SUMMARY COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS
School Success Express
Community Forum
Del Norte Unified School District & Building Healthy Communities
Del Norte & Adjacent Tribal Lands

The California Center for Rural Policy at Humboldt State University
Building Healthy Communities Initiative - The Del Norte and Adjacent Tribal Lands

Community Input for The Fair School Funding Law
Nov 2013
SUMMARY COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

School Success Express
Community Forum

November 13, 2013

Del Norte County & Adjacent Tribal Lands

The California Center for Rural Policy
at Humboldt State University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Suggested ideas and recommendations from the community from Del Norte County and Adjacent Tribal Lands regarding how to best engage students and involve parents and keep them informed were generated at a well-attended community forum, the School Success Express, on November 13, 2013, in Crescent City. The School Success Express made their final stop of 12 community forums to solicit community input and meet with local education leaders to discuss how California’s new Fair School Funding law could improve our schools.

In addition to 43 individual written comments that were collected from attendees, three questions were asked of the 168 youth and adult community members assembled that evening:

1. What is needed to keep students engaged in schools?
2. What works well for making sure parents are engaged, informed and can participate? What supports are needed to keep parents involved in decision-making?
3. What 3 things are missing from education?

The California Endowment, as a part of their Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Initiative, helped to support the series of community forums as a part of the larger health campaign effort, Health Happens in Schools. Through these community forums, the intent is that BHC sites…

• Share what was learned at community forums where parents, students, and community leaders expressed their vision for school success.

• Help communities hold school districts accountable, ensuring that new funds are used only to support improved achievement for high-needs students.

• Provide training for parents and students to familiarize them with the new law and how they can get involved.

Predominant Themes Emerging in Small Group Discussions about the 3 Questions

Question 1: What is needed to keep students engaged in schools?

The most often-mentioned categories for student engagement suggestions arising from the small group discussions were: School Climate favoring students being ready and able to learn, Alternative Teaching Methods, and having Incentives for Student Engagement. Some specific examples were:

• Reducing class size, to foster student:teacher relationships
• Having teachers with positive attitude and passion for subject taught
• Focus on hands-on activities, with real life application of skills (vocational and soft skills) for students, beginning in the classroom and extending to internships.
• Presenting information to students in multiple ways including visual, audio, and tactile learning methods
• Project-based learning with a real-world connection
Question 2: What works well for making sure parents are engaged, informed and can participate? What supports are needed to keep parents involved in decision-making?

The most often-mentioned categories for parent engagement and involvement in small group discussions were: Parents Feeling Welcome, Communication (including multi-lingual emphasis and use of technology), and Parent Support such as childcare and transportation.

Some specific examples were:

- Outreach programs that actively invite parents to attend meetings and get involved in school events
- Opportunities for parents to volunteer in the schools without barriers or opposition by the union
- Use of newsletters, websites, social media, phone calls, emails, PTA/PTO, etc. to facilitate communication
- Translation of all parent materials into Spanish/Hmong and a translator present at all parent events
- Use of parent liaisons to facilitate parent engagement
- A strong support system for parents including childcare at school events

Question 3: What 3 things are missing from education?

The most often-mentioned categories by small groups for the three things missing in education were: Other Student Outcomes including life and vocational skills, Alternative Teaching Methods, positive School Climate, and Sufficient Pupil Support.

- Incorporation of life/soft skills such as respect, self-motivation, and work ethic into the student curriculum.
- A strong vocational education and career counseling program
- Diverse teaching efforts and a challenging curriculum customized to student’s abilities that focuses more on understanding and less on grade levels
- Prevention of bullying, drug and alcohol use, and teen pregnancy within schools
- Adequate special education, ASL and ESL services for students that need them
- Behavior and mental health counselors at every school to address student issues
- Extra-curricular activities such as afterschool and summer programs that provide a safe place for students to go outside of regular school hours

Individual Written Comments

Among the 43 total written comments submitted by attendees, the most commonly mentioned themes related to: Implementation of California’s Academic Standards, Communication between Schools and the Community, and Alternative Teaching Methods. Specifically, these comments included:

- No funding for teaching the new Common Core
- Transparency in the communication between schools and the community desired by community
- The facilitation of collaboration between charter/district schools and between schools and the community members
- The implementation of alternative teaching methods to improve educational success
- The importance of accountability of schools in regards to how district funding is allocated
INTRODUCTION

On November 13, 2013, the School Success Express made their final stop of 12 community forums to solicit community input and meet with local education leaders to discuss how California’s new Fair School Funding law could improve our schools, in particular schools educating youth within Del Norte County and Adjacent Tribal Lands.

Three questions were asked of the nearly 170 youth and adult community members assembled that evening:

1. What is needed to keep students engaged in schools?
2. What works well for making sure parents are engaged, informed and can participate? And what supports are needed to keep parents involved in decision-making?
3. What 3 things are missing from education?

The California Endowment, as a part of their Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Initiative, helped to support the series of community forums as a part of the larger health campaign effort, Health Happens in Schools. Through these community forums, the intent is that BHC sites...

- Share what was learned at community forums where parents, students, and community leaders expressed their vision for school success.
- Help communities hold school districts accountable, ensuring that new funds are used only to support improved achievement for high-needs students.
- Provide training for parents and students to familiarize them with the new law and how they can get involved.

The California Center for Rural Policy at Humboldt State University is providing local learning and evaluation support and expertise, and has qualitatively analyzed themes from the community input received at the November forum, about how to best engage students so they can succeed in school, and involve parents so they can be informed and participate in decision-making.

“...California’s new Fair School Funding, formally called the Local Control Funding Formula, will send more state dollars to support students who are low-income, English learners, and foster youth. The law also includes a broader definition of school success, so schools won’t be judged by test scores alone. To drive academic success, schools must also develop plans to improve student engagement and parent involvement, and create more positive learning environments. And the law gives parents, community leaders, and students themselves the opportunity to help set priorities and guide local decision making.

- All Aboard the School Success Express, Building Healthy Communities, The California
METHODS

Community Input Documents Analyzed

A total of 168 persons (signed in) attended the School Success Express community forum held on November 13, 2013, in Crescent City. Youth and adults attended, and a breadth of schools, organizations and communities within Del Norte County and Adjacent Tribal Lands were represented, as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bess Maxwell Elementary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Rock</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of the Redwoods*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Elk</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Del Norte High School</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Del Norte (unspecified)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Hamilton</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klamath River Early College of the Redwoods</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Keating</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Grove Elementary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood Elementary</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith River</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset High</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable or Not Specified</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*“CR” assumed to be College of the Redwoods (n=2)

The community forum began with a series of presentations from a panel of speakers, representing Del Norte School District school board and administration, a parent representative from the school district’s School Site Council and District Parent Advisory Committee, and the Building Healthy Communities Initiative. Speakers shared information about the change to the Local Control Funding Formula through the new Fair School Funding Law, which would enable community members (students, parents, and other community groups) to provide input about how the unique needs of students in the community could be met (and supported through changes in district budgeting), such as low-income, English language learning, and foster care students.

The eight priority areas that must be addressed in local school success plans were outlined (see Fig. 1). While the focus of the evening forum was primarily asking questions pertaining to Priority Areas 5 and 7, i.e., Student Engagement and Parent Involvement, respectively, participant input during the forum also touched on the other priority areas.
### Community Input Questions

Following panel presentations, the forum participants were divided into 16 groups for facilitated roundtable discussion of the following questions:

1. What is needed to keep students engaged in schools?
2. What works well for making sure parents are engaged, informed and can participate? and What supports are needed to keep parents involved in decision-making?
3. What 3 things are missing from education?

Small group discussions for the three questions took place for about 45 minutes. Spanish-speaking facilitator(s) were assigned to small groups with Spanish speakers. Instructions provided to each group were:

- The State Board of Education is writing rules for how districts will implement Fair School Funding.
- The comments provided by participants will help guide the State Board as they write those rules for districts.
- Think about what is needed not just at your local school sites, but district-wide as well.

Following reporting out from each small group, there were additional comments provided by other participants attending the forum. These were either shared verbally at the meeting, as well as written on individual comment sheets.

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### 8 State Priority Areas that Must be Addressed in School Success Plans (LCAPS)

1. **Student achievement:** measuring success through test scores, English proficiency and college preparedness.
2. **Implementation of California's academic standards:** transitioning to the new Common Core, English language development and others.
3. **Course Access:** ensuring all students have access to classes that prepare them for college and career, regardless of what school they attend or where they live.
4. **Basic Services:** guaranteeing well-maintained schools and up-to-date student materials.
5. **Student engagement:** focusing on steps schools can take to help kids feel more enthusiastic about learning so they miss fewer days and become more likely to graduate.
6. **School Climate:** promoting a calm, positive and productive school environment, including reducing suspension rates and misbehavior.
7. **Parent Involvement:** participating in school district decision-making and the progress being made by their children.
8. **Other Student Outcomes:** physical education, the arts, and other areas of study.
Data Entry and Analysis

Data Entry
Each small group had a recorder writing down the main points of the discussion at their tables. These summarized comments were reported out verbally to all of the forum participants. Thus comments analyzed were those as summarized by the small group recorders, and not the actual comments made in each small group. Summary comments were transcribed and provided as meeting notes to CCRP for analysis. In addition, participant comments were audio-recorded, and transcribed, also for submission for theme analysis. It should be noted that small group notes were not linked to the audio transcript for the evening, which might have facilitated analysis. Individually written comments were typed and provided as part of the data for analysis.

Small groups were not described by their participant make-up in the records provided, therefore, comments could not be attributed to a particular group (e.g., Latino, or youth participants).

Qualitative Data Analysis of Participant Input
Qualitative data analysis of participant input in the small groups discussing the three questions asked was based on a modified method of constant comparison used in naturalistic inquiry. General written comments were also submitted by individuals at the end of the forum, though not specifically pertaining to any question in particular. Individual comments were analyzed separately from the small group comments, using the same methodology, due to the different 'unit of measure,' that is, small group comments emerged from a group of individuals, whereas, individual comments were submitted in writing, without the context of a group discussion.

Both small group summary notes and individual written comments were analyzed for repetitious patterns of ideas and concepts generated from participant responses to questions asked. Analysis was done by unitizing data (viz., identifying and recording essential information units from the data that are relevant to the focus of the inquiry); and categorizing using the modified method of constant comparison, defining categories that describe the nature of the groups of units then codes for categories assigned to the units. All data were coded and retrieved via computer-assisted qualitative data analysis using Dedoose software.

A code list was developed to represent the major themes and sub-themes arising from participant responses. A total of 41 codes (of which 16 were directly related to the 8 LCFF Priority areas) were defined (Appendix) and used in the analyses of small group comments and individual written comments. Codes were constantly refined and grouped, as new themes emerged.

Themes arising from participant suggestions and recommendations were analyzed per question asked, as well as across questions.
THEMES FROM THE FORUM PARTICIPANT SMALL GROUP INPUT

Small group responses were analyzed in regard to each of the three questions asked in the community meeting discussion to look for common themes. Individual written comments were removed from analysis. Predominance of themes was analyzed and shown in two ways: number of small groups out of the total number of 16 small groups who discussed and ideas shared within their groups; and number of times a particular theme was shared across groups.

Q1 - What is needed to keep students engaged in schools?

The first topic examines the ways in which students can be kept motivated and excited to be in school. This is an important priority for the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Too often, students are absent or even drop-out. In 2012-13, Del Norte Unified School District reported an 18% absenteeism rate among district students.4 At times, students are suspended or expelled. In 2012-13, Del Norte Unified School District reported a 12% suspension rate among district students.4 The community, parents, and school district all want each and every one of young people in school, learning, and excited to be there.

Using the LCFF Priority areas to analyze suggestions made to keep students engaged in schools, the most-often mentioned ideas were those that related to School Climate (Priority 6) (11/16 groups), Student Engagement (Priority 5) (6/16 groups), and Other Student Outcomes (Priority 8) (6/16 groups), as shown in Figure 1. To a lesser extent, suggestions offered by forum participants related to other State Priority areas such as, Parent Involvement (Priority 7), Basic Services (Priority 4), Course Access (Priority 3), and Student Achievement (Priority 1).

Example of the kinds of suggestions made that relate to the top four State Priority areas are shown on pp. 12-15. Note that many ideas shared for building in incentives for students were viewed as ways to engage students (Priority 5).
Q1: What is needed to keep students engaged in schools?

Priority 6: School Climate (11/16 groups)

- "For a child to be able to go to school and feel safe in the classroom, in a calm quiet environment where a child is ready to learn."
- "Reduce class size. When you have 40 students...it's almost inhumane to expect a teacher to take care of that many children. It would also make the children feel more appreciated, more listened to."
- "Where good behavior was rewarded. Good attendance was rewarded."
- "More internships."

Priority 5: Student Engagement (6/16 groups)

- "Funding for fieldtrips and opportunities to leave the classroom."
- "A program where students were actually helping and teaching other students."
- "We need more focus on art and music."

Priority 8: Other Student Outcomes (5/16 groups)

- "They need these soft skills to have motivation, they need to be enhanced with curiosity and these kinds of programs to build work ethic."
- "Need connection, work connected to their life and to their community."

Priority 7: Parent Involvement (3/16 groups)

- "Parents, teachers, principals, all have to work together as a team to help students stay engaged."

Life/Soft Skills (4/16 groups)
Tables 2 and 3 show the major themes for student engagement suggestions and number of groups and times that suggestions for increasing student engagement were mentioned, by state priority areas (Table 2), and by other categories (Table 3). The top (most often-mentioned) categories for student engagement suggestions are in bolded red font; these were: School Climate favoring students being ready and able to learn, Alternative Teaching Methods, and having Incentives for Student Engagement.

### Table 2. Ideas Shared as Being Important for Student Engagement Relating to State Priority Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions Related to Priority Areas</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Class Size</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Incentive Programs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Student Outcomes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Life/Soft Skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Vocational Skills</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic Services</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Course Access</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Other Categories for Ideas Shared as Being Important for Student Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Categories of Suggestions</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Teaching Methods</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication / Value student voice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Multi-Lingual Emphasis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Facilitate Collaboration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Schools &amp; Community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Transparency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient Pupil Support</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Education for Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ESL Courses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Forums/Events</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples for the categories of suggestions shown in Tables 2 & 3 are shown below and on pp. 14-15.

“...tying curriculum to real world learning, and what’s going on in the real world, and then building relationships with students and making sure teachers know what motivates each students to help keep them engaged and coming back to class.”

“...what was really cool was how we define vocational arts and vocational education... the enhanced version where gardening & ... making your own food & creating an industry out of that is equal to any sort of metal shop or wood shop enhancement”

“student voices need to be welcomed & heard, formally & informally. They need to be comfortable with their voices so they can be heard. Recognize student achievements, students need to be challenged on their level, academically & creatively so that they can actually see their own growth from that, and get confidence.”

“...our kids want to be at school, but they gotta feel safe to be there. Developing equal relationships with adults at school... that can build positive relationships with them.”

“[the] student-teacher interaction... the importance of a child ready to learn and excited to learn, feeling passion towards their teacher, their teacher feeling passion about the subject that they’re teaching and engaging the student.”

“...make it relevant... [and] when you go to school, it should be fun & [it] brings them in. Fun can be fun in a lot of different ways, whether it’s music, the arts, whether it’s just activities that are taking place, enhance them and embrace them and make them part of an education process.”

“we really need positive and enthusiastic educators ... also the ability to terminate a tenured teacher who is not performing for students in our community. It’s really important.”
Q1: What is needed to keep students engaged in schools?

**Alternative Teaching Methods**
- “Curiosity, hands-on curriculum that makes them want to come back”
- “Recognize student achievements, students need to be challenged”
- “Empowering children to take control of their own learning. No more busy work”
- “…tying curriculum to real world learning, and what’s going on in the real world.”
- “Encourage participation of Spanish speakers”

**Communication**
- “Language barriers addressed”
- “Making translation materials accessible to everyone”
- “Student voices need to be welcomed and heard”

**Multi-Lingual Emphasis**
- “Students need to feel like the schools understand and value the cultural communities”
- “Regular meetings with parents and school board”
More quotes about suggestions for engaging students:

“Parents, teachers, principals, all have to work together as a team to help students stay engaged, and support the kids, meet them where they’re at. If a child doesn’t want to go to school, find out why. Have a meeting with a teacher with the student, find out what the problem is, and listen, and work it out”

“Physical activity, not based on ability, more outcome based activities, like building something, writing something, creating something, something where you can look at it and go, that’s what the student learned.... Collaborative cooperative learning, clubs and activities that are interest-based, student generated. Engaging after school programs, interactive learning games.”

“(kids) knowing they have a safe school to be at would be a way to engage those students. Not just having a bullying policy, but also enforcing it at the school, and not just at one school but at all School Sites, so really making sure that it’s consistent, no matter what school”

“Curiosity, hands-on curriculum that make them want to come back, including celebrating diversity and culture in a way that makes everyone feel involved.”

“more hands on activities, so that kind of goes along with smaller class sizes — where they can work — more chance of getting one-on-one conversation with their teachers so the teachers have a chance to get to know them a little better. They’d be more comfortable asking questions if they know them individually.... also work in smaller group projects more often, instead of just 30 of the same handout”

“They need these soft skills to have motivation, they need to be enhanced with curiosity and these kinds of programs to build work ethic.... We need education and ready-to-work programs, and there’s kids that need a challenging curriculum.... Student portfolios, starting with Kindergarten, they have kind of a digital record that goes with them, where it talks about how they’re doing community service, so they’re getting credit in life for cleaning up the beach, for serving at Thanksgiving dinners. This portfolio goes with them on in their life and they can be proud of what they build on.”
Q2 - What works well for ensuring all parents are engaged, informed, and can participate? What supports are needed for keeping all parents involved in decision making?

The second question elicited suggestions for ways in which parents could be engaged in real partnerships with schools and have more involvement in decision making – a key priority (#7) for LCFF. For example, school districts will be forming Local Parent Advisory Committees. The state Board of Education wants to hear about how they can best support parent involvement.

As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the top three themes for suggestions to ensure parent engagement and involvement in decision-making were (in order): Communication (in particular, making use of Technology and social media; and providing multilingual emphasis), (Ways to help) Parents Feeling Welcomed, and Providing Parent Support (in particular, providing childcare to facilitate parent participation). Specific examples of recommended ways to engage and involve parents are shown below and pp. 17-19.

**Table 4. Ideas Shared as Being Important for Parent Involvement Relating to State Priority Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions Related to Priority Areas</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Parents Feeling Welcome</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>-Incentive Programs</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Incentive Programs</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Table 5. Other Categories for Ideas Shared as Being Important for Parent Involvement**

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<tr>
<th>Other Categories of Suggestions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>-PTA/PTO</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Multi-Lingual Emphasis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Facilitate Collaboration between Schools and Community</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>-Access to Internet</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Technology</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Transparency</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Support</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Childcare</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Transportation</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Extended Education for Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>-ESL Courses</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Community Forums/Events</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-No Funding for Common Core</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“having multiple channels of communication with parents, doing emails to parents .. and ensuring that we have Spanish available for all parents and after school and preschool”

“...the importance of teachers and administrators using social media as a form of communication [like] Facebook — how easy access parents would have to the teacher in the classroom, and administration. We talked about a teacher being approachable.”

“for our parent to feel really involved, a parent needs to feel ownership in the classroom. ... the importance of the Del Norte Engaged Learning Model and for parents to understand what that is [and] about understanding what the Common Core is, and how it affects the local funding.”
Q2. What works well for making sure parents are engaged, informed and can participate? What supports are needed to keep parents involved in decision-making?

Priority 7: Parent Involvement
(10/16 groups)

Parents Feeling Welcome
(8/16 groups)

- "Redefinition of parents' role in the school, re-teaching the importance of parent involvement in education."
- "Opportunity to volunteer in any position without barriers."
- "Make contact with parents when their kids are doing good things."
- "There should be more parent meetings. Meetings that they were invited to give incentives for them to come."
- "More access to teachers, comfortable coming onto the schools, open schools, a time for parents and teachers to meet together."
- "Awards ceremonies help bring parents in."
- "Work through students to reach their parents."
- "Convincing students that they need parental support at their school functions, student incentives for parental attendance."
Q2. What works well for making sure parents are engaged, informed and can participate? What supports are needed to keep parents involved in decision-making?

**Communication** (16/16 groups)  
- “Social media is a great way to reach out to parents.”
- “More communication, newspapers, radio, a phone tree, feedback that voices are heard.”
- “Communication should be not only expecting people to come in [U/A] but breaking down barriers for people, parents to be involved in education.”

**Technology** (11/16 groups)  
- “Having the language barriers addressed, having flyers in different languages, and making translation materials accessible to everyone.”

**Multi-Lingual Emphasis** (5/16 groups)
- “Respect for working parent hours and time”
- “Parent liaisons”
- “Provide transportation to meetings, etc. for parents in rural areas”
- “Things like craft night, movie night, student performances, etc.”

**Parent Support** (7/16 groups)
- “Childcare provided”
- “College info fair”

**Childcare** (5/16 groups)

**Transportation** (3/16 groups)

**Community Forums/Events** (3/16 groups)
There were many suggestions for engaging and involving parents in decision-making:

Communication should be not only expecting people to come in, but breaking down barriers for parents to be involved in education. They may not always be involved in the classroom because they may not have the confidence or want to, but they may be involved in the School Site by being involved in a separate area, doing work for the school otherwise, not just in the classroom.

“Ways to get parents involved — bring them in where they can feel successful and the hook is things like craft night, movie night, student performance—that gets them in the door. Then make that personal connection with them so that they’re willing to come back and help with attendance and help with other classroom activities that they can be involved in.”

“Strong support systems for the parents — if that’s childcare, translation, & transportation, that’s really huge to get people out that normally wouldn’t make it to the meeting. Collaborating with other agencies to support the family, educate the teachers on those resources, work through students to reach their parents. Meet parents where they are on their own turf whether it be at the volley ball courts, or at the horseshoes of 4H...

As far as parents involved in decision-making, make sure the information is transparent. Language support, again outreach to gathering spots, surveys, addressing the digital divide…

“have a PTO for minority parent groups, or have someone who is able to translate at the PTO meetings”

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“Parent nights— to build relationships… survey our parents more, we need to get their input, to see what times they have available to them”

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“We need more incentives to get families there…. awards ceremonies help bring parents in. Shifting times where they have school events so working parents can attend…. Have audio visual links so that parents can be there. Parents want to feel welcome, and they want to have their children of all ages included, more access to teachers, comfortable coming onto the schools, open schools where there is a time for parents and teachers to meet together, earlier welcome back to school nights, before school starts. More parent-driven family fun nights.”

“We need more incentives to get families there…. awards ceremonies help bring parents in. Shifting times where they have school events so working parents can attend…. Have audio visual links so that parents can be there. Parents want to feel welcome, and they want to have their children of all ages included, more access to teachers, comfortable coming onto the schools, open schools where there is a time for parents and teachers to meet together, earlier welcome back to school nights, before school starts. More parent-driven family fun nights.”

Supports when needed — teach parents how to be active participants in decision-making, provide transportation, they gotta get in there. Use our new counselors to form those relationships with parents to get them into school. Provide childcare, food, parent communication [via] social media. Assistance in notifying parents in advance on the day of the event — parents calling parents”

“more parent meetings [with] incentives for them to come — food and a social meet and greet for them. They need updated websites that teachers establish where they can communicate with the parents. Newsletters from the teachers and principals, monthly calendars so that the parents know what’s going on at the school on a day to day basis.”

“more parent meetings [with] incentives for them to come — food and a social meet and greet for them. They need updated websites that teachers establish where they can communicate with the parents. Newsletters from the teachers and principals, monthly calendars so that the parents know what’s going on at the school on a day to day basis.”

“Having the language barriers addressed, having flyers in different languages, and making translation materials accessible to everyone…What supports are needed to keep parents involved? A dedicated outreach activity — redefinition of parents’ role in the school, re-teaching the importance of parent involvement in education, constant open communication forums like this, and respect for working parent hours and time.”

“Having the language barriers addressed, having flyers in different languages, and making translation materials accessible to everyone…What supports are needed to keep parents involved? A dedicated outreach activity — redefinition of parents’ role in the school, re-teaching the importance of parent involvement in education, constant open communication forums like this, and respect for working parent hours and time.”
Q3 – What 3 things are missing from education?

Figure 2. Areas Identified as Missing from Education as Related to State Priority Areas

Each small group discussed and prioritized the top three things that are missing from or needed by education in the DNATL area. These were analyzed by which LCFF Priorities they pertained to (Table 6) and other categories (Table 7). Examples of the range of quotes are shown on pp. 20-23.

Table 6. What is Missing from Education, as Related to State Priority Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions Related to Priority Areas</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Student Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Life/Soft Skills</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Vocational Skills</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Addressing Bullying</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Addressing Teen Pregnancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Addressing Alcohol/Drug Use</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Class Size</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Services</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Incentive Programs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Access</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Parents Feeling Welcome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 6, the prioritized areas identified as missing from education that were most often called out by the forum small groups related to the following LCFF Priorities as follows (in order): other student outcomes (in particular, providing curriculum for life skills, “soft”/people skills, and vocational education), school climate favoring learning (i.e., class size), basic services, student engagement, course access, and parent involvement. See below and p. 22 for examples of quotes.

### Table 7. Other Categories for Areas Missing from Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Areas of Concern</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Teaching Methods</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient Student Support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- PTA/PTO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Multi-Lingual Emphasis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Facilitate Collaboration between Schools and Community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- School Districts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transparency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extended Education for Parents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ESL Courses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of small group-prioritized areas identified as missing from education, as analyzed by other categories for themes, are shown in Table 7. The most predominant themes from identified areas of need were (in order): Alternative Teaching Methods, Sufficient Student Support, and Communication. Examples of quotes are shown below and on pp. 22-23.

“Student-driven curriculum and course choices, and critical thinking.”

“Social-emotional wellness of our kids. We have a lot of kids who are really stressed for a lot of different reasons”

“More Special Ed for both ends of the spectrum”

“Personal and professional counseling”

“Collaboration between the schools in the district including Charter schools and county wide schools, and the colleges.”

“What’s needed? Special Ed services, preschool, after-school, music and arts, behavioral counselors at every school, and that Charter schools are equitably funded and get some of this LCFF money funding and better integrated into this system.”

“Another big one was more hands on activities, so that kind of goes along with smaller class sizes — where they can work — more chance of getting one on one conversation with their teachers so the teachers have a chance to get to know them a little better…And they’d also like to work in smaller group projects more often, instead of just 30 of the same handout”

“Focus less on test scores and more on understanding the concepts or subject matter.”

“Give students an opportunity to teach themselves so they can present — so they can more deeply understand a concept and internalize it themselves.”
Q3. What 3 things are missing from education?

Priority 8: Other Student Outcomes
(10/16 groups)

Vocational Skills
(7/16 groups)

Life/Soft Skills
(6/16 groups)

"More outcome based activities, something where you can look at it and go, that's what the student learned."

"Clubs and activities that are interest-based, student generated."

"More extracurricular and recreation, social and vocational opportunities, and provide more courses that appeal to students."

"Facilities that are beautiful, and that inspire parents and students to want to be there."

"Making schools attractive enough – there's too much trash around, really ugly."

"We really need positive and enthusiastic educators—every one of them."

"More chance of getting 1-on-1 conversation with their teachers so the teachers have a chance to get to know them a little better."

Priority 4: Basic Services
(3/16 groups)

Priority 6: School Climate
(2/16 groups)
Q3. What 3 things are missing from education?

- **Alternative Teaching Methods**
  (11/16 groups)
  - "Collaborative cooperative learning"
  - "Focus less on test scores and more on understanding the concepts or subject matter."
  - "More engaging or interactive learning — gives better understanding rather than textbook usage."
  - "Project-centered learning"

- **Sufficient Pupil Support**
  (6/16 groups)
  - "Special Ed services, preschool, after-school, behavioral counselors at every school."
  - "Social-emotional wellness of our kids."

- **Communication**
  (3/16 groups)
  - Facilitate Collaboration
  (2/16 groups)
  - "Collaboration between the schools in the district including Charter schools and county wide schools, and the college"
  - "Having student representatives from all the schools at the School Board"
Themes from Individual Written Comments

During the community forum, attendees were invited to write down any additional comments they wished to share. In total, 43 comments were collected and analyzed for common themes. These findings are summarized below:

From the 43 individual written comments received:

- 13 individual comments mentioned ‘no funding for the common core [curriculum]’, which pertains to Priority 2 (Implementation of California’s Academic Standards) of the LCAPS 8 State Priority Areas.
- 10 comments pertained to communication between schools and the community, 4 of which mentioned the importance of transparency, and 3 that included the importance of facilitating collaboration between charter/home school parents and the school districts.
- 8 suggested the use of alternative teaching methods.
- 7 included the importance of accountability, 5 of which pertained to accountability with regard to funding.
- 7 pertained to Priority 8 (Other Student Outcomes), 4 of which mentioned the importance of vocational skills training in schools, and 2 included life/soft skills training.
- 6 comments were related to Priority 6 (School Climate), 5 of which mentioned the reduction of class size, and 1 mentioned addressing bullying and drug/alcohol usage.
- 5 comments pertained to Priority 7 (Parent Involvement) as an important aspect for school success.
- Priority areas 3 (Course Access) and 5 (Student Engagement) were each mentioned in 3 written comments.
- Themes of community involvement, and sufficient pupil support were each brought up in 2 of the individual comments.
- Priority 4 (Basic Services) was only included in 1 individual written comment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code name</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Verbal or written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PTA/PTO</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association/Organization involves parents, teachers, and school staff in community and student/parent involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multi-Lingual Emphasis</td>
<td>Translators (or translator equipment) available at events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitate Collaboration</td>
<td>Collaboration between charter/home school parents and the school districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to Internet</td>
<td>Providing parents with information as to where they can have access the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Technology</td>
<td>Using technology to keeps parents informed on student’s academic progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transparency</td>
<td>Communication, accountability, and openness with funding and education based initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Teaching Methods</td>
<td>Less structured, project-based and real-time learning methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Education for Parents</td>
<td>Parents requested extended education for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ESL Courses</td>
<td>English as a second language course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocational Training</td>
<td>Trade/craft based vocations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>To be engaged or employed with the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District Involvement</td>
<td>To be engaged or employed with the school district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Support</td>
<td>External Support for Parents to maintain engagement and involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Childcare</td>
<td>Providing childcare for parents to attend school related events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transportation</td>
<td>Providing transportation for parents to attend school related events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient Pupil Support Service Personnel</td>
<td>Pupil support personnel help students overcome social, emotional, physical, and cognitive challenges to reach their maximum academic potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More local control of school curriculum</td>
<td>Participants requested more local control of school curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No funding for common core</td>
<td>Participants don't want common core curriculum to be funded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community Forums/Events</td>
<td>Community forums that stress engagement and support and explain the ways in which administrators and educators are being held accountable for student success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Accountability of actions for school districts and teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funding</td>
<td>Openness with allocation of funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School Districts</td>
<td>Accountability for school districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers</td>
<td>Accountability and openness with students and parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code name</td>
<td>Descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 - Student Achievement</td>
<td>Measuring success through test scores, English proficiency and college preparedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2 - Implementation of California’s Academic Standards</td>
<td>Transitioning to the new Common Core, English language development, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3 - Course Access</td>
<td>Ensuring all students have access to classes that prepare them for college and career, regardless of what school they attend or where they live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4 - Basic Services</td>
<td>Guaranteeing well-maintained schools and up-to-date student materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5 - Student Engagement</td>
<td>Focusing on steps schools can take to help kids feel more enthusiastic about learning so they miss fewer days and become more likely to graduate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Incentive Programs</td>
<td>Field trips, internships, and community recognition of achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6 - School Climate</td>
<td>Promoting a calm, positive and productive school environment, including reducing suspension rates and misbehavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Addressing Bullying</td>
<td>Addressing bullying within the schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Addressing Teen Pregnancy</td>
<td>Addressing teen pregnancy among youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Addressing Absenteeism</td>
<td>Excessive absences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Addressing Alcohol/Drug Use</td>
<td>Addressing alcohol/drug usage among youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Class Size</td>
<td>Reduction of class sizes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7 - Parent Involvement</td>
<td>Participating in school district decision-making and the progress being made by their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents Feeling Welcome</td>
<td>Parents want to feel welcome to volunteer and participate in everyday school functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8 - Other Student Outcomes</td>
<td>Physical education, the arts, and other areas of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Life/Soft Skills</td>
<td>Communicating, decision making, commitment, flexibility, time management, leadership, team player, problem solving skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocational Skills</td>
<td>Trade/craft based vocations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References