

Elementary Education Breakout Session Notes for LCAP Community Meeting Feedback  
Palo Alto Unified School District - SDC Room  
December 14, 2017 5:00-7:00pm

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Team Led by Barbara Harris & Kelly Bikle

**Participants:**

Principal Mary Bussmann, Walter Hays Elementary  
Principal Mary Pat O'Connell, Nixon Elementary  
Principal Chris Grierson, Duveneck Elementary  
Principal Tom Jacobowsky, Juana Briones Elementary  
Johanna Gonzalez, Student Wellness  
Parents  
Note taker: Wendy Velez

**Predictions from Group:**

Kelly started by telling the group to think about what they may see on the data. One thing is to think about what we'll see and something different what actually is on the data.

We'll look at the different categories that have enough students to report on that group. ELA, mathematics, what do you think you'll find on that data?

- Palo Alto has a reputation for high academics, so I would expect a good performance.
- I agree, Palo Alto also has a reputation of not so good performance for Hispanics and African American students, so I'll be curious to see that.
- Barbara suggested taking a look at the data book to get an idea as to what to expect.
- Are the students actually being prepared for a career, academics.
- Principal: we have a lot of parents from other cultures and other countries. I predict we'll see a lot of absenteeism because families go on trips to visit their relatives.
- I agree, and we come from high supportive households, so I expect we will see that as well. (English Learner progress). Progress of the sub groups over time.

**Observations: (looking at data)**

- No Hispanic column visible on state report (even online when I saw it on the Dashboard).
- Principal: Despite our category being blue for highest performing area, we have very good and excellent scores in ELA. When we look at socioeconomically disadvantaged students, the subgroups are in the lower areas. My prediction would be that the

numbers are fewer and maybe we're making the assumption that all is well in Palo Alto but we're not really looking deep into who's not doing well and why.

- Absolutely agree with that. In ELA and math, not only are these subgroups doing poorly, they are declining as well. That to me is even more troublesome, it's something to look at. What is the district going to do? How is it going to measure those programs, which level, which interventions? Who's going to be responsible?
- Really? We're not doing great in suspension rate? We're doing good but not great.

Kelly stepped in to explain that the 5x5 data is available by school site.

- Last year was the first year we changed the standards?
- Principal: the first year was a practice year and then the testing was the same the following two years. The CELDT hasn't been given for a year and a half because the state is changing the test that's being given. The data that's here is based on information from last year.
- Another question is, it would be nice to know how the subgroups in Palo Alto compare to other districts nationwide.
- Principal: Suppose we look at ELA scores from Nixon.

Clarisse stopped the groups to help with an explanation on the data found in the Dashboard.

- A major question is why the absenteeism data is not available. The information was just released by the state, there wasn't time to include it in the packet.
- Kelly suggested looking at the ELL, SWE and McKinney Vento tab.
- Note: no page numbers on the data (posters) portion of the book.

**Inferring Questions:** what does the data suggest for us? Anything you'd like to know more about? Data is really a question raising instrument, more than a question answering instrument.

- One thing I noticed about low socioeconomically disadvantaged (homeless) students is that their scores are very low,, which seems to be the lowest. I'd like to know how we can help these students.
- In order to have a pie represented in the graph, you need to have at least 30 students represented.
- For EL students, sometimes they're not here long enough.
- What percentage of the socioeconomically disadvantaged students are homeless?
- We have students, for example RMH students who are in temporary housing, and they are considered McKinney Vento.
- The attendance rate for AA has decreased, but the graduation rate has increased. Kelly: so you'd like a clearer picture of AA students' performance. Chris: yes.
- We need to have a clearer understanding of when the assessments give a better measure of students' performance. We want this new assessment to help us.

- I think it's going to take a few years.
- Is the data we're looking at statistically significant? Can we assess a specific aspect of the data? What is the implication behind this?
- We cannot really afford to dismiss the data, it's a bit of a conundrum for us.
- You really need to look at the tail end of things to see where there has been action in the numbers.
- It would be helpful to know a more specific number of students. We look at numbers in general, but more specific information would be nice.

### **Suggestions for LCAP role for next year.**

- We talk about programs, I don't know what the programs are, I don't know what they're built for. A list of programs would be nice. What are the Palo Alto programs building upon? Is that one of the programs on the statewide list?
- There is a list of statewide programs. They have been rigorously studied.
- Kelly: in your question, is there a specific category or group that you'd like to see?
- Mathematics and Bridges addresses one program

Barbara intervened to explain: if you go to the website, everything is listed. The curriculum is listed there and you will be able to see what the programs are, our approach when we teach and resources that we have.

- It would be nice to see a link to the data.
- For the low income kids, I have some suggestions: I think you should be measuring the kinders Math and ELA assessments as soon as they step through the door. The kids need the academic time, if you don't identify who they are, you won't be able to help them. Intervene, provide more time, measure your teachers, find new data. There's lots of early assessments that you can use. Target them and measure them, that's what leads to success.
- Principal: We actually do assessments.
- Sadly, my son is not doing well. Because he's in SI, he falls under the EL category, and he's not doing too well. He's not getting enough help. I want these kids to learn English as well. I know the teachers know he's not doing well, so why isn't he getting help?
- Parent: it's really important to target kids to know where they are so that we can start supporting them early on.

### **How the process worked:**

Kelly explained that this is the first time we've done this, so she told the group that we'd like to know how it went.

- This is a lot of information to receive for the first time

- It was a good structure, I felt it was very productive, it was very challenging because we're looking at a lot of data. I don't have a statistics background, so I think people would benefit from knowing where the context is, who's doing the comparative, etc.
- I think more time for suggestions and less time for other things.
- What would stand out for you to share with the group?
- For me, it's the issue of the persistence with the performance of some of our students, and that performance begins early, and it's across the board. How do we address that more effectively? I think it's the right work, it's not a lack of will.

### **Takeaways:**

Secondary: this group wanted a more broken down section of the information because this data is very high level. The group also noticed disparities between some of the different groups, and there's a big gap between ethnic and non-ethnic groups.

Students with disabilities: really to understand how the district is going to utilize this feedback to implement. Some more data about when is suspension behavior is challenging during transitions.

Elementary: we talked about this is a lot of information and a lot to take in. we talked about how if you look at the overall numbers, students in Palo Alto are doing really good, but when you break it down by groups, you can see the achievement gap quite clearly. The importance of early intervention being systematic.

School climate: a really great discussion about the opportunity to look at the data deeper and take that information to families who couldn't be here. The big one we took away was giving the students a voice, and helping them resolve complaints to get support from caring adults, as well as transparency. How to keep these conversations at the forefront of keeping people informed.

Meeting adjourned