LCAP Stakeholder Feedback and District Responses 2015

The following feedback is from Parent Advisory Committee and the English Learner Parent Advisory Committee based on the first draft of the NUSD LCAP.

Q: The fact that you're coming here to share this information with us, means a lot to us. We don't have another way to come across this type of information abou our kids and schools.

A: Thank you.

Q: Chromebooks…my son is really comfortable with the Chromebook, he wants to know if that's something that we can buy for him. Is that something that parents can buy from the district, and if a parent bought a Chromebook from the district, could there be a service to help them get that fixed?

A: This is not currently an program supported by NUSD

Q: Will the plan to get Chromebooks for NGMS and NHS students extend to the other schools?

A: There is not currently a plan to put one-to-one Chromebooks at other schools.

Q: The Chromebooks that students take home, if something happens to it, is the parent responsible for fixing it?

A: Not if the Chromebook was damaged by accident. However, if a Chromebook is damaged at home, a student may or may not be able to check out a Chromebook for home use in the future.

Q: Regarding the confirmation of mobile labs, will the mobile labs be replaced or fixed, some of the ones at our school aren't working…cleaning them, fixing the, replacing them.

A: The replacement and repair of Chromebooks is included as an item in the LCAP.

Q: With workshops that have been provided to parents, will there be an opportunity to teach parents how to use the Chromebooks?

A: Thank you for this suggestion. It may be possible in the future.

Q: I want to applaud….2.2 FTE for EL Coordinators in Secondary schools means more teachers talking to more students….increased support for schools. Also, the .2 FTE for band specialists and the 3 seasons of sports in elementary schools. I want to applaud all of those.

A: Thank you.

Q: Mindset is so important to achievement, its a key to achieving, and having the EL Coordinators, band specialists, and sports can all improve mindset for our students.

A: Thank you.

Q: Beautification of our facilities, either through landscaping or public art would improve our learning environments as well.

A: Thank you for this suggestion, you can learn about our Facilities Master Plan.

Q: Will we be continuing to do as much testing as we currently are? Will we have three NWEA tests per year? 10th grades students had NWEA, CELDT, PSAT, CAHSEE. The NWEA took away 15 teaching days from me this year, because we tested for math and English for 5 days in English.

A: The NWEA is a district assessment which students take 3 times per year. There are 3 tests which each take about 1 hour for a total of 9 hours of testing each year.

Q: Are the results of the NWEA test being shared with the students?

A: Teachers are encouraged to share the results with students and all parents have the ability to do so as well after receiving a printed student score report from their school after each assessment.

Q: It says we're adopting new math textbooks, will we be adopting other new textbooks, like English?

A: Thank you for this suggestion, this is now included in the LCAP for the upcoming school years.

Q: The Accelerated Reader program, they were able to read a book and take a test at home. Now they can't do that, why cant they take the test at home? What can we do to improve the timing of the test to when the student finishes reading it? Can the Chromebooks be made available?

A: The company that provides the AR program to NUSD requires that all testing happen at school.

Q: We have an interest in having more Chromebook carts for more instructional time.

A: Thank you for this suggestion. Additional funds have been included in the LCAP for Instructional Technology purchases

Q: It would be good to have students spend more time writing on Chromebooks, rather than pencil and paper, so they have more time to practice for the CAASPP.

A: Thank you.

Q: Is there anything designated for teacher raises, I'm especially concerned with high turnover rate of 8th grade math teachers. It affects teacher not to have consistent teachers. My child will have another long-term sub for a month. All the students' grades seem to have dropped.

A: Included in the LCAP is funding for ongoing teacher and staff raises which began in 2014.

Q: For teachers, they deserve an incentive, maybe at the end of the year, or during the year. They work so hard to get the kids up to speed. I don't see that happening. maybe a gift card, to get them more motivated than they are already. It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive, but something to show appreciation. If a teacher can get that from the school level, to them, it can motivate them even more.

A: Thank you for the suggestion.

Q: When a teacher is selected as the teacher at the year, who selects them? Can the parents have a say in that selection process? We share our children with those teachers, and my son is happy with his teacher, we should have say in

that. is it different at different schools? Do some schools allow parents to participate in the selection process.

A: Thank you for the suggestion, this is not currently part of the selection process.

Q: What was the budget that was shared at the last LCAP meeting for the facilities master plan?

A: Measure J passed in 2014 by the residents of Natomas. This bond will bring $129 million in facilities improvements and new school construction to Natomas.

Q: Parents shared that they have not received the NWEA letters coming home with the students.

A: If a parent has not received their child's NWEA score report, they may request a new one from the teacher or front office at the school.

Q: Regarding attendance, it talks about actions to address students who are chronically absent in K and 9, 10…it seems like it could be wider, to address it for more grade levels, and what about reaching out families in general about attendance. I think there could be more information to educate families about what's an OK absence and what's not.

A: Thank you for this suggestion. Having students attend school is important to ensure students learn.

Q: Is there a correlation between students who begin in 1st grade, since K is not required? Is there a pattern of just getting into the system of being in school. It may be difficult for some families to just get into the system. Maybe if they didn't start until later, they have worse attendance. It might be about making school a priority in life for students.

A: We do not have research on this in Natomas at this time.

Q: I'd be curious to see if, when we go to a year round schedule, if the months off for vacations will affect this. I think the mentality for parents is "they're young" they can miss school. So maybe the year round will improve attendance.

A: NUSD was on a year-round calendar years ago.

Q: I found out that we can do the independent study when we travel. I don't think most parents know about that option. NUSD has to decide whether we go all in on this option or not. Some families only get vacations in off months and some districts may have a system in place to support those families.

A: Thank you.

Q: What does the acronym "FIT" mean?

A: The Facilities Inspection Tool is a state-mandated assessment of school facilities by local staff.

Q: What does the acronym "CAC" mean?

A: The Community Advisory Committee is a group that meets to discuss and inform the district about the needs of Special Education Students.

Q: What does the acronym "DELAC" mean?

A: District English Learner Advisory Committee

Q: What does the acronym "ROP" mean?

A: Regional Occupation Program

Q: What does the acronym "IB" mean?

A: International Baccalaureate

Q: What does the acronym "CAHSEE" mean?

A: California High School Exit Exam

Q: What does the acronym "SDAIE" mean?

A: Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English

Q: Im a big fan of non-academic support resources. Its great to see music, Parent CORES… even the parent meetings like coffee with a principal. I see things like Band, Music, Sports, field trips, parent workshops, world languages…I'm waiting to see when they come, when we'll get more information about these. Are the programs being laid out from the district…is there information to keep parents into the loop about all the choices and options?

A: We're trying to keep kids engaged in school every day, so they feel connected to adults and their peers, and that's aligned with District Goal 4.Many of those are found at the middle and high schools. NUSD has plans to launch an elementary athletics program next year and we are working to music back to elementary schools but we're trying to do that in a way that doesn't keep students from getting all their other academics, arts, PE. Our goal is to have elementary music in place next year.

Q: Program money you talked about where you're checking to see how much money was spent in 2014-2015, what happens if the money was not all spent? Or if the program was not implemented at all, what happens to the extra money?

A: The money is returned to the appropriate fund for other uses

Q: Does hiring 4 new bus drivers mean that there will be fewer chances that school field trips will be changed, where we have to get picked up at different times than scheduled?

A: Not necessarily

Q: How are elementary school athletics going to dovetail with afterschool programs. We'd like to see the 2-3 o'clock hour be for academics and enrichment and then for 3-4 o'clock be for non academics.

A: Thank you for this suggestion.

Q: Do students have to maintain certain grades to participate in the athletics at elementary school?

A: No, this will not be a requirement.

Q: Are there any other ideas coming our way that would decrease suspensions and expulsion rates. Is the district open to contract with parents for programs like Outward Bound?

A:

- We have some in-district programs to support students like a TK – 1 grade program and we're working on a 4-5-6 program to keep students in the district with specialists to support their social-emotional skills along with the academic instruction. We know that if we can work with students at a young age, based on work at the Mind Institute at UC Davis, we can support those students to be successful.
- We also have a 8-12 grade program at Discovery High School to support those students. The Promise Program gives them direct teaching and opportunities to work and opportunities to get supported.
- Our intention is to keep students in the district and support their social, emotional and academic needs.

Q: Are those programs off-site or on-site?

A: Some are off-site and some are on school sites. We've had these programs going for a few years already and we've managed their hours and participation at schools in the district.

Q: In the Needs section, you've listed the suspension rates for just a few schools, is that because they have the highest rates?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there a correlation between the suspensions and expulsion rates for African American students?

A: Possibly.

Q: With the busses, do they come inside the gated communities?

A: No.

Q: We have intervention programs for children who need help to catch up but what programs do we have for students who are above grade level academically? I know we have GATE classes but what are we doing. What happens to those

students who are at a higher level who could go even further? Why aren't we doing something to make them go forward? Could an intervention teacher pull students out to work on higher level work? I feel like the work is too easy for some kids and some students may be creating habits of being lazy, because some are breezing right through school. So can we pull kids out with intervention teachers? If we want students to be college ready, we need to develop their habits early.

- Long term we can look at things like they're doing in other districts, for example, where a 3rd grader is taking 4th grade math. To get there we have to have really well aligned curriculum across our grade levels, so teachers would all have to teach math at the same time during the day. One district that did it took over 20 years to get there.
- Once we start getting our college rates up, we can work more and more on these issues. There are a lot of issues to consider to make this happen.
- Some of the money we receive from the State or Federal government is designated to help students who are behind grade level.

Q: The district is providing the PSAT test for all students. Are we doing anything for 8th grade families to tell them about the opportunities for High School like a CECA test? Are there test in the summer? How do we let more families know about 9th grade options, about what to expect for high school. There's a CECA test to get into the CECA program to be accepted into the program.

A: There is no test to get into the CECA program, but there is an application process managed by Inderkum High School. Our high schools do meet with middle school students and our Parent CORES program does provide information to parents about high school programs and college going but we may be able to do more to help parents learn about program offerings in NUSD high schools.

Q: When I was in school, students had choices about picking different ROP options. is that still the case?

A: Most of our pathways have connections to the career options and Community College programs in the Sacramento region. Also, there may be fewer options today in ROP than we had decades ago because of how the programs are funded. We are also working to make P-20 connections and pathways throughout our region.

Q: Is the Art Institute one of the partners?
A: Not currently.

Q: If the district goal is to prepare students to be college and career ready, I want it to be an option for my elementary students. I'd like to see some college and career readiness programs at the elementary school level. I'm concentrating on the data points like CAASPP and NWEA and benchmarks, but the school is looking at report cards and my son's participation in school more than these scores. The school is validating itself with subjective things, but is that going to help him keep the door open for college.

A: We're working to create a report that will give schools and families data on CAASPP, grades, NWEA, and tests like the ACT and PSAT to put a lot of data points together in once place so you can help your children get what they need. Once parents have all that information, you'll be able to have even better conversations with your child's teacher to raise the bar to get them what they need. We'll be able to bring all this data together so you can advocate for your child

Q: My hope is that, with Goal 2, that we'll give more attention in elementary school. If you're not at a competent reading level in 3rd grade, you'll struggle to get back on track.

A: Thank you for this suggestion.

Q: What is your definition of an intervention specialist?

A: A certificated teacher who works with students individually or in small groups to increase their knowledge and skills.

Q: How are parents notified? Is it mandatory? Are the students actually participating?

A: You can get more information about intervention supports for your child by speaking with your teacher or principal.

Q: Is this Intervention Specialist program with elementary students different than the HOST program?

A: Yes.

Q: What is the timing of the intervention program-what are they being pulled out of?

A: It happens at different times during the school day. You can get more information about intervention supports for your child by speaking with your teacher or principal.

Q: Gate program coming back? Is the same as accelerating/working in another grade level?

A: We have GATE programs throughout our elementary schools. Witter Ranch has self-contained GATE classes.

Q: Concern with the alienation of other students who may also be ready for acceleration, keep an eye on all students, it's not just those identified who would benefit-listen to and watch kids and give them the best opportunity available

A: Thank you for sharing this concern with us.

Q: Do the students who are GATE know and those who are not, do they not know?

A: Students may or may not know about their GATE status. You can get more information by speaking with your teacher or principal.

Q: Last year there were GATE workshops for parents and they were very helpful

A: Thank you for this feedback.

Q: Kids should be challenged but sometimes the best ones to challenge them are their peers

A: Thank you.

Q: What is on the chromebook? What programs are on it and what are they using them for? Concern with the WIFI access at NMS.

A: The Chromebook has no software. It accesses all the programs via the internet and Google Apps for Education

Q: Have they fixed the library screen at NMS and HAH?

A: Thank you for sharing this concern. This will be addressed as part of our Facilities Master Plan.

Q: Does the skill that is learned on the ChromeBooks something that can be used on other devices?

A: Yes.

Q: Will there be Chromebooks added to the other schools so there are more while assessments are taking place?

A: Additional funds have been added to the LCAP for instructional technology for students, teachers, and staff. Some additional chromebooks may be purchased with those funds and individual schools may also purchase Chromebooks for their students.

Q: Is anyone researching to see if Chromebooks will be viable in 3-4 years? Is that a good investment?

A: Thank you for this suggestion.

Q: Does the district check with staff to ensure that when we make future hardware purchases they are still going to work?

A: Thank you for this suggestion.

Q: Are there iPads missing?

A: If any district iPads are missing the should be reported to that school and the Instructional Technology Department Assessments: with NWEA, CAHSEE… concerned with how many mandated tests there are that takes them out of classroom instruction? Are they getting anything out of the testing vs the instructional time lost?

Q: The school year includes more than 1,000 hours of time for students and their teachers. In total, most students take fewer than 30 hours of standardized test

by the district or State. Like the fact that the teachers are allowing them additional time if needed if they didn't finish the test. What will the difference be between a test they take seriously(CAHSEE) and one they do not? (NWEA)

A: Thank you for this feedback.

Q: How does the test correlate with the exit exam(CAHSEE)? How are the student doing on the test (CAHSEE)?

A: Thank you for the question, we may do an NWEA to CAHSEE test score correlation analysis.

Q: Why are the kids at NHS not even closer to the district CAHSEE average? Who is going to identify the problem and plug the holes in the ship? What is the problem? Is it feeder schools, leadership?

Q: Need some intervention at NHS.

A: Thank you for identifying this data point, we will investigate.

Q: Need to reach the kids through their learning styles, demographics

A: Thank you.

Q: Parent Engagement: Need a foot soldier that is willing to go out and reach the parents, need to reach the parents; programs who try to diligently reach the parents who are in the fog. Someone in the demographic who is doing the outreach to them; mix it up with different voices-use the parents to make the calls, male voice. Look at targeted personal invitations to those parents who would mostly benefit. Reaching out to the parents who will benefit the most.

A: Thank you.

Q: Why are the kids dropping out of DHS? Not fair to put them in the data.

A: We will be analyzing this issue to identify the cause and potential solutions

Q: GED the kids and get them some skills-skills like woodworking, sheet metal, etc.

A: Thank you.

Q: Give the students the skills sets for jobs at the district level. Basic skills, keyboarding, Excel, etc.

A: Thank you.

Q: What are we doing to teach elementary students how to type correctly on these Chromebooks? Computer skills

A: Different classrooms and schools are teaching students how to use Chromebooks in different ways

Q: Look at the demographic of the students at Discovery; give them an opportunity to learn some skills in an area of interest, art skills

A: Thank you

Q: How to identify the student realistic desires and help them get those skills?

A: Thank you

Q: Goal #4…Have heard that the Ed code on defiance is being changed(48900k) how is that affecting the safety of the classroom, how is the district addressing this shift?Is there a parent committee working on this?

A: Thank you

Q: Take note of this name [teacher] at NMS-"the student whisperer", pick his brain and find out what he's doing, find the teachers that have the control of their class and what are they doing and have them share that.

A: Thank you

Q: Identify the teachers who are teachers and the ones that are teachable and the ones that need to maybe leave

A: Thank you

Q: Need to have parents on the interview panel, be involved in the hiring process…Make good choices when hiring new teachers

A: Teachers are not currently on panels for hiring staff.

Q: Is looking at teacher's data from their previous position (student grades for example) a part of the screening process

A: Thank you for this suggestion

Q: Is there a board policy that would prevent a parent from coming to observe teaching and learning?

A: No

Q: Is there a probationary period? Is someone evaluating the class and observing?

A: Yes

Q: Help the teachers out or help the teachers get out

A: Thank you

Q: Leaders at schools need to hold students and teachers both accountable to have good behavior, to keep good teachers teaching and students learning.

A: Thank you, teachers set expectations for student behavior in their classroom in alignment with school and district behavior policies

Q: No feedback to share, but wondering if it it is possible to give any new hires their full "years of teaching" to attract experienced teachers to the district.

A: Thank you for this suggestion

Q: Need more teacher input. There is not enough teacher involvement. District is too top heavy and too top down. Top is out of touch with needs of the classroom.

A: Thank you for your feedback

Q: Suggest adding an increased focus on the ASVAB Career Exploration program (not for military recruiters, but for determining career aptitudes when counseling). I have two HS students enrolled at Inderkum and was not notified that an ASVAB was even administered.

A: Thank you for sharing this suggestion.

Q: Ensure there's music/band program for Heron

A: Elementary music and band will be coming in 2016-2017

Q: We are supportive of the draft LCAP.

A: Thank you

Q: Could you please add to your Curriculum computer class for 7 and 8 grade students.

A: Thank you for the suggestion

Q: Well thought out and clear goals

A: Thank you

Q: I support the LCAP document.

A: Thank you

Q: Would like to see more focus on core issues

Q: I would just like to state that the district overall is lousy. Our principal is not a people person and tends to have a nasty attitude. There are no field trips here and the ones you do have my child had 1 that actually took him on a bus was to a play that was generic. Also having them go to the bus depot. When I was a child I had many field trips and have wonderful memories this will not happen with my son if I keep him in this district and I think you cheat the kids out of this with your 1 or 2 field trips a year to lousy little cheap places.

A: Thank you for the feedback

Q: Not all objectives have been met. We were looking forward to elementary school sports and it never happened.

A: Elementary sports will be coming to our school sin 2016-2017. We were not able to implement this program in 2014-2015.

Q: I don't understand this document.