



London N. Breed
Mayor



Maria Su, Psy.D.
Executive Director



Phil Ginsburg
General Manager



Michael Lambert
City Librarian

August 24, 2020

Dear Vice President Gabriela Lopez, Commissioner Alison Collins, and San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) leadership team:

On behalf of the Mayor and organizing City agencies, we would like to thank you for your participation and guidance in our conversation on August 21st between SFUSD and City representatives about the Mayor's initiative to offer distance learning assistance, social-emotional support and physical activity for our City's highest needs children while SFUSD is unable to welcome its students back to campus. The Mayor shares your deep commitment to serving these children and welcomes your partnership in ensuring we are providing support services to those who need it the most.

As we all understand now, distance learning efforts this past spring exacerbated historic inequities in our communities. Many students who were already facing a large achievement gap saw the divide widen even more. Data shows that African Americans, Latinx, and Pacific Islanders, as well as children in foster families, those who are housing insecure or homeless, and English language learners logged on less frequently than their white counterparts; some did not engage at all. Family support, access to a device and access to reliable internet were all barriers to engagement.

With racial equity and digital access at the forefront of our planning process, the City created the Community Learning Hub initiative under the Mayor's direction to provide full-day, in-person programming to support youth access to technology for distance learning in response to SFUSD's fall programming constraints. The Hubs will provide safe and digitally connected neighborhood spaces within walking distance from children's homes that will be staffed by community-based organizations and the Recreation and Parks Department employees with strong track records of implementing high-quality and culturally competent, youth-development programming. The Hubs will provide additional enrichment programming including STEAM, literacy, and nature-based outdoor play and education, and will offer social-emotional support services and healthy meals and snacks.

In no way are the Community Learning Hubs intended to function as shadow schools or substitutions for schools and academic teachers. In our conversation, it was brought to our attention that the word "Learning" in the initiative title created confusion and concern. In the spirit of collaboration and moving forward, we will rename this effort the Community Hubs Initiative (CHI) and sites will be referred as, "Community Hubs" or "Hubs."

While we would love to serve every child in San Francisco, resource constraints have forced us to focus on and prioritize our children, youth, and families with the greatest need. Thus, our approach has been to connect high need youth to a Community Hub in their neighborhood. These are youth who have been historically oppressed and marginalized; for this initiative, our commitment is for the youth who have been at the back of the line for too long to be moved forward to the front.

Phase I of focused outreach, enrollment and registration is slated to begin Monday, August 24th, and will be offered to families of our target populations. Our priority population criteria include those in: HOPE SF, single room occupancies (SRO), and public housing; homeless youth; foster care youth; English language learners; low-income African American, Latinx,

Pacific Islander and Asian families. The priority eligibility characteristics include applicants who are multi-system involved, who indicate they have no internet access and who are without a digital learning device.

Phase I will be geared towards youth with existing relationships with our community-based organizations (CBOs) and sister city agencies that meet the priority population criteria. We are using this approach to ensure youth feel comfortable, recognize familiar faces, and are placed in an environment that will optimally benefit their distance learning and social emotional development. Our Phase I youth population was identified with careful consideration and through our hard work with city departments including the Human Services Agency, the Housing Authority, HOPE SF and the Recreation and Parks Department. We are also working together with over 80 CBOs to identify and conduct focused outreach to the youth who most need this support.

We are grateful for the interest shown by the Curriculum and Program Committee of the SF Board of Education and look forward to working together to ensure we serve the youth that the District identifies as most in need. You and your staff are in the position to be most knowledgeable about your students who could most benefit from the supports offered at the Community Hubs. We are grateful for your support.

To that end, we request that SFUSD staff review the target list of youth and provide feedback and suggestions by Monday, August 31st. One of our primary guiding principles in identifying our list of high need youth is the proximity of a Community Hub to their home address. This principle is critical for ensuring that Hubs are truly, meaningfully accessible in the context of this pandemic. We ask that your feedback and suggestions keep in mind these considerations. We will incorporate your feedback and suggestions for Phase II.

The Community Hubs Initiative is currently constrained by the lack of large spaces with the necessary infrastructure that allows us to follow health guidelines and to serve youth and staff safely. As we previously discussed, we are eager to expand this program and serve more youth. In order to do this effectively, we will need more locations, funding and in-kind supports. If the District and District partners have suitable spaces available, we would appreciate working together to stand up Community Hubs at those sites and serve even more youth and families. We know the need is great. Therefore, we also request that the District share with us the spaces and facilities that will be available for a Community Hub by August 31st so that we can commence Phase 2 planning.

Finally, we understand that many high need youth also require special learning assistance and extra staff support. We welcome the District's input and resources to ensure we are best able to meet each individual youth's specific learning needs. Your guidance and, more specifically, any resources the District is prepared to provide to this effort are welcomed and appreciated.

Again, we are deeply grateful for your interest in supporting this initiative and your focus on equity. We are confident that, with your input and collaboration, we can broaden and strengthen this work to serve San Francisco's most vulnerable families during this crisis.

In partnership,

Maria Su, Psy.D., Executive Director, SF Department of Children, Youth and Their Families

Phil Ginsburg, General Manager, SF Recreation and Park Department

Michael Lambert, City Librarian, SF Public Library