



Our Schools, Our Voices Mapping the Way to Success

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

May 27, 2014

Report of Findings from Community Conversations about SFUSD's Local Control Accountability Plan: A Collective Effort

May 2014

Executive Summary

State regulations under the new funding model, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), require the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) to provide feedback to the district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

As one of the official parent advisory bodies to provide input on the LCAP, the PAC invited our community partners to join outreach efforts in gathering input from a broad spectrum of parents to help shape the LCAP. Our community partners in this work include:

Chinese for Affirmative Action
Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth
Mission Graduates
Parents for Public Schools
Second District Parent Teacher Association
Support for Families of Children with Disabilities

Together we worked with SFUSD staff from the DELAC and the Office of Family and Community Engagement to develop the framework, materials and timeline for families to provide input on the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). We strategically mapped our outreach efforts to hear from families across the district, especially those of English Language Learners, low-income students, foster youth and students with special needs, and then conducted 29 community conversations, focus groups and public forums to hear directly from families about what they think students need to be successful in SFUSD schools.

From March 18th through May 15th, we collectively heard from over 400 participants about what is working, and what could be increase or improved in our schools to share with district staff and the Board of Education to help inform SFUSD's Local Control Accountability Plan.

This report presents our findings from these community conversations, and our preliminary recommendations for the district to strengthen the community engagement process; the content of the LCAP; and considerations for increasing and/or improving services, programs and strategies being implemented to support student success.

Our Approach

Our team worked with SFUSD staff collectively to:

- Strategically map a larger community engagement plan
- Coordinate outreach efforts to invite different school sites, community groups and service providers to host community conversation
- 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 (seven conducted in Spanish and two in Cantonese, and others with interpretation, including Arabic, Amharic, Cantonese, Eritrean, Japanese, Spanish and Vietnamese)
- **Focus groups** with community organizations working with families and serving students (including the Families and Youth In Transition Council, Foster Youth Services Providers Council, the Foster Parents Association, SFUSD’s Family Engagement Network, members of the African American Parent Advisory Council, the Indian Education Parent Advisory Committee and the Student Advisory Council’s Youth Leadership Summit)
- **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 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.*

We organized the eight state priorities the district is required to address in the Local Control Accountability Plan into three central themes: Student Access and Achievement, Student Engagement and School Climate, and Family Engagement. In each conversation, participants were asked to share their ideas about what’s working, what more could be done to improve or increase services, and what success would look like for each of these primary areas. In nearly half of the conversations participants were given the opportunity to prioritize services they would like to see increased or improved by indicating what they cared about the most with three “dots.”

Who We Heard From

Between March 18 and May 15, 2014 **we conducted 29 conversations** about the district's Local Plan and **heard from over 400 participants**. Based on surveys of participants:

- ✓ 70% were parents/guardians
- ✓ 6% were high-school students
- ✓ 11% were educators/district staff
- ✓ 14% were community members

They represented **68 different SFUSD schools**:

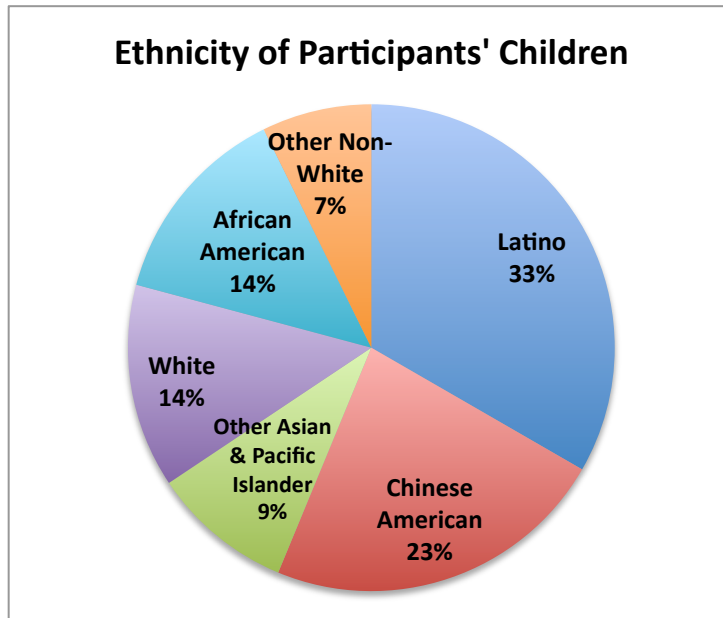
- 36 Early Education and K-5 schools
- 5 K-8 schools
- 12 Middle schools
- 15 High schools
- 5 non-SFUSD schools (private and charter schools)
- Several community-based or public agencies working with students and families

Of the participants:

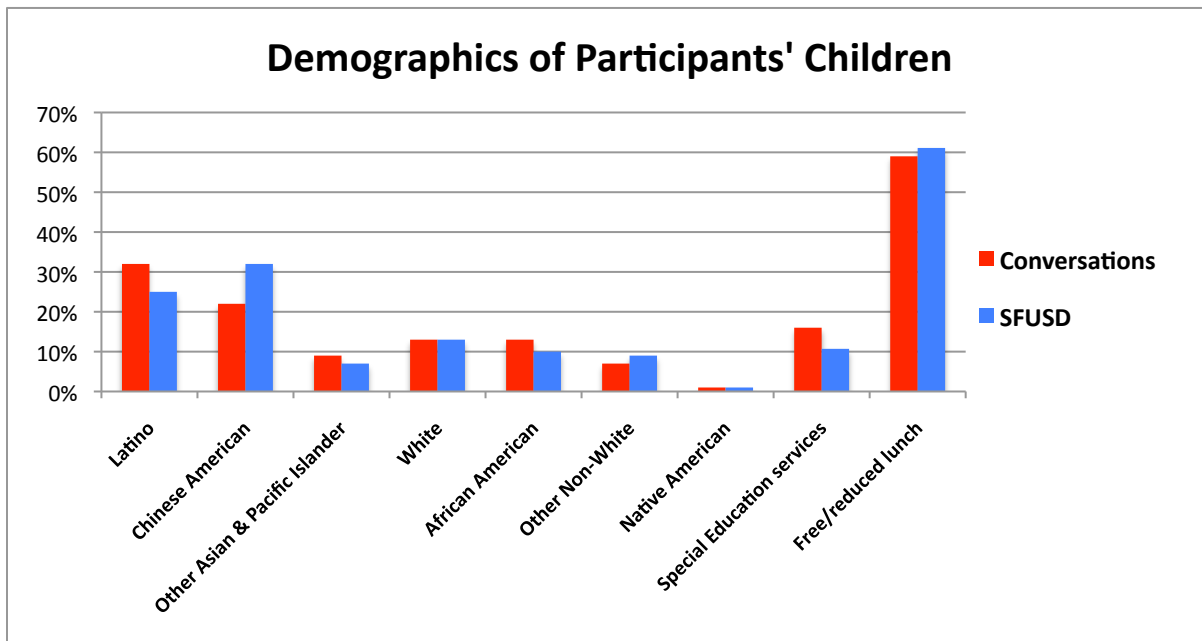
- 55% speak a language other than English in their home (SFUSD = 25% English Learners)
- 59% of their children qualify for free or reduced-price meals (SFUSD = 61% qualify)
- 16% of their children receive Special Education services (SFUSD = 11% with an IEP)
- 18% were either foster parents or providers who work with foster youth

Participants spoke many home languages:

- ✓ 45% speak English
- ✓ 28% speak Spanish
- ✓ 19% speak Chinese
- ✓ 8% other languages, including Arabic, Amharic, Eritrean, Japanese and Vietnamese



Demographics of Participant's Children compared to SFUSD Student Enrollment



Summary of Findings: What We Heard in the Conversations

These findings share some **overall themes** we heard across many different conversations, the “**Top 10 Questions**” we identified, participants’ ideas related to **Student Access and Achievement, Student Engagement and School Climate, and Family Engagement**; and finally, concerns about **school funding and accountability**.

Connecting Common 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
 - ✓ Student Success Team (SST) and Individualized Education Plan (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 & Community Based Organizations (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 need additional services.
- **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 English Language Development 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?

Sharing our Findings

On April 24th our team shared with district staff and the community at large our preliminary findings from the first 23 conversations. The goal of this public forum was to inform the actual development of SFUSD's draft LCAP. Our specific objectives were to provide an opportunity for district staff to reflect on how parents' ideas might inform their work, highlight efforts in place to support student success, plans to improve and increase programs and services, and finally, foster two-way communication and encourage a mutual exchange of information, ideas and perspectives.

Seventeen SFUSD staff, who lead key district initiatives to support student success, participated in this public forum, along with families from our organizations and the other community members. The number of district leaders in attendance speaks volumes about the willingness and interest in hearing what families have to say. At the same time, we see there is a disconnect between the work that is happening at the district level and with what families experience on the ground, at their children's schools. Through this process we recognize there are some fundamental questions: How would families know these priorities are being addressed at schools? How would families feel or experience the change, and what would these changes look like in a school? How is this work being communicated across SFUSD?

Most recently, on May 22nd Deputy Superintendent Myong Leigh and Assistant Superintendent Kevin Truitt presented an overview, big picture of SFUSD's draft LCAP to the DELAC and PAC as official advisory bodies. At this public forum, there was an equal number of district leaders- some the same and others different from April 24th- who attended. They actively participated by sharing how their work aligns with specific goals, measures, and strategies identified in various sections of the LCAP draft and answered questions from participants. Again, we realize the number of district staff attending this event is another indication of the level of commitment district leadership has to supporting the success of all students.

Preliminary Recommendations for the Local Control Accountability Plan

After conducting the community conversations and reviewing the first draft of the SFUSD's Local Plan (LCAP), **we are concerned that stakeholder engagement did not meaningfully inform the content of the LCAP.** This draft relies on existing internally created documents, rather than having the community engagement process actually inform development of the LCAP.

Based on what we learned through this process, we have identified the following preliminary recommendations to strengthen community engagement in revising the LCAP in coming years, the content of the LCAP, and finally, the implementation of SFUSD's programs, services and strategies to support student success.

Ensure a community engagement process that is more transparent, intentional and timely for the LCAP process as well as the overall SFUSD budgetary process, in general.

Demonstrate the ways in which stakeholder engagement helped shape the LCAP:
District relied on existing, internally created documents to create the LCAP rather than engage stakeholders in development of the LCAP.

- In order to **build authentic participation** of school community stakeholders, the community engagement process needs to be **intentional, transparent and timely.**
- Begin the community engagement process for the LCAP in the fall with the start of each new school year.
- Give serious consideration to changing the budgetary timeline process to introduced the budget (in May) when schools are in session and parents are still available to give input.

Action step: form a coalition of district and parent representatives to map out LCAP timeline and process for engagement for the 2014-15 school year. Begin the process before fall 2014.

Resources required: Staff time to plan, project and realign the budgetary timeline, including introducing SFUSD's annual budget to the Board of Education for its first reading at the second board meeting in May when schools are still in session and parents are more readily available to voice their questions, concerns and suggestions.

Share an implementation plan for the services, programs and strategies outlined in the LCAP, to help families understand what the LCAP means for their children.

Recommended Content to be included in the LCAP

Commit resources to finish the Family Engagement Plan. Communications was a major theme in our findings yet the LCAP does not identify actions or services to support this area. Allocate resources and identify specific strategies in the LCAP to implement the Family Engagement Plan, including communication strategies so that families feel more connected to their schools community.

Include the actions the district is taking to **implement Restorative Practices** and reflect the resources allocated to support this program. This is a strategy many families support to increase instructional time, decrease suspensions/expulsions, and improve school climate and student engagement.

Include specific strategies to **support community building** and **positive school climate**, including designated resources for family liaisons, and/or a point person at each school site to support family engagement.

Resources required: Fund- point person to take on role of supporting family engagement and compensate with a stipend similarly how a stipend is given to a health advocate.

Describe specific **actions** being taken to **expand cultural competency among teachers and district staff** as well as steps to **deliver engaging and culturally responsive curriculum, academic programs and services** that support the learning of all students. Include resources allocated to support these programs.

Identify specific **strategies** that are being implemented to **support African American students** and resources earmarked to support these strategies.

Provide details in the LCAP **outlining how teachers** will be supported to **deliver differentiated instruction** for all students

Conclusion

In order to build authentic participation of school community stakeholders, the community engagement process has to be intentional, transparent and timely. We were able to gather a broad range of parent voices and perspectives through collective efforts between community and district partners in a short period of time. We are happy we had this opportunity and are pleased with the number of families and district staff who participated in the overall process. We recognize this is a new process for everyone and acknowledge there is room to improve the process moving forward. We look forward to this being the beginning of ongoing process to engage families to help shape the district's priorities to support student success.

Additional Recommendations for SFUSD's Local Control Accountability Plan
Presented to San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education

June 10, 2014

The following recommendations are supplemental to the previous recommendations presented and submitted by the Parent Advisory Council and our community partners¹ on May 27, 2014.

Recommendation #1

Clearly communicate SFUSD process for evaluating and responding to stakeholder recommendations.

For each of the recommendations presented to SFUSD regarding the LCAP by PAC and DELAC, we recommend that district staff provide a response that addresses the following points:

- What is the process to determine the viability of each recommendation and if it is aligned with the district's existing goals?
- Who is responsible for following up on each recommendation and communicating back with the respective bodies about each recommendations' outcome (accepted or declined)?
- How could the recommending bodies support these deliberations?

Recommendation #2

Establish an LCAP Task Force:

The implementation of LCAP is new for everyone. It is important for parents to understand the new funding model and what it means for their children's educational experience. To support this end, we recommend that an LCAP Task Force be formed with representatives identified in the state regulations and including SFUSD staff leading key district initiatives. An LCAP Task Force could facilitate:

- Communicating implementation strategies that support the actions and services identified in the LCAP – to help stakeholders better understand these priorities.
- Continuing a robust LCAP development process, including ongoing opportunities for stakeholder engagement.
- Gaining greater transparency about the budget process.

¹ Our community partners: Chinese for Affirmative Action, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, Mission Graduates, Parents for Public Schools, Second District Parent Teacher Association and Support for Families of Children with Disabilities

Recommended timeline: Hold an initial meeting in September or October to develop this task force.

Questions for SFUSD District Staff from May 22, 2014 Presentation of the LCAP

The following questions were generated at the DELAC and PAC meeting on May 22, 2014 when San Francisco Unified School District staff presented its Local Control Accountability Plan for stakeholder input.

General Questions

- Which schools are in Superintendent Zones, “Intense” and “Strategic” Zones, etc.?
- Does student achievement have an impact on how much funding schools receive? If so, please explain.
- Some schools are receiving less money than last year in their budgets. Why is this happening when they’re supposed to be getting more money under the new funding formula?

Topic 1: Teacher Quality & Accountability

- How do we retain Immersion teachers who have many competing job opportunities? Who is recruiting teachers for SFUSD?
- Is SFUSD competitive with teacher salaries?
- Who provides feedback for assessments?
- How do we assure high quality qualified substitutes?
- How are teacher evaluations done, and how often and by whom are they being evaluated?

Topic 2: Common Core State Standards & SFUSD’s Core Curriculum

- Math curriculum is now quite integrated. Where did Algebra go?
- How do you assess students’ understanding of CCSS?
- How are CCSS adapted to language immersion programs?
- Are CCSS based on District, State or National standards?
- How is technology service provided or included in the LCAP?
- How do parents know if students are on grade level according to CCSS?
- How can the student get individualized attention when many students have different questions about math curriculum?
- How is the District supporting teachers in implementing CCSS?
- When CCSS test are administered, does the school have discretion over the time in which the test is scheduled?
- How does CCSS affect English learner curriculum?
- What efforts are currently in place to ensure parents are informed of changes in curriculum as it pertains to CCSS –in particular EL/LI families?

Topic 3: Differentiated instruction & student supports

- How can project-based learning support differentiated learning? Can this be added to the LCAP?
- Could SFUSD define “learning culture.”
- How are teachers challenging high-achieving student while still working with struggling students?
- What are the EL typologies referred to in section 1.3 of the LCAP?
- How can we keep creativity and innovation in classroom learning while aligning to the common core?
- What is the training for teachers re: differentiated learning? What are the accountability measures?
- What is research behind differentiated learning vs. pull-out learning? Especially as it relates to individual growth of high-achieving students.
- How do students receive additional support (academic and/or emotional) if their schools are not receiving additional funding for these services?
- How can parents learn about how to get academic support for their children?
- Is there a list or a chart that parents could see that shows the various services and supports available to students in SFUSD?
- What academic and emotional supports are available to Middle School and High School ELLs, especially newcomers, having a tough time adjusting to the American school system?
- Will MTSS tiered support be provided to EL students in their home language?
- What is the process for ensuring a transferring student from one SFUSD school to another remains in the same language pathway?
- Are additional teachers being added to support English language development in immersion programs?

Topic 4: Services for English Learners

- How is it determined which schools receive software to support ELs to acquire English language skills?
- How can parents learn about their children’s progress if parents don’t speak the same language as the teachers?
- What trainings do teachers receive to identify needs and learn strategies to support EL students?
- What interventions can help long-term ELL’s get “unstuck” in the intermediate level 3?
- What extended learning opportunities are available for long term ELL’s?

Topic 5: How youth in foster care will be served

- How can the larger school community support foster youths?
- Management of Foster Youth has to interface with Human Services and Foster Homes, What safety nets are provided to keep them from falling through the cracks?
- What will LCAP do to enhance support for Foster Youth?
- What supports do Foster Youth receive currently?

Topic 6: Supporting African American students

- What is tier 1,2,3 teaching?
- What professional developments do teachers receive to look at personal biases?
- How are we measuring the effectiveness of the districts professional development on cultural competency and bias?
- What are the benchmarks and metrics used to identify if a teacher/staff is “culturally competent/ able to support AA students?
- Who is monitoring effectiveness of support strategies for African American students?
- Do the needs of African American students vary based on different concentrations of African American students in the schools they attend?
- What is working with African American students here and in other districts in California?
- How do parents get on the African American PAC?
- Were parents and the community members a part of team developing recommendation for African American Achievement Initiative? Will those recommendations be shared with the community?

Topic 7: Student engagement & school climate

- How has your work changed as a result of LCAP?
- How would you measure and improve school playground climate?
- Are the other support resources aligned? Parent liaisons, nurses, police, etc.
- How is restorative practice training given?
- When will all cohorts be rolled out on restorative practice?
- What training happens for teachers working with African American students?
- Will you look at racism as a trigger with de-escalation RO, PBIS trainings?
- Who builds professional capacity in this area and what are the goals? Who determines the content and who get capacitated?
- What are the elements of capacity building in this area?
- What are the elements of school climate?
- How does the LCAP align with the Safe and Supportive Schools resolution passed earlier this school year?
- Who is eligible to receive RP training?
- What opportunities are there for parents/school community to be involved in training around RP/PBIS?

Topic 8: Family engagement

- What is the timeline for implementing the Family Engagement Plan? What resources are supporting this effort?
- How do we make sure translation is consistent all year?
- How will family liaisons be trained to deal with different cultures?
- How do we ensure family liaisons are assigned to schools that match needs (EL parent communication)?

Topic 8: Family engagement (continued)

- How will text/email be delivered in multiple languages and how will you address digital divide for kids and families (skills and access)?
- What does roll-out by cohort mean? What does it look like?
- Is there baseline data for family engagement? How does the district measure improvement in family engagement?
- Does the plan for Family Engagement involve all departments and schools in SFUSD?
- Will there be opportunity for parents to be coaches and mentors on family engagement? Who is the “coach”? Where do they fit in?
- How would the district/schools support parents/families in schools with no family liaisons?
- What are the schools served in the cohort mentioned in 6.1 of the LCAP? How will these cohorts expand to additional school sites?
- What resources are allocated to expanding opportunities for parents to be trained and a part of the decision-making bodies at school sites? (SSC, ELAC and PTAs)
- Are school sites required to have Family Engagement Plans, and if so, are they aligned to the districts plan?

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

SFUSD: www.sfusd.edu

Our LCFF/LCAP page: www.sfusd.edu/en/about-sfusd/budget/lcff-and-lcap.html
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: www.ppssf.org

San Francisco's Parent Teacher Association/2nd District PTA:
www.sfpta.org

California State PTA: www.capta.org