

# Shoreline Unified School District

## Listening Campaign Report

February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

Presented by:



NATIONAL  
**EQUITY**  
PROJECT

# Summary of Preliminary Findings

## Overview

During the Listening Campaign, interviews were conducted in small group formats and one on one meetings. Approximately 200 people were interviewed over a span of four months from October 2011 through January 2012. Certificated staff, classified staff, students, parents, administrators and board members were interviewed and asked a series of scripted questions. National Equity Project facilitators transcribed the participants' responses. All interview responses were kept anonymous. The campaign attempted to capture the participants' thoughts, feelings, and questions about their experiences in the district and with the schools.

## Data Analysis

A team of coaches reviewed the transcripts of the interviews conducted during the Listening Campaign to surface themes and patterns in participants' responses.

## Themes of Responses

1. Leadership
  - Experiences
  - Voice/Advocacy for Students, families and staff
2. Communication Systems
  - Experiences
  - Family Engagement
3. Equity
  - Cultural
  - Regional
  - Class
  - Resource Allocation
4. Academic Experience
  - Expectations
  - Teacher Practice
  - Student Achievement
5. Opportunities
  - Instructional (Courses, Electives, Enrichment)
  - Community and Climate
  - Health and Social Emotional
  - Collaboration and Professional Development

## Listening Campaign Focus Questions:

1. **What is working well in the district or at your school? (and who benefits?)**
2. **What isn't working well in the district or at your school? (and who is impacted?)**
3. **What would you change about the district or your school? (and who would benefit from that change?)**

## 1. Leadership

- Experiences
- Voice/Advocacy for Students, families and staff

The responses selected for this category indicate a range of participant perceptions and experiences related to leadership in the district and on school sites. The responses also capture a theme of staff, families, and students feeling like they either have a voice in the leadership of the district and on school sites, or that they do not. Comments reflect thoughts and ideas around decision-making, the role of the District Office and Board, how leadership is being experienced, and what is being expected of site staff. The comments below are a sampling of the range and richness of the Listening Campaign data and are not meant to be an exhaustive representation of peoples' experiences.

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### Experiences

Need fresh ideas, leadership and leadership. Because we are already doing really well. Our kids graduate and do well. I think we can be better at what we do.

There is a lack of vision – a common direction to go to. We've got so much around us as resources, the physical environment, these new teachers, and yet we're a mediocre school

The board of directors are all local. They have their kids here, but they don't represent all of the students. If we have a 50/50 population in this district why is there no Latino on the board?

I'm not sure that the board fully understands the curriculum and instruction going on and it is easier to focus on facilities.

I would echo that closed feeling from the board, it has felt that they were hard to move and not open to new ideas. It seems like there's just a reluctance to change the system.

The community came to the board and kept complaining and complaining and the initial decisions that were made by the board were rescinded. It makes you wary about bringing decisions forward when you don't know if you'll have the support of the board and Superintendent.

There are decisions made at the board level that come from a board member who had not been to the school.

Maybe our board needs to be visiting the sites more often. If they don't have students in the schools anymore then how do they learn about what's happening?

I kind of wish that the board would visit us. I haven't seen a board member in this building, except for a meeting, in forever. So they don't have a flavor of what the school's about.

You don't know what will be passed up the chain from student to board, and you don't know exactly what happens in between students and the decision. So we have ideas about the senior trip, but we don't know if anything will ever get put in writing.

The Superintendent in a small district is also the Special Education director, the curriculum director and there are lots of state mandates. On top of this, he's the high school principal. He doesn't have enough time to get involved at the district level.

If you have a superintendent that is supposed to be leading the whole district then that superintendent needs to stand up to some of the principals and lead.

The superintendent has said more than once to treat them like they're your own. That's the kind of a message that is district wide. It's evident at our campus.

Having a part time Superintendent is really difficult. I feel that we need a Superintendent that is more engaged. A stronger leader. He's so involved and wrapped up in the high school that I don't feel like he's held up his role as Superintendent.

Principals get to have a say and help make decisions, but the final decisions are made by the board and the superintendent. A lot of things have been lost because of a lack of focus on the kids.

We are on our third principal in 7 years. That's too many. There are a bunch of reasons for that, but it doesn't really matter. What matters is some stability and direction. We need strong leadership that has a vision. It has to be a district vision.

Every principal really fights for their own site. As a district, I'm not sure the administration is looking out for the best for everybody. Everybody's an island unto themselves, looking out for their own.

We are a unified district, but we aren't unified. We don't have a direction that all 5 schools would be working towards.

In a variety of ways, people are looking at what's best for adults. At the district, different sites.

Our district has decided not to have a dedicated person managing the data for the district. Having multiple people handle that for the district is really difficult because there is a lot more in doing that than the district realizes.

Decisions should be based on evidence. Whether that's data or research into other programs... That would be a style of leader that I could see helping.

I know our principal is just filling in, but s/he's not easy to find. S/he should get involved more. I'll go into the office and s/he won't ever be there.

One thing that I would like to see change is a principal that leads for everyone with clear communication and respect. I'd like to see a bilingual principal and a secretary that is bilingual.

I have really good leadership and support from my principal and really clear guidance about how my work is supposed to look. I can see the results coming out of the elementary school but I can't see the results coming out of the high school. I would hope for a leader who could help all schools so that the results that we see at the elementary school would be seen at the high school. I know that there are hormones and challenges at the high school level but you have to take responsibility for preparing students who are not ready for college.

The principal has realized that it isn't about just him /her but it is about a team of people. S/he does let us manage the school in a collaborative team way. We have done that better in the last two years. The teachers have taken up some of the work.

Every single person has a good heart. Yes, but you have to stay away from any topic to improve the school. But that to me is leadership – if we just had a direction to apply that good heart.

We have an obligation to prepare students to a common high standard, so they have the choice to go to college, or go into business successfully.

We could have more potential if we had goals we came to for a reason, worked on for a while, and evaluated for progress.

All students should be getting the opportunity in the classroom. Really meeting the needs of the students for whom aren't getting what they need. How do we actually share say this in a nice way? We shouldn't have to beg to have our children taken care of responsibly.

I don't know how things change and how newer progressive ideas are taken on. Simple things aren't taken up. It seems there is an emphasis on what's testable – that “we don't have time in the day for that” there's an inability to grasp a new idea and integrate it and instead it is just shut down.

Several years ago, we developed a literacy plan and the general philosophy of what we would like to see our children accomplish along their journey, how their individualized needs would be met. That's been fairly successful.

I've been accused of favoring the Spanish speaking community. I'm going to help what needs help.

I just want to do the best that I can for the kids. This education is their chance. If we blow it, this is generations of kids coming through here. We have to know how to do this better every year. Time is of the essence for these kids.

Every single adult here has their moral direction in the right direction, which is “the kids come first.”

### **Voice/Advocacy for Students, families and staff**

The board really doesn't understand what an EL student is and what an EL parent is. We are not all the same. One board member said that we all want the same thing for students and they all need the same things. This is not true. For EL students, there are literacy issues, there are economic barriers and this is not understood by the board. They really need to understand that we are different in order to close the achievement gap.

Students can go to the board meetings, and although you can, it's hard to get your voice heard. You need a lot of support, and even then, it doesn't always help.

I think having a student on the board is a good idea. It's really intimidating to go and talk there. And if we had a vote, it would be amazing.

They asked us what we wanted in a new principal. We said we want a bilingual principal, understanding of cultures, someone who has been a teacher, young so they could be spirited, interested in all activities, easy to approach. Also be around more often. You could go to her/his office and know s/he might be there.

I want it where the families come in and they are a part of the board and they are a part of the coop. I think that the Hispanic families don't feel like they are part of the coop. I want the Hispanic parents to feel that they have a voice. Our non-English speaking parents need to know that their voices are as valuable and anyone else that walks through the door.

We're looking for someone who can speak more than one language. Why not listen to our community and hear what they want?

It hasn't been clear to me – sometimes when I've come to PTA, I've felt it hasn't been the place for new ideas. The PTA meeting already has an agenda, I didn't know where else I could go. Where could we get parents together to generate ideas for fundraising, to come together to brainstorm, but there doesn't seem to be a place for that.

## 2. Communication Systems

- Experiences
- Family Engagement

The responses selected for this category indicate a range of participant perceptions, experiences and ideas related to communication and relationships between the district and families, between the district and school site staff and administration, and between school sites and families. Comments reflect experiences related to the role of administration, decision-making structures and systems of support for both staff and families. The comments below are a sampling of the range and richness of the Listening Campaign data and are not meant to be an exhaustive representation of peoples' experience.

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### Experiences

The primary does a pretty good job with communicating with families and the community but the high school does a very poor job with communicating with families. That is frustrating.

On the parent side, times when my son's had a D or an F and no one's communicating that to me. Should be better communication.

The same information isn't given to all of the parents.

There is a protocol for raising a disagreement with staff but it is very hard to use because there is a fear that it will come back to count against your student.

Another thing that's working I think that at the high school that that they have the parent portal where parents can log in and look at attendance and homework assignments. It requires the teachers' input so it's only as good as the teachers' input.

Communication is a big one for me. At the parent level, my daughter is now at the high school and after nine years of weekly communication and a calendar, it suddenly got cut off.

Communication is there, but parents don't take the time to look for it. Community members don't take the time to look at the information.

We've just created a new website for each site and for the district to ease the inputting of information and data. It will give the sites the ability to communicate with their communities. One of the things that is good for the website is that it can switch really easily between languages, in our case English and Spanish.

One thing that I would like to see change is more communication in Spanish.

I'm unclear what the family center does at the school but I have trepidation about asking what it is. I don't know why that it is.

Because it is so small I think that sometimes there is a difficulty in criticizing the administration or staff because we know them so well. You might have a problem with a teacher but because you know something about their personal life or a difficulty that they may be having that you don't tell them because it would be like criticizing family.

Communication between everybody is an issue. There is a lack of communication all the way from the district office down.

It is really frustrating to see the budgets getting cut. We're dealing with such a smaller amount of money than we had 10 years ago. Because the pie is so small I see people vying for the money and I have been brought to tears some times by the conflict between people trying to compete for limited money.

The concept of sharing information would help us to identify problems and make some decisions.

You have a principal here to talk to the ELAC meetings and have some honest conversations with the parents about the numbers and what they mean for their students. If you get information and don't share it then you don't know how you are doing.

Communication between the other schools. There's very little articulation between MS and HS. I don't even know who works there. There's no articulation between the feeder schools and the high school.

When we were having our office meetings; that was working, meeting on a regular basis. Because we have a part time Superintendent, that was vital for keeping the communication of who was doing what.

I need a better understanding of what my job is. The job descriptions are not updated for a long, long time and we need to do that. It is a Union issue. People are being asked to do things out of their job descriptions.

### **Family Engagement**

We have a really strong ELAC committee at this site.

ELAC is very well attended and PTSA isn't – why is it so separate? It seems to have a big life of its own – the ELAC group is big and strong and the PTSA does little things on the side. We try to have joint meetings a couple of times a year – but the groups each have a different focus.

There was a “*something café*” where the community came together to talk about what they wanted to see at the schools, but the staff felt like it was bashing them and just a chance to complain about schools. Because of this there isn't as much of any interest by the staff to build a strong PTA.

We had the board come and talk about how they got on the board. Parents were surprised that the board was surprised that the EL population did not feel welcome by the board.

Our family center is working really well at our school especially benefiting our students. It is currently benefiting mainly our Hispanic students but it is open to all students.

I think that the family center is seen sometimes as being only for Latino families. But it has always been open to all families. I think that our economically disadvantaged families tend to use those services and that is overwhelmingly our Latino families. So communication may be needed.

I've seen the Hispanic community really blossom and come out and attend events, teacher conferences. We have a much more active Hispanic community than we have in the past. Part of how that has developed is the Family Center. It allows the families to have someone to connect with.

Family advocates work with parents to solve medical, immigration, driving issues, etc. They'll sit in on the parent coop/after-school program.

The Family Advocate position is an important position. It is needed and it would be great to have it be expanded.

Many of the families don't understand why they should pay for preschool when I can get school for free next year.

### 3. Equity

- Cultural
- Regional
- Class
- Resource Allocation

The responses selected for this category indicate a range of participant perceptions, experiences and ideas about the idea of equity. Statements indicate how respondents feel and think about the cultural divides that exist between communities of difference. The comments show how respondents are experiencing the impact of those divides as it relates to relationships at the site, district, and community levels. The comments below are a sampling of the range and richness of the Listening Campaign data and are not meant to be an exhaustive representation of peoples' experiences.

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#### Cultural

Equality and equity are not the same thing. Some staff say that they treat everyone exactly the same way but that doesn't address the challenge.

We have a responsibility to deal with this civil rights issue. To deal with providing an equal education for all of our students. We are not meeting the needs of our Latino students. Educational equity has to be seen as more than be nice to those kids. We owe all our students a quality education.

Those poor Latino students don't speak English, is the excuse.

I've had experiences where what I've seen as important in understanding a kid's culture is downplayed and discredited by other teachers. I'd like to see Latino literature that brings that voice in.

My challenge is working with the subtle attitudes that they don't even know that they have. There are many subtle ways in which the Hispanic families are not seen as equal.

The staff has preferences toward the American kids. At lunchtime, our kids say that the staff yells at them to come back if they start to walk away, but the white kids can venture far off.

If you were to put the community in a room, when the kids get here first as kindergarteners you see a lot of mixing of EO and EL students. And by second grade they have separated themselves back out. When I first got here, it was a lot worse and there was a lot of animosity. You may share the same driveway but you don't go to the same house. The ranchers kids don't necessarily associate with the workers kids. But I think we've made a lot of strides.

The grouping of cultures wasn't really a surprise, the strength of how separate they are. Many of the farm workers call their boss patronas. Many people hang on very tightly to their way of thinking and their way of life.

Our Hispanic relationships and helping those kids out. Over my 27 years I've seen that change. They used to be a subgroup, but now they're integrated. They're getting really good services here.

The district did allocate funds to create a bilingual program. Then the state passed the law that took the program away and then gradually things went back to the old way. We only had two Latino aides and we asked what is going on? There aren't even staff in the office who can say "bienvenidos." And the achievement gap is evidence of this.

I think that what is working is having a teacher that is bilingual especially with the kids who don't speak English. That makes more open doors with the families and whatever questions that they have, they can ask.



Having a teacher bilingual is a big thing. It benefits everybody, because then the Anglo students see that the teacher is bilingual and they ask why can't I speak Spanish. It makes them want to learn to speak Spanish too. The mix of cultures feels warm and welcoming and makes friends.

The English speaking children get Spanish as an enrichment. The Spanish speaking kids get English support. But the Spanish speaking students don't get the enrichment in Spanish even when they have been identified as fluent.

Those Latino kids come into the school without knowing reading and writing in Spanish that their parents cannot teach them. What is thought is that those kids wouldn't benefit from learning Spanish. Some of these philosophies need to be discussed. Maybe because most people don't see it as a problem.

When students speak Spanish on the playground, my kids feel anxious that they are being laughed at. I think that there's a time for speaking Spanish and that it shouldn't be at a time when other kids might feel ridiculed. If you're going to speak it, make sure that the other students can understand it.

It's difficult to ask about the family center because you can sound like a racist. I don't assume that it's for Anglo families.

My biggest dissatisfaction with this area is there is a lot of catering to the Hispanic community. While I'm not against that, I think it's being forgotten that there are non-Hispanic families who are not well off. There needs to be a bit more fairness to everyone. There is a feeling that we've gone the other direction with discrimination and now we're discriminating against ourselves. The family center is for one group of families and many families don't even know that it exists. I found out about it only because I went in and asked.

Culturally, it seems the Anglo families don't ask for support in the same way that our Latino families ask.

I feel like nobody wants to talk about it sometimes, like we don't deserve it. In Marin county there's the assumption that if you live here that you must have money because otherwise you wouldn't be able to live here. The idea that because we live here that we're okay. If you're an Anglo family and you're struggling, that it isn't as highly visible. Because on paper it looks like you're doing good but in reality that you're not.

I was once told that I had enough money to get private tutoring. People assume that I have money because we are ranch owners but it's just land and without selling that land you have no money.

My kid has never been in the proficient range and she has never gotten help. There are assumptions that people are worse off than us. I think that there are assumptions that because I'm literate and I speak English that I'm doing well.

The Hispanics think that the Whites have money. The Whites think that the Hispanics get everything for free. And it frustrates everyone.

There is PTA and ELAC, and all of the parents of English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language kids go to ELAC, and English speaking parents got to PTA. To go to both meetings is a lot – so we only go to one. And that's really divisive. If we were to all come together to talk about school and fundraising ideas that would be great

I don't know how much understanding there is at the board level of who our students are right now. We have an all White board. How much can they or I know about what's really happening in the Latino community? There isn't a disinterest by the board to support the Latino community, but I don't know what the level of understanding is?

Another area that would be nice to change or grow, is race relations education; tolerance and getting to know the other group is some sort of mediated way. There is divide and there are resentments and some people who mistrust and it would be great to get that out in the open, an open discussion, a forum.

This school is the Braves and they have an old Indian head. That was a huge conflict to get rid of it. We were successful with getting rid of the head but we could not get rid of the name the Braves. I understand that there is a volleyball team that when they score they are making a “woo, woo, woo” sound.

### **Class**

We now have many Anglo families that are living on the edge and need assistance. And now it's about what families are willing to ask for help. There are a lot of people who think that the Family Center is just for the Latino community, but it's for all of our families. The ladies who work there don't look like me, so that must be for Latino families.

These programs are for the socioeconomically disadvantaged but they feel like everything has to be for all of the students. There isn't an understanding of the basic concept of equity.

I sometimes feel like there is a cultural divide here at the school. I had a teacher tell me that there are haves and have nots here and I found that offensive. That still bothers me.

Most of our Latino families are not recent immigrants. Most of our Latino students were born here. We're in a high wealth area with some families in poverty. Some of our families are living in extreme poverty.

### **Regional**

It's an hour and a half bus ride for students.

Our students come from 2 different schools. It is different in the North and different in the South. They bring different things with them to school. They are both somewhat rural, but the North is more Ranches and tradition of families. They are the people who have donated the land for the schools. They have tangible ownership of the district. The southern part of the district is newer to the district. There isn't the same kind of buy in. Southern people in the district sometimes feel like they have better ideas because they are professional, they are more educated and believe that the people up here are hicks. I don't see the difference within our students as much, but the parents for sure.

There are various levels of ... young professionals, people who have lived here forever, ranchers, and immigrants. People really hold on to what their piece is and won't let go. The community doesn't connect. Bridging the cultural challenges is hard, in any community. The long timers and new connect people from different small towns with very unique values?

The size and variety of the geography plays a role in some of the overwhelm. Some of it really is just that the cultures in the different areas are so different. Though in many ways they are more alike than people realize. There are more community services here than in the north end of the district. There's a more active downtown area and more of a town with the services related to a town. Tomales doesn't have the same services and aren't able to provide the same services to the community.

There is a bit of an us vs. them in the parent community. They want to start a charter school, which would siphon some funds from our school.

What would happen if we had an all staff meeting? Everyone talks about bridging the gap and bridging our communities. If we got together twice a year and had this conversation, what's working, what's not. There isn't the mixing of staff and some team building would really help. We're called a unified school district but we have not had a sense of unification for a long time.

## **Resource Allocation**

Our parcel tax, community-supported since the early 1980's, have sustained that for almost 30 years now. That's allowed us to continue the whole child education pieces, arts, counseling, library, and technology.

Because we have used those funds as we specified, there's been a trust factor with the community that they believe it's worthwhile continuing. That's been vital to our community to maintain those resources.

With the economy, our teaching staff keeps dwindling at the high school. Scheduling gets tighter and tighter. We need more flexibility.

The basic things that the kids need that are being cut out are horrific. I don't know if there's anything that can be done. It's almost become acceptable. Teachers getting pink slips have almost become normal and it never used to be like that. I think that the allocation of one-on-one support resources to K-3 isn't working. We have some newcomer students who need support but they don't fit into the K-3 range.

Look at the money situation. I'd want to make sure it's being shared equitably. That we're making sure that everybody feels supported.

How is the money being spent for English Learners? The families that are low SES? There was no meeting where they asked us how to spend the funds.

#### 4. Academic Experience

- Expectations
- Teacher Practice
- Student Achievement

The responses selected for this category indicate a range of participant perceptions, experiences and ideas related to meeting all students' academic needs. Comments reflect thoughts about expectations and definitions of success, what's working well and for whom, how the system responds when students struggle, what could be better and how, and challenges faced in preparing all students well for success in and beyond high school. The comments below are a sampling of the range and richness of the Listening Campaign data and are not meant to be an exhaustive representation of peoples' experiences.

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##### Expectations

We have parents who want the higher standards. Students do too!

We have kids that are not gonna go to college. They're gonna grow up and be welders.

I have really easy classes. My teachers are really laid back.

The students aren't leaving school prepared for the University. They don't have high expectations for the students.

We need people who can do some of the vocational work, so it isn't a bad thing that they aren't able to go to college.

We have another set of kids who are first or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation here and who are still the first generation to graduate from high school. These kids still have to compete with the kids from Palo Alto. Unless they are armed with the same academic rigor as their neighbors in Palo Alto they can't compete.

You ask yourself, why am I putting a student through this academic torture when you know that they aren't going to go to college.

We need to get demanding of ourselves and of each other about high student performance.

One thing that we would like to see change is to see all the students as equals. If the teachers see all of the students as equals, then they will advance together.

In terms of the academics, I wish they would tell us that our children are behind in reading. They try to be positive to not bum us out, but I'd prefer they tell me how they're doing!

##### Teacher Practice

It's nice when you have a question, and the teacher takes the time to look it up.

If you really need help with a certain subject, they can listen to you during lunch and after school.

I like when the teacher explains when you don't get it. This teacher does it step by step, tells you what to do.

We have a really good library, and we have a lot of computers, but if we were able to use it more freely that would be nice.

There are people at this school who are not prepared, others who are not trying, some whose instruction and pedagogy are antiquated.

Sometimes the classes aren't relevant to what we need. Or they're so used to their ways of teaching they don't change.

We go through the day and we don't do very much. A lot of it seems like a waste of time. They could just tell us what to do and then we could go get it done. Sometimes we don't have to even take out a pencil.

Some of the teaching methods that we use don't support kids to learn the content as well as the language that they are learning at the same time.

Teachers who don't have a lot of patience for the students, frustrate the students a lot. We need to change that. They should be more patient.

The classes just aren't interesting and you are just waiting for class to end.

The drawback of a small school is that each department is just one or two teachers and if one of them isn't a very good teacher, then it really impacts the department.

Sometimes, in the cases of seniors, when they're trying to graduate, the teachers just let them struggle. They let them sink.

### **Student Achievement**

Our test scores have gone up, we got the distinguished school award.

The STAR test scores in 8<sup>th</sup> grade down there are so high and then they get here and it doesn't show up. Something is happening that makes that happen.

Anyone can take an AP class here, and even though they may get a C or D in the class their test scores are going up.

My son wanted to go to the University and took an exam and was eight points below the basic level. They needed more preparation, especially in math and English. His qualifications were inflated here. If you bring an apple to the teacher, that is called "extra credit?"

There's definitely a lower participation level for Spanish speaking students. When I ask them, they say that they need help with their speaking. If they don't have their voice in the classroom, then it's hard for students to improve and build that self-confidence.

There needs to be more attention to the students who are lower, not the students who are at the top. Level the academics for the students. Help the ones that are really low.

I'd like to see more emphasis on curriculum and assessment. The elementaries are really trying to focus on the primary levels, K-3, as a result of the grant. We need at least a part time curriculum and assessment person to get the conversation going. We need to do some real analyzing how our kids are doing.

Most other school districts have a full time data person. I think that if they had the ability to get the most out of the data and maintain the accuracy of the data that it would have a big influence on student performance.

## 5. Opportunities

- **Instructional (Courses, Electives, Enrichment)**
- **Community and Climate**
- **Health and Social Emotional**
- **Collaboration and Professional Development**

The responses selected for this category reflect the range of experiences, perceptions, and beliefs related to opportunities that are offered or not offered in the community, district and on school sites. Opportunities are defined by a range of descriptors. Comments point to examples and benefits of collaboration, challenges in coming together as colleagues, and varying opinions relative to school programs. The comments below are a sampling of the range and richness of the Listening Campaign data and are not meant to be an exhaustive representation of peoples' experiences.

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### *Instructional (Courses, Electives, Enrichment)*

I wish there was a larger class selection, like electives. I would like to have wood shop.

More language classes, like other schools have Mandarin, French, Italian. We only have Spanish, and it's not bad, but we didn't have a choice.

To graduate you need art, but we want other kinds of art. And there's dance at other schools.

I think life skills should still be a class. I think I should know how to change a tire, which you learn in that class. I think it's called home economics.

It seems like there's more support for the agriculture program than when I was here. It's a great outlet for students that aren't interested in sports.

For our size, we offer as much as a bigger school (drama, band, art, PE, trips to DC and abroad, football). Try to make it a comprehensive high school. Kids get a lot of the benefits of a private school and public school in their offerings, extracurricular.

Catch 22: We don't have the electives to offer. When we get one, it only fits into so many kids' schedules. Not enough kids, so we cancel it.

My son's 1<sup>st</sup> grade class, his teacher is bi-lingual. She translates a lot when parents are present and I think that bridges a gap for children whose English is a 2<sup>nd</sup> language. It benefits my son that he's learning Spanish every day.

As terrific as the teachers are – not all of the teachers are willing to differentiate the program. It feels like there is less expectation to have kids excel to their full potential. There is no GATE program – even when there was one. It was a separate program. It wasn't integrated into their instruction.

The students that arrive here often speak fluently in English but their skills are low. One thing we started was an Academic language development class, which I think is really going to help.

I think we need to have more students in a helping class so that when they go into a standard science class they can compete with their English speaking counterparts. There are some kids that we have had since Kindergarten and still aren't prepared for the classes that they are in. They are long term English Learners.

They need to offer Spanish to our children. They assume that they can write in Spanish, but they can't. We want the board to hear us and the district to hear us. My son had a lot of problems in Spanish and they need it for college. It's an academic Spanish they need.

I want it to be equal with all kids that they grow, learn Spanish, all together, half hour Spanish, then half hour English. We want a bilingual program or at least classes with the other, so that our children aren't divided.

If there was one thing that I would change, it would be to change our library and materials to make them more multicultural. We need a stronger writing program and ELD program school wide.

I think that our Special Ed services here really work and the kids are served well. They are really integrated into the program.

We have a high-quality aide staff that are competent, take a lot of initiative, and take a lot of responsibility. They feel valued, they're really teaching and tutoring the kids. But you have to have people you can really trust.

Tutoring is successful. Willingness of certificated staff to stay after school and help them is heartwarming. And we offer it free for everyone. They work their butts off for these guys.

We aren't taking advantage of the integration of technology in learning.

The gym, there have been many barriers to using it. Already there have come many rules, money to pay for insurance. The gym isn't accessible.

### **Community and Climate**

Women teachers have expressed that they have felt bullied, dismissed, and very frustrated. There are certain attitudes here that haven't been put in check.

There are staff bullies. The way some staff talk to people. There is a lack of professionalism and demeaning.

There is a real separation between the classified staff and the certificated staff.

Staff meetings always have to do with the certificated staff. We don't go because there isn't anything that pertains to us and our work.

It is a great teaching assignment here. The small numbers of students, the personal relationships with students that aren't even in your class. In big schools you maybe know a circle of people, but here you know everyone.

There is a group of parents who don't feel confident to send their kids to the HS in the area. Because it is small school there are benefits, but there are fewer opportunities for study and enrichment. For kids who are really into sports, FFA – those are great programs. But my kids are really academic and that isn't great there. There need to be more AP courses and more electives.

The school isn't big. There are few students and they get a lot of attention. My kid has a new teacher and I can say what she needs and the teacher is available and open when I need her.

We have a stronger sense of community out here being a small community. Everybody knows everybody else.

It is great to have a small school, but a result of such a small school is it is difficult to differentiate. It is not as easy to track students into different courses at their level.

What really works here is that we're a small school, we know everybody, we're very supported by the community. If it's a smaller school you're not just a number, teachers will pay more attention to you. You get more one on one time.

Staff works well together. As a whole, we're pretty close together.

Being small we can individualize too much. It becomes not as equitable when we are taking everything on a student to student basis. Sometimes expectations can change from student to student.

I think our building and grounds work very well for what we're trying to do. It's been a labor of love with the maintenance staff to create an environment where kids and staff want to come. Our environment is working very well and is a source of pride for everyone.

The grounds have gotten cleaned up. The physical environment has improved. It has affected the morale and behavior of the students and teachers.

On a good note, our janitorial staff has been improved. It has been awful!

Maybe also a cleaner gym. Our locker rooms are disgusting.

You probably noticed that this is a beautiful campus. Our facilities are well maintained. The whole staff works at it. I don't want to leave out the custodial staff because they do a great job.

There is mutual respect for the teachers, they all really respect us.

The elementary school has been wonderful. I never see a teacher that makes me feel not welcome or not part of the school. This is our community, this is our school.

What's working is the kids really like the place. They're happy to be here.

The kids here benefit from the preschool being on the elementary campus and the teachers talking with each other. It really sets them up for success. It's great that they're here on the campus.

I would like to see better food too. Like, less meat foods, more fruits – because I'm a vegetarian.

### **Collaboration and Professional Development**

We have to have more team meetings for collaboration and articulation between the grade levels. So that you have the time to talk kids and talk program. We need to start having more educational aspects to our staff and team meetings.

Needs a coordinated effort district-wide to put the reading, ELL, English programs in sync with each other so there's a measurable process along the way. So at least we know this isn't working. Or these are the gains this kid has made.

More time to work with each other, cross curricularly, rather than having someone from the outside coming in to tell us what vertical alignment is.

There was no cross curricular stuff when I came. I think all of the math people should be talking to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers – vertical teaming. We just started doing that, but we should do it more often.

Communication and having time to talk to each other is really difficult. Time with the aides. No common time for a staff meeting, when everybody's here at the same time.



We get into our cocoon out here, we don't go to outside training to get ideas. The few of us who do, come back and just apply it in our rooms.

I don't see a lot of faculty that are passionate for continuing education on their own. We don't have many folks who are writing articles or pursuing other academic interests.

I feel like the internal trainings haven't been so helpful. It's elementary.

We are given the freedom to create our own curriculum. There's no one standing over us telling us which standards to teach.

### **Health and Social Emotional Needs**

We are about the only thing in town if they're in distress in some way. What we've tried to build is a centralized clearing house for help.

Our family center is critical to our functioning here. The kids benefit because they can't learn if they're teeth hurt or if they don't have a place to do their homework.

We don't have a student advocate person, a woman. We have three girls who are pregnant now, and they don't have a woman to talk to.

The children need a lot of counseling here. Divorced parents, parents have died, sexual and physical abuse. Many haven't found a spot with the counselor.

We've had a lot of kids with a variety of needs, social-emotional needs. Things happen in the household. Kids have a difficult time assimilating in school, friendships. And we didn't have an adequate counseling program.