



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item 11.2

Meeting Date: October 15, 2015

Subject: Strategic Plan Needs Assessment

- Information Item Only
- Approval on Consent Agenda
- Conference (for discussion only)
- Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: _____)
- Conference/Action
- Action
- Public Hearing

Division: Strategy and Innovation Office

Recommendation: Receive information on the Strategic Plan Design Team's report on the district's needs.

Background/Rationale: The Needs Assessment is the first step in the Discover Phase for the strategic planning process. The Needs Assessment will inform the direction of the Strategic Plan.

Financial Considerations: None

LCAP Goal(s): College and Career Ready Students; Safe, Clean, and Healthy Schools; Family and Community Engagement

Documents Attached:

1. Executive Summary
2. Needs Assessment

<p>Estimated Time of Presentation: 15 minutes Submitted by: Al Rogers, Chief Strategy Officer Approved by: José Banda, Superintendent</p>
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I. OVERVIEW / HISTORY

In the winter and spring of 2014-2015, Sacramento City Unified School District started to plan for an update to SCUSD's existing strategic plan. The current strategic plan, although a solid foundation, is now officially expired. Additionally, several changes over the last few years at the District mean that the existing version of the strategic plan is not up-to-date with the current context and needs of SCUSD.

For example, the state has introduced the Local Control Funding Formula and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) since the existing strategic plan was developed. This means that, although the LCAP was intentionally aligned to the current strategic plan pillars, the documents really are not one, as they should be. Also, there have been many leadership changes and new or different priorities that are not reflected in the existing plan. All of these big changes, along with the age of the document, mean that the existing strategic plan also does not speak to or reflect the experience of Sac City's stakeholders, a challenge that we aim to address through the development of a strategic plan that is informed by the diverse voices of the District and will make a positive impact from the Board to the classroom.

The district has engaged Pivot Learning Partners, a nonprofit organization known for innovative and impactful work with school districts nationwide, to lead the Strategic Planning process with staff. The revised Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Education in June, 2016 for implementation in the 2016-17 school year.

II. DRIVING GOVERNANCE

The district's existing Strategic Plan was launched in 2010, as a descriptive companion to the Board of Education-adopted Mission Statement: Students graduate as globally competitive, lifelong learners, prepared to succeed in a career and higher education institution of their choice to secure gainful employment and contribute to society. The three foundational pillars of the Strategic Plan: Career- and College-Ready Students, Family and Community Engagement, and Organizational Transformation, have guided the work of the district to date, but with new leadership it is an appropriate time to revisit the Strategic Plan.

III. BUDGET

Pivot Learning Partners is sub-contracted to support staff with the process design and framework for a sum of \$153,000.



IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND MEASURES

The main outcome of the strategic planning process this year is the highest quality strategic plan that will:

- Integrate with the LCAP,
- Reflect best educational practices, and will be feasible and sustainable.
- Capture the needs and visions of all Sac City stakeholder groups, including students and their families, teachers, principals, central office staff, community members, the Superintendent, the Board of Education, etc.

V. MAJOR INITIATIVES

The Strategic Plan will provide a framework for the district culture, norms and student supports for five years. It is expected that the Strategic Plan will align with the LCAP and, by extension, the Single Plan for Student Achievement at each school site.

VI. RESULTS

The District is following a Change Design Process to update its Strategic Plan. From mid-July through mid-August, we completed the Pre-Work Phase. The Pre-Work Phase was an opportunity to determine how various stakeholder groups can be involved in the process and develop a plan for rolling out the process, including setting deadlines for outcomes. The official launch of the project to stakeholders was September 3.

We completed the Discover Phase from mid-August to the end of September. The Discover Phase is an opportunity to study the current context of the District in order to identify needs that can serve as a foundation for the first draft of the plan. This includes beginning to understand the experience of District stakeholders and starting to deeply review District data (achievement data, culture and climate data, and budget and operations data). This also includes studying other districts to determine best practices that can be applied to Sac City's strategic plan and LCAP.

The Needs Assessment report is the first major deliverable in the strategic planning process, a result of the Discover Phase. The Needs Assessment's primary purpose is to review data and outline our understanding of the current context. And, then, based on findings, identify needs to address and make recommendations for the strategic plan. Essentially, the Needs Assessment gives the strategic plan direction, ensuring that the strategic plan is rooted in reality and that strategies to address needs are not only based in best practice, feasible and

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sustainable but even more importantly, will make a positive impact on SCUSD students, families, teachers, principals, staff, and the broader District community.

Following is a detailed description of the areas examined by the Design Team to prepare the Needs Assessment report.

Focus Groups: To engage in deep conversations with diverse stakeholders, we held ten focus groups that involved students, teachers, principals, parents, classified staff, community, etc. We asked each stakeholder to share their previous and current experience with the District, particularly as it related to the strategies outlined in the existing strategic plan. We also asked them to share with us suggestions for change, to address needs that they expressed. Note that the focus groups were designed to be a quick but deep measure of the current context. There will be several opportunities for many more District stakeholders to be engaged in this process this year, through the Public Education Volunteer process, community meetings, and school site meetings, etc. In fact, we aim to hear from thousands of diverse District stakeholders, using their feedback on the draft strategic plan to inform the next iterations and/or final versions of the plan.

District Data: In addition to focus groups, we also started to review district data, including student achievement data (i.e., graduation rates, college readiness indicators in ELA and math, etc.), culture and climate data (suspension and expulsion data), and budget data. We reviewed the data in order to get a more complete picture of district strengths and needs and based on needs, to make data-driven recommendations for the strategic plan – basing future strategies for positive impact on current reality. Note that, through this process, we discovered that we needed to collect additional data in all areas. For example, in the realms of achievement and culture and climate, there are data showing bright spots in the District. However, we don't have the program evaluation data to explain why they are bright spots (specific strategies used in those places, etc.). Also, particularly in budget and operations (technology, food services, transportation, facilities, etc.), we will be gathering additional data as we develop future iterations of the strategic plan, in order to identify strategies for the strategic plan that are feasible and sustainable long term.

Other Districts: Beyond understanding current context at SCUSD, we also studied other districts in order to identify best practices in eight other districts' strategic plans and/or LCAPs. These districts were chosen based on a few factors: location (relative proximity to SCUSD), size, similar content, demographics, etc. For example, we chose two districts in the Sacramento area that confront a different context but do share some similarities because of location. Our assessment of these plans helped us in our thinking about our needs in all areas. These plans also gave us ideas about key, research-based strategies that could work for addressing the

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District's challenges. Additionally, we learned some things we did not expect, including strategies for communicating and implementing the plan.

After we finished conducting focus groups, reviewing data and plans, we combined all data into a draft of this report. The draft report was shared with the Design Team, who made revisions to the report. Then, once the report was revised, it was shared with the Superintendent's Executive Cabinet, who gave additional feedback. Finally, it is being shared with the Board of Education at the October 15th Board meeting. This report will be used throughout October to inform the first draft of the strategic plan, which will be ready to share with the community in early November.

VII. LESSONS LEARNED / NEXT STEPS

- November 5, 2015: Board Presentation of first draft Strategic Plan
- November – December 2015: Cycle 1 feedback on the district's draft strategic plan (School site meetings, community meetings, community planning process with Public Education Volunteers)
- January – March 2016: Review data and revise/detail plan
- April – May 2016: Produce draft Strategic Plan and gather Cycle 2 feedback on the draft alongside the draft LCAP
- June 2016: – Presentation of final Strategic Plan to the Board with implementation plans for the 2016-17 school year.



Strategic Plan Needs Assessment

Fall 2015



**Board of Education Meeting
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Overview

This Needs Assessment was created over a six-week period at the start of the 2015-16 school year. Requested and reviewed by the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) Board of Education and district leadership, the Strategic Plan Needs Assessment report is the first major deliverable in the strategic planning process. The Needs Assessment outlines the district's current context, based on data reviewed thus far, and then identifies needs to address and make recommendations for the Strategic Plan.

The report begins with a brief snapshot of the district's demographic profile. Following that is a description of the strategic planning process the district uses; a description of data gathered from focus group interviews; a data review of a variety of student, school, and district information; and a review of other districts' Strategic Plans/LCAPs. The report concludes with a summary of key needs and key recommendations.

Sacramento City Unified School District



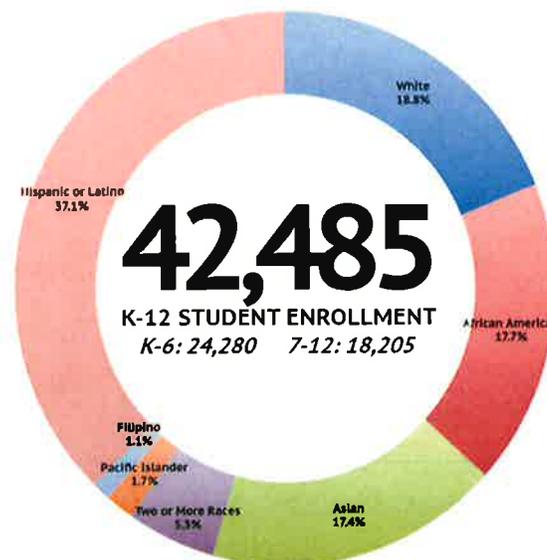
Photo used with permission (Sacramento Bee)

Sacramento City Unified School District is the 10th largest school district in California and one of the oldest in the western United States, established in 1854. The district spans 70 square miles in urban Sacramento and serves over 42,000 students on 76 campuses, including 43 elementary schools, 12 high schools, nine K-8 schools, six middle schools, four multiple grade schools, and two adult schools. The SCUSD Board of Education, Superintendent José Banda, and his Cabinet oversee a \$449.5 million annual budget.

SCUSD's board-adopted mission statement promises the community that students will "graduate as globally competitive life-long learners, prepared to succeed in a career and higher education institution of their choice to secure gainful employment and contribute to society." Sacramento is one of the most racially diverse cities in the United States and SCUSD's student population reflects this diversity. Residents within SCUSD speak more than 48 languages; 38 percent of students do not speak English at home and 22 percent of students are designated as English Language Learners.

Sacramento is also a high-poverty school district with over 68% of students eligible for free or reduced price lunches. Thirteen percent of all students receive special education services.

Since the adoption of Strategic Plan 2010-2014: *Putting Children First* in the spring of 2010, SCUSD has focused its work in three areas to meet commitments to the community with Career- and College-Ready Students; Family and Community Engagement; and Organizational Transformation. With the implementation of Local Control Funding Formula in 2014, the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) included a strategic goal for Safe, Clean, Healthy and Emotionally Healthy Schools to indicate its strong support for positive school climate.



Report Introduction

Why is this important?

During the last school year, Sacramento City Unified School District started to plan for an update to its now-expired strategic plan. When the state introduced the Local Control Funding Formula and the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), the LCAP was intentionally aligned to the current strategic plan pillars, but the documents are not one, as they should be. Consequently, the **main outcome** of the planning process this year will be a high-quality strategic plan that will:

- Align seamlessly with the LCAP,
- Reflect best educational practices, and will be feasible and sustainable,
- Capture the needs and visions of all Sac City stakeholder groups, including students and their families, teachers, principals, central office staff, community members, the Superintendent, the Board of Education, etc.

What is our process?

The District is following a Change Design Process, outlined below, to update its strategic plan.

Phase	Date	Key Activities	Outcome
Pre-Work	July - Early August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a project plan. • Determine team structure, and plan for stakeholder engagement. • Develop and deliver communications to launch project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Plan • Team Structure • Introductory Communications
Discover and Interpret	Mid-August-Sept. 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Discover Process. • Conduct focus groups, review strategic plans and LCAPs from other districts, examine internal and external data (achievement data, culture and climate data, budget and operations data). • Produce a Needs Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder and Other Data Gathered and Analyzed • Needs Assessment
Ideate and Prototype	October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the results of the Needs Assessment, develop key ideas to incorporate into first draft of plan. • Develop “final” first draft of strategic plan to share for feedback. • Develop survey and other materials to gather feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Draft of Strategic Plan
1st Cycle of Gathering Feedback and Refining Prototype	Nov. 2015 - January, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share draft with stakeholders by training Public Education Volunteers (PEVs) to gather feedback from the community, hosting community meetings, conducting meetings at school sites (facilitated by principals). • Gather and examine feedback. • Refine draft for a second cycle of gathering feedback. Note that, in January and February, we will be integrating in next year’s LCAP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Public Education Volunteers (PEVs), Community Meetings, School-Site Meetings, etc. • Other Data Gathered and Analyzed • Second Draft of Strategic Plan

Integration with the 2016-2019 Local Control and Accountability Plan			
2nd Cycle of Gathering Feedback and Refining Prototype	February – April, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share second draft (with integrated LCAP) with stakeholders through PEVs, community meetings, and school site meetings (facilitated by principals). • Gather and examine feedback. • Develop a semi-final version based on feedback from the 2nd cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from PEVS, Community Meetings, School-Site Meetings, etc. • Other Data Gathered and Analyzed • Third Draft of Strategic Plan, with aligned LCAP
Finalizing, Approval, and Preparing for Implementation	May-June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make final changes to plan. • Share plan and obtain board approval. • Create metrics for implementation and impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved and Finalized Strategic Plan and LCAP • Implementation Plans, Teams, etc. in Place to Implement Strategic Plan and LCAP

Who has been and/or will be involved in this process?

SCUSD’s Chief of Strategy and Innovation, Al Rogers, is overseeing the Strategic Planning Process, while Cathy Morrison, LCAP/SPSA Coordinator, manages the project. A small, working group – the Strategic Plan Design Team – representing many of the District’s stakeholder groups, is responsible for developing the Strategic Plan under the careful guidance of the Superintendent’s Cabinet. Drafts of the Strategic Plan will be shared with existing district advisory committees, such as the LCAP Advisory Committees; school sites through principal-led school site meetings; and the larger community through community meetings, and through Public Education Volunteers who are trained to share and gather feedback with their network.

What is the Needs Assessment? Why is this important?

The Needs Assessment gives the Strategic Plan direction, ensuring feasibility for implementation and sustainability. The Needs Assessment will also help the Design Team and Cabinet to keep the Strategic Plan activities founded on sound educational theory and best organizational management practice. Doing this means the work described in the new Strategic Plan will make a positive impact on SCUSD students, families, teachers, principals, central office staff, and the broader District community.

How did we develop the Needs Assessment? What data did we review and why?

The Needs Assessment was developed through the Discover Phase, launched in mid-August. In order to start to understand the full context of the District, the Discover Phase necessarily involved engaging in deep conversations with diverse stakeholders through focus group interviews, reviewing different types of district data, and studying eight other districts in order to identify best practices outlined in their strategic plans and/or LCAPs. Results are outlined in the following sections of this report.

Description of Data Gathered

A. Focus Groups

Process:

Ten focus groups were facilitated between September 15 and October 1, 2015 in order to get thoughts and opinions from representative stakeholder groups in the district. The role-alike focus groups included parents, students, teachers, administrators and classified staff. Labor partner unions' leadership was directly invited to participate, and encouraged to invite constituents to participate in the interviews. The focus groups were comprised of participants reflective of Sacramento's diverse community. The commentary received from **focus groups can be viewed as samples** of stakeholder opinions, and will inform the broader engagement that is anticipated during the ensuing feedback cycles.

“Have assemblies, meetings and workshops that will prep students for college...must be consistent...”

-SCUSD Student

At the outset, participants were advised of the district's intention to **build upon the existing Strategic Plan**, rather than create a wholly new plan. To conduct the discussion, the focus group facilitator described the four themes to be considered:

The three pillars of the previous SCUSD Strategic Plan

- Pillar 1: College and Career-Ready Students (also represented as Goal 1 of the LCAP)
- Pillar 2: Family and Community Engagement (also represented as Goal 3 of the LCAP)
- Pillar 3: Organizational Transformation

Local Control and Accountability Plan Goal 2

- Safe, Clean, Healthy and Emotionally Healthy Schools

Focus group interview participants were assured of anonymity during the process, but completed a classification form that captured gender, ethnicity, home language, etc. Main ideas of the discussions were recorded either by computer or handwritten on chart paper. All focus groups identified both strengths and challenges with the previous Strategic Plan. At the conclusion of the discussion around each theme, participants were asked what needs remained to be served in each area. The final question in “wrap-up” was to ask each person to identify what they believe to be the top, or key, needs for the district. Each focus group interview lasted approximately one hour. Translators for Spanish and Hmong were provided for all parent focus groups.

“Strong relationships between teachers and students are motivational.”

-SCUSD Parent

In terms of process, the second student focus group took a slightly different approach. Feedback received from the first, traditionally-facilitated, student group was a preference to learn the topics and facilitate their own discussion, as well as to write their words verbatim (as opposed to using a chart-writer or note taker who might summarize or paraphrase).

Student leaders from the SCUSD Student Advisory Council facilitated the second, larger student focus group. The framework for discussion was consistent with the other groups, but students were divided into groups to “Jigsaw” the work to share with others in the room.

Data Gathered:

Overall, all demographic groups were found to be in agreement on the strengths of district programs since the implementation of the previous strategic plan. **Over 45% of all respondents highlighted the district's innovative work in Social Emotional Learning as a strength.** This category includes curriculum and practices that support positive school climate, continued implementation of Restorative Justice, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and other alternative discipline practices. Over half of all respondents reported that **school-parent partnerships had been notably enhanced** over the past five years, and nearly one-third noted that preparing students for post-secondary success was a visible achievement for the district.

“Cultural relevancy is always important.”

-SCUSD Teacher

Staffing and the hiring process were noted as a priority need by over 40% of focus group participants. This priority is reflective of the current shortage of teachers in the state of California, but comments recorded also called out the need for recruitment and retention of the most motivated and qualified employees, who more closely match the diverse population of students served by SCUSD. Although some participants noticed the improvement of central office systems (28.6%), **over 35% reported that there are issues with support from the district office.** Concerns about efficiency, systems, and administrative structure emerged through the comments recorded.

Paradoxically, some of the strengths found were also viewed as challenges or needs. According to participants, students and their families need more access and exposure to career options. Although the district has made strides to improve partnership with parents, **47% of all believe that two-way communication between home and school is still a challenge.**

Summary of Focus Group Data

In the focus area of College and Career-Ready Students, the top priority for each group varied. Administrators identified **professional learning** as a key need, while students identified access to academic **counselors**. Certificated staff expressed concern for a wider variety of **course options** in order to ensure well-rounded students: sciences, visual and performing arts, and vocational/trades. Parents' top priority in this area was more focus on **career exploration**, starting before high school. **Special education** was noted as being both under-staffed and under-funded.

The theme of **equity** arose as a **high need** with administrators and certificated staff, with one person commenting, “Make SCUSD the equity district.” Administrators and classified staff pointed out the continued support for school-family partnerships, while parents and students alike reported that good communication was their highest priority.

“Equity – make it the top of all pillars....
Make SCUSD the equity district.”

-SCUSD Administrator

When commenting on the district's needs in the area of Organizational Transformation (admittedly, most open to interpretation) all demographic groups highlighted concerns in hiring and staffing, leadership, and central office support. For example, systems should be established to better anticipate enrollment. The lack of funding to support programs was tied to a declining enrollment. Some stakeholders expressed a desire to create destination schools that might better retain students.

B. Data Review:

Overview

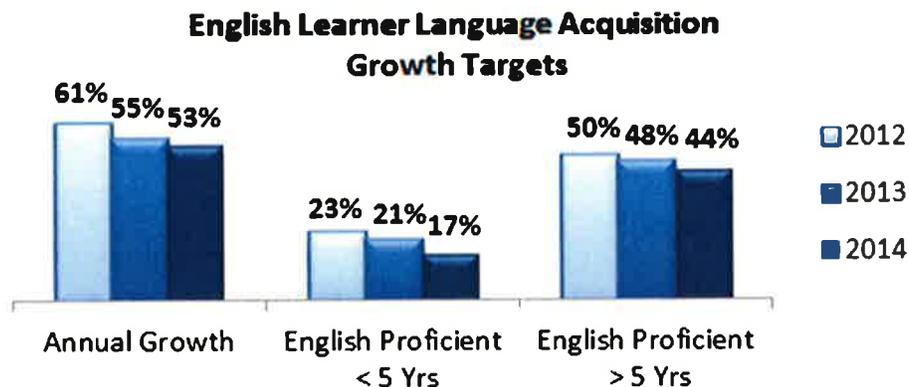
The Design Team examined a variety of student, school, and district information to better understand the needs voiced in the analysis of data. This brief summary of SCUSD's scope of work has not revealed dramatic success or failure, but has provided the opportunity to ask questions about how past initiatives have or have not improved the prospects for its students. Importantly, the analysis indicates that the district may not exactly know, at the nuts and bolts level, why a program is having success. Moving forward, the district should develop additional metrics that allow for a more real time understanding of programs and for smaller and timelier adjustments to its strategic initiatives.

Achievement Data Examined

Briefly, most of the key measures of progress as seen through the lens of state performance accountability frameworks have **not shown significant changes in student achievement**. Over the last four years (2009-2014), the district attained a modest growth of 14 points in the Academic Performance Index (API) which was much less than what was expected through the implementation of the previous strategic plan. For the range of significant subgroups reported, the largest increase was for socioeconomically disadvantaged (3.4%), while most other subgroups were fairly stagnant.

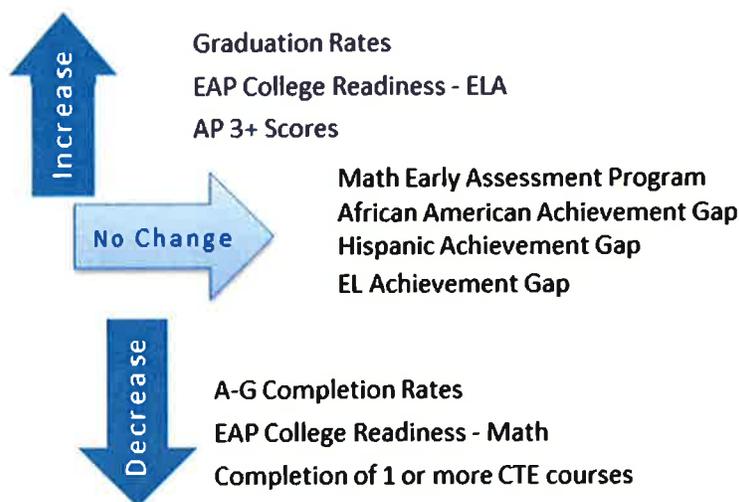
In terms of the achievement gap, the API again gives us a high level snapshot of SCUSD's performance. While the API gap between white students and African American, Hispanic/Latino, English Learners (EL), and Socioeconomically disadvantaged remains over 100 points, the gap narrowed slightly for Hispanic/Latino students (-8.8%), and Socioeconomically disadvantaged students (-10.7%). For English Learners there was no change (0.0%), and for African American students the gap increased (6.2%).

Under federal Title III accountability requirements, English Language Learners are expected to show annual progress in English language development and to obtain English language proficiency. Our trend data show that our **EL students are not making consistent progress** in English Language Development.



College and Career Readiness

Over the last three years of reported data, 2012-2014, compiled by CDE in the State Priorities Snapshot (Appendix), little has changed through the implementation of SCUSD's previous strategic plan. While certain measures show a small degree of progress between 2012 and 2014, the long-term **college and career readiness gaps for students of color have not changed** appreciably.



For LCFF target groups (English Learners, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, and Foster Youth), changes in A-G requirement completion, college readiness (EAP), AP exam scores of 3+, and Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway completion have either remained flat or declined. The gap for A-G completion for African American students has widened but slightly narrowed for Hispanic/Latino students. While the four year Cohort **graduation rate increased overall** and for most subgroups between 2012-14, the gaps remain among the African American and Hispanic/Latino students at 18% and 9%, respectively.

Climate data examined

The Design Team also examined suspension and expulsion data between 2012 and 2014. At this time, greater attention was being placed on reducing the numbers of suspensions due to defiance, with some schools using restorative practices as a discipline alternative. During this time period, **overall suspensions dropped** from 5,347 to 3,936, a drop of 26%. While this drop was certainly significant, the percentage of suspended African American students, who make up approximately 16% of SCUSD's enrollment, increased from 41% to 47% during the same time period. For Hispanic/Latino students, who make up approximately 38% of SCUSD's enrollment, the percentage of total suspensions dropped from 33% to 29%. Conversely, the 19% of SCUSD's enrollment that are white made up 12% of suspensions in 2012 and 10% of suspensions in 2014. **So, at exactly the same time as disproportionality was being highlighted, African American suspensions increased while white student suspensions decreased.**

What's more, of the 1,565 suspensions for defiance (Ed Code 48900k) in 2012, 42% were African American students, while 11% were white students. Hispanic/Latino students accounted for 33%. By 2014, the total number of suspensions for defiance had been cut in half to 771 students, but the percentage of African Americans being suspended for defiance increased to 56%.

Summary of Data Review

All of the data acknowledged in this report indicate that SCUSD's results over the past 3-5 years have not shown appreciable gains in spite of strategic initiatives to address inequities. The major concern raised through the Design Team is not simply that substantial progress wasn't made, but that the district does not have "nuts and bolts" data to make conclusions on why an initiative did or did not show success. To measure impact, the district needs to know information such as: Was the program implemented districtwide? What professional development did individual teachers have? What were class sizes? What was the attendance of students in the program? How many parent conferences occurred? Was there an aide? etc.

The important take away from examining this data is that the next iteration of the Strategic Plan and, more importantly, the LCAP must have data points that are more indicative of the actual practices that are occurring. There are simply too many variables to make any informed judgments beyond implementation, beyond the anecdotal.

C. Other District Plans

Review of Strategic Plans and LCAPs

An in-depth study of Strategic Plans and, when possible, LCAPs, is integral to developing the highest quality plan for SCUSD. This study provides a detailed view of the high level planning of districts who share similar characteristics to SCUSD, including location, size, demographics, etc. Project leadership and the Design Team reviewed key goals, strategies, actions, metrics, timing for rollout, etc. The team also reviewed the process that each district used to develop the Strategic Plan itself, including how each district engaged their community.

The following eight districts were included in the analysis:

- Elk Grove Unified School District
- Denver Public Schools
- Fresno Unified School District
- Long Beach Unified School District
- Saint Paul (MN) Public Schools
- San Francisco Unified School District
- San Jose Unified School District
- San Juan Unified School District.

The main criteria for review included the following:

- Creation date and duration of the strategic plan/LCAP
- Process used to develop plans and timeline for development
- Stakeholder engagement
- Vision/Mission/Theory of Action/Core Beliefs
- Key organizational structures (Pillars, Priorities, etc.)
- Goals/actions/services/strategies
- Measures for implementation and impact.

Common Themes and Processes in Strategic Plans

There were several clearly identified themes that were obvious in every district. Though there were differences in naming conventions, all districts had “big buckets” for:

- Academic success
- Career and college readiness
- Equity, diversity, and/or addressing disproportionality
- Safe/secure/healthy schools
- Parent involvement/engagement/advocacy.

There were varying degrees of complexity to the strategic planning documents. In most cases the plans included either sub bullets outlining key initiatives within the district, goals and or general student outcomes. Also, at the strategic planning level, measures of success were general in nature.

Also specifically called out in this review of Strategic Plans was attention to subgroup data. This was most significantly noted for students that are English Learners, and addressing the opportunity/achievement gap between white, African American and Hispanic/Latino subgroups.

Constituent input and transparency was important in all planning processes. Some districts tapped into existing stakeholder engagement structures, while others planned specific engagement strategies that sought engagement from specific stakeholder groups as well as larger community forums. In nearly every case, there was an iterative process with intentional points of contribution by invested community members. The strategic planning processes noted were similar to SCUSD's planned strategic planning process.

Comparison of LCAP Actions and Metrics

The Design Team included studies of other districts' LCAPs where possible to understand alignment with district strategies and to better inform the structure of SCUSD's developing LCAP. Except for St. Paul and Denver, districts outside the local control initiative in California, a review of LCAPs yielded significant differences in complexity. While all districts necessarily followed the state template for the plan, there were significant differences in depth of planning. Some districts provided precise information on actions, strategies and metrics while others were more generalized. This is a high-contrast example:

District A:

Pupil Outcome #1 (PO1):

- Increase the percentage of all students who are Proficient or above in English Language Arts (ELA) by 3% annually.
- Increase the percentage of students from specific subgroups who are Proficient or above in ELA by 5% annually.

Actions and Services:

- Expand literacy support in elementary and K-8 schools. This expansion includes:
 - The use of literacy classrooms or specialist support;
 - Tutorial services in literacy; and
 - Intensive Reading Clinic Instructional Aides.
- Enhance the library education program. This enhancement includes both teacher librarian and library media assistant support, as appropriate, based on site and student needs.

Expected Annual Outcomes:

- All Students: Baseline from 2014-15 + 6% are Proficient or above in ELA.
- Specific Subgroups: Baseline from 2014-15 + 10% are Proficient or above in ELA.
- Metric: Percentage of students who are Proficient or above in the Smarter Balanced assessment for ELA.

District B:

- Increased implementation and awareness of the CCSS to support differentiated instruction for all students to ensure closure of achievement gaps.

While these differences were surprising, from a practical perspective it informs the Design Team on what county offices of education have been willing to accept to date. In comparison to the target districts reviewed here, SCUSD's current LCAP for 2015-2016 appears to be within the acceptable range of previously approved LCAPs. It should be noted that the SCUSD LCAP has a relatively high degree of specificity. However, there could be more specificity with metrics for the specific services planned for implementation.

In some cases, implementation itself is a worthy measure of LCAP success, yet in others, impact metrics should be identified so that actions and services might provide greater insight into overall program effectiveness.

For example, SCUSD's LCAP **Goal 1 – Action 1.1 C** is to provide CCSS-aligned instructional materials with embedded assessments to ensure a quality CCSS implementation. The Goal 1 “Expected Annual Measurable Outcomes” includes a metric for Williams textbook sufficiency, and one to affirm participation in professional learning, but “quality CCSS implementation” is undefined and with no operationalized measures to gauge the effectiveness of this action.

Summary of Findings from Other Districts

In summary, the review of eight large districts across the region, state, and nation revealed common concerns and similar approaches to the process and product of Strategic Plans and LCAPs. Notwithstanding the level of complexity and precision of measurement, there was much in common with the content of both Strategic Plans and LCAPs. In comparison to the work in which SCUSD has committed, this review did not uncover significant gaps in the strategic planning process, nor did it uncover an unusual divergence from the common approaches necessary to address ongoing dilemmas in education.

Summary of Key Needs

Each key need was determined by an analysis of all data gathered. Through this Needs Assessment, the Design Team has determined that the district has not made sufficient progress in the achievement of all students. Further, upon review of the previous Strategic Plan, the Design Team realized that the district has not addressed many of our intended strategies over the last 5 years.

The needs below are not listed in any specific order.

#	Needs
1	Students and families need social supports, beyond academics, to be successful.
2	Need to improve communication and partnership between the central office and school sites and students and families, and build on our existing successful community engagement strategies (like home visits and parent resource centers).
3	Students of color need additional, targeted supports because they are performing below their peers, and they are disproportionately represented in discipline data.
4	English Learners need additional, targeted supports because they are performing below their peers in academic indicators.
5	Need to focus on building a more effective special education system, including over-identification, addressing disproportionality and general operations.
6	Targeted support that prepares students for career should be expanded (course options, career exploration).
7	Staff needs to more closely reflect the demographics of the district so that students and families feel more connected.
8	Given district data, etc., there is a need to improve the quality of practice from the central office to the classroom, including improving professional learning.
9	There is a need to improve the quality of district systems, like data systems, at the central office and at school sites, to better meet our goals.

Summary of Recommendations

The set of recommendations below are not a final set of recommendations. They are proposed based on data collected, reviewed, and interpreted through the needs assessment process: focus groups, the review of other district Strategic Plans/LCAPs, and the quantitative data review.

Overall Recommendations:

Develop a Strategic Plan that is actionable, that the district can implement with project plans and monitor with aligned metrics. As an outcome of implementing the Strategic Plan, the district will ensure that there will be improvement in the overall performance of all students, in addition to the performance of sub-groups mentioned below.

#	Recommendations
1	The district should build wraparound social supports, making those additional resources available to all families and students, while specifically focusing on communities of highest need.
2	Continue to build on existing successful strategies for student and family engagement, like home visits and the Parent Resource Center, while also continuing to listen to the needs of the community and adjust communications and partnership strategies to better fit their needs.
3	Identify bright spots in the community that demonstrate successful outcomes for students of color. Develop a strategy for scaling those strategies to other schools in need, including providing all staff with professional learning opportunities to improve outcomes for students of color.
4	Provide improved and required professional learning for staff supporting English Learners. Continue to recruit staff with bilingual capabilities at the central office and school sites.
5	Rethink the special education systems. Reduce disproportionality by addressing identification, including providing professional learning around identification.
6	Expand course options to reflect student need. Provide additional opportunities for students to explore college and/or career, including professional trades.
7	Improve recruitment of staff at all levels so that staff reflect the demographics of the district. Ensure that the hiring process starts earlier to address needs sooner.
8	Develop and implement a performance management system from central office departments to the classroom. As a part of this improvement process, provide appropriate training and support.
9	Improve district systems, including the district's data systems, so that the central office and school sites and classrooms can better meet their needs, more effectively and efficiently.

Next Steps:

A version of these recommendations will be included in a next iteration in the first draft of the Strategic Plan to be presented November 5, 2015. The district will get extensive feedback from the community in November and December, make changes, and then ask the community again for feedback in March and April.

Appendix

Please view all of the data sources that were studied on the Sacramento City Unified School District's Strategic Plan web page: www.scusd.edu/strategic-plan

District Overview

- SCUSD by the numbers
- SCUSD 2015-16 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

California Department of Education publications

- SCUSD Local Control Funding Formula State Priorities Snapshot (2014-15)
- SCUSD Local Control Funding Formula Funding Snapshot (2014-15)

District Reports on Academic Achievement

- Academic Performance Indicator (API) Report by Subgroup (2013)
- STAR LEA Report by Subgroup (2013)
- Graduation Rates / Dropout Rates / A-G Participation / CA High School Exit Exam passing rates
- Smarter Balanced (SBAC) English Language Arts results 2015
- Smarter Balanced (SBAC) Math results 2015
- Smarter Balanced (SBAC) Science results 2015
- English Learner Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAO)

Design Team Climate Sub-Team

- Climate Data Report

Focus Group Response Analysis

- Participation
- Overall Responses
- Responses by Cohort
 - Parent
 - Classified Employee
 - Certificated Employee
 - Administrator
 - Student

Similar, Nearby, and Innovative District Reports