE	% CHS
FY2015	564.45				
FY2016	518.11				
FY2017	529.22				
FY2018	491.96	241	82	48.99	16.67
FY2019	508.45	219.6	77	43.19	15.14
FY2020	565.20	286.79		50.74	
FY2021	876.32	601.66		68.66	
FY2022	698.62	436.82	68	62.53	9.73
FY2023	665.85	392.81	82	58.99	12.32
FY2024	681.48	412.52	75	60.53	11.01
FY2025	620.98	406.5	67	65.46	10.79
FY2026	573.09	354.5	72	61.86	12.56

Appendix B: Enrollment Discontinuation Reasons

This data comes straight from FileMaker's records for FY 26. There are some record keeping practices that made required some executive decisions on my part, but I do not believe they influenced the data to a great degree.

The orange and green categories between Military Move and Non Renewal are Fast Track and PEAK correspondence schools. Each had one student reported a move to those programs.

