Overview of the Cycle 1 Strategic Plan Survey

November 9, 2015 – January 4, 2016

<u>**Overall:**</u>

Every school site was represented, with the highest percentage (43%) coming from secondary schools due to larger enrollment and intentional robust student outreach. Parents (26%) and certificated staff (24%) represent the majority of survey-takers, but students represented 18%, which is a significant increase from the spring LCAP survey (5.6%). All board member areas were represented with the percentage of respondents ranging from 5.5% to 17.6%.

About 20% of the people who started the survey did not finish it, and are represented in the "missing" total. Of the 12 Chinese speakers who started the survey, 11 did not complete.

Just under 80% took the survey in English. Of the remaining 20% of survey respondents, 10.8% identified themselves as Spanish-speakers and 6.3% responded "Other" as their language preference. Of the parents who took the survey, 24% were Spanish speakers. Fifteen percent (15%) of students indicated Spanish as their language preference and 22% classified themselves as bilingual by indicating "Other."

Over 50% of respondents indicated a Bachelor's degree or higher, while 19.3% of respondents indicated they had not completed high school.

College and Career Ready:

"Expand and improve interventions and academic supports…" was the top choice overall (26%). 31% of African American respondents, 29% of Hispanic/Latino respondents and 26% of white respondents made this initiative their first choice initiative. Examples in this category were improving Early Childhood Education, Special Education services, and building systems that lead for positive outcomes for students of color, low income, English Learners, foster and homeless youth.

Certificated staff was strongly in favor (32%), and roughly 49% of respondents ranked this initiative as either their first or second choice.

Management's # 1 choice however, was "Improve teacher and leader practice," which could include additional professional learning and collaboration, and support for student sub-group performance and instructional technology.

Parents chose as their top two strategies "Improve and expand…standards-based curriculum" and "Expanding approaches to instruction." Expanding approaches could include language immersion, work-based learning, and additional course options including dual enrollment, AP, and college partnerships.

Hispanic/Latino respondents showed even preference for the first three choices described above: standards, approaches to instruction, interventions and academic supports.

Safe, Healthy, Engaging Schools:

"Ensuring clean, safe healthy environments conducive to learning," was the overall top choice within this goal, chosen by 37% of respondents. This choice in initiative was carried by a heavy preference with white respondents (44%). It is important to note, however, that there was strong second-choice support (48%) for "building and maintaining safe and supportive school climates…" exemplified by Restorative Practices, Bullying Prevention, and PBIS implementation.

Clean, safe environments are overwhelmingly the first choice for employees: Certificated by 12 % points, Classified by 12 % points, Management by 11 % points [selected this over their second choice].

African American, Hispanic/Latino, Spanish speakers, and students selected "Providing students and staff with culturally relevant social, emotional and health supports" as their top choice under this goal. It is also important to note that these four respondent groups all made the "Ensuring clean, safe…" initiative their third-ranked preference. A majority of Asian respondents selected "Build and maintain safe and supportive school climate" as either their number one choice or number two choice.

Ranking was very close for the parent subgroup between "Ensuring clean, safe…" and "Provide students and staff with culturally relevant social, emotional, and health supports." Some respondents stated in open-ended comments that the difference between these two choices was difficult to distinguish.

Family and Community Empowerment:

Most respondents ranked "Continue to build capacity for parent empowerment" as # 1, reflecting support for expanding parent education, home visits and culturally-competent communication including language translation. Spanish-speaking respondents chose the parent empowerment initiative as their first priority by a huge 15-percentage point margin. Spanish-speaking respondents also chose "Foster and strengthen community partnerships…" as their least important initiative. For that matter, "Foster and strengthen…" is a clear third-ranked preference (48% overall) among most demographic groups.

Parents and students--by a slight margin--chose "Support the wide range of needs of school communities" as their first choice. This category includes support for Parent Resource Centers, training staff on effective models for parent engagement and expanded facility availability.

Operational Excellence

Nearly half (45%) of all respondents ranked "Hire, support and retain high quality staff…" as their number one preference. This was the strongest top ranked preference of all initiatives under each of the four goal areas. Over half of management, certificated staff and community partners indicated this as their top choice. Classified staff had a slightly different focus, indicating their first preference for excellence in customer service; next, supporting high quality staff; and then identifying/improving systems and practices for all operations and business services.

All stakeholders chose implementing robust data collection and reporting as their last choice. As one parent stated: "*Communication, accountability, quality assurance needs to be included in all aspects of the strategic plan.*"

Ethnic groups showed the same level of support for staffing needs. Within language segments, Spanish speakers ranked excellence in customer service as their # 1 initiative, closely followed by high quality staff.

Open-ended Comments:

Of the 1743 survey respondents, 459 wrote additional comments in the open-ended text box at the end of the survey. 392 comments (85%) were in English, with 14% in Spanish and 1% in Hmong.

Comments were classified as either in support of a theme, or as a criticism / need. Each open-ended entry could be classified in unlimited ways depending on the content. The most frequently-commented need was on the survey itself. One parent put it this way: "*In several of the categories, it felt difficult to prioritize when each of the options presented was important in its own way. I hope that whomever compiles the data will take into consideration that there was no opportunity to say "all of these items are equally pressing needs;" just because something was labeled #3 or #4 does not mean that community members don't value it.*" Some participants did not find the ranking exercise worthwhile, and some expressed skepticism that the district reads or uses responses. While as a whole the participation rate in this survey is acceptable, it is worth recognizing that our community may be exhibiting at the least, "survey burnout," and in the worst case, a lack of confidence in the value the district places on their participation. Although we strive to identify areas where we do not meet expectations, this comment may reflect the sentiment of many: "*I hate filling out these surveys because I don't believe they accurately reflect what I believe and what direction I believe the district should be heading. It feels like a random exercise so the district can say they got feedback from all stakeholders and then continue to do what they want to do.*"

The next most frequently commented need was in hiring and staffing, principally illustrated by a high number of comments by certificated staff. Third most-frequently commented upon was the theme of social-emotional learning or school climate, with parents making nearly half (46%) of those comments.

Student academic support—identified as comments on struggling students, intervention needs, etc. — was the fourth most frequently identified need, followed closely by Course Options. Course options included comments about electives, vocational classes, arts education, etc.

Only 5.2% of the open-ended comments were remarks classified as strength-based, or positive. One teacher commented: "*Meaningful survey. Many of the points asked about are important issues our district is struggling with.*" Many Spanish-speaking respondents stated they valued the survey translation.

Once comments about the survey are set aside, note these specific concerns by role:

- Parents expressed needs in the areas of: Student academic support, Social emotional learning, Course Options, School-Parent Partnerships. A Spanish-speaking parent stated: "*We need to be*

united to make a difference and I want my children to become good people and graduate from college and have a career but especially have them be good citizens."

- Certificated staff most frequently commented on class size reduction, hiring/staffing, funding, and access to equal resources. At the time of the survey, the district had not confirmed class sizes would be reduced for the 2016-17 school year, so there were a number of comments indicating that class size reduction should have been included in the strategic plan. "*Class size reduction at all elementary grade levels is a large priority that benefits all students, teachers, and parents. Intervention programs for special needs students at all grade levels. Professional development choices for teachers after school to participate in voluntarily. After school tutoring available for all low performing students. Those are priorities for teachers.*"

- About one-fifth of student comments were on the survey. Many of the comments were in reference to the difficulty that they encountered trying to understand initiatives that, though implemented at school sites, are not recognizable in the language used by the survey. This important learning for the district will impact the next cycle of engagement with students. It will be student-designed, with the help of the SCUSD Student Advisory Council, and presented in a different format.