

**Written Responses to the Local Control Accountability Plan  
Questions and Comments from the  
Community  
May 2016**

**Any plans for general information sharing / "lessons learned" across school sites? There's a good amount of collaboration that happens on each campus. How can we increase this across the sites for the benefit of teachers who may be struggling with similar issues?** Yes, our initial step is to implement a Professional Learning Community model at both site and District levels. There will be training over the summer. The District administrative team meetings have been redesigned to include this model and sites will also be training and supporting teachers in this next year.

**Staff survey results - I was surprised to see that only 33% of staff believe that SpEd students get the resources and support they need. Are the needed resources and support defined? If not, can that be part of the strategic plan and LCAP?** This is a part of our LCAP. In Goal 1 we have an action to research and purchase materials for our special education classrooms and in Goal 2 there is the following action:

Research and re-design special programs to better meet needs of students with disabilities.

- Book End program for students with high functioning Autism
- Functioning life skills program
- Co-Teaching model at Middle School level
- Inclusion preschool program

**Student survey result - I was very surprised to see that the lowest response was "I often work with other students on assignments." 80% isn't bad, but given the discussions around the portrait of an 8th grade graduate, that's very low, especially when most other responses were 90+%. Hopefully this is being addressed in goals 1 and 2 to ensure that teamwork and collaboration is an increasing part of the expectations of our students.**

This is actually more a part of Goal 3, specifically in the actions for culturally responsive education and the development of the Framework for 21st century skills and inquiry.

#### **LCAP Goal 1**

**"Highly qualified teachers" (as stated in the goal) - what is the district's definition of a highly qualified teacher? How does a teacher in MVWSD know if they're progressing towards this "status" of being viewed as a highly qualified teacher? And is a highly qualified teacher the same as a highly effective teacher? If not, what are the deltas and how can teachers reach that status?** Having Highly Qualified teachers is a metric that the state and federal government require. The definition of a highly qualified teacher (HQT) is one who meets all of the following criteria (although this will change in the next year:

- Holds at least a bachelor degree from a four-year institution

- Fully certificated or licensed by the state
- Demonstrates competence in each core academic content area in which the teacher teaches

Districts are responsible for identifying and documenting highly qualified teachers. This is not the same as a highly effective teacher. The District uses its own evaluation system based on the Standards for the Teaching Profession to develop teachers and provides coaching and support for all teachers at all levels of their careers.

**Actions and Services - my observation is that this is highly focused on the defined content standards, not the soft skills that actually seem to divide teachers into the effective or not effective groups. I only have 5 years of school experience as a parent, not as an educator, but content knowledge doesn't seem to separate the good teachers from the bad (or "less effective") as much as the intangible skills do. Can PD be provided for these skills? I'm thinking specifically of things like:**

**Classroom management**

**Differentiation among students within the same classroom**

**Group work**

**Collaboration**

The district's LCAP and Strategic plan will increase the amount of coaching at each site. The instructional coach as well as the site administrator provide support in those domains to all teachers. Additionally, our district will continue to offer these types of supports to new teachers for two years through our teacher induction process.

## **LCAP Goal 2**

**"Pilot blended learning" - on Monday I was surprised to hear that the definition of blended learning is the addition of online sites and information to supplement teacher instruction. What about hands-on learning / manipulatives? What about real-world application of the concepts?** The blended learning program includes project based learning. Additionally the district is looking to increase the amount of hands on learning through its adoption of a NGSS aligned curriculum as well as the Framework's that will be developed and implemented in the areas of Inquiry, 21st Century Skills, and Project Based Learning.

**Support for DI program - I'm glad to see this included because I think DI as a concept is a valuable option for the 21st century citizen, especially kids growing up in the Bay Area. But doesn't this need further exploration / discussion with the board about the role of choice programs in the district? I personally view choice / magnet programs as valuable options for a community based on my experiences growing up in Houston Independent**

**School district which had a large number of programs for both gifted students and students with specific interests (ie, performing arts, STEM, etc). But given Dr. Rudolph's public comments, Bill Lambert's public comments, etc, it seems like the district needs to agree on whether to continue with choice programs before committing money to program improvement. Note - I am intentionally leaving Stevenson out of these comments since the LCAP specifically mentions DI, but it is only fair that there be an open discussion about whether Stevenson PACT has a long-term place in the district. The subtle and and at times unsubtle questioning of whether it should continue to exist as a school is distracting and disheartening to those who embrace and support our education model.**

There is a great deal of research about the benefits of Dual immersion and its impact on student achievement, especially for English Learners. The school and the district want to understand how we can see similar results at our dual immersion school. This is not a referendum, instead a process to understand best practices in dual immersion learning and provide support and resources to the program.

**Curriculum for Inquiry and Project Based Learning - you discussed the need for an inquiry framework on Monday. For a PBL "curriculum" or framework, would you be leveraging the Monta Loma and Stevenson learnings and experiences? Our teachers have learned SO much about deepening the projects, and I'd love to see other district school learn from what they've gone through already.** The district will be looking to experts both inside and out to assist. Principal Westover has already commented that she would like to assist with the development of the framework of inquiry.

**Question - nothing about challenging the high performers? I don't think a GATE program is as valuable as keeping these kids engaged in class every day. I see so many kids in class who are bored or zoning out because they already know the subject material. My fear is that they'll become disengaged learners, which is bad for everyone, especially the students themselves.** We are not developing a GATE program. We are however looking to increase the rigor in all classrooms as well as provide opportunities for enrichment throughout the day. This will be the job of the new Educational Services Coordinator who will be working to develop the District's Response to Intervention Plan which will support students at all levels.

### **LCAP Goal 3**

**"Upgrade technology devices" - what is the purpose of this? I enjoy technology, and my kids love it. But how do we ensure that the technology is being used to enhance their learning, not just as busy work while the teacher is doing something else?** All technology has a shelf life of 3-4 years. As an organization we continue to monitor our devices lifespan and replace devices as needed. With ever changing technology it is important to assure that we have devices that are functioning. The district will continue to offer a technology coach to all

schools, as well as professional development during the summer, to help teachers feel comfortable with using technology for more than just busy work.

**Enrichment activities - is it possible to define a minimum level of enrichment activities that should be offered at each school site? I realize that some sites, like Huff, get dedicated parent donations that let them offer more programs, classes, etc, and you don't want to discourage those donations. But how can we ensure that kids at schools with less active PTAs or less affluent parents can still get some benefits from afterschool activities?**

The district will continue to create a consistent set of expectations for the core programs of school. In addition, one of the actions in Goal 3 is to audit the activities that are happening at all schools so that a consistent program can be developed for the District.

#### **LCAP Goal 4**

**Public Information Officer - needs significant work still, and the strategic plan is a great example. There was a high level description of the process on the website, but even with direct questions, no information was ever provided in terms of who was involved at each step in the process (ie, parent reps from each school selected by \_\_\_\_\_, X district staff from A, B, C departments, etc, etc). And how was progress reported? The lack of transparency and refusal to share details made it seem like the outcome was predetermined. Perception matters, and the difficulty getting information negatively colored the perception.** We will continue to assess and revise our communication protocols and provide timely communication through multiple mediums. The 30 community representatives (parents, teachers, students, staff members, business and community partners) on the final planning days of the Strategic Plan / LCAP spent a great deal of time crafting the outcomes, activities and metrics. The process has been lauded by the larger community.

**Scheduling - must avoid scheduling conflicts of district events. For example, the meeting to provide input on the strategic plan conflicted with the district-wide Open House night, and the principals were required to go to the input session rather than attend their own school's Open House. Bad, bad decision. I would have gone to the input session, but I wasn't willing to disappoint my kids and miss seeing their work. And it was disappointing that the principals couldn't see what a great job their teachers have done or the excitement on campus of that evening.** We will look into this, but there are many mitigating factors that impact when a meeting can take place especially toward the end of the school year.

**Learning Challenges - how can this resource be better publicized at the school level? For example, are there parent reps at each school who can be identified if parents have questions whether it is an appropriate forum for them or how the LCC might be able to benefit them and/or answer their questions? And how does it differ from the SELPA?**

The Learning Challenges Committee (LCC) is comprised of parents representatives who have children with special needs throughout our District. The LCC meets monthly with the Carmen Ghysels, (the Director of Special Education for our District at our District Office. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss current events, questions, issues that parents with special needs may have at each school site, as well as for the District to consistently communicate progress on the District's vision and goals in supporting our students with special needs.

Beginning in August of 2106, The monthly LCC meeting calendar for the 2016-2017 school year will be communicated throughout the school district including in each school newsletter. Anyone is invited and welcomed to attend these meetings. Currently the LCC is looking for parent representatives from the following schools:

- Castro
- Landels
- Theuerkauf
- Monta Loma
- Slater Special Ed Preschool

The Chair of the Learning Challenges Committee is Christine Case-Lo. The LCC email address is [lcc@lamvptac.org](mailto:lcc@lamvptac.org). Please contact Carmen Ghysels ([cghysels@mvwsd.org](mailto:cghysels@mvwsd.org)) or Christine Case-Lo if you are interested in participating in the Learning Challenges Committee. You can also use the [lcc@lamvptac.org](mailto:lcc@lamvptac.org) address to subscribe the LCC monthly newsletter.

For further information please refer to the the LCC website:

<http://learningchallenges.lamvptac.org/>

The Learning Challenges Committee is PTA Group made up of parents and teachers from the Mountain View/Los Altos schools districts.

The Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) coordinates with school districts and the Santa Clara County Office of Education to provide a continuum of programs and services for disabled individuals from birth through 22 years of age.

There are 5 SELPA Areas in Santa Clara County. Mountain View Whisman School District, Mountain View Los Altos High School District, Los Altos School District, and Palo Alto Unified School District all participate in SELPA Area 1.

The SELPA 1 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) have specific roles and responsibilities in assisting and advising our SELPA 1 school districts about the Special Education Local Plan, annual priorities, parent education, and other Special Education related activities. The CACs provide an important connection between the community and the SELPA.

For further information on the SELPA Area 1 CAC, please refer to the following website:

[http://www.selpa1cac.org/\\_/Home/Home.html](http://www.selpa1cac.org/_/Home/Home.html)

For further information regarding our Special Education Local Area Plan, please refer to the following website:

<http://www.sccoe.org/depts/selpa/Pages/default.aspx>

**Parent University - wonderful idea and could really be a benefit to the entire community. One of the other parents had a question that made me think about the difference between "nuts and bolts" types of offerings (ie, specific topics that address daily issues such as supporting reading at home or computer literacy) and long-term topics (ie, topics that cannot be mastered in a week/month/year but require on-going work to learn and master, such as resilience or raising a successful student). Another "nuts and bolts" topic I'd like to suggest is 1) how can parents/family support homework at home and 2) how does each school in the district respond to bullying situations (with concrete examples and responses from teachers and the administration). A broader topic that would spark a lot of discussion is "what type of homework is appropriate in elementary school and middle school," especially given the discrepancy I've seen among the elementary schools and the research that keeps coming back showing that homework doesn't have any educational benefit in the elementary grades. Parents have such strong opinions (both ways) about homework that I wonder if it wouldn't be better for the schools and teachers to start a dialog toward a common agreement so that students at one school don't have 1.5 hours of homework a night while students at another school might have 1.5 hours of homework a week (or even none at all). The purpose of Parent University is to provide parents with resources to assist their child. Courses like cyber bullying, homework help, raising a resilient child will be offered. While the topics may spark policy debates, those discussions will be left to the governing body of the district, as the intent of the University is to simply provide timely and relevant information to parents**

**Role of the LCFF Supplemental Grant money is suppose to be for programs that are aimed at Target student populations and demonstrate new programs and new efforts for those students.**

**If a school site (or in instance of math tracks in the two middle schools = "Math Pathways") has an existing program, that serves all students, and does not offer new and significant support for Target students, that existing program for X All should not be shifted to Supplemental Grant funding.**

**It appears that the existing math tracking in middle schools - is being shifted to Supplemental Grant funding - without any explanation of how the Target students get improved and enhanced services. It appears from the meager documentation provided by Administration and nonexistent appendices to the LCAP, that current 'extra track' math teacher positions are just being moved over to Supplemental Grant funding.**

**These 'extra track' and extra math period programs have existed since the 2011-12 school year at Graham. There has been no indication on academic test data, that the math academic achievement gap has been decreased. Target students do not seem to have benefited from this 'math tracking' in the Math Pathways curriculum system.**

Support for the Math Pathways is the addition of three math teachers. These teachers allow both Crittenden and Graham to have 90 minute math periods. This support was put in place in the during the 2014-15 school year and continued in the 2015-16 school year to help students, especially our target students transition to the new standards. These teachers have been paid for using supplemental funding for both years as described in our previous Local Control Accountability Plans.

The District received baseline data in 2014-15 on state and District assessments which will be compared to results received this summer. Support for the math pathways (i.e.) additional teachers will continue for 2016-17 so the District can keep the 90 minute math blocks and pilot a new blended learning math program in 6th grade which is a new program designed to better support our target students. This action can be found in goal 2 of our 2016-17 Local Control Accountability Plan.