

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

Dr. Elizalde sounds reasonable when she's talking to the media. But when the cameras aren't rolling, the actions she and her administration take are unreasonable. Speaking to KXAN on October 1, 2020, she said the following:

"It's not about forcing anyone to come back," said Elizalde. "It's about us working together so that we can again meet the needs of our students, and any time anyone is backed into a corner it doesn't bring out the best in any of those individuals—so we're working very hard to stay away from that."

"I have to recognize we're in a pandemic, and there is nothing normal about anything we're going through," said Elizalde. "So I'm not going to stick to 'well it's insubordination, and this is what we're going to do.' No one is trying to do that right now. Everyone's trying to keep themselves safe. They're trying to do their jobs as best they can."

In reality, teachers who asked to continue teaching remotely have been told they must report to school even when they will have zero students in their classroom. Teachers who are trying to teach remotely have been told they must put in for leave, resign, or even threatened with job abandonment, despite the fact they taught all their classes that day. This feels like we are being backed into a corner. Teachers want to continue teaching their students, but when teachers are put on leave they are not allowed to continue with their duties. Each disruption, a direct result of the district's callousness, ultimately harms students the most. How is this best for kids?

Dr. Elizalde said the following in the Austin American-Statesman on October 5, 2020:

"This is a difficult time for everyone," she said. "We want to be able to personalize as much as we can. Everyone's situation is unique and everyone should be valued."

In reality, teachers and staff do not feel valued. They have asked to work out situations with principals based on their unique needs but are told the principals have no authority to do this. Instead, the teachers and staff are told they must report—even if they have zero students in the room.

In an article published by the Austin Chronicle on October 8, 2020, Austin ISD said the following:

"The district is continuing to work with Education Austin and we are looking forward to their proposal that would ensure all student needs are met," Austin ISD said in an emailed statement. "Our campus principals are working closely with their teams to find creative solutions that support staff needs and the needs of the students on campus."

In reality, we proposed a reasonable solution but the district is dragging its feet. Our volunteer system would allow campuses to cover in-person students while decreasing the risk for all students and staff. There are not that many students in the schools right now. Some schools have twice as many teachers and staff as students. For some reason, the district continues to require all staff to be in the schools. Having more people in the buildings than is absolutely necessary is not the safest solution for the students, the staff, or their families.

Dr. Elizalde, stay true to your words and work with us!
Our students are counting on it.