

August 13, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to express my concern for our students in special populations. If the Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada moves to 100% distance learning except for our students in special populations this will be detrimental to their academic development. Research and data clearly indicates that students with learning disabilities and students acquiring English thrive and progress more quickly when they have peer models to interact with. Students learning English need peer models with lots of interaction to orally process learning and information while also acquiring knowledge around social conversation which allows them to acquire academic language more fluently. Students with learning disabilities also need the peer support and interaction that a classroom can provide. Students with learning disabilities regularly look to their peers for knowledge and information processing. We know that peer interaction is one of the best indicators for academic success for all students.

Distance learning, for all the improvements that have been made, is still lacking in the natural interaction between students. Conversations and information processing is stilted because of the protocols for using online learning such as muting the microphone and needing to wait your turn to speak. This allows students who are learning english and students with learning disabilities to fade into the background. Their academic needs are not fully met with online and distance learning.

Due to the fact that our students missed the last quarter of learning from the past school year, it is even more imperative that all of our students have the opportunity to come to the school campus on a hybrid model that encompasses all of our detailed and extensive safety precautions. This will allow students to begin on the road to academic recovery and continue to grow and learn with grade level content.

Please reconsider your stance on 100% distance learning for our students. If we truly want what is best for all of our students, we need to ensure that they can come to school safely and continue to learn with their peers.

Sincerely,

Sundae Eyer  
EL Coordinator/Instructional Coach  
Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada