

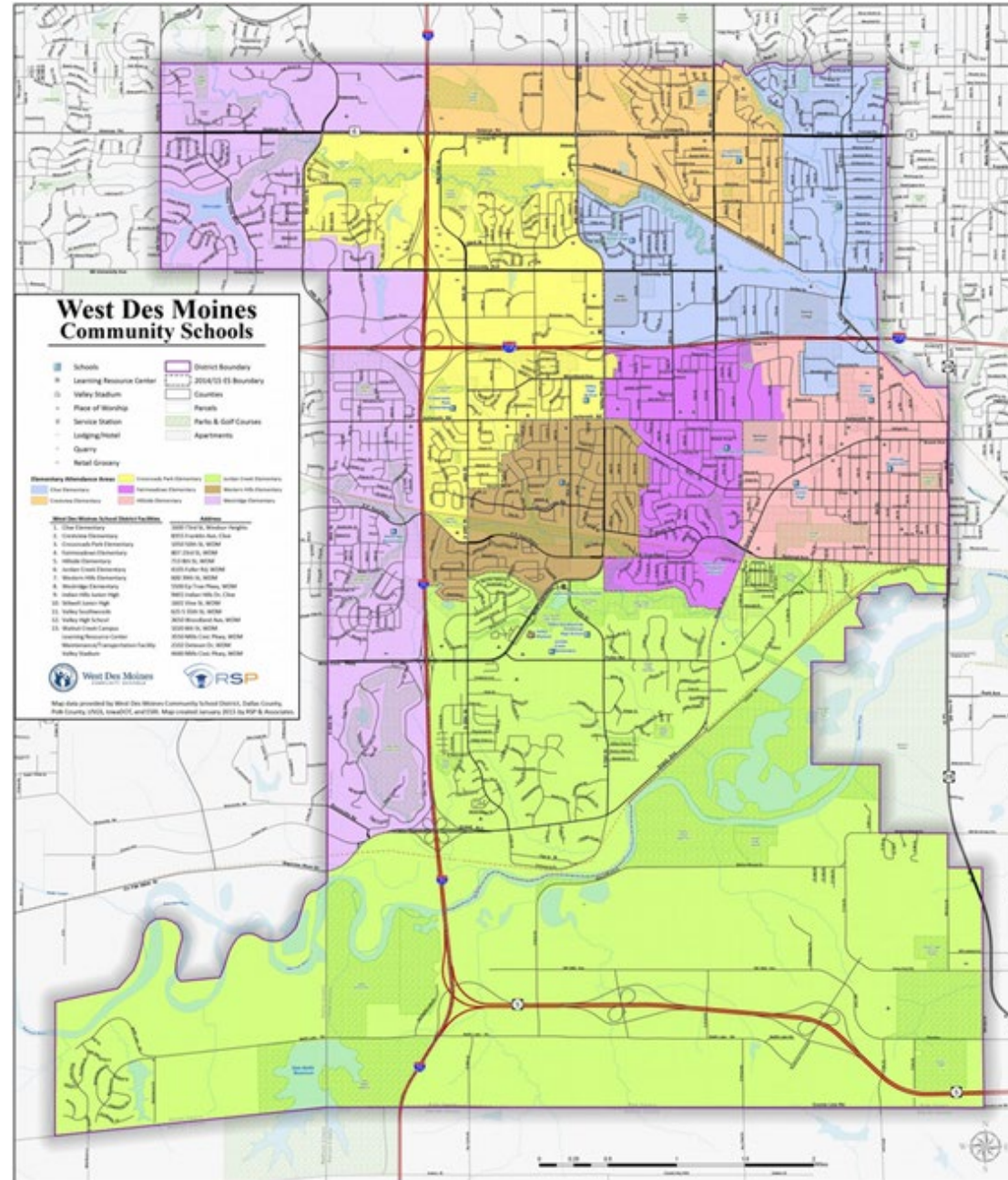
Community Needs Assessment

West Des Moines Community Schools Community Education

**HANSER &
ASSOCIATES**
public relations

Purpose

- Strengths
- Changes
- Concerns
- Opportunities
- Priorities for the next 5-10 years



Methodology

Community leader interviews

Director, West Des Moines Human Services

Superintendent, West Des Moines Community Schools

Director of Community and Economic Development, City of West Des Moines

City Manager, City of West Des Moines

Police Chief, City of West Des Moines

Executive Officer, Office of Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs

Director, Board of Directors, Indo-American Association of Iowa

Burmese/Chin community leader and pastor

Sacred Heart's Hispanic Ministry Outreach

Focus groups

School staff (eight participants) —Thursday, April 30, 2015

Law enforcement/youth justice (seven participants) —Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Human services professionals (six participants) —Thursday, May 7, 2015

High school students (nine participants) —Thursday, May 7, 2015

Parents (six participants) —Thursday, May 14, 2015

Community (seven participants) —Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Human Services clients (low income) (eight participants) —Thursday, May 21, 2015

Business leaders (eight participants) —Thursday, May 21, 2015

Findings

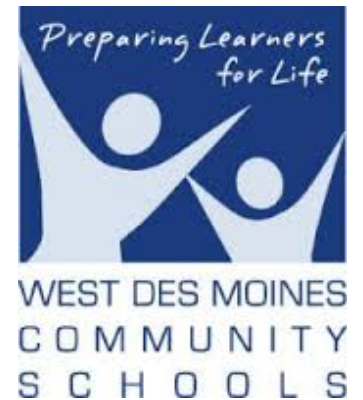


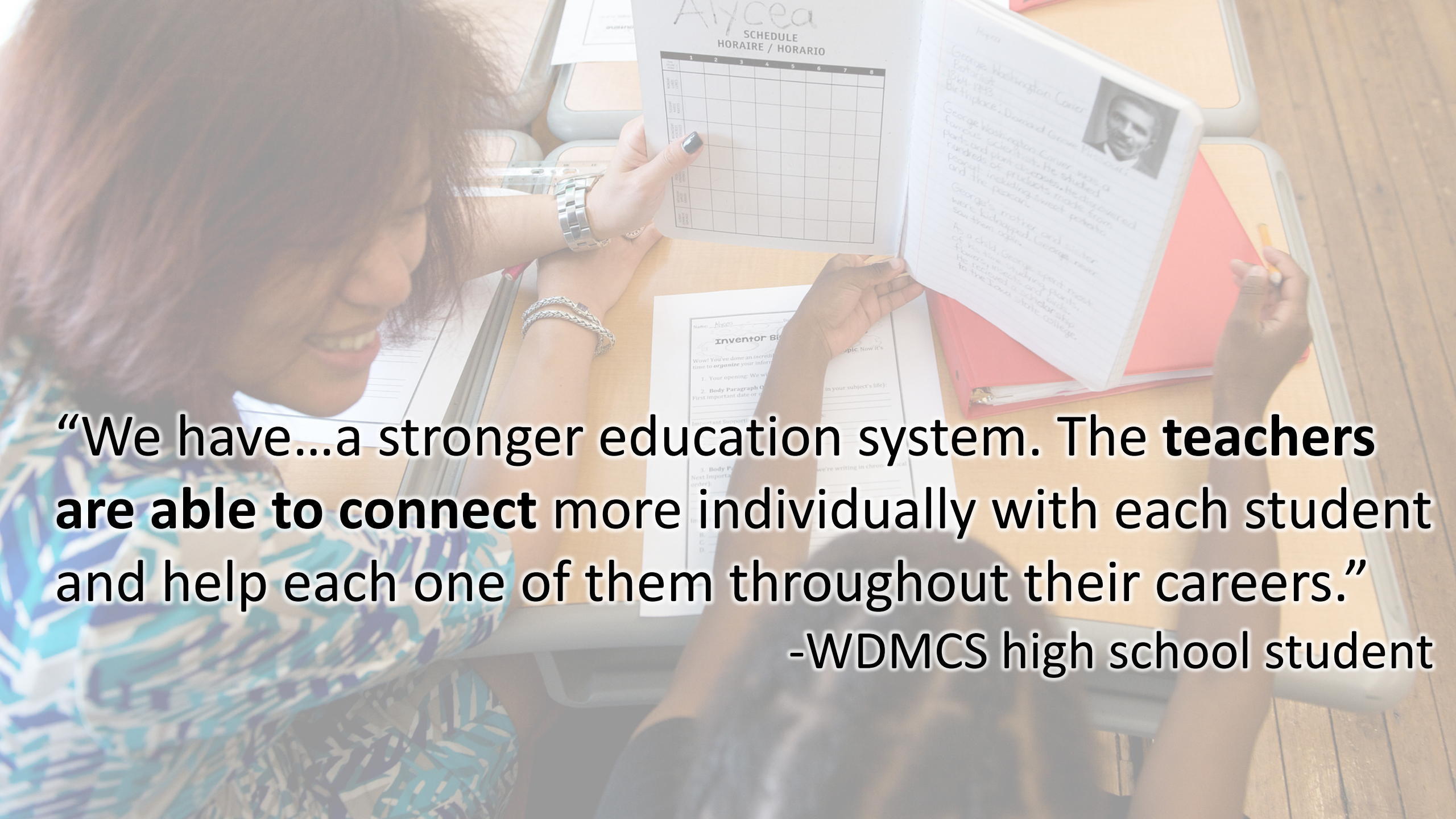
"Communities already exist. Instead, think about how you can help that community do what it wants to do."

Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook

Strengths

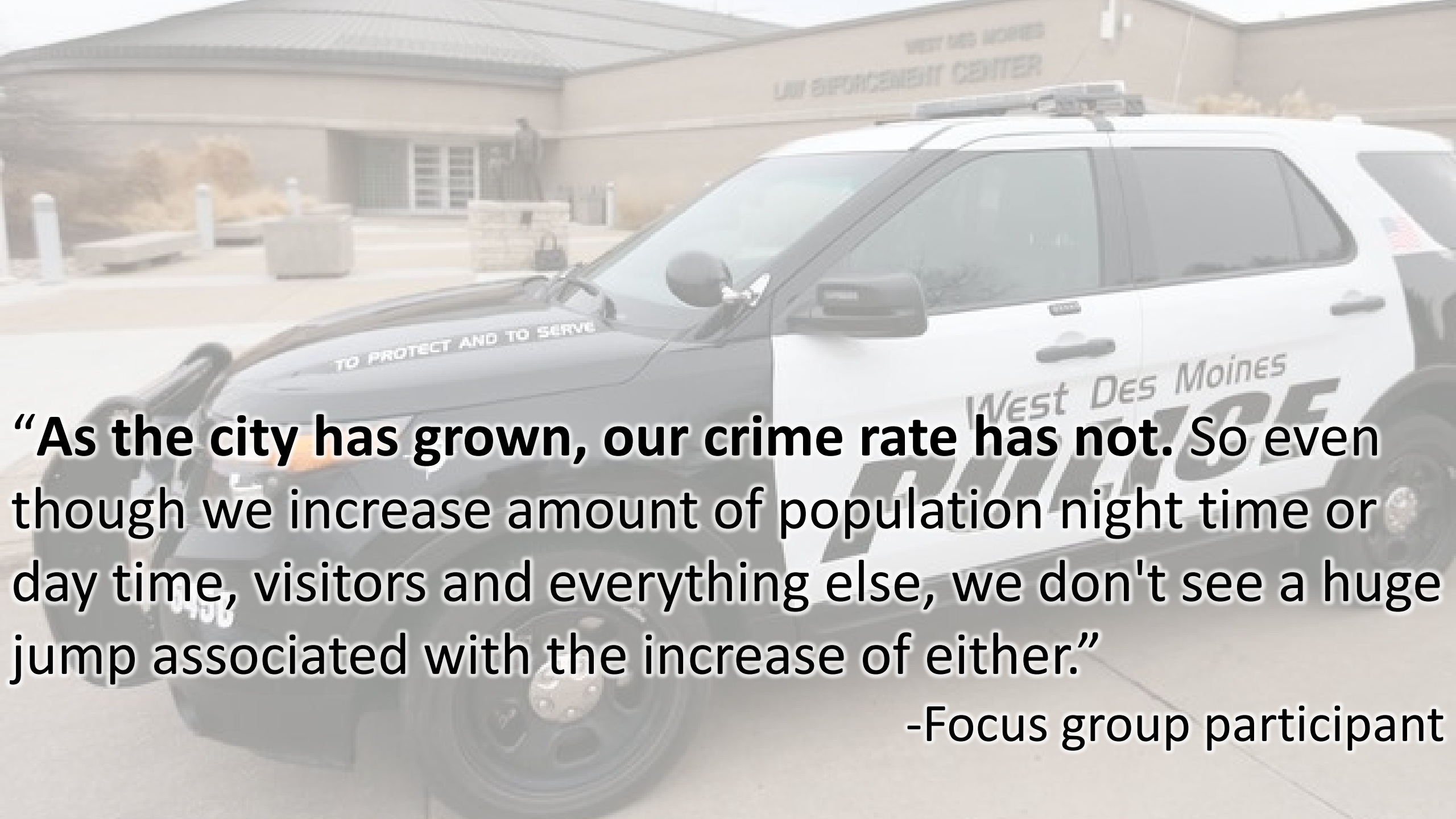
- A good educational system
- A strong, engaged community with opportunity for involvement
- Safety





“We have...a stronger education system. The **teachers are able to connect** more individually with each student and help each one of them throughout their careers.”

-WDMCS high school student



“As the city has grown, our crime rate has not. So even though we increase amount of population night time or day time, visitors and everything else, we don't see a huge jump associated with the increase of either.”

-Focus group participant



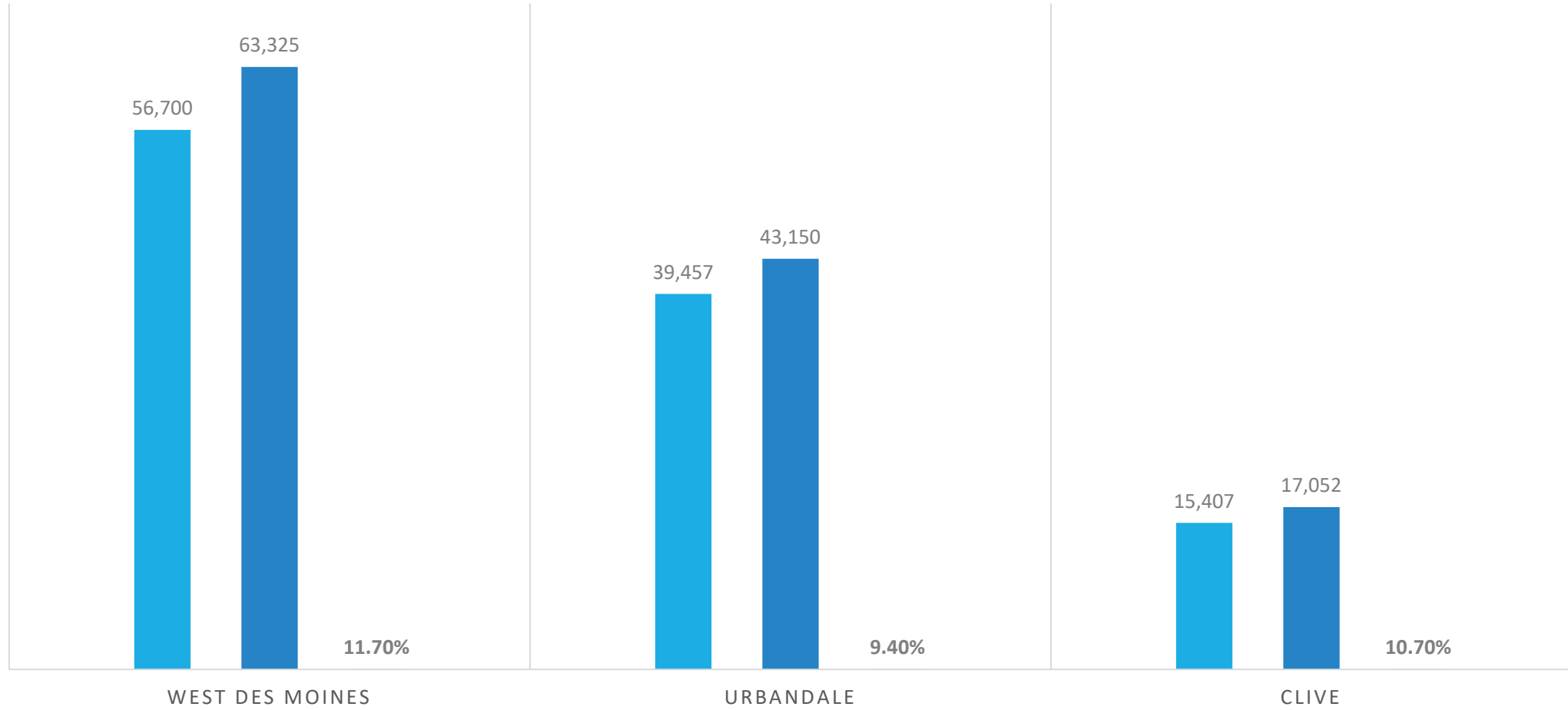
“All the cities in the community have a sincere desire to **find out what the needs are** of its constituents and to address them.” -Focus group participant

Changes

- Dramatic population increase
- Increase in diversity
- Changes in income stratification
- Business growth and development

POPULATION CHANGES 2010-2014

■ 2010 ■ 2014 ■ Change

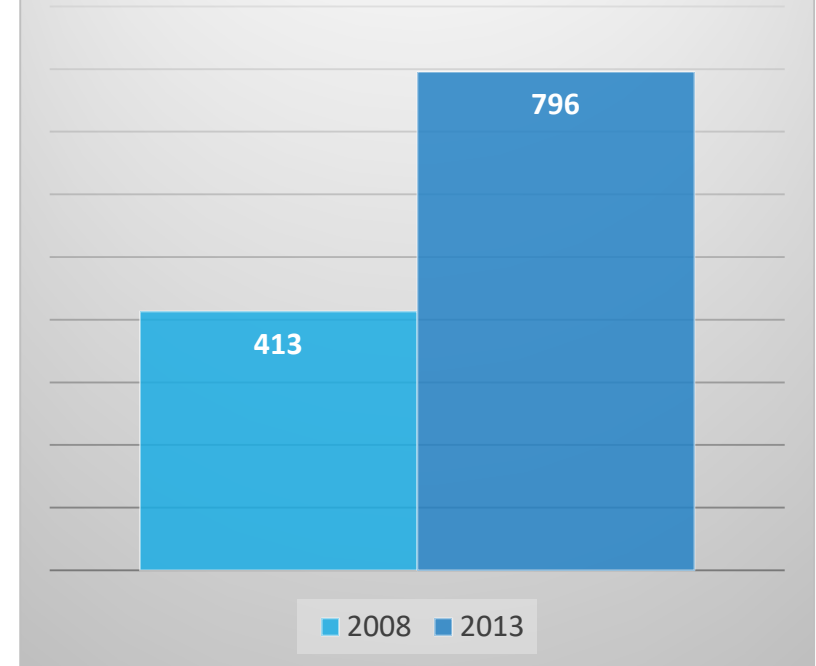


WDMCSD STUDENTS IN POVERTY


— Students in Poverty



English Language Learners



Information from West Des Moines Community Schools Student Data Dashboard, November 2013

A photograph of two young girls sitting at a table in a classroom. The girl on the left is a young child with short blonde hair, wearing purple glasses and a pink apron over a blue shirt. She is eating a small white snack. The girl on the right is an older child with braided hair, wearing a bright yellow jacket over a pink shirt and a necklace with a peace symbol. She is looking towards the younger girl. The background is a blurred classroom setting with other people and furniture.

“We have more families in need than we had 5 years ago. We have more religions represented in our community now. More languages represented in our community now which then brings on some just different needs of how to support all those different groups.”

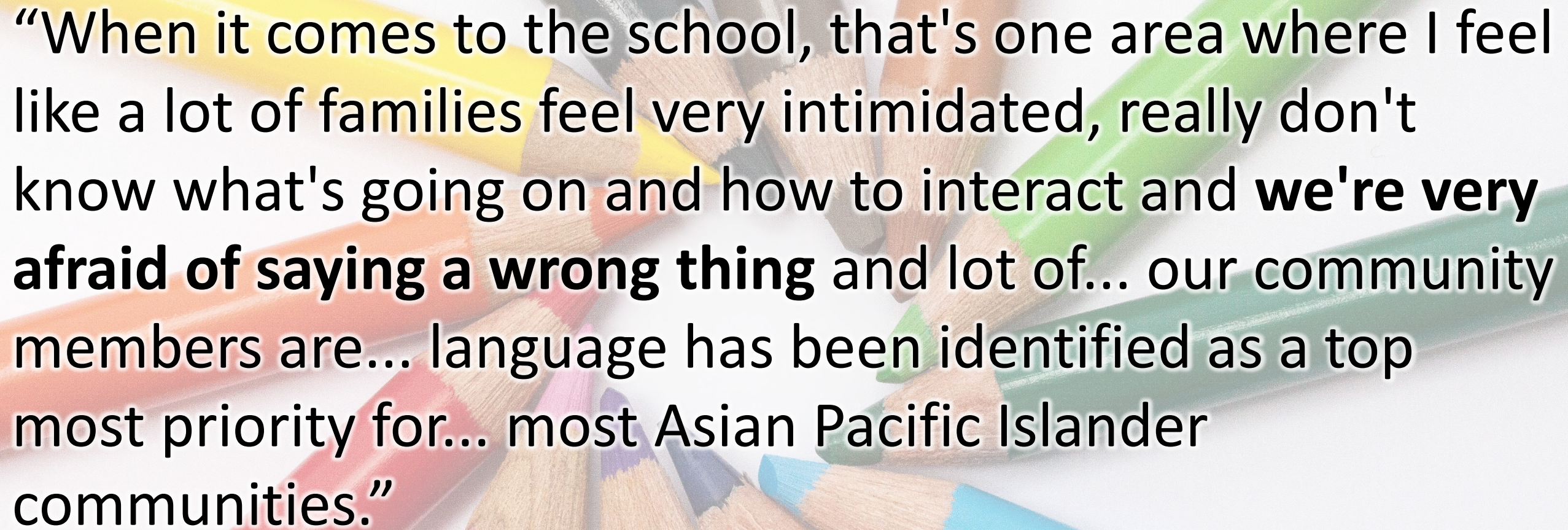
-Focus group participant

“Sometimes I feel like the development isn’t always well thought out... every time you turn around they’re building some enormous building and it’s harder to get in and out... **Maybe the infrastructure isn’t keeping up with the development.**” -Focus group participant



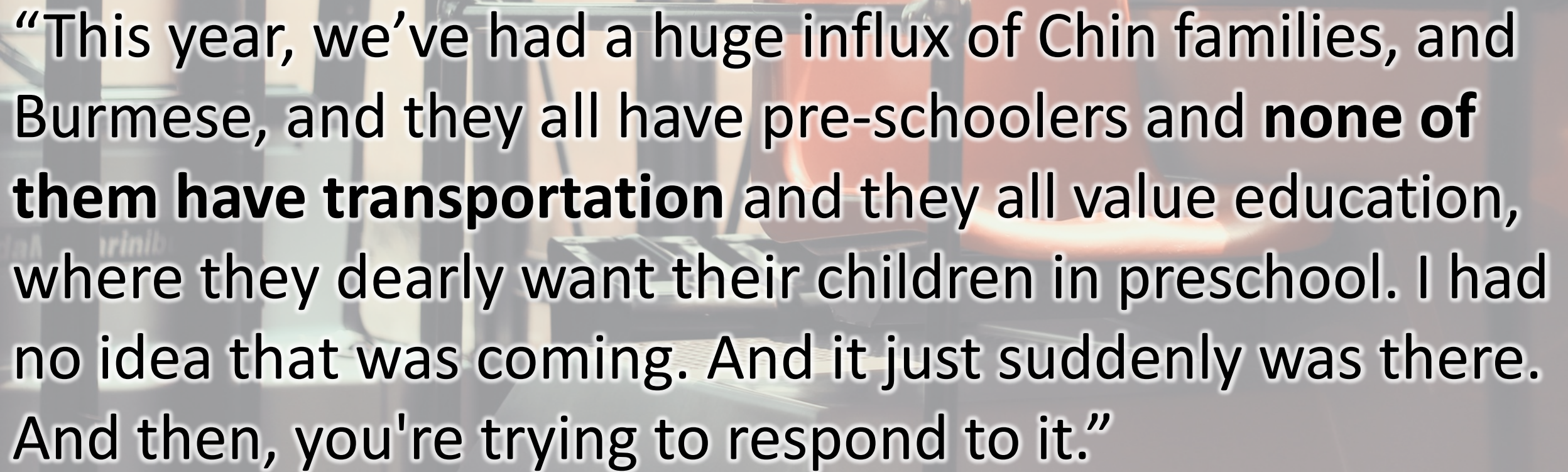
Concerns

- Language barrier
- Lack of public transportation
- Lack of affordable housing
- Diversity acceptance
- Resources for social issues
- Education
- Business community's ability to attract and retain millennials



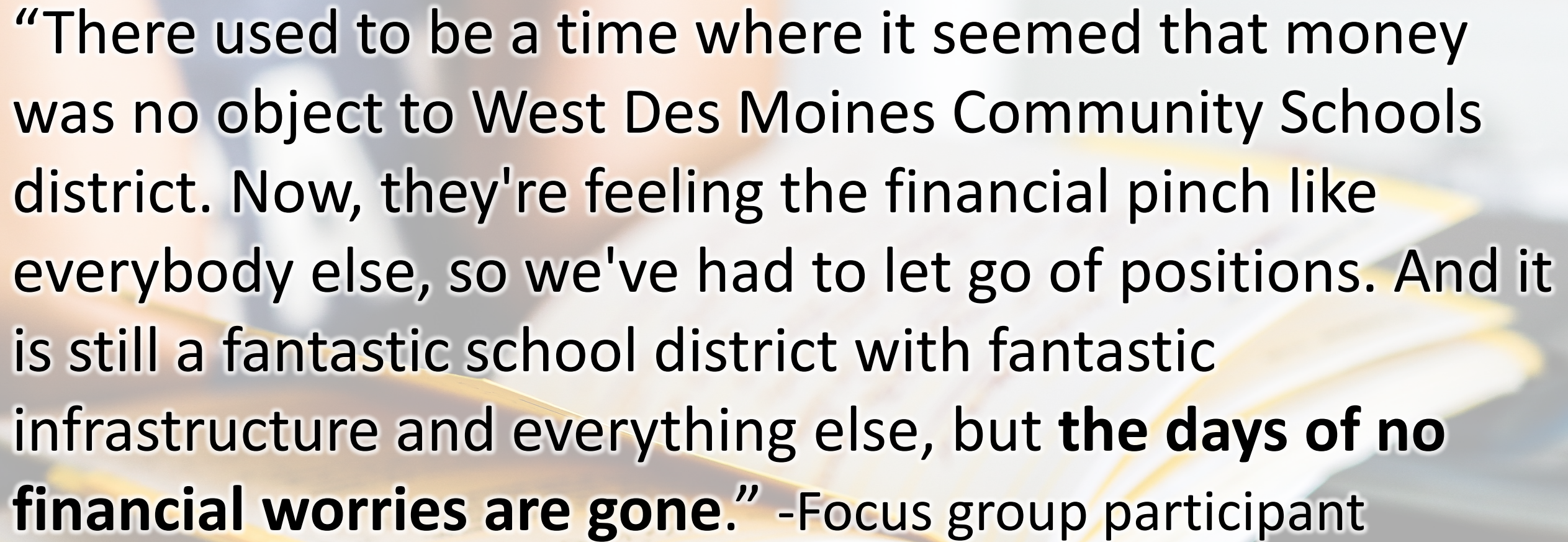
“When it comes to the school, that's one area where I feel like a lot of families feel very intimidated, really don't know what's going on and how to interact and **we're very afraid of saying a wrong thing** and lot of... our community members are... language has been identified as a top most priority for... most Asian Pacific Islander communities.”

-Community leader interview

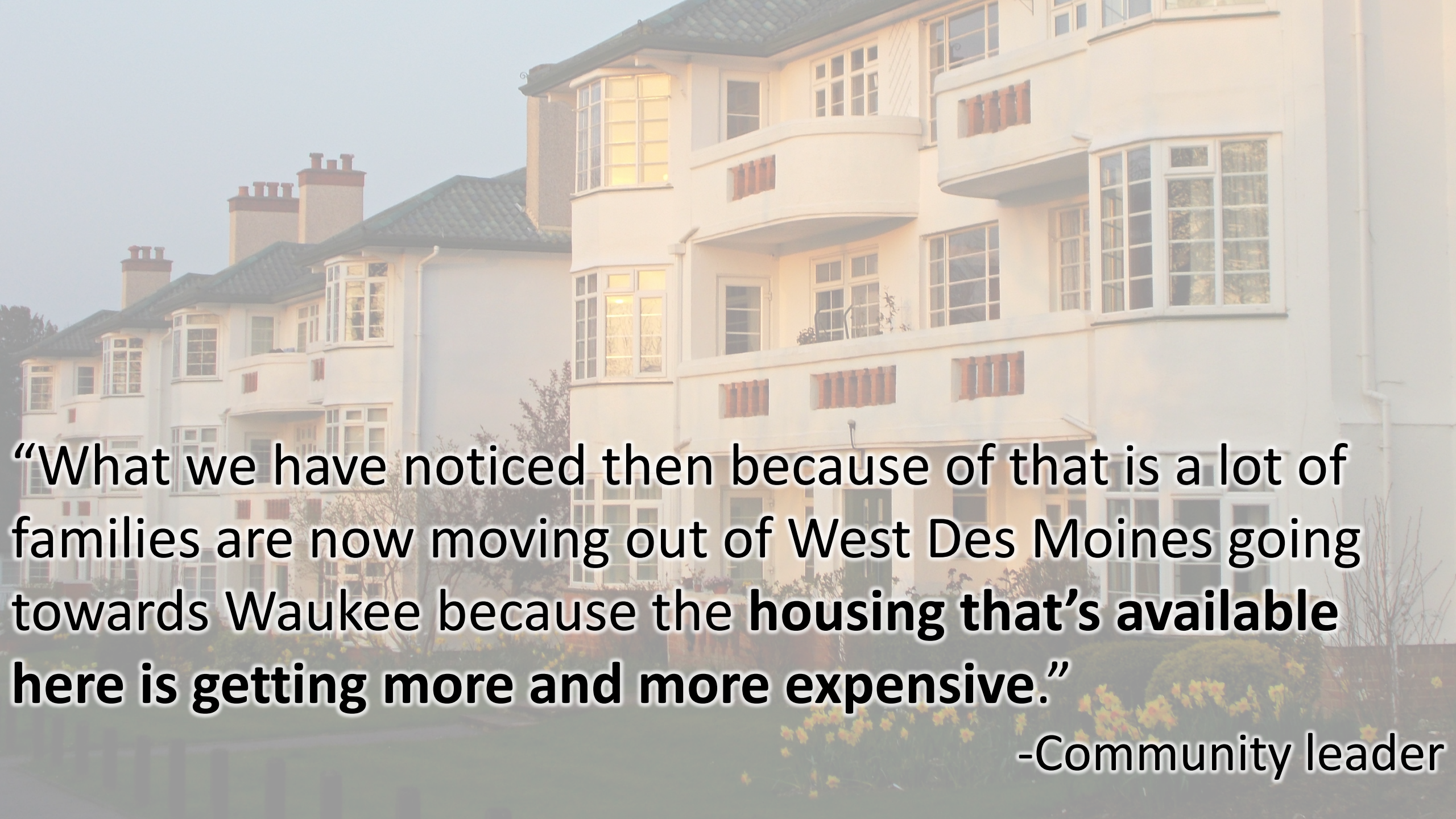


“This year, we’ve had a huge influx of Chin families, and Burmese, and they all have pre-schoolers and **none of them have transportation** and they all value education, where they dearly want their children in preschool. I had no idea that was coming. And it just suddenly was there. And then, you're trying to respond to it.”

-Focus group participant


An open book with yellow pages is shown from a high angle, resting on a wooden surface. The book is open, and the pages are slightly curved. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown color.

“There used to be a time where it seemed that money was no object to West Des Moines Community Schools district. Now, they're feeling the financial pinch like everybody else, so we've had to let go of positions. And it is still a fantastic school district with fantastic infrastructure and everything else, but **the days of no financial worries are gone.**” -Focus group participant



“What we have noticed then because of that is a lot of families are now moving out of West Des Moines going towards Waukee because the **housing that’s available here is getting more and more expensive.**”

-Community leader



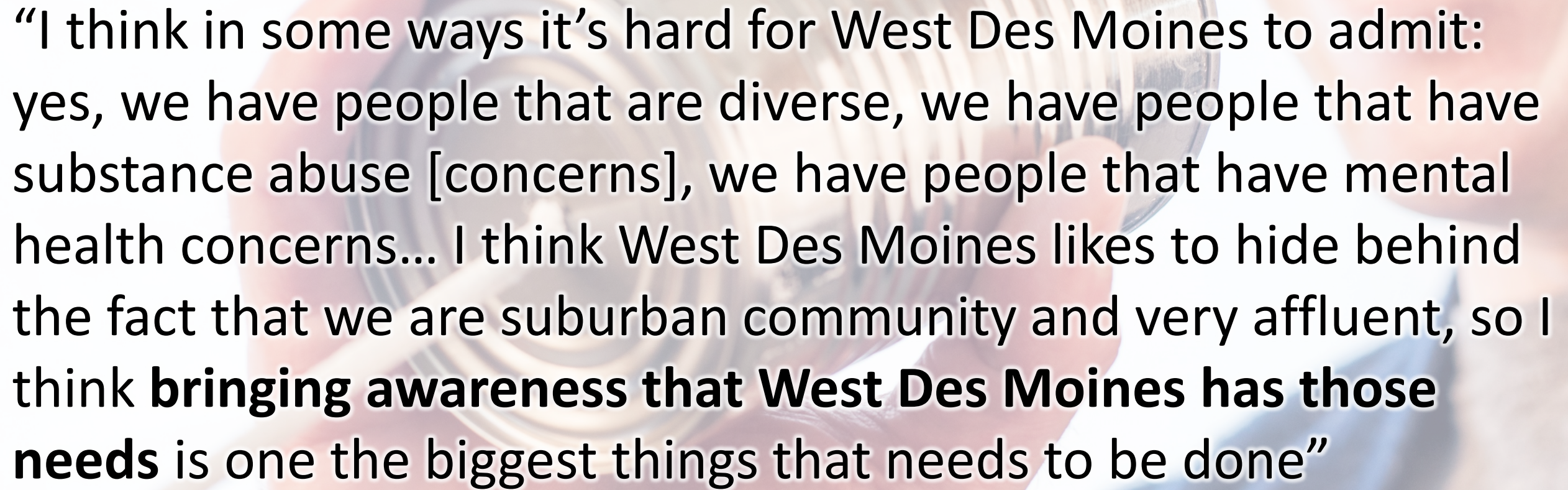
“Seeing all the problems that are out there and how many camps and homeless people are out there, **it's really just eye opening** to me and not only just homeless in Iowa but homeless teens especially the LGBTQ community.”

-WDMCS high school student

Opportunities

Develop and expand current resources:

- Language classes
- Affordable housing
- Public transportation
- Diversity training

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a silver, ribbed megaphone. The person's mouth is open as if speaking into it. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

“I think in some ways it’s hard for West Des Moines to admit: yes, we have people that are diverse, we have people that have substance abuse [concerns], we have people that have mental health concerns... I think West Des Moines likes to hide behind the fact that we are suburban community and very affluent, so I think **bringing awareness that West Des Moines has those needs** is one the biggest things that needs to be done”

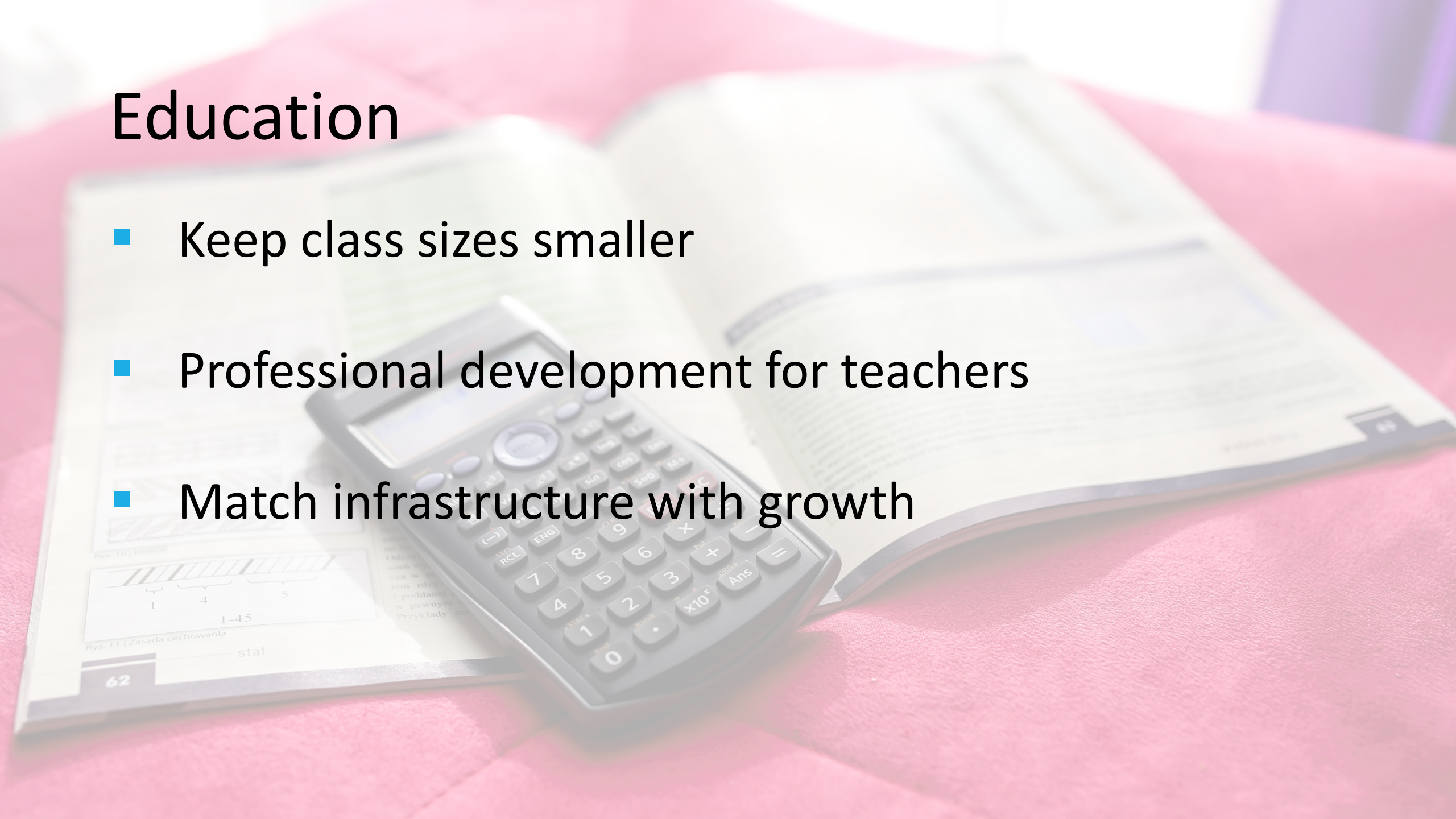
-Focus group participant

Priorities

- Education
- Community building
- Accommodating growing diversity

Education


- Keep class sizes smaller
- Professional development for teachers
- Match infrastructure with growth



Community building



- Increase civic engagement
- Increase public's knowledge of available services
- Opportunities for kids
- Build community to attract and retain millennials

A photograph of three children of different ethnicities laughing and playing outdoors. The child on the left is a young girl with dark hair, wearing a dark blue hoodie with a 'GAP' logo. The child in the middle is a young girl with dark hair, wearing a pink jacket over a green shirt with a white and pink graphic. The child on the right is a young boy with light brown hair, wearing a colorful striped sweater. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

Accommodating diversity

- Diversity training in the community
- Resources to reduce language barriers
- Provide more community cultural events



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