2018 Feedback and District Responses to Parent Advisory Committee and DELAC for LCAP

Q: Did the student focus groups consist only of 12th graders?
A: Focus groups were conducted at elementary, middle, K-8 and high schools. Different focus groups had students in grades 3 through 12.

Q: How were the focus group students chosen?
A: Principals were asked to select at least 15 students from diverse student groups and grades.

Q: Why are Chromebooks replaced after 3 years?
A: The typical life of a Chromebook is 3 to 5 years, depending on wear and tear, number of users, software updates, etc. Our Chromebooks are used by students on a daily basis and require replacement about every three years.

Q: There is a lot in place for English Learner students or kids that are struggling. What about GATE students?
A: There is $45,000 in our GATE program budget to support testing for GATE identification and to provide differentiated instruction for GATE students.

Q: GATE is a smaller percentage [of the student population]. There are more EL students than GATE students, I really haven't seen much of anything happen for GATE students.
A: There is $45,000 in our GATE program budget to support testing for GATE identification and to provide differentiated instruction for GATE students.

Q: It troubles me that there are resources [for GATE] that [weren't used this year].
A: We encourage you to talk to your teacher, and then with your principal if you have concerns about what is or is not happening in your student's classroom.

Q: Why is it that all the programs go to IHS? Why do they all go to North Natomas?
A: We have several programs at NHS including the AP Capstone, Digital Media Pathway, Health Pathway, Engineering Pathway, and Transportation Pathway. A new Building Trades & Construction program will also be located at Natomas High School and available to all of our students in the District.

Q: What do you do so our students have a teacher or a qualified substitute in place?
A: In some classes students may have a long-term substitute teacher in place of a full-time teacher.

Q: Not having stable teachers is not just at that School. It's at all schools. It happened to me when I was young too. The district can only do as much as they can when teachers are out.

A: Thank you for the information.

Q: Another problem is how long substitutes can stay–caps affect how long substitutes can work–extend work days/periods for substitutes.

A: Thank you for the information.

Q: The last meeting I attended when I shared about subs issue, I was told that it is policy that subs can stay only a certain amount of time. I would want that to change.

A: California has laws regarding the amount of time that a substitute teacher can work in the same classroom during a school year based on the type of credential.

Q: This is a great opportunity to settle contracts with teachers and make NUSD a more attractive district to teachers.

A: Thank you for the information.

Q: Does increasing security support mean getting actual police officers?

A: We have partnered with the Sacramento Police Department and currently have three School Resource Officers dedicated to support our schools. In addition, at our high schools, middle schools and K-8 schools we employ Campus Safety Specialists.

Q: I've noticed that our staff, as a grade-level team, would be out a lot this year. I see the value in that, but with sub shortages, I am concerned about scheduling all of that PD/pull-out time. Does teacher training have to be during the day? With the sub shortage, there aren't even enough subs to cover teacher absences.

A: NUSD continues to work to hire teachers and substitute teachers and to reduce teacher vacancies. We have increased our professional development opportunities outside the school day, including training in the summer and online.

Q: You guys are putting a lot of money into different programs, but what about considering the culture around teachers and getting teachers to want to be teachers? As a society, we don't pay teachers well. My high school had a Teaching career path. High school students can see if it's a path they are interested in.

A: Thank you for the information. We have proposed a Careers in Teaching committee that also includes launching a Future Teachers Club at our secondary schools. NUSD offers a competitive teacher salary.

Q: NP3 has a volunteer tutoring program; students get volunteer hours and experience.

A: Thank you for the information.

Q: So we've talked about the GATE budget, EL, etc. Where does the SPED program fall? Where does that money go in supporting Instructional Aides and teachers? Is there a specific budget for SPED students/program?

A: Yes. Our district actually spends $11 million more on our Special Education program than NUSD is given by the state and federal governments to support that program. NUSD added Instructional Aides in the past few years and is also adding additional teachers and staff to that department.NUSD is also exploring options for taking more direct responsibility for our program and increasing the funding to support our students.

Q: Are we still going to keep SPED inclusive?

A: NUSD is committed to continuing inclusive practices of special education students in a Least Restrictive Environment model. Inclusion happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes as often as possible. In 2015-16, the California Department of Education reported that NUSD met the state and federal requirements for providing the Least Restrictive Environment for our students with disabilities by implementing inclusive education or inclusive practices.

Q: Is our teacher union and staff supportive of the SPED inclusion?

A: Providing students with disabilities a Least Restrictive Environment model is a state and federal requirement and good for students. We cannot comment on the union's perspective nor on behalf of over 1100 individual NUSD employees. Each individual support level may vary. Through our collective efforts over recent years and as indicated in the Fall 2017 District Progress Report, more NUSD students with disabilities are: Graduating at higher rates (up 11%), Increasing readiness for college with higher a-g completion rates (up 18%), Making progress towards language re-designation (up 19% for English Learners), Taking the ACT college entrance exam (up 13%).

Q: Is there a full-time psychologist at every campus?

A: Yes

Q: I was very excited to go on the college field trip with my 3rd grader but it was completely lost on the third graders; it was more "look at our building, look at this cool thing." I don't think 3rd grade is the right time to do it. If the district is going to be spending money on tours, then there should be communication with tours/guides about plans. Teachers are unhappy about a tour that doesn't do anything for their 3rd graders.

A: Thank you for the information. There is a continued need to help our stakeholders understand the importance of introducing college opportunities to students at all grade levels. Research shows that students start thinking about college as early as Kindergarten and our District has invested resources to ensure that all students, regardless of their family income, language, or parent-education level have the opportunity to visit 2-year and 4-year colleges as elementary, middle, and high school students.

Q: I want kids to have good emotional experiences and to connect them to college.
A: Thank you for the information.

Q: Do you think African American increases in successes are attributed to the type of people on the staff? Have they had struggles as well? Do they understand struggles and cultural backgrounds? Do you think having this Superintendent, who said he came from a low income background, attributes to our successes? I feel like it's happening for some reason. It's very commendable.
A: Thank you. The NUSD Board of Education and Superintendent are committed to the Core Beliefs that diversity is a strength and that disparity and disproportionality can and must be eliminated.

Q: This has been on my mind for a long time now: administration and staff, as we look to create success in elementary, should have an understanding for success in Elementary. What works for secondary grades does not work in elementary. How many of our staff come from an elementary background? Look at teaching elementary teachers to really engage students–something secondary teachers don't do the same.
A: Thank you for the information. Our Associate Superintendent of School Leadership was an elementary teacher and K-8 principal, and our School Leadership Department has a balance of people with experience in both elementary and secondary education.

Q: Will the Building Trades and Construction Pathway be at Natomas High School?
A: Yes, it will be located there but it will be open to students across the district.

Q: Can any student attend Public Safety trade?
A: The program will be at Inderkum High School.

Q: Can we possibly have DELAC meetings at the school sites?
A: We will share your inquiry with the appropriate administrator to consider hosting District English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC) meetings at the school sites.

Q: Are you going to have the website in different languages?
A: Our websites have a translation tool for Spanish, French, Punjabi and Tagalog.

Q: Some parents get the letters like the On Track to College Letters and don't even know what it is, maybe go to the school sites to promote items. Call parents and make special invitations.
A: Thank you for the information. This will be shared with our new Student and Family Engagement Department.

Q: We need more people going to meetings and school sites to speak Spanish; it attracts more people when there are others with a native tongue.
A: Thank you for the suggestion.

Q: It is great to have psychologists at school sites–you never know what kids are going through.
A: Thank you.

Q: Why are there are no programs or tutoring services during the summer.
A: NUSD has summer school for elementary students located at Two Rivers Elementary School. NUSD students in grades 4-8 can participate.

Q: I think that it is necessary to have summer school at every site. My son is not caught up in reading and writing, but summer school could help.
A: Thank you for the suggestion.

Q: Will the EL Directors and TOSAs be at every school?

A: These new staff will work with staff at every school, but will be located at the Education Center.

Q: When will CAASPP scores be ready for families to view?
A: They will likely be available in August.

Q: Do we have the name of the EL Director?
A: We do not have the name yet.

Q: Are the new teachers working with English Learners going to have a specific schedule?
A: That has not been determined yet.

Q: I speak French but my children only speak English. It's their first language. Why do they have to be classified as English Learners?
A: The State of California requires schools to use a home language survey upon first enrollment. Once a student is identified as an English learner, they must be reclassified to Fluent English Proficient following California and NUSD guidelines which include demonstrating proficiency in English and English Language Arts.

Q: The question from the State to know home languages is confusing–they should change that question.
A: Thank you for the suggestion.

Q: Will there be a different CSU test for ELM?
A: CSU schools will use other information to determine whether new college students need remediation. They are considering looking at a student's previous test scores in elementary and middle school as indicators of the need for remediation in college.

Q: Universities looking at grades prior to high school happens in Europe–I had to bring my transcripts from 8th grade and on to my college to have classes to be determined.
A: Thank you for the information.

Q: I don't think that there should be K-8 schools. I'm concerned about my children's safety at school with middle school students on the same campus.
A: In Natomas, the K-8 model has shown to be more successful academically and behaviorally for students in middle school grades. Also know that we are investing more resources year in safety/security for K-8 schools by having 1 full-time campus safety specialist at each school.

Q: Where can I see the On Track to College Letters?
A: The new "On Track to College Letter" is located on our website.

Q: It says you are adding money for alternative programs at our schools. What programs are you considering?
A: There is not a specific program in consideration yet. Part of the work next year will be to review what is already in place and working well in NUSD.

Q: Is the district ready for crises like the ones we've seen on the news around the country?
A: The safety of our students and staff is the highest priority. We are working hard to keep our schools safe and secure. Our district has invested in safety and security improvements at our schools, added staff such as full time psychologists, health aides, campus safety specialists, and partnered with the Sacramento Police Department to have three full-time School Resource Officers to support NUSD schools.

Q: I believe that because there is a lot of bullying at the schools around the country, kids that are being bullied react in bad ways.
A: Thank you for the information.

Q: When teachers are absent, there are not enough sub teachers. Sometimes when they don't have a teacher, the subs are not there, they bring non-teachers to watch the class.
A: Thank you for the information. NUSD increased the substitute pay and continues to actively hire substitute teachers.

Q: Is the diversity recruitment going to continue?
A: Diversity recruitment is ongoing. The Diversity Recruitment Program is a 3 year program and will be considered for extension prior to expiration.

Q: I would like to see more information regarding the programs schools have. I don't know the differences between IB and CECA. I want the students to know what classes to take in college.

A: School staff can assist with specific program questions. In addition, our District website contains many resources for parents, please click here.

Q: I received notices about meetings at my old school, but at my new school I don't get any information about DELAC/ELAC.

A: Thank you for the information. We will work to improve communications at all of our school sites with their parents/families.

Q: Will there be any tutoring after school during the year?

A: After-school tutoring is managed at each school site. Please speak with your student's teacher or principal to discuss options for your child.