



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT
ON THE
PUSD STRATEGIC PLAN**

**SUBMITTED BY
THE STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

**TO THE
PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

APRIL 27, 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2009 the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD or District) launched an integrated and multi-pronged community engagement process to elicit input, ideas, and feedback on the District's Strategic Plan Framework. The outreach process included the creation of a Strategic Plan Steering Committee comprised of PUSD stakeholders – parents, business representatives, nonprofit leaders, district employees, and civic leaders who were charged with assisting with the implementation of the engagement process. The approach employed tools ranging from traditional outreach methods, such as focused conversations with large and small groups, to utilizing an online survey and social marketing.

More than 800 individuals from the greater Pasadena community participated in the engagement effort through the following methods:

- Twenty-six small group meetings
- Four large community forums
- A dedicated PUSD Strategic Plan website with updates in English and Spanish
- PUSD Strategic Plan Facebook pages
- One-on-one interviews
- Flyers and posters in both English and Spanish announcing the community forums
- Direct outreach to parents at school sites
- Phone contact with 250 community based organizations and civic groups
- On-line survey and email list serve
- Telephone calls to parents and community members
- Bi-weekly updates placed in local media outlets
- School principal automated telephone calls to parents promoting the community forums

Overall feedback into the strategic planning process was positive and participants were excited to have an opportunity to provide ideas about their priorities for improving schools for students.

While feedback was positive, participants expressed a lack of confidence that the District would actually incorporate the community's ideas into the strategic planning process. Many community members cited prior efforts that failed to provide regular updates on the planning process or communicate which community ideas were implemented.

The community engagement plan was designed in response to PUSD’s commitment to securing input from a broad range of stakeholders, including underrepresented communities. In consultation with District leadership and the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, the project team developed an engagement plan that was implemented in two phases – small group presentations and large community forums. A structured visioning activity was uniformly used throughout the process. Participants were also provided opportunities to interact with members of the Board of Education, the Superintendent, and District and School Administrators. The dynamic nature of the engagement process captured the energy and imaginations of Steering Committee members invested in helping bring the community’s voice into the District’s strategic planning process.

STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

As part of the community engagement plan, the Board of Education and Superintendent created a Strategic Plan Steering Committee comprised of community members to assist the District in outreach with identified constituencies. Community members were invited to apply to serve on the steering committee through an online application process. Sixteen members were selected from among 32 applicants. Steering Committee members are:

Raul Borbon	Thomas Kosakowski
Erika Cardenas	Mayra Macedo-Nolan
Sue Clark	Kayleen Maya-Aviles
Darla Dyson	Rema Reynolds
Karen Evans	Raymundo Reynoso
Curt Gibson	Susan Schwartz
Jouslynn Griffin	Blanca Siebels
Felita Kealing	Inez Yslas

The Committee’s objectives were to:

- Assist with convening small groups throughout PUSD inclusive of parents, organizations, business leaders, higher education representatives, community leaders, faith based groups, and others;
- Serve as community ambassadors in outreach efforts for community forums;
- Finalize recommendations elicited from the community for Board approval; and
- Collaborate with the PUSD strategic plan project team.

Throughout the engagement process the Steering Committee actively recruited stakeholders to attend small group meetings and community forums. Committee members tapped into their personal and professional networks to recruit parents and community members to join the conversation about the District’s future. They demonstrated a willingness to leverage their personal relationships and credibility with friends, colleagues, and others to assist the District in ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives were included in the process. In total, the Steering Committee helped convene 26 small group meetings throughout Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre.

PHASE I: SMALL GROUP PRESENTATIONS

The Strategic Plan community engagement process was launched with small group presentations to PUSD stakeholder groups, including parents, students, residents, community leaders, faith based representatives, higher education representatives, community based organizations, and other members of the civic and business community. Small group discussions were held in a variety of locations throughout Altadena, Pasadena, and Sierra Madre, including churches, homes, parks, community centers, businesses, non-profit organizations and schools. This phase of the engagement process preceded a series of community forums.

Over 500 individuals participated in the small group presentations during the Phase I period between January and February 2010. These groups were facilitated in English, Spanish and Armenian. As part of Phase I, the project team developed presentation materials, agendas, evaluations, and collateral material in English and Spanish to support outreach to parents and community leaders. These materials assisted the steering committee members in conducting outreach for the groups and community forums.

Participants in the small groups agreed that updating the District's strategic plan was critical and that it would help guide PUSD's academic, intervention, and enrichment initiatives. An updated plan would also help guide budgetary decisions at a time when public schools are facing significant fiscal shortfalls.

Attendees participated in a conversation regarding PUSD's future and the structured visioning exercise. The discussions generated a number of ideas and suggestions for integration into the draft strategic plan framework, including adding parent engagement as a strategic priority category. A synopsis of the top priorities generated in the small groups can be found in Appendix A.

Small group meetings were held with the following groups and organizations:

FOCUS GROUP	GROUP/ORGANIZATION	# OF PARTICIPANTS	STEERING COMMITTEE CONVENER
Business	Council of Chairs	16	Binti Harvey
Parents	Dual Immersion Mandarin	16	Sue Clark
Civic Leaders	Elected Officials/Staff	9	Kayleen Maya-Aviles
Community	League of Women Voters	12	Inez Yslas
Youth	Neighborhood Outreach Workers	9	Karen Evans
Youth	City of Pasadena Youth Council	19	Sue Clark
Parents	Parent Education Network	12	Susan Schwartz
Community	Vision 20/20	12	Kayleen Maya-Aviles
Parents/Community	Community Advisory Committee	50	Blanca Siebels
Youth	Teens In Action	12	Mayra Macedo Nolan
Parents/Community	Sierra Madre Residents	7	Thomas Kosakowski
Parents/Community	Armenian General Benevolent Union	10	Kayleen Maya-Aviles
Youth	Neighborhoods Acting Together Helping All	17	Karen Evans
Parents	African American Parents	13	Jouslynn Griffin
Community	Latino Forum	5	Inez Yslas
Employees	PUSD Employees	7	Jouslynn Griffin
Community	Sports Leagues	3	Jouslynn Griffin
Parents	APPLE	17	Raul Borbon
Faith Community	Community Clergy Coalition	37	Curt Gibson/ Mayra Macedo Nolan
Community	African American Leaders	6	Felita Kealing
Business	Pasadena Education Foundation Donors/Partners	10	Binti Harvey
Higher Education	Higher Education Community	13	Rema Reynolds/Thomas Kosakowski
Parents	English Language Advisory Committee	25	Erika Cardenas
Employees	District Performance Team	70	Binti Harvey
Community	Altadena Residents	2	Felita Kealing
Business	Business Summit	160	Binti Harvey
		Total: 569	
Parent/Community	Community Forums	Total: 212	
Parents/Community	On-line surveys	Total: 29	
Parents/Community	Interviews/Emails	Total: 3	
Total Community Engagement		813 participants	

PHASE II: COMMUNITY FORUMS

In addition to the small group meetings, 212 parents and community members participated in four community forums that were held at four locations throughout the PUSD service area. Forums were held February 3-11, 2010 at centralized locations within the community; Lake Avenue Church, the First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena, Loma Alta Park, and Villa-Parke Community Center. The goal of the community forums was to engage the community in the visioning exercise for PUSD schools. The target audiences were parents, community members, community-based organizations, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders.

A substantial outreach campaign preceded the community forums. Approximately 20,000 flyers inviting parents and other community members to ‘Join the Conversation’ were distributed in English and Spanish at schools, parks and recreation centers, churches, social service agencies, and other locations throughout the community. Distribution at the schools was coordinated to occur in conjunction with scheduled events and activities where large number of parents and residents were expected. The project team deployed staff to ensure personal outreach, and more than 300 parents and residents provided phone numbers and email addresses to receive further information. In addition, 235 non-profits, religious, educational, social services, youth, and labor organizations and public offices within the District’s boundaries were contacted as part of the outreach effort. The team also attended the *State of the City of Pasadena* address to distribute flyers and identify additional community members for outreach. In preparation for the community forums, the team contacted more than 300 parents and community members, sent reminder emails to individuals and organizations, placed posters at community centers and libraries, and distributed additional flyers to individuals and organizations identified through earlier outreach efforts.

The forums were structured to provide participants with an overview of the District’s progress and rationale for updating the Strategic Plan. Each forum began with Board Member Scott Phelps and/or Superintendent Diaz explaining the purpose of the Strategic Plan and how it guided the District’s activities and initiatives. After a brief PowerPoint presentation, the participants formed small breakout groups where they engaged in a facilitated conversation using the visioning exercise (described below) and a discussion that concluded with participants offering their top three prioritized ideas and suggestions for the District to integrate into the Strategic Plan. A member of the outreach project team and a member of the steering committee facilitated each breakout group discussion, which were offered in English and Spanish. After a 50-minute group discussion, participants reported their group’s top priorities to the entire community forum. Board Members and Superintendent Diaz participated in lively question and answer session with the attendees.

The results mirrored the Phase I small group presentation discussions. Forum participants also agreed that the strategic plan is a critical tool to help guide the District’s activities and initiatives. A synopsis of the top priorities generated from breakout groups at the community forums can be found in Appendix B.

THE VISIONING EXERCISE

In both Phase I and Phase II, a standard visioning process was used to create a community consensus on the future of Pasadena public schools. The participatory exercise began with a question designed to inspire conversation, creative thinking, and collaborative planning. Participants were asked, “*What skills, knowledge, and values should a graduate of Pasadena public schools obtain?*” The question was presented in three parts, permitting participants to describe their vision of an ideal graduate of PUSD. Each group was asked to sketch a student figure to help participants imagine their sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, grandchildren, or neighbors. A facilitated group brainstorming session followed: 1) the skills and knowledge that would be in the student’s *head*, 2) the values they would hold in their *heart*, and 3) the opportunities they would take advantage of with their *feet*. Following the brainstorming session of the ‘head, heart, and feet’ the participants then created and reached a consensus on the group’s top three priorities. This resulted in each group offering their vision of the profile of a PUSD graduate.

After creating a graduate profile, participants were asked to offer ideas and suggestions that the District, schools, or community could implement to support the development of the student they envisioned. Again, participants were led through a facilitated brainstorming session that concluded with a prioritization of the group’s top ideas and/or suggestions.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON THE PROCESS

During the community forums, attendees were asked to provide written feedback on their satisfaction with the engagement tool. Approximately 81% of participants felt that “*The break out group was a good opportunity to discuss my expectations for students who graduate from PUSD schools.*” When asked, if participants felt their breakout group provided them with an opportunity to offer suggestions and ideas, approximately 83% strongly agreed. Written observations on the visioning exercise were primarily positive. Some examples of feedback received included:

- *Thank you for the opportunity as a parent of a PUSD student to participate in this planning. I would like to continue to see ongoing updates as to how the school district will implement these changes. I would also like to know how to get more involved to help move this forward. – Participant, Community Forum One*
- *The visioning tool I think was appropriate, easy going, and an easy understanding for the general public, and for a community vision. - Strategic Plan Steering Committee Member*
- *I appreciate how our moderator encouraged everyone in our group to participate and every idea was respected and given equal time. The Superintendent’s presence was important and essential to ensuring that parental input was heard and acknowledged. – Participant, Community Forum Two*
- *This was a much more engaging experience than I had expected. Well done. I would be interested in the implementation oversight. – Participant, Community Forum Two*

- *Es la primera vez que asisto a una reunión como esta en donde me parece muy excelente y educativa para todos. Gracias. (It is the first time I attend this type of forum and I found it to be, excellent, informative and educative for all. Thank you) – Participant Community Forum Four*
- *Gracias por darnos la oportunidad de expresar nuestras opiniones y sugerencias. Seria una buena oportunidad para los padres que se hiciera algo parecido en las escuelas no solo en los concilios de padres. (Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express our suggestions and opinions. It would be a great opportunity for parents, if similar forums at smaller scales in schools were conducted.) – Participant, Community Forum Four*

A synopsis of the Evaluation feedback along with all the comments from the attendees can be found in Appendix C and D.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The PUSD Board of Education and Superintendent identified specific goals for the outreach plan prior to launching the process. The goals for the outreach process included:

- Inclusive and authentic engagement of a broad spectrum of PUSD stakeholders
- Full involvement of all groups - especially under-represented populations
- Reach at least 500 people
- Ensure extensive outreach by utilizing a range of strategies such as media, websites, school visits, electronic surveys, email list serves, etc.

The engagement plan achieved these established goals and identified community ideas and suggestions to be integrated in the draft strategic plan framework. The Steering Committee met over two months to analyze, synthesize, and refine the community's priorities and then integrate them into the draft Strategic Plan.

GRADUATE PROFILE

One of the Board of Education's desired outcomes of the Strategic Plan was the development of a profile of a graduate of PUSD schools. Prior to the community engagement process, the draft Strategic Plan did not contain such a profile to represent the skills, knowledge, attributes, and preparation a student would receive at a PUSD school. As a result of the visioning exercise during the small group and community forum meetings, parents and community members were able to generate priorities and expectations for students in PUSD schools.

The graduate profile represents a shared vision for the range of skills, knowledge, and readiness a student should acquire on his or her educational journey through the Pasadena public school system. The visioning exercise captured the community's expectations for students who attend PUSD schools.

Head – Skills and Knowledge

The "head" represented skills and knowledge a students would acquire as part of their educational journey. Participants were asked to brainstorm and prioritize the top three skills and competencies the student should possess in his or her "head." Participants in the visioning exercise overwhelmingly expressed a desire for students to graduate with strong academic skills. While mastery of basic skills and completion of college preparatory courses were identified as top priorities, the community recognized the need for 'soft skills' such as critical thinking and problem solving. A graduate equipped with practical "life skills" enabling him or her to navigate life successfully was mentioned across all stakeholder groups. The list below represents the ideas that small group and community forum participants listed as their top skills and competencies for the PUSD graduate.

Strong Academic Skills

1. Students will master basic academic skills in reading, writing, and math
2. Students will have opportunities to take and complete college preparatory courses. High schools will offer A-G classes so that students can successfully satisfy the University of California and California State University entrance qualifications
3. Students will acquire strong verbal and written bilingual skills so they can better compete in the global marketplace
4. Students will possess 21st Century skills necessary to navigate a multidimensional landscape. Students will be equipped with a range of interpersonal, academic, vocational, technological, and entrepreneurial skills that will make them competitive locally and globally.

Life Skills

1. Students will develop financial literacy and basic money management skills
2. Students will possess interpersonal and social skills in order to build positive relationships with peers and adults
3. Students will embrace cultural diversity, seek out opportunities to learn more about cultures from around the world, and will understand their own heritage
4. Students will become lifelong learners and will find joy and satisfaction in learning
5. Students will understand the global economy

Dynamic Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills

1. Students will possess self discipline and appreciate the importance of goal setting
2. Students will understand their personal value and become advocates for their future
3. Students will acquire strong organizational skills to support academic and personal growth
4. Students will have the ability to quickly and easily adapt their knowledge and skills to new environments (Cognitive flexibility)

Heart - Values

The “heart” represents the values the student would acquire from their family, school community, and the larger community. These values would also contribute to a positive school and community culture that embraces positive relationship development among peers and with adults. Specific values such as integrity and responsibility were consistently identified as top values for a graduate. Other values could be categorized as internally driven or externally focused. The list below represents the ideas that small group and community forum participants listed as their top values for the PUSD graduate.

Internal Values – Values developed by and originating within students

Students will:

1. Possess positive motivation
2. Be responsible for their behavior, actions, and choices
3. Behave with integrity
4. Be internally driven and resilient to overcome challenges
5. Be compassionate and have empathy towards others
6. Possess ethical and moral compasses to guide them
7. Have respect for themselves and others
8. Build self-confidence

Positive External Values – Values representing a student’s commitment to his or her community, both local and global.

Students will:

1. Volunteer and give back to their community
2. Value and support their family and community

Feet – Opportunities

The “feet” represented opportunities that the student would be prepared to take advantage of upon graduation. Participants identified college and career readiness as their top priorities. They also identified personal opportunities a PUSD graduate would be prepared to seize. With their feet, the student would make responsible decisions, contribute to their community, and build a future as a result of their academic, emotional, and social preparation at PUSD schools.

Awareness and appreciation of future potential

Students will:

1. Attend and graduate from college
2. Enter a career, vocation or employment opportunity equipped with the skills to succeed
3. Embrace the goal of academic and professional excellence
4. Travel throughout the world to expand their understanding of themselves and other cultures
5. Pursue their passions and follow a path that supports their passion

Opportunities that support new knowledge and skills

Students will:

1. Become independent and self-sufficient throughout their lives
2. Become resilient, resourceful, and willing to take risks to reach their goals
3. Dream about their future and establish goals to achieve success
4. Have a global perspective

Commitment to community

Students will:

1. Seek out opportunities to volunteer and give back
2. Become a contributing member of society
3. Return to the PUSD community to serve as leaders and support their families

COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The draft strategic plan framework highlights the Board of Education and Superintendent's vision for PUSD schools. The draft Strategic Plan contained the following five areas of strategic priorities for the school district. In addition to the five, one additional category was identified based on community feedback, 'Parent Engagement.

1. Powerful Instruction
2. Outstanding Staff
3. Quality Learning Environment
4. High Performing, Accountable Organization
5. Meaningful Collaboration
- 6. Parent Engagement (proposed)**

These six categories represent significant areas of focus for the District and community over the next ten years. The stated goals of these priorities are to improve student achievement by incorporating rigor, relevance, and relationships into learning and by increasing organizational effectiveness.

During the engagement process, the community was asked to offer their ideas and suggestions for PUSD schools and the community. Each brainstorming session was followed by prioritizing the community's top three ideas or suggestions for schools. From this list the project team sorted the community's top ideas into one of the six categories above. The community's ideas for each strategic priority ranged from participating in global projects, to attracting and retaining qualified teachers, to improved communication between schools and parents, to increasing parent engagement at the middle and high school level.

1. Powerful Instruction

Stakeholders felt strongly about the need to ensure high quality instruction for all students. In small group meetings and community forums, instruction was a frequently mentioned topic among participants. The importance of instruction in strengthening student academic outcomes was expressed across all stakeholders. Ideas presented under this strategic priority include:

Quality Instruction in every classroom

1. Cultivate and foster positive relationships among and between teachers, classroom aides, students, school staff, District administrators, and families
2. Personalize learning through positive relationships between teachers and students
3. Develop evidence and research based instructional programs
4. Design inclusive and rich instructional programs
5. Recruit and retain high performing teachers and paraprofessional staff in all classrooms
6. Develop a curriculum that engages all learners and their learning styles
7. Address the specialized skills and needs of students
8. Expand project-based learning opportunities
9. Connect career exploration within curriculum
10. Utilize differentiated instruction practices and strategies in the classroom to recognize and meet the unique learning styles of students
11. Provide all students with instructional programs that support their academic growth, inclusive of all students, e.g., students with special needs, English Language Learners, GATE students, etc.
12. Identify multiple ways for students to succeed academically
13. Learn from non-traditional teaching practices, e.g. special education teaching to support needs of the general education population
14. Offer emotional development support to students through wrap-around services
15. Provide teachers and school staff with professional development in cultural competency and classroom management
16. Encourage community engagement to support positive student connections to school
17. Personalize learning through positive relationships between teachers and students.

2. Outstanding Staff

Stakeholders offered a range of ideas to support outstanding leadership at all staff levels within the District. Specifically, there was a desire to experience a paradigm shift within schools and district offices to expect innovation, creativity, and excellence as the norm versus the exception. Participants also wanted to improve accountability mechanisms to ensure that high performing and outstanding staff is recognized for their dedication and service. Ideas presented under this strategic priority include:

Strong, innovative, and accountable leadership

1. Encourage responsible leadership to implement change throughout the District
2. Improve accessibility to bilingual staff, teachers, and administrators
3. Build an accountability system that focuses on and responds to students needs instead of adult agendas

High Quality staff that is continually trained and accountable to the District and community

1. Provide professional development that equips both certificated and classified staff to understand how to address the unique needs of students
2. Provide additional professional development for paraprofessionals
3. Increase the number of counseling staff and explore flexible scheduling for counselors to meet with parents and guardians at convenient hours.
4. Recruit passionate teachers who are trained in the subject matter, are enthusiastic, and care about students
5. Train staff on a range of community resources available for students and families
6. Create a performance based evaluation system for teachers and schools that go beyond Academic Performance Index and Adequate Yearly Progress indicators.

Foster a culture of shared ownership that is grounded in relationships

1. Provide professional development and training opportunities for staff and volunteers to support the development of positive relationships
2. Provide regular training for office and other District staff on positive engagement and communication with parents and family members
3. Identify opportunities for special education and general education teachers and staff to collaborate and share best practices

3. Quality Learning Environment

Participants offered ideas and suggestions to improve classroom and school environments. Generally acknowledging the shrinking resources available to public schools, participants felt it was important to invest in programs and initiatives that support the diverse learning needs of students and keep students engaged in school. Some ideas presented under this strategic priority include:

Better and consistent use of technology in instruction, intervention, and enrichment programs at all grade levels

1. Equip all schools with modern computer labs and trained staff and provide maintenance support

Create a well rounded and personalized educational environment by reducing class sizes – specifically at the upper elementary and middle school levels, expanding learning beyond the classroom, and engaging parents and guardians in schools

1. Reduce class sizes in upper and middle school grade levels
2. Create learning opportunities outside of the classroom
3. Engage parents and guardians as partners in learning

Improve and expand counseling services available to all students to provide emotional and academic support

1. Provide mentoring and peer counseling services
2. Create or expand programs to assist in transition between elementary school and middle school and between middle school and high school
3. Develop clearly defined transition programs for all students between general education and special needs population.

Provide support for special needs students at all schools

1. Develop well defined job descriptions and provide professional development for all staff, including peer training opportunities (special education teachers training others)
2. Provide resources to special needs students
3. Appropriate mainstreaming

Create a robust program of extracurricular opportunities for students to keep them engaged in school

1. Support associated student body organizations on campuses
2. Increase student clubs at all middle schools

Foster a culture of high expectations for all – students, teachers, parents, administrators, school staff

1. Expect more from students – leadership, academic success, extra-curricular involvement
2. Welcome parents and guardians and acknowledge that they play a positive role in schools
3. Recognize the importance of spirituality in student development

Expand college, vocation and career exploration and preparation at all schools, including appropriate transition programs between grade levels. Promote and cultivate teaching practices that prepare students to transition successfully into the global economy

1. Make grade-level appropriate college, career, and vocation planning mandatory for all students
2. Develop a personalized action and life plan for all students
3. Expand college readiness enrichment programs such as PUENTE, Upward Bound, MESA, etc.
4. Increase counseling services so students are aware of and prepared for college entrance exams such as SAT and ACT
5. Expose students to a range of career and vocation opportunities through work-based projects and internships
6. Teach beyond standardized tests and address the individual interests, strengths and needs of students

7. Teach 21st century skills – interpersonal, academic, and technology skills to prepare students for multiple demands upon graduation

Create a multi-pronged approach to improve the safety of students in schools

1. Offer additional extra-curricular and enrichment programs before and after school
2. Increase mentorship and internship opportunities to provide students with positive experiences
3. Increase physical safety of students with additional school security staff and surveillance equipment
4. Offer wrap-around services to address the social and emotional needs of students

4. High Performing, Accountable Organization

Community members and parents strongly identified the need for a high performing organization that is responsive to the needs of students and families. Steering Committee members confirmed this sentiment and offered additional ideas to transform the District into an organization that leverages opportunities, addresses weaknesses, and implements innovative practices. Additional ideas focused on ways to increase accountability at both the District and school level to foster greater transparency and trust within the community. Ideas presented under this strategic priority include:

Develop a cutting-edge, innovative, and courageous organization that is designed to respond to the needs of today and tomorrow

1. Perform ongoing evaluations and respond with necessary changes in policies and practices to positively impact academic growth
2. Increase organizational capacity to anticipate, adapt and respond to the academic and social needs of all students and families
3. Dare to be different and become great
4. Pioneer and innovate quality based on a “culture of a willingness to risk greatness”
5. Be transparent in setting goals, designing and implementing action plans, and evaluating performance.
6. Learn from other world-class local entities in the community such as Caltech, Art Center, JPL, selected independent schools, and business
7. Encourage broader and more shared equity and ownership of the successes and problems of PUSD schools
8. Support leadership development at all levels within the District; Everyone is a leader within PUSD and should model characteristics and behaviors attributed to success
9. Integrate business model practices that help drive change and accountability within the District

5. Partnerships and Meaningful Collaboration

Participants viewed partnerships with external entities as critical to improving student academic outcomes. Participants offered ideas for potential partners, suggestions on ways to engage partners, and system changes to support and sustain partnerships. Ideas presented under this strategic priority include:

Create an inventory of potential partners that have the capacity to leverage or expand District academic, enrichment, intervention, and social service initiatives

1. Businesses
2. Faith community
3. Higher Education Institutions
4. Civic institutions
5. Service organizations
6. Nonprofit organizations
7. Hospitals
8. Public agencies

Identify a variety of partnership opportunities at all levels within the District

1. Mentoring opportunities
2. Internship and job shadowing through career exploration and high school academies
3. Fundraising support
4. Contributing in-kind resources – both human and fiscal
5. Assist with scholarship awards
6. Support curriculum and instructional program development
7. Provide social and community service project opportunities

Revise and streamline protocols to ensure positive relationships between partners and schools

1. Identify strategies to connect partners with the District and schools
2. Create value for partners and schools and acknowledge the mutual benefits and interdependence between schools and the broader community
3. Train school administrators on the value, benefit and purpose of meaningful relationships with partners that are linked to outcomes
4. Identify appropriate school based staff to implement and strengthen partnerships with external entities
5. Create value for both partners and schools by assessing the benefits, level of student support, and availability of resources to launch and sustain the partnership
6. Establish a mechanism to assess and determine the partnership needs of the District and schools
7. Develop ongoing evaluation of partnerships
8. Replicate what works at school sites and apply best practices across the District

6. Parent Engagement (*New Category*)

This is a new category that surfaced from a wealth of comments and feedback from participants about the need to create a more welcoming environment for parents and to provide meaningful opportunities for parents to work with schools, teachers, and other educators on behalf of students. Participants expressed a strong desire for the District to embrace parents as partners in the work of educating students and suggested ideas that focused on three areas – communication, opportunities for engagement, and support for parents. The Steering Committee echoed sentiments that a world-class education can be achieved by engaging parents/families in schools. Ideas presented under this strategic priority include:

Improve communication between parents/guardians and schools through a multi-pronged approach

1. Utilize technology to inform parents/guardians of students' academic progress
2. Collaborate with public libraries to improve communication with parents and families
3. Offer cross-cultural and cross-generational communication workshops so parents and students can better understand and support each other
4. Promote communication between parents to improve cultural understanding and support information sharing
5. Sponsor the sharing of best practices among parents/guardians

Engage parents/guardians through a range of activities that recognize the various factors that affect participation

1. Engage parents through volunteer opportunities at school sites and throughout the District
2. Include parent engagement in curriculum as a mechanism to improve collaboration between parents/guardians and teachers
3. Utilize a team approach to improve parent engagement at schools and to foster partnerships with school staff
4. Conduct home visits and neighborhood based outreach to engage with parents through meetings at community centers, churches, libraries, grocery stores, etc.
5. Leverage resources to create a District-wide parent/guardian groups that can advocate for solutions to issues of racial disparity, special needs, cultural competency, safety, etc.

Support parents in becoming more engaged in their student's academic and personal growth.

1. Adopt effective and proven parent engagement models
2. Create opportunities for parent groups to share best practices across the District
3. Identify parent/guardian engagement opportunities at the middle and high school level
4. Provide support for parent engagement activities in schools
5. Partner with community entities (churches, non profits, etc) to sponsor workshops to support parents/guardians and families with school and community engagement
6. Support leadership development for parents at school sites and at the District level

Strengthen relationships between parents/guardians and staff at all levels within the District

1. Provide professional development for District staff on strategies to better engage parents and guardians from all ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds in school activities

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The community engagement process solicited valuable input to inform the further development of the District's Strategic Plan. The Steering Committee offers the following recommendations to guide the District as it begins the process of integrating the community's input and ideas into a Strategic Plan and operational plans. The recommendations cover three areas – revisions to the draft strategic plan; the implementation process, and ongoing communication and community outreach. These categories respond to the hopes and concerns expressed by parents and community members throughout the engagement process, and are intended to help the District build upon the momentum created by the process while strengthening new and existing community relationships.

RECOMMENDATION ONE: INCLUDE A 'CULTURE' STATEMENT IN THE DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

The need for cultural change and the importance of strong relationships emerged as common areas of concern throughout the engagement process. These themes reflect the nexus between the District's credibility and its potential to become a recognized leader in public education. The Steering Committee recommends revising the draft Strategic Plan to include a 'culture' statement that represents the type of relationships and conduct that will be promoted throughout the District.

The Steering Committee identified the need for a stronger commitment to building relationships among all stakeholders within the PUSD community. The Steering Committee also felt that strong relationships could serve as the catalyst for transformation throughout local communities. Strong relationships would be achieved through targeted and intentional strategies to build and maintain interactions that connect stakeholders to the vision, mission and values of the District.

Throughout the community engagement process, parents and community members expressed concerns that the prevailing District culture is slow to embrace change. Furthermore, participants believe that the culture often promoted within schools and at the District level limits the potential to build stronger relationships with parents, community members, and external partners.

Proposed Culture Statement

The Steering Committee recommends that an "**Our Culture**" statement is added to the draft Strategic Plan. The current draft strategic plan outlines the District's mission, vision, and values; however there is no implicit statement on the type of culture that will be promoted. The culture statement will outline shared beliefs, behaviors, and customs to be embraced by the entire PUSD

community. The committee offers the following statement for inclusion into the draft strategic plan.

Our Culture:

Pasadena Unified School District shall cultivate a culture where parents, students, and the community are welcomed, valued, and supported. We will collaborate with each other and our partners to achieve academic excellence, pursue continuous personal and professional improvement, and build positive relationships. We will celebrate our strengths and continually embrace opportunities to improve as a community of learners.

Lastly, the Steering Committee recommends that the draft Strategic Plan incorporate strategies that focus on strengthening relationships among students, teachers, parents, administrators, other district employees, and the broader community as a vehicle to help all understand and take action in their respective roles in achieving PUSD’s vision and goals

RECOMMENDATION TWO: ADD PUSD GRADUATE PROFILE TO THE DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

A desired outcome expressed by the Board of Education was the development of a profile of a graduate of PUSD schools. The visioning exercise utilized throughout the engagement process provided the community with an opportunity to offer their hopes and expectation of students who graduate from PUSD schools.

The graduate profile presented on pages 10 – 12 of the document are offered by the Steering Committee to be integrated into the revised Strategic Plan. The skills, competencies, values, and readiness highlighted in the document represent the shared vision of the community.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: ADD PARENT ENGAGEMENT AS A NEW STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Throughout the engagement process, the need to strengthen parent engagement in PUSD schools emerged as a clear priority for all stakeholder groups. Parents overwhelmingly felt that opportunities to participate in their child’s education were limited, and many said they often feel unwelcome on school campuses. Additionally, parents and community members stressed the need for educational opportunities and resources to increase parents’ ability to partner with school site staff.

Recommendations offered to improve parent engagement include:

1. Add **Parent Engagement** as a new category under the Strategic Plan priorities with specific ideas and suggestions to achieve stronger parent relationships throughout the District.
2. Provide parents and the community with regular updates on the progress of strategic plan implementation. Additionally, identify creative and innovative ways parents can continue to provide input and suggestions to the District.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: DESIGN A TRANSPARENT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Many community members expressed concerns about whether their ideas would be included in the final Strategic Plan. In response to the evaluation question “I feel that my ideas and suggestions will be included in the Strategic Plan” only 42% of participants strongly agreed with the statement and 23% somewhat agreed with the statement. Written comments also expressed community members’ hopes that ideas and suggestions would be considered by the Superintendent and Board of Education.

“I think that you should listen to us. I hope you will take our ideas into consideration.”
- Participant, Community Forum Four

It is critical that the next steps are transparent and offer the community an opportunity to stay connected to the development, implementation, and progress of the strategic plan. The strategic plan and operational plans should be measurable, results-oriented, and build upon the community’s willingness to invest in PUSD schools.

Below are recommendations offered for consideration during the implementation process:

1. Identify key staff responsible for assisting the Superintendent with finalizing the strategic plan and leading the development of District level and school-based operational plans.
2. Identify strategies that match the District’s and community’s assets, leverage opportunities to create, expand and sustain successful initiatives and programs, and address identified challenges.
3. Establish clear short and long term benchmarks that are measurable throughout the implementation process.
4. Develop District-level and school-based action plans that outline specific tasks, identify responsible staff, and communicate expected deliverables connected to the implementation of the strategic and operational plans.
5. Provide regular updates on progress towards implementing the Strategic Plan, along with opportunities for input and feedback from stakeholders. Specify how progress will be monitored, evaluated, and publicized.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: CONTINUE COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The strategic plan community engagement process stimulated interest in stronger collaboration to support public education. Participants in both the small group presentations and

community forums expressed a strong desire to remain connected to the progress of and implementation of the Strategic Plan. Steering Committee members echoed the need to consistently update the community on the District's implementation of the community recommendations as well as provide additional opportunities for parents and community members to partner with the District. One committee member stated "*PUSD needs to give information back to those who participated in a way that they can understand. You came, you gave us your ideas, and now this is what is going to happen.*"

Specifically, committee members felt the need to maintain a personalized approach similar to the strategic plan engagement process where parents, residents, and organizations felt their voice would be heard and valued. The ongoing communication should also include opportunities for parents and the PUSD community to provide input and feedback on District initiatives and plans in a manner that respects their time, ideas, and voice in the process. Finally, the Steering Committee adamantly echoed community sentiments for the District to cultivate authentic relationships with parents, external partners, community organizations, and other stakeholders. Without the investment into relationship building, the goals and spirit of the strategic plan to transform PUSD schools would face tremendous hurdles.

Communication Activities

Some initial follow up actions taken since the completion of the engagement process include:

1. **Creation of a Database.** The project team has compiled a database with 704 individuals who attended the small group presentations and community forums. Contact information includes name, address, telephone number, and email address. Additionally a database of 574 community and faith based organizations, public agencies, and higher education institutions was updated.
2. **Strategic Plan Website.** The PUSD Strategic Plan website has been updated with all the documents from the community engagement process such as: raw data from small group meetings and community forums, videos from each community forum, written evaluation feedback and tabulation,.
3. **Distributing a Thank You Letter.** A thank you letter to individuals and organizations was distributed via email in March 2010 as well as posted on the strategic plan website.

Additional recommended communication activities include:

1. **Distribution of a Community Report.** This report should be easy to navigate and user friendly so that all parents can review input received throughout the engagement process. The report should be readily available on the District's website, distributed to all community engagement participants, and provided to media outlets.
2. **Establish ongoing opportunities for Community Conversations.** In addition to updating the community on the outcome of the engagement process, the District should consider establishing ongoing community conversations to create two-way dialogue between the

District and stakeholders. These conversations would be an opportunity for parents and community members to meet with school board members, the Superintendent, and other school district leadership to continue relationship building, express concerns, receive updates on District initiatives, and provide recommendations to the District.

3. **Presentations of the Strategic Plan Community Engagement Report to identified school and community groups.** Many community members have limited access to the internet or limited time to digest and reflect on the outcomes of the community engagement process. Presentations to identified school and community groups, especially those who participated in small groups, would greatly raise the District's credibility within many communities. The presentation would provide an overview of what was said by the community as well as outline next steps of the implementation process.
4. **Presentations of Strategic Plan Community Engagement Report to District Leadership Teams.** This engagement process helped amplify the community's voice in the District's planning process; however many school leaders were unable to attend the community forums and did not participate in the small group discussions. A presentation of the community engagement report will help continue the momentum and build a stronger bridge between school leaders, parents and the community. As much as possible, Steering Committee members would participate in the presentations to represent the community's voice, ideas and suggestions for schools.
5. **Media Outreach.** PUSD has made significant strides in building strong and healthy relationships with local media. As part of the ongoing implementation of the strategic plan, regular updates to media outlets will continue to shape PUSD's image and credibility.