

April 30, 2024

Dear Parents, Students, Teachers, and Staff:

Thank you for all your input on the 2023-24 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and for giving us further ideas for the 2024-25 LCAP. We appreciate the time and effort it took to share your ideas with us, which you did in a number of different ways including filling out the Parent Involvement and Family Engagement survey, filling out the Certificated Staff Tech Survey, or the Teacher LCAP survey, or by giving input at Curriculum Councils and an OTA meeting, or by giving input during your class at the high school. All ways of sharing input allow us to hear your ideas and concerns and to reflect those as much as we can in the work we do. We did have many fewer families and staff give input this year, so we especially appreciate the input of those who were able to chime in.

Below, I will address the major concerns that were put forth. There are many commonalities.

Communication. The top concern across the board, especially for parents and students, was communication. Parents and students were loud and clear about the need for more communication about topics as diverse as how their child is doing in class to knowing when board meetings are. We encourage parents to reach out to teachers anytime you have concerns or questions, but we will continue to encourage teachers to answer emails in a timely manner, to keep Aeries updated, and to make sure to keep the channels of communication open and welcoming to all. Students and parents can do their part by being sure to read emails and texts and listen to voice messages, as well as check social media for sites and the District in order to stay on top of all information. You also asked for more social media content rather than email, and we can certainly work on that, though for longer messages, email is still our go-to platform, so be sure to check yours periodically. Information about board meetings, including dates and times and past agendas and minutes can be found on the District website under Board of Trustees.

Families let us know that they would like to be notified anytime there is a safety concern on any campus. All of our sites take safety concerns seriously. Each situation is fully investigated by site administrators. These investigations sometimes include cooperation from our school resource officer and Oakdale Police Department. After an investigation, each site will determine the need to notify families based on specific circumstances. Families are encouraged to contact sites with all questions and concerns.

Participating in school committees. Many of you would like us to host more evening meetings. When we've done this in the past, we've had little to no turn-out, but we do understand the need as many of us are also working parents. Some of you would like in-person meetings and some would like virtual meetings. While we acknowledge that we are never going to satisfy everyone,

we will keep working toward making sure that all families are informed about and included in the advisory committees and other committees at school sites. Some people expressed concern that they didn't know what opportunities exist or how to join and others expressed that they didn't feel included. This is certainly something we can and will work on.

More parent/teacher meetings. Many of you had ideas about parent-teacher conferences. Some thought they should be earlier and some later, and some thought they should happen every trimester. While the timing of the parent-teacher conferences is dictated by the OJUSD calendar, and while trimesterly meetings are not a possibility, all parents are welcome to reach out to teachers to check on their students and ask questions as needed.

Resources for supporting learning at home. Parents would like more resources for helping their students at home and are especially interested in a specific list of resources of both online and print help. There are some resources for all subjects and grade levels listed on the homepage of our District website (at the bottom of the left column), but we'll encourage sites and teachers to keep sending more out as possible, and we'll post more resources on the District website as well.

Facilities. Restrooms and facilities were of major concern to both students and teachers. More and updated restrooms would be much appreciated, especially gender-neutral restrooms, which allow only one user at a time, and restrooms in all TK and K classrooms. OJUSD has plans for updating many of the facilities around our District, and your concerns regarding facilities will be shared with planning teams. Parking lot supervision and safety were both topics on the minds of high school students as well.

Technology. We are not a one-to-one district, meaning that we choose to keep our student devices in the classrooms, rather than send a device home with each student. However, you've expressed concerns about assignments that are required to be completed on a computer or required to be typed. While there should always be an alternative to completing an assignment on a device as we know that not everyone has access to a device and/or the internet, this may be something staff needs to be reminded of. We also realize that turn-around times on Chromebook repairs seem slow, so we'll do what we can to make this go more quickly. It should also be noted that the junior high and high school library media centers are often open before and after school for students to use the computers and printers.

In a surprise revelation, students requested less time with technology in general, less time with online communication, and more time with people conveying information in-person and especially talking them through various college and career-related topics. They are especially interested in hearing more about A-G from counselors and from teachers. This will be happening at the high school and at the junior high next year. Students also wanted better communication about scholarships and college/career opportunities, but it appears that much of this is already

being shared on the daily bulletin, on announcements, through email, and through social media. We'll keep sharing.

More staff. There were many calls for reading specialists, more yard duty personnel, more campus supervisors, more SpEd teachers, and a variety of additional certificated staff. Unfortunately, we cannot hire additional staff at this time. We know this is frustrating, and that it sometimes puts more pressures on existing staff, but we hope you can appreciate that hiring staff in a time of declining enrollment and the current economic forecasts would be unwise.

Homeroom/Study Hall. Teachers and students were both interested in a homeroom at the high school, especially if it taught life skills and study skills. Fitting this into the already-tight high school schedule would be a challenge, but we'll consider this idea for the future.

Building connections between schools and families. Parents suggested that we have more evening activities for families. Families love the picnic night and winter festivals, but they would love to see more teacher participation as well. Parents and teachers both suggested a return to Family Math, Science, or Writing nights, something we can certainly look into, especially at the elementary level. Some parents were interested in getting-to-know-the teachers/school events, something the junior high has done a good job with this year with their Future Rams night for incoming families.

As you can see, concerns are diverse and deeply felt. Not everything can be addressed in this letter, but rest assured that every single concern has been read and cataloged from all of this year's input sessions. Some of the ideas cannot be addressed in the LCAP, but I can make sure that they are brought to the attention of people who can take more direct action.

Thank you for the kind words and understanding included in the input as well. We appreciate those thoughts too! And thank you again for your time and energy in sharing your ideas and concerns. Your input matters.

Sincerely,

Gillian Wegener, EdD
Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
Oakdale Joint Unified