



San Francisco Board of Education Parent Advisory Council

Report to the Board of Education

June 9, 2015

The role of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is to represent parent voices and perspectives to inform Board of Education policy discussions and decisions. This report highlights our closing recommendations for San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) to: strengthen its Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP); increase the transparency and accountability of the budget process; and address the frequently asked questions (FAQs) generated during the LCAP community engagement campaign.

Local Control and Accountability Plan Recommendations

In our last report to the Board of Education, the PAC shared several recommendations with the Board of Education and district staff to help inform SFUSD's Local Control Accountability Plan. We are pleased that since then, several of our recommendations have been integrated within the plan to various degrees. (Please see Appendix I for details.)

Nevertheless, the PAC would like to see the following set of recommendations incorporated by the time the Board of Education approves the SFUSD's revised LCAP on June 23, 2015:

Recommendations to Increase Transparency and Accountability Regarding Resource Allocations

- Make it evident what resources are being increased from year-to-year. (Recommendation 7 in May 26, 2015 report)
- Provide a brief rationale for funding allocations and details for programs, services and staff positions funded with supplemental and concentration grant funds listed in Appendix A intended to serve English Learners, low income students and youth in foster care. (Recommendation 15 in May 26, 2015 report)
- Provide a brief narrative about how the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support resources are allocated, coordinated and prioritized to support underserved students with additional needs. (Recommendation 8 in May 26, 2015 report)

These recommendations uphold the intentions behind the state regulations under LCFF, which grant school districts increased flexibility to allocate resources in an equitable manner, and at the same time, require greater transparency and accountability with stakeholders for how funds are utilized to support student success, especially English Language Learners, low-income students and youth in foster care.

Moreover, these recommendations not only support increased transparency and accountability, but they also facilitate parents and other stakeholders' understanding about budget tradeoffs among resources funded and not. This understanding is a critical piece for families to be able to authentically engage, advocate and participate in the decision-making process, both at the school site and district levels, when faced with limited resources.

Top Frequently Asked Questions from LCAP Community Conversations

Throughout the community conversations participants asked many clarifying questions about the district's budget process, and how the new funding formula changes school funding, resources and accountability.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to express numerous questions, concerns and ideas, but the resounding questions that continued to emerge, included the following:

Questions about formulas that SFUSD uses to allocate funds:

1. What is the "Weighted Student Formula" and how is it different from the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)?
2. What factors are given weight other than the LCFF (Local Control Funding Formula) factors? (e.g. The number of students with IEPs? Those who qualify for free/reduced price meals? English Learners? Can we actually know the formula?)
3. What formula is used for the distribution of resources for the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)? What is the "input" data for MTSS that determines the allocations for each school site? How are they each weighted and prioritized?

Questions about Title I funding:

4. What is the "justification" or rationale for Title I funding allocated as "all or nothing" to sites based on their percent of students who qualify, instead of per pupil allocations across all sites with qualifying students?
5. What factors or formulas determine how much money schools are allocated from Title I?

Questions about funding to provide services to students with IEPs (Individualized Education Program) / Section 504:

6. How are federal funds allocated for students receiving special education services (with IEPs and/or 504 services)? Where does the money come from and where does it go? Does it follow students to their sites?
7. Are these funds included in the Weighted Student Formula?

Questions about LCFF's Supplemental & Concentration Grants:

8. How are Supplemental and Concentration Grant funds being distributed/allocated to "increase or improve" services for English Learners, low-income students and youth in foster care?
9. What's the process for this to be decided and who decides?

Families want to understand how budget decisions are made, support student achievement and provide equity across the district to serve all students.

Many of these questions, when answered, will increase the level of transparency about how resources are distributed to equitably serve all students, explain how they align with the district goals and priorities, and perhaps more importantly, facilitate stakeholders' understanding about the mechanisms used to determine budget allocations overall.

Conclusion

The PAC looks forward to seeing SFUSD's revised LCAP for 2015-2016 as it evolves over the next couple of weeks, including the complete LCFF budget numbers reflected in the plan. We hope the recommendations and questions presented in this report will be seriously considered. This is a unique opportunity for the district to demonstrate its vision, commitment and partnership with the families in our public schools in San Francisco for the 21st Century.

If you have any questions or comments about this report, or the PAC's work in general, please contact the PAC at (415) 355-2201, or at pac@sfusd.edu. You can visit our website at www.pacsf.org