



Our Schools, Our Voices: Mapping the Way to Success

Report of Findings and Recommendations From Community Conversations about San Francisco Unified School District's Local Control and Accountability Plan

May 26, 2015

Community Engagement in SFUSD's Local Control and Accountability Plan: A Collaborative Effort

In 2013, California adopted a new model for funding public schools, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), which requires all school districts to create a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Under the state regulations, districts are required to meaningfully engage stakeholders such as parents, students, school staff, labor partners and community members to inform the development of their plan. In turn, districts must state how stakeholder engagement impacts the development of their plan, including the its goals, actions, services and expenditures.

Based on recommendations from the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) last year, in the fall of 2014 SFUSD convened a **LCAP Task Force** with SFUSD staff, representatives of advisory groups, students, labor partners and community organizations to work collaboratively to improve transparency and communication about the LCAP process. Members of the Task Force were instrumental in developing the objectives, content and outreach plan, and helped convene and lead conversations, for community engagement in spring 2015.

The overall goals of this community engagement process were to engage our district's students, families, educators and community members, to:

- Understand state funding priorities and SFUSD's approach to allocating resources, services and supports to schools,
- Inform these central district allocations, and
- Help shape the district's updated Local Control and Accountability Plan.

Our Approach

Community members and district staff from the LCAP Task Force organized and led a series of conversations to share information about SFUSD's existing LCAP, and hear participants' questions, suggestions and priorities, through:

- **Community conversations** in schools and community centers (conducted in Spanish or Cantonese, or in English with interpretation)
- **Focus groups** with community organizations working with families and serving students (including youth in transition or foster care) and with United Educators of San Francisco
- Three **forums open to the general public**, co-hosted by SFUSD with Parents for Public Schools, the Second District PTA, and Support for Families of Children with Disabilities.
- SFUSD's website provided **an online survey** and information that was presented through the forums and conversations, for people who couldn't attend in person.

From March 19 - April 28, 2015 **we heard from over 300 participants** in 23 conversations. By conducting conversations at schools and in trusted community settings we aimed to hear from participants reflecting the diversity of SFUSD’s students and families across differences in language, ethnicity, neighborhood and socioeconomic background. Throughout this process we also **prioritized hearing from students, families and communities intended to be served by LCFF and SFUSD funding priorities:** English Learners, low-income students, youth in foster care, African American students and students who receive special education services.

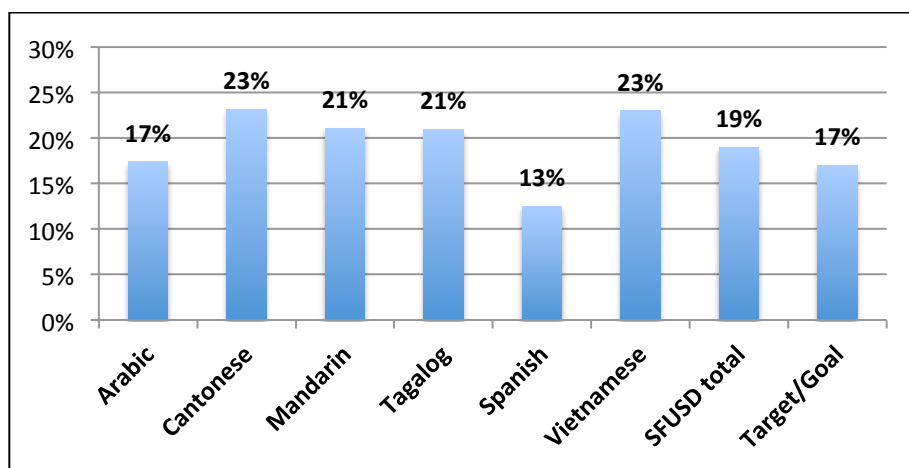
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SFUSD’S REVISED LOCAL PLAN 2015-2016

The recommendations in this report are based on a very early, incomplete draft of the revised 2015-2016 LCAP. At the time of its presentation the draft LCAP did not contain outcomes from 2014-2015, percentages for outcome measures or budgeted expenditures for 2015-2016. For this reason we may have additional recommendations once this information is available, reviewed and evaluated for community impact.

SECTION I: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LCAP GOALS AND MEASURES

Through these community conversations **we identified several goals and measures** to be strengthened or incorporated into SFUSD’s revised LCAP for 2015-2016:

Recommendation 1:
Add a goal to increase the reclassification rate for Spanish speaking ELs by a minimum of 4% to reach the district’s goal of 17%.



As the data above illustrates, the English Learner (EL) reclassification rate for Spanish speaking ELs is significantly lower than their peers as well as the district’s overall reclassification rate. All

other EL subgroups reach the district's current LCAP goal of 17% for reclassification while Spanish speakers do not.

"The Spanish-speaking ELs don't reach the goal in LCAP – what supports is SFUSD providing to address this?" -Parent from the Parent Advisory Council

"I have the same questions about reclassification. For example, my son is low in reading and writing and his teacher says that's why he can't be reclassified. He's in fifth grade. I had a meeting with the teacher, and they just gave me a list for tutoring."
-Spanish-speaking parent at public forum.

"English Learners need high quality instruction program for ELD block to help reclassify."
-Participant at Longfellow Elementary School

Recommendation 2:

Specify the percentage to reduce the academic achievement gap for youth in foster care.

Participants noticed the 2014-2015 LCAP identified a goal to reduce the educational achievement gap for foster youth but did not specify a percentage to measure the reduction margin. Again, the revised 2015-2016 LCAP does not specify a targeted percentage.

"Want to see more data on foster youth and outcomes for them."

- Participant at the Foster Youth Steering Committee

"One of the most important resources at my school is the academic classes. With very little time in school, I wish there were more academic class options. It's important to me because I like to learn as much as I can to feel ready."

-Student from Foster Youth Association

Recommendation 3:

Strengthen the goal to further reduce the suspension rate for African American and Latino students.

Many participants commented on how minimal the change margin is for the reduction of suspension rates for African Americans and Latinos, 2% and .2% respectively, in the 2014-2015 LCAP. **Our recommendation is to strengthen this goal by increasing the growth margin of the reduction in suspensions for African American and Latino students. For example: Reduce the suspension rate for African American students from 40% to 35%, and for Latino students from 26% to 20%.**

“Goals for remedying [suspension] disproportionality are way too meager.”
-Parent from the Parent Advisory Council

“Over the past few years suspensions for African American and Latino students have increased. A high number of students out of class and not learning. Suspension data, referral data...”
-Participant at Elementary School in the Bayview

“For me it’s about improving schools overall and supporting the children, not sending them out or suspending them.”
-Spanish-speaking parent at public forum.

“The rates might have also gone down – fewer suspensions or students being sent home?”
-Participant from Foster Parent Association

Recommendation 4:

Include a goal related to measuring and reducing out-of-class referrals and in-house suspensions, and provide data disaggregated by ethnicity.

While suspensions in our district have declined overall, the data shows there continues to be a disproportionate number of suspensions among African American students and an increase in suspension rates among Latino students between fall 2013 and fall 2014.

Participants expressed concerns that out-of-class referrals and “in-house” suspensions are not being captured, calculated and reflected in the data. To address this concern and ensure and monitor that out-of-class referrals are not increasing as official suspensions decrease, **the recommendation is to include a goal related to measuring and reducing out-of-class referrals and in-house suspensions in the LCAP, providing data disaggregated by ethnicity.**

“Suspensions’ may be down officially but at my school, they are happening but are not being reported.”
-Participant in conversation with UESF

“What about referrals? Where is the data for ‘in house’ suspensions?”
-Parent from the Parent Advisory Council

“I want to look into what teachers know about foster children – to understand the trauma they’ve been through, to stop sending them out of the classroom and calling the parents to come get them. “
-Participant from Foster Parent Association

“A lot of disagreement with that [suspension data]– it’s just not reported, kids are sent out of classrooms or have in-school suspension instead of officially being suspended.”

-Participant from Foster Parent Association

“The suspension data looks really good, but what about students being sent out of class?”

- Participant in conversation with UESF.

Recommendation 5:

Add goals and measures for achievement and progress for students in elementary and middle school grades.

Several participants noted the achievement data captured in the LCAP was limited, reflecting only kindergarten readiness and high school achievement data measures. With the middle school feeder system in place, adding 5th grade readiness could provide important information for district and site leaders alike to anticipate, prepare and provide interventions needed to support incoming 6th graders. Likewise, 8th readiness data could highlight interventions needed to support students who are transiting into 9th grade.

“SFUSD LCAP needs to show measures/goals for elementary and middle school – with the exception of K Readiness no other measures reflected – please add!”

-Parent from the Parent Advisory Council

“Greater supports and measurement of services for middle school students with remedial needs in reading & math.”

-Parent from the Parent Advisory Council

Recommendation 6:

6a. Include goals and measures related to implementing the district’s Family Engagement Plan and Family Engagement standards.

6b. Add a goal to adopt a strategic Family Engagement Plan and allocate the resources to complete and implement it.

The 2014-2015 SFUSD LCAP stated no goals for family engagement. This year some measures and outcome goals related to the district-wide Family Culture and Climate Surveys were incorporated into the LCAP. However, there is no goal or timeline for adopting, implementing and resourcing a Family Engagement Plan, and yet, family engagement is identified as the sixth

strategy for success for students in our district. **The recommendation is to add a goal for adopting a strategic Family Engagement Plan and allocating the resources to complete and implement it.**

“Where is the funding and/or staff to meet these family engagement goals?”

-Parent at community forum.

SECTION II: Recommendations for LCAP Actions, Services and Supports

We also identified several **actions, services and supports** related to achieving current LCAP goals and measures, to be articulated in the revised LCAP for 2015-2016:

Recommendation 7:

Make it evident what resources are being increased from year-to-year.

During our community conversation participants express a desire to see how centrally-allocated resources, including staff positions, are being increased to support teachers and students - in particular student populations prioritized by LCFF funding and SFUSD strategic initiatives.

“Parents want data on how the money is spent.”

-Participant from Foster Parent Association

“There needs to be more support - money towards having a nurse, Wellness Coordinator, Juvenile Justice liaison.”

-Parent from the Indian Education Program

“[In] some schools you have to have a certain number or percentage of kids to get the help or services. So if you’re at a school with a low number of students who need the help – they need the help but they’re not getting it. I know before that at some schools the parents would raise the funds and the services would go to the “top kids” and the ones who needed help didn’t get it. The state put in place some regulations related to funding – but since they took away the ‘categorical funds’ – who’s paying attention to this, about the decisions being made?”

-Participant from Foster Parent Association

Recommendation 8:

Provide a brief narrative about how the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support resources are allocated, coordinated and prioritized to serve high-needs students.

Participants also wanted to know how **supports are being allocated, coordinated and prioritized** to serve high-needs students – including those with needs for mental health services, suffering from trauma, receiving Special Education services and/or with behavioral challenges.

“All schools that serve low income and English Learners need more money because they have a higher population of students with trauma” -Parent from Indian Education PAC

Recommendation 9:

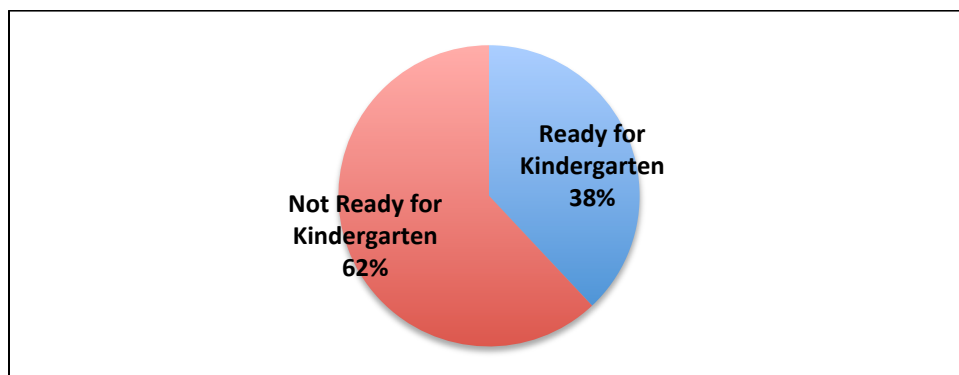
Articulate strategies being implemented to increase English language proficiency among Spanish speaking English Learners, in particular, to close the gap in their reclassification as Fluent English Proficient, include budget allocations to support these strategies.

“What additional supports are Spanish-speaking ELs receiving to be reclassified? They are the LEAST reclassified!” -Parent from the Parent Advisory Council

“What measures does the district take when there are many students in a school that aren’t being reclassified?” -Spanish-speaking parent at public forum

Recommendation 10:

Articulate services, supports and strategies being implemented to increase kindergarten readiness for children attending SFUSD PreK programs, including budget allocations to support these efforts.



The data in this chart stood out to participants during community conversation and generated numerous questions, concerns and comments.

“Why are kids who attended SFUSD PreK not prepared for Kindergarten? What more can be done to get them ready?” -Parent at community forum.

“Unbelievable that such a wealthy city can have such a low percentage of kids ready for kindergarten.” -Parent from the Parent Advisory Council

“How would you recommend to prepare for kindergarten?”

- Parent from the Indian Education PAC

Recommendation 11:

State specific activities to engage and support families and identify a point person at each school site, provide them with a stipend and support from the Office of Family and Community Engagement with content, presentations, menu of PDs, and technical assistance.

“I’ve liked the workshops very much, to learn about helping my children; it helps me and helps my children. But many times there isn’t translation and it’s hard to have good communication with the teachers.”

-Spanish-speaking parent at public forum.

“One challenge I’ve experienced is there has only been one person in the school who really connected with my family and informed them about me and my school situation.”

-High school student.

“Offer different types of workshops – i.e. ELD classes, offer families to visit class a few times a year. This would offer a group meeting, to update families in addition to individual meetings during conference week.”

-Parent from the Parent Advisory Council

Recommendation 12:

Incorporate resources to support the reduction of the educational achievement gap for foster youth, including providing full funding for the Social Worker, Child Welfare Attendance Liaison, and Counselor positions partially funded through LCFF allocations.

In 2014-2015, LCFF allocations provided partial funding (\$150,000) for the positions of a Social Worker, Child Welfare Attendance Liaison and Counselor to serve the nearly 600 foster youth enrolled in our district in fall 2014. The matching grant that supplemented these three positions has been reduced for the 2015-2016 school year. We recommend fully funding these

positions to continue providing the direct support these positions offer the foster youth in our district.

"[One of the most important resources at my school is] the Wellness Program. Therapy could be offered."

-Student from Foster Youth Association

"Need to increase or improve services for foster youth. School's need more benefits like educational, employment and housing services"

-Student from Foster Youth Association

Recommendation 13:

Incorporate actions, services and resource allocations to support African American students.

While the state regulations do not require school districts to directly identify supports for African American students in the LCAP, we know there are intentional efforts being made in SFUSD to support the success of African American students. During our community conversations last year, African American families expressed their concerns about the LCAP not addressing their children's specific educational needs. This year, again, we heard skepticism from African American (AA) families in the Bayview about their input resulting in any changes for their children's schools and education in general. This addition would:

1. Acknowledge that African American parents' concerns have been heard.
2. Demonstrate the district intentions to address the needs of African American students.
3. Support efforts to rebuild trust with the African American community.

"The attention the district is giving to educating African American kids [makes me feel optimistic]. I hope it results in more services and higher graduation rates for them.

-Participant at Support for Families forum

"I have been at this school since the day we started off with these kinds of meetings, we wrote things down, we got gift cards for coming to the programs. I'm trying to understand what this is, what's different about this, what's going on? We can say all these things that we want but is any of it going to happen? Is any of this new money going to come over here to our schools?"

-Participant from a school in the Bayview

Recommendation 14:

Establish an earlier timeline for community engagement and provide district and site-based budget Infographics in the fall to start the conversation and increase awareness of the LCAP development and overall budget process.

"I can't say I'm surprised by any of this – I'm still trying to figure out where all those millions of dollars gave to schools – basically the same as everyone else – who's monitoring this? We want the kind of accountability where if there's a class of 20 kids and 19 are passing and one is not, that the principal looks in and says, What are we going to do to help that student?"

-Participant from the Foster Parent Association

Recommendation 15:

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.

The budget format from the former PEEF (Public Education Enrichment Fund) is an exemplary model to follow for the allocations of resources provided under LCFF. It fosters transparency, accountability and ease of understanding with the detailed breakdown of:

- Expenditures
- Programs, services and staff positions being funded
- Brief narrative to explain the rationale for the funding allocation

"This is going to generate a flood of information – who's monitoring all this, who's reading all these plans? The people in the room seem to really care about this – but who's going to read this? Is the Board of Education just going to say, "That's nice but we don't have the money." -Participant from the Foster Parent Association

"I have the same kind of question – even with the money that's allocated to the schools, who's monitoring that this is what the money is actually being spent on?"

-Participant from the Foster Parent Association

How We Got Here: Information We Shared Through Community Conversations

In each conversation we presented information about the Local Control Funding Formula and the state's emphasis on equity, flexibility and accountability. Through small group activities we shared information about the different levels of supports SFUSD provides schools; examples of goals and measures described in SFUSD's current LCAP; and district data related to these goals. Finally, we asked participants to share ideas about resources and services that are effective, and could be improved or increased; then identified their priorities and supports they feel are most important to support students.

The information was organized through three themes: ***Student Access & Achievement***, ***Student Engagement & School Climate***, and ***Family Engagement***. Participants identified priorities related to all three of these areas, but in nearly every conversation **the theme that generated the most discussion and feedback was Student Engagement and School Climate**.

What We Heard: Findings from the Conversations

- Students, families and staff shared many concrete examples of supports and services that are important – and that work – to support students.
- While the overall tone of many discussions was positive, participants in every conversation had questions about how funds and services are being monitored and evaluated, and about the mechanisms for accountability.
- Participants in some conversations (especially in African American communities) were deeply skeptical about whether this engagement process would result in changes or improvements for their children's schools.
- Many participants expressed dismay about the trauma that students are experiencing and bring to school. They emphasized the importance of **better aligning and prioritizing resources, such as sufficient staff supports in classrooms and school-wide** where students are experiencing trauma and teachers are struggling to create more positive learning conditions, as well as adequate space for students who need time to de-escalate.

These primary themes emerged across the different conversations among students, families, school staff and community members, related to the overall themes of the LCAP:

Student Access and Achievement

- Participants in every conversation emphasized the importance of teachers being culturally competent, caring about their students as individuals and understanding the experiences that students bring to school. This point was particularly emphasized by those working with families and youth in transition, youth in foster care and in communities experiencing trauma.

- They highlighted the need to build the capacity of teachers to manage their classrooms and provide differentiated, integrated instruction, noting the combination of class size reduction and increased classroom staff as concrete actions to support these ends.
- Many participants – especially students – emphasized the **need for a curriculum that’s more engaging, hands-on, and relevant**. They also prioritized the need for tutoring, bilingual paraprofessionals, and **increased support in afterschool programs aligned with specific student needs**, especially for English Learners and students receiving Special Education services.
- Participants had many questions and concerns about students being ready for Kindergarten, and some wanted to see measures of academic achievement in the LCAP in addition to those focused on high school data points (such as graduation rates and UC/CSU eligibility) and Kindergarten readiness

Student Engagement and School Climate

- Participants observed that African American and Latino students continue to be disproportionately suspended, across all grade levels. They emphasized that, while formal suspensions may be down, **in-house suspensions and out of class referrals are significant** and not being reported.
- Across all the conversations participants identified the need to **provide behavior supports** to reduce out of class referrals. They highlighted the need to **increase, prioritize and better coordinate staff providing mental health and behavior supports**, including counselors; social workers; nurses; psychologists; Rtl, Behavioral Action Team and Restorative Practices coaches; student advisors; and paraprofessionals.
- In several instances, participants stressed the need for physical space to safely address behavioral challenges and *still* provide a learning environment to reduce loss of instructional time.
- Most families of English Learners – even parents who felt welcomed and involved in their children’s schools – did not understand or know about the procedures and the importance of students being reclassified as Fluent English Proficient. Participants were deeply concerned that while SFUSD’s English Learners on the whole are meeting district goals for reclassification, **students who are Spanish speakers are significantly behind and wondered what strategies are being put into place to address this gap.**

Family Engagement

- As in every community engagement initiative over the past several years, families, students, educators and community members emphasized the **need for better communication with teachers and schools** on the whole.

- Many parents expressed the desire to learn about **ways to support their children** at home, including information at the beginning of the year about milestones and expectations that are used to assess their children’s development, growth and success to advance in school.
- Parents, district staff and community members talked about the importance of working with families to support their students and schools, and noted the current LCAP does not **include goals or measures related to family engagement**, or refer to SFUSD’s Family Engagement Standards.

Serving Youth in Foster Care or in Transitional Housing

- During focus groups with students, families, and community agencies providing services to youth in foster care and to families and youth in transitional housing, participants stressed the importance of school and district staff reaching out to encourage and support students to stay in school.
- Participants noted that students and families need additional help to access the services that are available. Students, guardians and community members expressed the need for both **communication** about ways to support their students’ education; and for **direct services** such as help applying for college, financial aid and scholarships.

Conclusion

We hope that SFUSD will seriously consider these recommendations as the 2015-2016 LCAP continues to be revised. Some of the specific points detailed in this report are new, but many of these ideas, concerns and questions have been expressed before. The fact that they continue to come up highlights the need for students, families, staff and community members to see and feel concrete changes that reflect their experiences and acknowledges the value of their voices.

At a minimum, stakeholders want to:

- See greater transparency and accountability
- Understand how LCFF resources support ALL students, in particular English Learners, low income students and youth in foster care
- See the shift in resources from year-to-year

Our community recognizes that work is happening in SFUSD to provide supports for students, teachers and schools. Many of these efforts, however, are not captured in the current LCAP. We believe that incorporating the above recommendations – and implementing these strategies across the district - will help reduce the level of skepticism that exists and even begin to restore trust in SFUSD with many of our students’ families and communities.

Appendix I: SFUSD's LCAP Task Force

Based on recommendations from the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) last spring, in the fall of 2014 SFUSD convened district staff and representatives of advisory groups, labor partners and community organizations to work collaboratively as the **LCAP Task Force**. Members of the Task Force developed the objectives, content, and outreach plan, and helped convene and lead conversations, for the community engagement process during spring 2015. Participants in SFUSD's LCAP Task Force include:

SFUSD Staff and Labor Partners

- Access and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Families and Youth In Transition (FYIT)
- Foster Youth Services
- Policy and Operations
- United Educators of San Francisco

SFUSD Advisory Committees

- African American Parent Advisory Council (AAPAC)
- District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC)
- Parent Advisory Council (PAC)
- Student Advisory Council (SAC)

Community-Based Organizations

- Chinese for Affirmative Action
- Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth
- Mission Graduates
- Parents for Public Schools-SF (PPS)
- Peer Resources
- Second District PTA
- Support for Families of Children with Disabilities

The purpose of SFUSD's LCAP Task Force is to:

1. Increase and improve transparency, accountability and communication about the Local Control and Accountability Plan (both the current Plan, and revisions for 2015-16)
2. Review specific elements within the LCAP for the current year (2014-15), including
 - Section 3 - Appendix A budget for 2014-15
 - Section 2 – Goals & measures, and whether these reflect/demonstrate student success
3. Support timely community engagement to inform revisions to the LCAP for 2015-16.

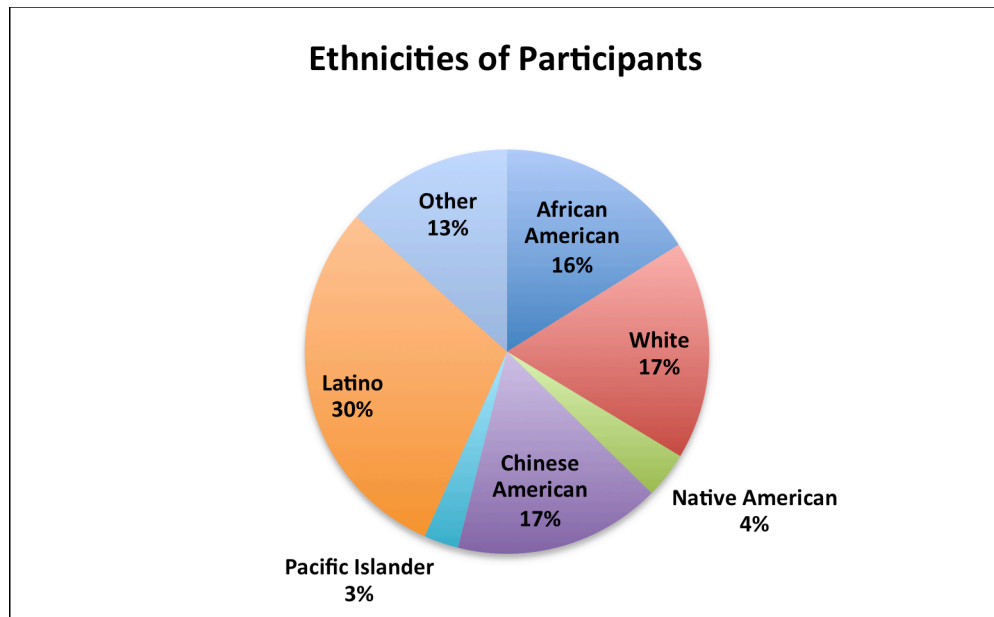
Appendix II: Who We Heard from: Participants in Community Conversations

From March 19 - April 28, 2015 we heard from **over 300 participants** in 23 conversations, surpassing our objectives for both the number of conversations and participants.

By conducting conversations at schools and in trusted community settings we were successful in reaching our goal of hearing from participants reflecting the diversity of SFUSD's students and families across differences in ethnicity, language, neighborhood and socioeconomic background. We also **prioritized hearing from students, families and communities intended to be served by LCFF and SFUSD funding priorities**: English Learners, low-income students, youth in foster care, African American students and students who receive Special Education services.

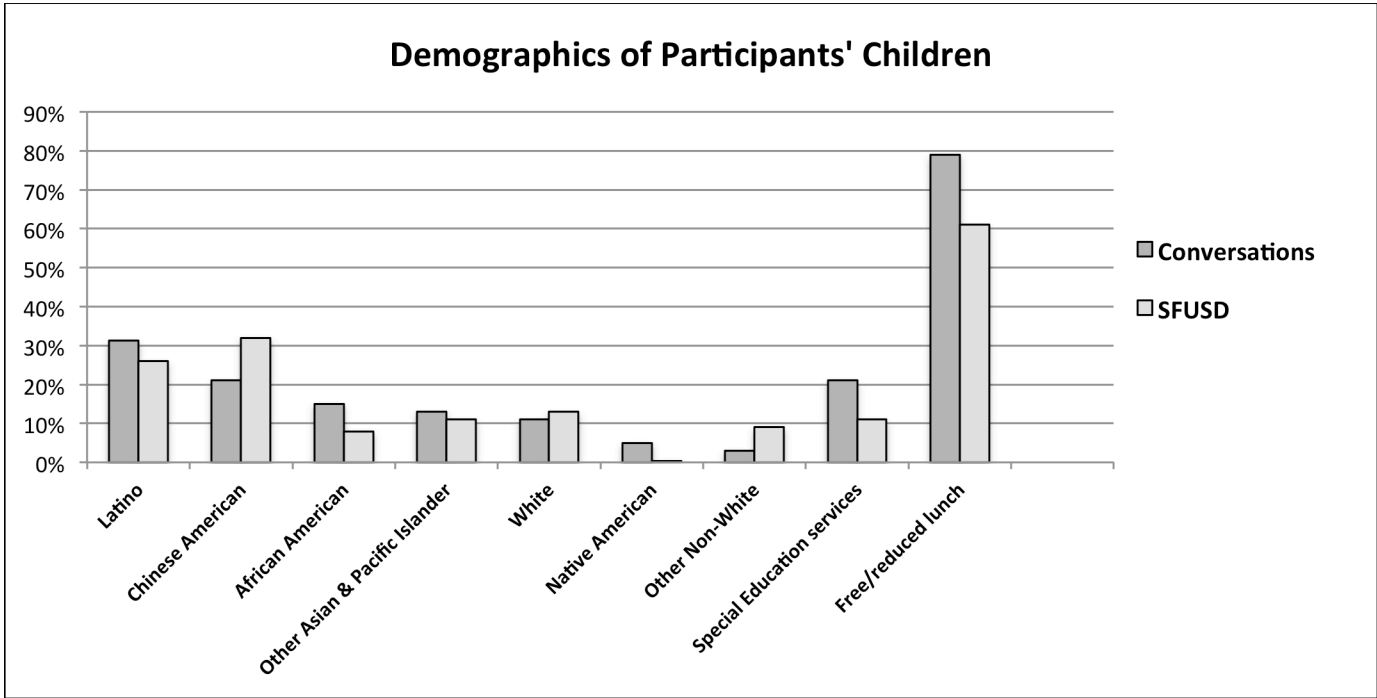
Based on surveys of participants:

- ✓ 72% were parents or guardians
- ✓ 4% were students
- ✓ 14% were educators/district staff
- ✓ 9% were community members



Participants spoke **many home languages**:

- ✓ 46% speak English at home
- ✓ 32% speak Spanish at home
- ✓ 27% speak Chinese at home
- ✓ 15% speak other languages, including Arabic, Cambodian, Czech, Navajo, Russian, Samoan, Tagalog, and Vietnamese



Participants represented 45 different SFUSD schools:

Early Education and Elementary Schools: Alvarado, Bret Harte, Bryant, Carver, Cesar Chavez, Chinese Education Center, Cleveland, ER Taylor, Flynn, Garfield, Glen Park, Grattan, Guadalupe, Junipero Serra, Longfellow, Malcolm X Academy, Marshall, Mission Education Center, Moscone, Sanchez, Sheridan, Spring Valley, Tenderloin Community School, Tule Elk Park

K-8 Schools: Bessie Carmichael, Buena Vista Horace Mann, Lawton, Claire Lilienthal

Middle Schools: Aptos, Denman, Everett, Francisco, AP Giannini, Hoover, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James Lick, Marina, Presidio, Roosevelt, Visitacion Valley

High Schools: Lincoln, Lowell, Mission, John O'Connell, Washington

Charter Schools: Edison Charter Academy, KIPP Bayview Academy, San Francisco Flex Academy

Where we held the conversations and focus groups:

At schools: Carver Elementary School, Chinese Education Center, Denman Middle School, Garfield Elementary School, Hoover Middle School, Longfellow Elementary School, Malcolm X Academy, Mission High School, Spring Valley Elementary School, and Tenderloin Community School.

With community groups: Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, Mission Graduates, Parents for Public Schools, and Support for Families of Children with Disabilities.

Focus groups: Families and Youth in Transition, Family Engagement Network, Foster Parent Association, Foster Youth Stakeholders, and United Educators of San Francisco/Division Meeting.

SFUSD advisory committees: Indian Education Parent Advisory Council and Parent Advisory Council to Board of Education.

For more information about the Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control Accountability Plans...

SFUSD: www.sfusd.edu/lcflcap
or email budget@sfusd.edu

San Francisco Board of Education's Parent Advisory Council:
www.pacsf.org

Chinese for Affirmative Action: www.caasf.org

Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth:
www.colemandadvocates.org

Mission Graduates: www.missiongraduates.org

Parents for Public Schools-SF (PPS): www.ppsf.org

Parent Teacher Association/2nd District PTA: www.sfpta.org

Support for Families of Children with Disabilities:
www.supportforfamilies.org

California state PTA: www.capta.org