Kathleen Mortier was interviewed by two major news sources highlighting the need for special education services to continue while recognizing the challenges faced by teachers and families. The articles have drawn the attention of potential donors to help teachers buy classroom supplies and materials to send to families in need.

“Students with special needs have a right, just like all the other kids, to continue learning and moving forward,” she said. “Principals and administrators need to remember that learning is equally important to all their students, whether they’re in regular ed or special ed.”


On March 2, 2020, Peter DeHaas and the San Francisco Disability Business Alliance (SFDBA) had their kickoff breakfast at the Marriott Marquis in San Francisco. Over 100 people attended the event including disability owned businesses, small business supports, advocates, students, local leaders, elected officials, and allies.

“The work of the SFDBA is even more important now for small business owners with disabilities with the fallout of the pandemic. We are having conversations with businesses everyday to help them strategize ways to adjust accordingly to the losses and barriers presented by the pandemic.”

Peter DeHaas, SFDBA Executive Director

He is collaborating with the School of Business and ICCE to host an event integrating leaders from the broader business community, disability owned businesses and students. Check out the full article here: https://sfdba.blogspot.com/2020/03/sfdba-2020-launch-breakfast.html

Due to the sleuthing detective work of Maryssa Mitsch, the Golden State Teacher Grant is now available to all SFSU SPED credential students! The California Student Aid Commission will award one-time grant funds of up to $20,000 for students who teach in special education for 4 years upon graduation.

Thank you for advocating and going that extra mile for our students, Maryssa!
Congratulations to California Deafblind Services (CDBS) Project Coordinator, Maurice Belote, Project Director, Kathleen Mortier, and their team Julier Maier, Myrna Medina, Brian Devereux, and Kayla Coburn! Starting in Fall 2020, CDBS is collaborating with SFSU’s College of Extended Learning to offer The Intervener Training: Deafblind Education certificate program. The online training program prepares paraeducators to serve learners who are deafblind (i.e., a child who is both deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired). Interveners are paraeducators with specialized knowledge and skills in deafblindness. Trained interveners allow school districts and agencies to effectively meet the unique individualized support needs of students who benefit from intervention services. The program provides in-person discussions with deafblindness specialists to supplement online instruction. You guys are amazing! http://www.cadbs.org/sfsu-cdbs-intervener-training-program/

On March 10, 2020, President Lynn Mahoney announced that all face-to-face courses at SFSU would be suspended due to the COVID-19 crises. By March 16, 2020, all courses were taught online and business services conducted remotely. I want to take a moment to reflect on what an incredible accomplishment this was given the short timeline and shelter in place conditions. In less than one week, our special education faculty were able to adapt their instruction through asynchronous and synchronous teaching for 51 seminar courses and 46 supervision sections. With Ting Siu’s lead as our online teaching guru, our faculty mastered I-Learn technology, Flipped classrooms, and ZOOM breakout rooms. With the support from our seminar instructors and fieldwork supervisors, 82 intern teachers (including 50 student teachers) are providing special education services through distance learning and resources for families while schools remain closed. Our Department of Special Education students, despite their own personal challenges, adapted to this new world of teaching and learning and built online communities of practice. Our SPED office staff members, Jeanne, Steve, and Chelsea, were able to seamlessly transition all business operations without any service interruption to faculty, students, and other campus units. What was thought to be impossible was made possible in a matter of weeks. I am so proud and immensely grateful to our faculty, staff, students, and special educators--you are essential workers, and we appreciate all the positive ways that you are contributing, everyday.