Our Schools, Our Voices:
Mapping the Way to Success

Preliminary Findings
from Community Conversations
about San Francisco Unified School District’s
Local Control Accountability Plan

April 24, 2014
For more information about the Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control Accountability Plans...

SFUSD:  [www.sfusd.edu](http://www.sfusd.edu)
Our LCFF/LCAP page: [www.sfusd.edu/lcfflcap](http://www.sfusd.edu/lcfflcap)
or email [budget@sfusd.edu](mailto:budget@sfusd.edu)

San Francisco Board of Education’s Parent Advisory Council:
[www.pacsf.org](http://www.pacsf.org)

Chinese for Affirmative Action:  [www.caasf.org](http://www.caasf.org)

Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth:
[www.colemandadvocates.org](http://www.colemandadvocates.org)

Mission Graduates:  [www.missiongraduates.org](http://www.missiongraduates.org)

Parents for Public Schools-SF:  [www.ppssf.org](http://www.ppssf.org)

San Francisco’s Parent Teacher Association/2nd District PTA:
[www.sfpta.org](http://www.sfpta.org)

California State PTA:  [www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)
Community Engagement in SFUSD’s
Local Control Accountability Plan: A Collective Effort

Regulations under the state of California’s new funding model, the Local Control Funding Formula, require a Parent Advisory Council and District English Learner Advisory Committee to provide feedback to the district’s Local Control Accountability Plan.

This spring a group of community organizations and SFUSD staff worked in collaboration to lead a much broader community engagement process than required by the state – developing materials, conducting conversations and compiling these findings together.

In addition to the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and District English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC), the partnership in this process includes:

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

SFUSD Offices and Programs
• Office of Access and Equity
• Office of Family and Community Engagement
• Families and Youth In Transition (FYIT)
• Foster Youth Services
• Student Advisory Council

These preliminary findings were shared in a public forum on April 24, 2014. The objectives in sharing our findings (even while conducting a few additional forums and conversations) are:

• To share our findings – as a work-in-progress - about what families, service providers and school communities think is working and what needs to be increased or improved to support students in San Francisco.

• To provide the opportunity for district staff to reflect on how parents’ ideas might inform their work.

• To foster two-way communication and encourage a mutual exchange of information, ideas and perspectives.

A formal report of Findings and Recommendations will be presented in a meeting of the San Francisco Board of Education on Tuesday, May 27, 2014.
Our Approach

SFUSD staff and community partners worked collectively to:
- Strategically map a larger community engagement plan
- Coordinate outreach efforts
- Develop materials, conduct conversations, review transcripts and compile the findings

We heard community questions, concerns and suggestions through:
- **Community conversations** in schools and community centers, with focused outreach to specific sites & family populations (led in Spanish or Cantonese, or with interpretation)
- **Focus groups** with community organizations working with families and serving students (including youth in transition or foster care)
- Three **forums open to the general public**, co-hosted by SFUSD with Parents for Public Schools, the Second District PTA, and the Coalition to Close the Gap.

The objectives of each conversation (and our overall effort) were to:
- **Share information** about how new state funding for public schools will support our students in San Francisco
- **Provide examples** of SFUSD’s goals and strategies to support students to succeed
- **Hear from 200-250 participants** about what is working, and what could be increased or improved, to help SFUSD’s students be successful – especially our low-income students, English Learners and youth in foster care.

Who We Heard From

Between March 18 and April 18, 2014 we conducted 24 conversations about the district’s Local Plan and heard from over 300 participants. Our outreach continues, with one public forum and several community conversations scheduled in early May. Based on surveys of participants:
- 69% were parents/guardians
- 8% were high-school students
- 10% were educators/district staff
- 16% were community members

Participants represented 60 different SFUSD schools:
- 29 Early Education and K-5 schools
- 4 K-8 schools
- 12 Middle schools
- 15 High schools
- 5 non-SFUSD schools (private and charter schools)
- Several community-based or public agencies working with students and families
Participants spoke many home languages:
✓ 48% speak English at home
✓ 30% speak Spanish at home
✓ 19% speak Chinese at home
✓ 1% speak Japanese at home
✓ 1% speak Amharic at home
✓ 0.5% speak Eritrean at home
**Preliminary Findings: What We Heard in the Conversations**

In each conversation we asked participants to share their ideas about what’s working, what could be improved or increased, and what success would look like, for three topic areas related to priorities the LCAP needs to address. These preliminary findings include overall themes that emerged across many different conversations; participants’ “Top 10 Questions;” their ideas related to Student Access and Achievement, Student Engagement and School Climate, and Family Engagement; and concerns about school funding and accountability.

**Connecting Themes Across the Many Different LCAP Conversations**

- Participants recognize that many things are working well in schools – but they’re inconsistent across the district and connected to deeper inequities.
  - Access to programs, resources & classes
  - Cultural competence & teacher skills
  - Restorative Practices happening
  - SST and IEP process going well
  - Knowing about/accessing community resources & services

- Across all conversations participants expressed their desire for more & improved communication. It’s working in some places but also inconsistent, not systemic.
  - Families want to know when students are struggling, before their report card comes home
  - Better communication between teachers, schools & families
  - Among/between schools
  - Among/between schools & CBOs

- Participants stressed the importance of schools creating a welcoming and inclusive environment – and that this isn’t true in schools across the district.

- Conversations with families of under-served students highlighted concerns about schools having low expectations for their children, not liking or understanding them, and not supporting them to achieve.

- Some participants expressed concern that LCAP doesn’t address supporting African American (and other) students who are not English Learners, low income or in foster care – but who SFUSD is not serving.

- Conversations with families of higher-performing students highlighted the desire for more challenging & differentiated teaching, again based on knowing each child’s needs & supporting them to go farther.
Top 10 Questions from LCAP Community Conversations

These are questions we heard during many conversations, or paraphrase similar questions or concerns written on notes and shared through “parking lot” charts.

1. Will my voice really be taken into consideration as part of this planning process or will the district not listen to us and do what it wants to anyway? In light of previous planning processes where this was the perception of what happened, how will this planning process be different?

2. How is the district going to ensure transparency with families regarding what is in the LCAP once it’s adopted? How will be parents involved in the ongoing accountability measures for the District regarding the LCAP?

3. How will LCFF funds be divided among the schools? Is it different than before? Will any of the funds follow students? If so, which funds?

4. How will the LCAP address ongoing issues of equity between schools, and between students within schools? (For example, previously documented disparities within Dual Immersion language programs, and disparities between schools’ parent & community fundraising.)

5. How does the district propose to address greater alignment with the Common Core? Is there a plan to increase the access to technology and education in advance of the Smarter Balanced Assessments? How will families be kept informed as to the Districts’ decision-making about this?

6. How are teachers and principals trained and held accountable within the LCAP? How can the school district communicate better to parents about the types of trainings teachers and school administrators participate in, and the ongoing accountability practices for teachers and administrators?

7. How will the district expand and improve the way schools implement Restorative Practices, especially in light of the district’s commitment to reduce suspensions?

8. What is an English Learner? What are the current services the District provides to English Learners? How will the LCAP seek to increase or improve on these services?

9. What does LCAP mean for the district’s commitment to a community school strategy? As this strategy addresses multiple areas of district focus, how can additional resources be allocated to full service community schools or provide community school components in more schools?

10. How does the LCAP address the particular needs of African American students? Are they only included as a subset of the low-income students?
For Student Access and Achievement, people want to see an increase/improvement of...

- **Teacher & Principal quality and leadership**
  - Skills / process for evaluation / accountability
  - Cultural competence
  - Training, professional development, and support – so we retain great teachers.
  - Qualified and reliable substitute teachers (including bilingual)
  - More high quality bilingual teachers

- **Support for students – in general**
  - Counseling and tutoring, including bilingual counselors
  - Mentoring
  - Credit recovery opportunities

- **Support for students with special needs/in Special Education**
  - More individualized support & staff to provide that during the regular school day
  - Increased access to and services in afterschool programs
  - IEPs done on time, implemented as written

- **Information about English proficiency reclassification**
  - Families want to understand reclassification requirements, procedures and important timelines
  - Help families support students in the reclassification process
  - Increased ELD support for EL students (during after school, in 1-on-1 or small groups, etc.)

- **Curriculum / academic programs**
  - Increased access to afterschool and other Out of School Time programs
  - Increased access to Summer programs for all
  - More arts & music, project-based learning, and increased language pathways programs
  - Technology within curriculum (not just using computers for testing)

- **More staff in classrooms, to know each student & their needs**
  - Differentiate instruction – to challenge and support all students
  - Smaller class size as a way to support this
  - Additional support staff (including bilingual skills) in classrooms for more individual support

- **Collaboration**
  - Between teachers within schools
  - Between school-day & afterschool staff
  - Across different schools: share best practices, what’s working
  - School staff being more aware of community services & resources
For Student Engagement & School Climate, people want to see an increase/improvement of...

- Engaging & relevant practices
  - Engaging & relevant curriculum that’s connected to “real world” experiences
  - Engaging and interactive teaching practices
  - Seeing our students / demographics in curriculum
  - Sports, arts and activities – especially after school
  - Connecting students to internships; exposing students to career opportunities

- Promote and support safety and wellness
  - Increase staff to support safety and student wellness (Social Workers & nurses, counselors, etc.)
  - More adult supervision in yard, at recess & lunch

- Improve systems to get, share & use data:
  - More positive responses to resolve truancy
  - Monitor and reduce out of class referrals & in-school suspensions
  - Electronic cum. files so easier to access student data

- More consistent use of Restorative Practices
  - Reduce bullying and discrimination toward newcomers and other students

- Promote and Support Collaboration
  - Among teachers, other staff & service providers (both SFUSD and CBOs)
  - Across schools
For Family Engagement, people want to see an increase / improvement of...

- **Improve communication between school and families**
  - We don’t hear from teacher early enough when child is struggling academically – not until report card or parent-teacher conference
  - We only get the phone call when there’s a behavior problem
  - More immediate access to student data – like the CLA and other performance tests
  - School Loop – not all teachers use it, and not all families have access to it

- **Have someone at each school with clear responsibility to focus on family engagement**
  - Clarify role of Family Liaison
  - Shouldn’t just be a half-time position

- **Acknowledge and address conflicts and build community**
  - Across differences in families’ ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and home language
  - Need specific goals, action plans and accountability for school staff’s cultural competence

- **Make it possible for families of all students and cultures to participate**
  - Ensure translation of written materials, and interpretation for events and meetings
  - Have events, meetings, appointments (e.g. SSTs, IEPs) at more flexible times/off hours so working families can participate
  - Make schools, events and activities more welcoming to families of all students & cultures

- **Expand opportunities for adult learning and leadership development**
  - Classes to learn English, literacy, computers, etc.
  - Workshops and training on how to support students
  - Support parents to participate in school and district governance & decision-making
Concerns about Accountability, Funding and Equity

➢ Accountability
  ▪ How will schools and the district be accountable for how funds are allocated and whether they serve students they’re meant to?
  ▪ Do our voices really count in this process?

➢ Inequities of parent-based fundraising
  ▪ Wealthier school communities raise funds for programs that other schools don’t have access to
  ▪ Within schools, some programs offered only to students whose families can pay
  ▪ How does the district look at this / how will this inequity be addressed?

Next Steps

The next steps in concluding the process of community engagement in SFUSD’s Local Control Accountability Plan include actions by the school district and community partners:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct the final public forum and community conversations</td>
<td>SFUSD and community partners</td>
<td>Complete by May 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compile formal findings from community conversations and feedback gathered through SFUSD’s online survey</td>
<td>SFUSD and community partners</td>
<td>Complete by May 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share the draft Local Control Accountability Plan for feedback</td>
<td>SFUSD</td>
<td>May 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present formal Findings from community feedback, and Recommendations to the Board of Education and SFUSD leaders</td>
<td>Community partners</td>
<td>May 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adopt SFUSD’s Local Control Accountability Plan</td>
<td>San Francisco Board of Education</td>
<td>June 24</td>
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