

INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE
Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of the Chief of Schools

INFORMATIVE

DATE: June 11, 2021

TO: Members, Board of Education
Austin Beutner, Superintendent

FROM: Dr. David Baca *DB*
Chief of Schools

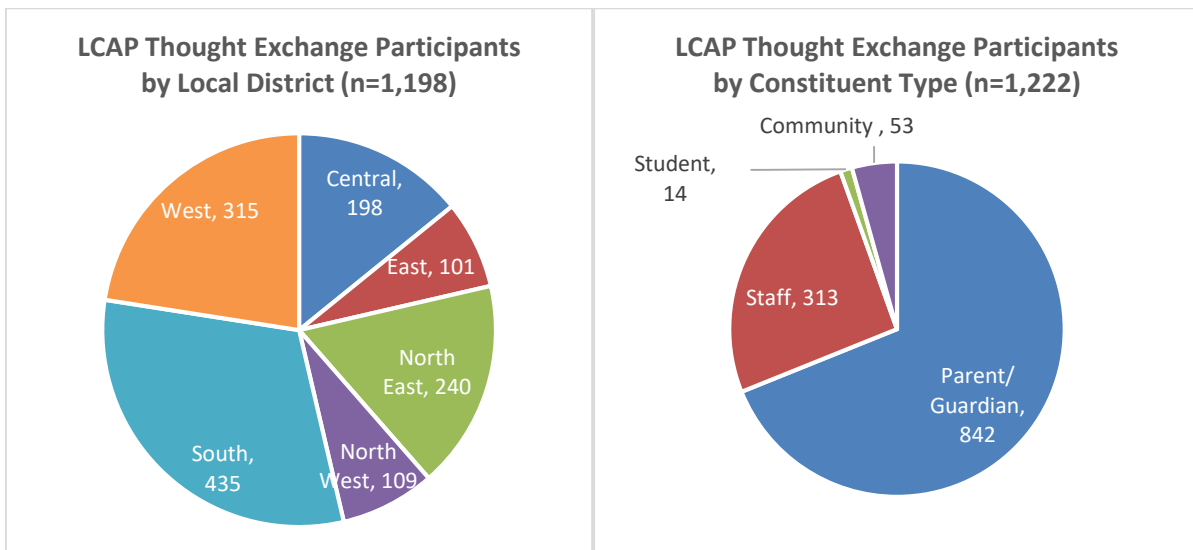
SUBJECT: SPRING 2021 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK – PATH TO RECOVERY

Since March, various departments in Los Angeles Unified engaged with parents, students, and other staff. Stakeholders were asked what the District needs to prioritize for student success, and what their priorities were for investments over the next three years and relating to our Path to Recovery. The following analysis summarizes feedback from 1) Local Control Accountability Plan convenings, 2) Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant forums, 3) reports and letters from community-based organizations and coalitions and 4) conversations and input from administrators. Parents, students, teachers, staff, administrators and other stakeholders from across the District participated in the various town halls, focus groups, and surveys.

Local Control Accountability Plan Convenings

Community of School Town Halls & Parent Council Meetings (PAC, DELAC)

- Thought Exchange Question: *What are the most important things our district needs to think about in order to support all students academically over the next 3 years?*
- 1,398 participants and 1,365 “thoughts”



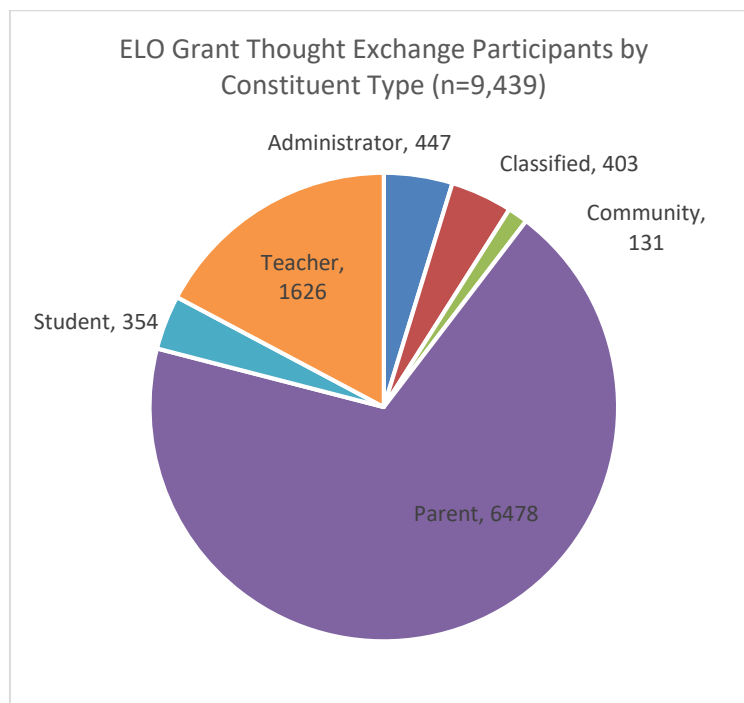
**note: participants were not required to answer demographic questions represented in Thought Exchange summary charts*

- Additional LCAP Focus Groups & “Study Sessions” for Student Populations
 - Students with disabilities (5 students, May)
 - Students in foster care (5 students, April)
 - English Learners (5-10 students per meeting, 3 meetings in January, March & April)
 - Black students (5-10 students per meeting, 2 meetings in February & March)
 - Student learners engaged with community partners (5-10 students, January)
 - Associated Student Body Presidents (20+ students, 2 meetings in late October & February)
 - Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council (20+ students, 3 meetings and 1 focus group in November, February, March and May)
 - Student Board Member Finalists (5 students, May)

Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant

Community of School Town Halls and Blackboard Connect Messages to Families

- Thought Exchange Question: *What investment would you recommend from your point of view as a student, parent, teacher, administrator, staff or community member for each of the 5 strategies (Health & Safety, Accelerating Learning, Mental Wellness, Support for Specialized Populations, Parent & Family Engagement)?*
- 10,531 participants and 9,556 “thoughts”



Reports and Letters from Community Based Organizations and Coalitions on Reopening and Recovery

- ACLU of Southern California’s Youth Liberty Squad**
 - Students from all areas of District
- Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)

- Immigrant parents and students from MacArthur Park area
- Centro CSO
 - East LA Parents & Educators
- Communities for Los Angeles Student Success (CLASS)*
 - Primarily East and South LA Organizations
- Equity Alliance for LA's Kids*
 - Primarily East and South LA Organizations
- Great Public Schools Now (GPSN)
 - Analysis based on District wide data
- Parent Organization Network (PON)**
 - Organizations across Los Angeles Unified
- A full summary of these reports can be found [here](#).

** Indicates a coalition of multiple organizations*

*** Indicates a lead organization on a multi-organization letter*

Conversations and Input from Administrators

- Deputy Superintendent Reilly's Principal Advisory Committee
- Local District Superintendents
- Community of School Administrators (via Thought Exchange)

Findings *(including estimated Path to Recovery allocations as of 6/10/21)*

Findings are organized by the four pillars of Path to Recovery to which investments are currently aligned: acceleration of learning, mental wellness, supports for specialized populations and health and safety. These pillars represent a holistic approach in our responsiveness to student need, recognizing that the path to recovery, healing, and acceleration requires support for students that is targeted and takes into account both their general wellbeing and instructional needs. Findings related to family and community engagement are summarized separately.

Where possible, proposed Path to Recovery investments are indicated alongside the feedback to highlight current alignment and potential gaps. The dollar amounts indicated below represent a portion of Los Angeles Unified's total investments in our students and schools. Other funding sources not indicated below that may be aligned with these identified needs include Title I, Title II, Title III, state monies in the Local Control Funding Formula, and others.

Acceleration of Learning

- Student Supports: Students, teachers, and parents are looking for deeper relationships and more personalized interventions to support student learning. Smaller class sizes and tutoring were two primary strategies to achieve this level of support; the expansion of Primary Promise was a popular suggestion amongst Community of School Administrators. Students also called for additional enrichment opportunities, especially the arts (which can also improve mental wellness and engagement) and college access supports such as additional college counselors, credit recovery opportunities, Advanced Placement resources and SAT/ACT prep classes.
 - Primary Promise expansion: \$200M
 - College and Career readiness: \$25M
 - Tutoring & small group instruction: \$54M

- Expanded enrichment: \$25M
- For Staff: Administrators highlighted the need for sustained capacity building and professional development for teachers. Math, learning acceleration, middle and high school literacy interventions, and culturally responsive curriculum were topics of need. They identified more than time and space for teachers to analyze student data, learn new skills, and develop coherent local learning plans with teaching teams.
 - Professional Development: \$102M
 - Focused instruction: \$166M
- For Schools and District: Access to updated devices and quality broadband for students was a common theme. Community members and school staff recognized that a lack of access has exacerbated learning loss for some students and communities. Some community organizations have expressed concern over a widening opportunity gap between students that returned for Spring 2021 and those that remained online. For students who choose to remain online for the Fall of 2021, quality online instruction will be a focus for some community organizations.
 - Computers, Internet Access and Helpdesk Support: \$145M
 - Online Program – Independent Study: \$30M

Mental Wellness

- For Students: Students are overwhelmingly looking for more mental health supports to address the trauma, instability, and disconnection from the last year. The high-profile police murders of Black people and the rise of anti-Asian hate crimes were also points of anxiety for students. There is a concern that the transition back to in-person school could be re-traumatizing and punitive, especially for students who may be unable to make assignment deadlines, or who are absent often. Administrators and students also advocated for beginning of year opportunities for community healing and building. Community partners have elevated the [Restorative Start Framework](#) from statewide studies.
 - Mental Health Support: \$177M
- For Staff: Both staff and students identified the importance of positive relationships with students, setting the groundwork for social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies. Some administrators also thought trainings on social-emotional learning and how to incorporate SEL into advisory periods would be supportive. Community organizations recognize the need to train current and additional school staff on identifying and addressing trauma. Students also recognized how implicit bias plays out in classrooms and impacts learning and wellbeing.
 - Professional Development: \$102M

Support for Specialized Populations

- English Learner Supports: Many parents and community organizations focused on the pandemic's exacerbated impact on English Language Learner students. Students asked for more individual supports and opportunities to have positive relationships with school staff—a driver that they believe would support with their confidence and self-efficacy. Parents advocated for increased reclassification plans and parent involvement in their student's reclassification. They recognized the importance of reclassifying before elementary school. Community groups and parents also cited the influx of newcomer youth into Los Angeles Unified. These students need support with academics, community building, and mental wellness.
 - Investments TBD
 - SENI: \$300M

- Black Student Supports: For Black students and families, the focus was on closing opportunity and access gaps. Some partners and administrators emphasized the importance of the Black Student Achievement plans. Students wanted increased access and support with leadership and extra-curricular activities, as well as alternative approaches to discipline. There were some comments from student focus groups and Thought Exchange comments that demonstrated how many Black students and families felt like they were not welcome in their school community; others felt like they “did not belong.”
 - HEET: \$21M
- Foster Youth: Foster youth highlighted the impact of the Specialized Services Program, which connects them to supportive adults and other foster youth. They also highlighted the need for improved relationships with other school staff. Parents and teachers recognized the learning challenges foster youth face.
 - Investments TBD
 - SENI: \$300M
- Students with Disabilities: Small group and early interventions for these students emerged as a top priority. Parent communication and collaboration can also support these students. This means additional staff or more training for all staff to be partners in supporting these students. Parents also cited the importance of access to social emotional, tutoring, and speech programs.
 - Special Education: \$129M
- For Staff (themes across all specialized groups): Staff must prioritize improving their supportive relationships with students. Smaller class sizes, alternative approaches to discipline, and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy were identified strategies to support positive relationships. This requires reengagement with families early and often (in a family’s home language). Administrators and teachers cited the success of the Break Through Team model.
 - Professional development: \$102M
- For District (themes across all specialized groups): Community groups, administrators and Thought Exchange participants recognized the importance of equitable funding and resource allocations to these groups. Community groups also called for additional accountability for these allocations and student outcomes, including an Office of Racial Equity. Parents and teachers recognized the current disparate experiences of students and families depending on demographics and geography.
 - SENI: \$300M

Health and Safety

- For Students: Black students and their peers cited the importance of alternatives to discipline. High school students also elevated their concerns on lack of accountability for staff and peers that demonstrate racism and insensitivity to identity. Female-identifying students also asked for free menstrual products in all restrooms.
 - Investments TBD
- For Schools: All stakeholders appreciated the new standards of cleanliness, ventilation, sanitizing, and health checks to protect the school community. There is an expectation that this will continue into future years. Students hope to see an ongoing availability of personal protective equipment (PPE). Stakeholders asked for full-time nurses at all schools. Parents in particular wanted dedicated physical education for students, especially after the pandemic.
 - COVID testing, contact tracing, vaccines: \$155M
 - Custodial and facility costs: \$139M
 - PPE: \$33M

Parent and Community Engagement

- For Students: Students want additional engagement, leadership, and decision-making opportunities, both at the school and central office level. Students gave a strong appreciation of the Student Empowerment Unit as a model for what they would like to see in their schools. Students from community organizations asked for ongoing surveying and feedback opportunities, so their schools could hear what students needed from them in real time. As mentioned in other sections, students, especially those from specialized populations, emphasized how positive relationships with school staff and engaging curriculum and elective programs can make a big difference in a student's experience.
 - Investments TBD
- For Families: Families recognized the role that they can and must play in their student's education. For them to do this effectively, respondents touched on increased opportunities for learning how to use technology, be supportive of accelerated learning initiatives, and practice social-emotional strategies. For English Learners and families of students with disabilities, additional and intentional efforts to co-create learning plans with the families and support them in navigating the school system was requested. Community organizations asked for clear strategies on reconnecting with families who have been disengaged during the pandemic. Parents from the PAC and DELAC wanted more engagement in school level budgeting decisions.
 - School Site Family Engagement: \$18M
- For Staff: Thought Exchange respondents and community organizations asked for schools to create more opportunities for two-way communication where parents can ask questions, offer suggestions, and feel heard. Students in particular asked for more creative and personalized forms of engagement such as focus groups and ongoing surveys. Community organizations, the PAC and DELAC, and the student focus groups asked for increased transparency in decision making around reopening and budget decisions. Respondents cited strategies such as investing in compensated capacity building for staff to learn best practices for family engagement. Some administrators asked for additional support and trainings on communications strategies and technology platforms. Many of the Thought Exchange respondents cited the important role that a full-time Community or Parent Rep could play in their school community.
 - School Site Family Engagement: \$18M
 - Professional development: \$102M

Considerations

The data were collected with a variety of methods, across a six-month timeline (student focus groups began late October for LCAP). While the prompt was often focused on student needs and success, the specific questions varied. Data for the ELO Grant and LCAP Thought Exchanges continue to be collected.

The majority of Thought Exchange feedback was generated by parents. Students participated the least in this format, but some had the opportunity to join focus groups.

District staff will continue to engage stakeholders, document feedback, and share findings with the Board of Education.

Resources

- [LCAP Summary](#)
 - [Thought Exchange](#)

- [ELO Grant & Community Partner Summary](#)
 - [Thought Exchange](#)
- [Community of School Administrator Thought Exchange](#)

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