

Parent and Community Questions from LCAP Review Sessions
May 28 – June 5, 2014

Miscellaneous Statements:

1. “College and career ready” - Educational jargon means a-g and CTE
2. Engagement: peer – student
3. Accelerated programs

Input Process Comments:

1. Today was fantastic in theory. I felt valued and like my voice matters. I hope to see our input used.
2. This workshop format is flawed in that dominant personalities prevent genuine parent engagement of all attendees.
3. Parents need to be included in the gathering process and selection of input for the March 17th meeting.
4. Have schools do a similar activity with their parent groups.
5. The meetings in the future relative to DAC and/or other Parents’ Forums should be filmed with full audio.

Singletons:

1. As you have mentioned about the future programs about zip codes for the children. I would like to know which kind of zip codes you are talking about.

At this time there is no program designed around zip codes. In terms of equity, we do want to ensure that all students in all areas of our district have access to equitable programs, and not have a certain standard in one area not equal to that of another area. An example of how the district is addressing this is bringing all technology throughout the district to at least a 3 to 1 ratio, students to computers. In the past there were different areas in our district that had different accessibility to technology. With the new student devices coming for the 2014-2015 school year, all students will have equal access to a level of at least 3 to 1.

2. *Question translated from Spanish:* **Have more protection for students. Implement a security program at the school site.**

School site and district personnel are very focused on school safety for all students. Currently, the district and its school sites are revising each school site comprehensive school safety plan. The goal of the school safety plans revisions is to continue to provide the safest educational school climate for all district students. In addition to school safety plan revisions, many TRUSD school districts programs provide violence prevention programs that support positive

school climate initiatives for all students, also hiring five (5) additional School Resource Officers.

3. Can we please talk about needs of foster youth? We have not looked at any foster data or discussed unique needs of foster youth.

The district held a LCAP/LCFF forum specifically for Foster Youth students on March 14, 2014. During this forum the unique needs and supports of educating Foster Youth were discussed. During the forum valuable feedback and input was given back to the district. As we continue to work to improve the supports and educational outcomes for all students, the district will continue to solicit and review data related to the unique needs of Foster Youth.

Class Offerings:

1. Can we please teach more quality STEAM classes? Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math classes.

We see STEM and VAPA as critical ways to engage students. In regards to Art, we have aggressively addressed this in our LCAP through hiring Art teachers K - 12.

In Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, we are moving forward as well. We have done significant work in Math this year, through a K - 12 Math adoption. Our board adopted a transition to the CCSS integrated pathway. We have also worked with WestEd on Common Core aligned unit development. This summer we are piloting a Middle School STEM program.

Most significantly, we already have a team of teachers working on Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

All of these efforts connect with our understanding of the importance of STEM and VAPA in student engagement and student learning. We are currently developing programs that enhance student learning in all areas. We are building pathways that will support strengthening student concepts through science, technology, math and arts integration.

2. Can we please increase number of classes per day through: Extended learning day – more instructional minutes, and / or block scheduling?

We currently offer opportunities for students to increase the number of classes and instructional minutes they take through a variety of opportunities, such as After School Education and Safety (ASES), credit recovery, summer programming, extended school year and online curriculum. The district and its school programs will continue to build, research and coordinate program options that offer all students opportunities to increase the number of classes they can

take. Block scheduling is one strategy to take into consideration in order to meet the all of our students' academic goals. This is a negotiable item per the teachers' contract and must be approved through collective bargaining with Twin Rivers United Educators (TRUE).

3. Will the music be culturally sensitive to neighborhood?

Music and Visual Art instruction will be based on the Visual and Performing Arts Frameworks and Standards. It will provide foundational skills for all students and will be culturally responsive.

4. Can we have more project-based learning and more arts integrated learning?

Arts integration training is planned as part of the District Professional Development next year. Implementation of CCSS will move to project-based learning.

Data/Proficiency Rates (CST and CAHSEE):

1. CAHSEE question: Why are we passing in ELA and Math at twice the proficiency rate?

The scoring range of 350 to about 379 is the passing range. 380 and higher is usually proficient and advanced. So a student may score high enough to pass the exam but not high enough to be considered proficient. For more information on performance level ranges download the technical reports at:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/resources.asp>

2. Why is there such a huge dip in CST Math proficiency in all subgroups between 6th and 9th grade?

Beginning at 7th grade students may take different math paths depending on their performance in 6th grade as well as other factors. For example, 8th graders could be enrolled in pre-algebra, algebra, or perhaps even geometry. Consequently, these students will take different CSTs. Student grade level CST math is only administered until 7th grade. Beginning in 8th grade, students will take subject area CSTs, such as algebra or geometry depending on which course they are enrolled in school. Performance decreases due to many factors, including the increasing rigor of the subject and the mix of different grade levels taking the various tests. This trend is seen at the county and state levels as well. Note: math and English CSTs are being replaced by the Common Core assessments which were field tested this spring and will go operational next year.

3. Data comparative to other districts in the county: Are we the lowest in the county? Do we do better in some categories throughout the county?

The California Department of Education reports all subject and grade level CSTs, as well as other data at Dataquest: <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>. Many of these tests are combined into a single measure called Academic Performance Index (API). API is an overall measure of a school site or district and may be more practical for comparisons. It too can be accessed at Dataquest. The API range is 200-1000. The goal is for schools and districts to reach a minimum of 800. In 2013, API scores for districts in our county ranged from 725 to 839. Twin Rivers was the lowest and Folsom-Cordova was the highest.

Other suggested sites for data:

- Testing & Accountability: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/>
- Data & Statistics: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/>

Disproportionalities (ELs, SPED, and African-Americans):

1. Disproportionalities exist between subgroups. I am concerned that the EL's and especially LTEL's have English language support from paraeducators whose primary language is not English. Will there be ELD support for EL's from Native English speakers?

All Bilingual Paraprofessionals met the required qualifications to be hired in their position which includes meeting the No Child Left Behind policy. In addition, they receive monthly training on how to best support English learners effectively through integration of Common Core Standards. One of the main tasks of the Bilingual Paraprofessionals is to provide L1 support, that is, support in the first language in small group settings for preview/review activities so that students have double the opportunity to learn the vocabulary and concepts.

All English Language Learners receive English Language Development (ELD) support on a daily basis from their classroom teachers through designated ELD time. Bilingual Paraprofessionals are not part of the base program for English Learners, their role is to provide extended and comprehensible learning opportunities for our students.

To ensure success for Long Term English Learners (LTELs) TRUSD has diligently sorted out student data, reviewed research, and best practices. As a result, specific classes to accelerate the learning success for LTELs were created and will be in place for the 2014-15 school year. These classes are to be taught by English credential teachers.

2. LCAP and CCSS provide the opportunity to rethink our students' needs and to meet those needs in a more successful way. The data shows EL students have historically not been successful in meeting a-g at TRUSD. How are the needs of EL students being met differently so that we/they can be more successful?

TRUSD is taking an aggressive approach to support English learners meet the a-g requirement by creating a course exclusively for Long Term English Learners. This new course has been submitted to U.C. Doorways, the organization that approves courses that meet the a-g requirement. The course was created after careful review of student data and research based strategies. Because research has also demonstrated the importance of supporting students in their first language, we have created pathways from the middle school level to high school to support students with native speaker courses that will focus on teaching transferable literacy and concept building skills.

3. If the vast majority of our EL students are “Born in the USA” why can they neither read nor write English or their native language?

TRUSD recognizes that we need to improve in all of our students' performance. 38% of all English Learners have been in an American school system for six or more school years. One very specific initiative is first best instruction and a focus on K-3 foundational literacy skills. All K-3 teachers are being trained on very specific skills and techniques to ensure that all students will read by the end of third grade. This initiative includes assessments and regular student monitoring with heavy in the classroom intervention with best teaching practices. We are expecting all students to have the ability to read and write in English by the third grade level.

In terms of English Learners writing in their native language, TRUSD has Early Exit Bilingual programs at Madison and Noralto Elementary Schools where students are taught in Spanish and are also expected to read and write in Spanish. Other than the Late Exit Bilingual Program, the only instruction in a language that is not English occurs at the middle school and high school levels in the Native Spanish classes or at the Hmong and Russian Saturday School community programs. In the near future, TRUSD is planning on expanding the opportunities for student to fully acquire biliteracy skills through a Dual Immersion program starting in preschool to middle school.

4. Why are we over-identifying African-American students into special education?

Findings from the Significant Disproportionality Coordinated Early Intervening Services Plan (CEIS), dated 2/26/13, indicated the following reasons for disproportionate rate of identification of African Americans under the eligibility of Emotionally Disturbed in TRUSD:

-There is a “push down” of state standards. As content and instruction increase in complexity, students have more difficulty and are referred for intervention and support. Staff often perceive that referral for special education and special education placement will provide the optimum support.

-Staff lack an understanding of the culture of the students/community. Staff need to increase their awareness and understanding of the culture of the students and the community as they review student progress, develop pre-referral intervention strategies, and consider referrals for special education placement.

-The student population of TRUSD is very transient (approximately 51%)

-Assessment and procedures for students identified as ED need to be reviewed. Many students transfer into TRUSD already identified as ED students. TRUSD needs to develop procedures to review the eligibility of incoming students with active IEPs.

-Disproportionate rate of suspension of African American Students.

Note: While these specific findings explained disproportionate identification under the criteria of emotionally disturbed, these findings also apply to disproportionate identification of African American students in special education in general.

5. Why are we pushing so many functionally illiterate students through the system?

Research conducted over the past century does not support the use of grade retention as an intervention for academic achievement or socio-emotional adjustment problems. Recent comparisons between retained and matched comparison students indicate that retention has a negative effect on student achievement. For the vast majority of students retained, retention is ineffective and may be harmful.

Retention at any grade level is associated with later high school dropout. Research indicates that retained students have lower levels of academic achievement in 11th grade and are more likely to drop out of high school.

Retention has been found to be one of the most powerful predictors of high school dropout with student who are retained being 2-11 more times likely to dropout than promoted students. Retained students are less likely to earn a high school diploma by age 20 and are less likely to enroll in any post-secondary educational programs. Given the research indicating that retention is ineffective and even harmful, educators have grown ever more reluctant to retain students.

For most struggling students, retention is not a satisfactory solution—nor is promotion without an appropriate plan to accelerate learning to help the student catch up. For students who start school far behind their peers, intensive intervention initiated prior to Kindergarten may be the best path to success. Other options to accelerate learning such as: extra help during the school day, before and after school programs and summer programs have been shown to be more effective. Given the research indicating that early diagnosis and targeted intervention are the most effective ways help students catch up, educators are working to identify and implement quality support programs.

6. Why are we failing to graduate 9/10 black and brown students college and career ready?

There are many reasons why we have not been effective working with all students in our district, including those described as "black and brown" in the question. This is one reason why our board has adopted specific core beliefs addressing this type of issue, including "All students will graduate career and college ready". It is also why we have developed specific goals in the LCAP tied to eliminating the achievement gap and ending disproportionalities. We are using the 8 State Priorities, TRUSD Core Beliefs, and LCAP goals to address this critical issue.

Extra-curricular Activities/Offerings:

1. Can we please have a hook to keep students loving going to school? Hook could be integrated music, art, or afterschool activities.

We have Art for 1-3, Music for 4-6 and Arts Integration training planned for next year. We have partnered and will continue to partner with Afterschool providers to extend enriched activities to include the Arts.

2. Can we partner with parents, community groups and non-profits to develop afterschool clubs/classes? Ex: computer refurbishing, robotics, community service.

One of the roles of the Parent and Community Involvement Team is to listen to parent ideas and assist in linking these ideas to TRUSD's core beliefs and vision so that everything we do positively impacts student learning. Stakeholders will

have monthly opportunities to discuss the potential impact on student learning of these ideas and may elect to submit these ideas to the district team responsible for the annual revision of the LCAP for their consideration.

Funding Sources:

1. The money in the preliminary LCAP that I saw is not exact. When will the final budget numbers be available to the public to review?

The money in the Adopted LCAP will always be an estimate. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is based on the State approved COLA and Gap percentages, Period 2 and Annual Average Daily Attendance and the October Unduplicated student count. The Supplemental/Concentration funding is a part of the LCFF calculation. The final LCFF will not be known until all data is available (the end of the fiscal year). LCAP is not intended to be a budget; it is a strategic road map for improved student outcomes. However, we constantly monitor and analyze the LCFF data through out the year to determine if any changes need to be made to the budget.

2. TRUSD has 85% high needs students: Additional funds concentration and supplemental needs to go to them; why isn't that stressed?

The Supplemental/Concentration funds are *earned* from our 85% Unduplicated student count. Districts with an enrollment of Unduplicated students in excess of 55% can spend Supplemental/Concentration funds district wide. We have done both; created programs geared towards the Unduplicated student population (English learner, low income and foster youth) and also created programs that are district wide (Please see Section 3 of the LCAP).

Gathering Input from Stakeholders:

1. What has TRUSD done to get input from students on the LCAP? There have been community and parent committee forums (I have attended at least 6 of them); however, I have never seen a student in attendance.

The Twin Rivers Unified School District held a student Leadership forum dedicated to receiving input from students regarding LCAP/LCFF. This student centered forum was held on March 13, 2014 and was facilitated by the Youth Development Network. Over 75 students representing 21 school sites attended this forum and gave valuable feedback and input to the TRUSD LCAP/LCFF development.

- 2. Has input as to the state priority, re: Student Engagement, been received from TRUSD students? If so, was the sample size statistically significant, particularly at the HS level, been asked to collaborate with the TRUSD LCAP process this year?**

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Mental Health:

- 1. Can we take an integrated whole child community school approach and provide wrap-around services?**

As we develop the Local Control Accountability Plan it is imperative that integrated support services become part of the discussion and plan. Twin Rivers Unified School District is a diverse and unique district with many opportunities to build integrative support programs that provide a variety of services to all students. These integrated services should not only include academic services and development, but also social emotional, career and post-secondary services that are developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive to student need and success.

- 2. Can we invest in counselors for all students k-12 to take care of their social, emotional, and academic needs?**

The California counselor to student ratio is 445 to 1. The district and its school programs have and will continue to invest in hiring more counselors to reduce the counselor to student ratio. The district has lowered the counselor ratio from 450: 1 to 350: 1 in grades 7-12. All counselors in TRUSD are trained and participate in ongoing professional development in the three components of a complete counseling approach: Academic, Career, Social Emotional. The lower ratio will improve a counselors' ability to manage and for student social emotional and academic needs.

3. Can we please support all students with counselors not just HS?

Many of our elementary schools and all of our schools that have grades 7-12; including K-8 sites, have fully credentialed counselors allocated to their staff. Parents and students are welcomed to make appointments with any of our counselors regardless of grade level and school of attendance.

4. It seems that student and parent support in Pre-K and elementary is crucial. Does the district plan to increase counseling services (ie: hire counselors) at the preschool and elementary sites? The sooner the better.

Yes, both through Educationally Related Mental Health Services funding and the LCFF funding associated with LCAP more Social-Emotional support is planned for high-needs schools/students.

Parent Education:

- 1. Can we train parents so they can be true partners in their student's educational journey?**
- 2. Can we please train parents for student success through parent university style program?**
- 3. Can parents please get similar training to the PD teachers receive on close reading strategies for common core?**
- 4. Can parents receive common core math?**

Parent University will launch this upcoming fall providing parents meaningful opportunities to engage in a variety of parent derived classes that contribute to their child's success in school and beyond. The district's Parent and Community Involvement Coordinator has met with a diverse group of stakeholders including parents, students, key community leaders, and district and school staff to listen to areas of importance to TRUSD parents. Arrangements for additional focus groups are being made and will be hosted in our neighborhood communities during the summer to ensure that all parents have the opportunity for their voices to be heard. Thus far, stakeholders' valuable input indicates a need for information and experiences on how to:

- Support children and youth in accessing the common core
- Become true partners in education
- Strengthen the family unit
- Become aware of and access existing district and community resources

Parents are encouraged to work collaboratively with the Parent and Community Involvement Coordinator to share ideas and assist in the creation of Parent University.

Parent Involvement (Measures and Funding):

- 1. Parent Engagement is another of the 8 state priorities but it appears to be minimally funded in the TRUSD LCAP (\$50,000). I was told this section was written before we had a parent involvement coordinator and that the actual amount in the 2014-15 LCAP would be different. What is the actual amount to be set aside for parent training/classes in the 2014-15 LCAP? (Barbara)**

A Local Education Agency or district that receives a Title I, Part A allocation of greater than \$500,000 must reserve not less than one percent of its Title I, Part A allocation to carry out the provisions of section *1118(a)(3)(A), ESEA*, pertaining to parent involvement and is calculated on the basis of the LEA's total Title I, Part A allocation. TRUSD reserves five percent of the mandated one percent for district level parent involvement related activities. The remainder of the one percent is divided on a per pupil basis amongst all of the district's Title I schools and participating private schools. The LCFF allows for flexibility and additional money may be allocated for parent involvement as needs arise.

- What metrics will be used to gauge the efficacy of the parents' engagement and of the trainings beyond a general parent survey and attendance sign in sheets?**
 - What are the measureable goals and desired outcomes for Parent Engagement in TRUSD for 2014-15 and beyond?**
- 2. What will the metrics be of meaningful parent collaboration and training? In current LCAP? Parent Involvement Plan to be developed 2014-15**
 - 3. (Parent and student engagement question) Can we use positive metrics to measure student engagement and parent involvement?**
 - Don't rely on attendance at events (parents) or attendance/suspension rates for students**
 - Rely on engagement in clubs, sports, activities, parent trainings**

The California Department of Education (CDE) sets forth specific guidelines for the development of district Parent Involvement Plans and Policies. The most important requirement under these guidelines is that parents' input must be included in said plans and policies.

Stakeholder input gathered by the district's Parent and Community Involvement Coordinator will be included in the revision of the current TRUSD Parent Involvement Plan and Policy. Prior to the plan and policy appearing before the Board of Trustees for approval, parents will receive various opportunities to provide input to the draft through the participation in district level parent committee meetings, site based meetings, via the internet, and other means yet to be determined,. The public will be informed of the Board of Trustees meeting dates for approval of the plan and policy.

A noticeable increase in accountability from the state and federal government calls for a variety of metrics to measure the effectiveness of parent involvement and engagement. The Parent and Community Involvement Coordinator will collect, compile and share both qualitative and quantitative data using appropriate sampling methodologies to address the goals jointly created with parents. Some examples of these metrics are:

- A variety of surveys completed by staff and parents, including but not limited to customer satisfaction, cultural awareness and acceptance, and self evaluation of how we are meeting the whole child's needs
- Formal and informal observations conducted during parent education opportunities provided by the district and at a variety of school events
- Personal written and/or oral narratives from students, parents, and staff addressing specific goals
- Higher percentage of parents attending and actively participating in student conferences, decrease in number of uniform complaints filed with the district, increased positive ratings on healthy kids survey related to school climate, improved attendance rates, lower overall suspension rates and within specific subgroups, other areas to be determined in collaboration with parents (once the data is reviewed, specific percentages will be noted in the final plan)
- Possible use of technology at parent trainings to measure participant engagement and inform the presenter of needed changes during the meeting to make for meaningful experiences

4. How will the district ensure that parents and community members from each school site will engage with the district?

Parent engagement is considered a shared responsibility between the schools and district, parents, and community agencies committed to providing meaningful ways that actively support children's learning and development. TRUSD is redesigning its district level parent advisory committees to be more inclusive of foster youth, parents of English learners, parents of students with special needs, those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and who come from ethnically diverse backgrounds,. As we transition to this new, more inclusive model, current parent representatives from School-Site Councils and English Learner Advisory Committees will receive a special invitation to attend a series of meetings to brainstorm ideas, plan, and implement the new direction of district level committees. Meeting dates will be announced to the greater community in the near future. All stakeholders are welcome to attend.

Technology Questions and Comments:

- 1. Will the 10,000 computers discussed in the Computer Committee be leased by August 2014 for implementation in the classrooms? If so, exactly how will they be funded? They do not seem to be included in the LCAP.**

The technology committee recommended specific devices in its meeting on June 9th. They will be funded outside of LCAP monies. Implementation will be throughout the Fall semester of 2014.

- 2. How will the district ensure the new computers are used with fidelity to implement the curriculum? (There have been problems with underutilization of computer resources by teachers in the past).**

With computer usage, we will monitor how they are used, especially as we move toward preparation for the new state testing. It is the expectation that with a ratio of 3 to 1, students will have regular access to computers. This will be monitored at the site level, and access is crucial for our students to be computer literate in the modern world, and prepared for standardized testing as well.

In addition, there will be professional development required of teachers in order to use the devices with their classes. With quality professional development we can assure that when devices are used they are used appropriately and also that teachers understand how to use the devices well, so that the devices are not underutilized.

- 3. What are the goals and metrics associated with computer implementation?**

TRUSD sees the provision of technology as an on-going cost of doing business in the modern world, similar to how we would look at paying our utility bills. There is a plan to purchase a large number of computing devices for students in order to bring us to at least a 1:3 (three students to one computer) ratio. Because of the professional development needed along with this initiative as well as other factors involved in the deployment of technology, there will be a staggered rollout of devices in the fall of 2014.

- 4. Opening libraries in elementary schools and increase technology centers.**

Over time, a large number of projects and initiatives including that of a comprehensive library plan will assist our school district. This is currently under consideration for future emphasis. With the new computers and carts and our wireless access, all classrooms have the ability to become well equipped with technology.

5. I think the only concern is ensuring that parents who do not have access to technology are still getting valuable info.

The Parent and Community Involvement Team is committed to providing interactive and engaging parent offerings in a variety of ways that do not heavily rely on technology; rather focus on face-to-face personal encounters with TRUSD parents in their own communities.