



SESSION 2 REPORT – SCHOOL PLAN PRIORITIES

NAME OF SCHOOL: Nimitz Middle School

DATE OF SESSION 2: 10/04/2012

NAME OF ORGANIZATIONREPORTING: Alliance for a Better Community (ABC)

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL REPORTING IN BEHALF OF THE ORGANIZATION: Martha Cortes

DATE THIS REPORT IS COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED: 10.09.2012

- INTERPRETING DATA AS A STEP TO BUILD HIGH PERFORMING COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING
- INTERPRETANDO DATOS COMO PASO HACIA CONSTRUIR COMUNIDADES DE ENSEÑAMIENTO DE ALTA CALIDAD.

This School Plan Priorities report was created by a combination of feedback provided by the small group activities, discussion, and annotated narrative data.

I. Student Performance: Where is the School Now?

During the small group exercise, *Student Performance: Where is the School Now?*, session participants were asked to select and analyze two data points from a pre-assigned section of the LAUSD School Report Card (SRC) and compare the data across school years. The four sections of the SRC discussed by the participants were: 1) *Progress*; 2) *Readiness*; 3) *Learning Environments*; and 4) *Student Groups*.

PROGRESS

For the *Progress* section, session participants discussed the percentage of students at Nimitz scoring proficient or advanced in the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math portions of the California Standards Test (CST). The participants analyzed these data points and agreed students were not meeting standards and discussed the different reasons why they were not being met. Participants identified the importance of parents working in partnership with their student and teacher to provide the necessary support, to build the deteriorating relationships between teachers and students, and to ensure students have access to quality teaching. During the large group discussion, many of the session participants stated Nimitz's lack of progress was unacceptable. One of the parents reported:

- "Data tells us students did not meet the standards in either ELA or Math both at the school and district level. These data points are not acceptable. In my opinion, schools are not meeting standards and students are not learning as much as they should be. Overall, the school is not doing well."

The following is the written feedback provided on *Progress*:

Data Points: Students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA & Math (CST)

1. Having more tools at the human level, such as the study materials to stimulate the student.
2. Teach students to be more responsible and think about their future.
3. Students feel more comfortable and confident if they know their teachers.
4. This means that we have not reached the minimum required by the district.
5. Motivate more children to progress, to learn, and to succeed in school.
6. How are teachers involved with students?
7. How are parents tuned in student progress?
8. The student must have commitment to study.
9. The growth of students is very low because they need better explanations.
10. I think every grade needs to exceed its level.



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11. Students are not learning the rules or the school's academic standards.
12. I do not believe because the percentage is very low, I think we need more programs for all students to reach the same level in general.
13. Need more above what is anticipated. We need more help in all areas.
14. I see you are slowly making progress, but try as a parent to encourage and help them be better together.
15. It takes more effort from teachers in the two subjects, math and language.
16. Academically we see that mathematics in grade 7 is very low and the same in grade 8, everything is lower than we thought. We believe that there is much to learn.
17. Very low, need to better prepare students to achieve the standards.
18. I think what we can do this work together, parents and school, motivate more students - all students generally to attend school.
19. We need parental involvement, trained teachers, and the district to support programs to achieve positive results and more graduating teenagers in the future.
20. Well, school achievement is low, for one, there is a lack of support, the teachers do not give them security but working together we will succeed.
21. I think some teachers are not really taking the time with the kids to teach.
22. Get more help because some kids still don't understand.

READINESS

For the *Readiness* section, session participants discussed the percentage of 8th grade students at Nimitz scoring proficient or advanced in the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math portions of the California Standards Test (CST). The small group stated that standards were not being met regardless of the increases in the past couple of years. The following is the written feedback provided on *Readiness*:

Data Points: 8th grade students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA & Math (CST)

1. They do not achieve goals.
2. There was progress but even so, they did not meet the goals.
3. These results demonstrate that the children are not advancing sufficiently.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

During the *Learning Environment* small group, session participants discussed the percentage of students at Nimitz suspended more than once and the percentage of teachers that have been at the school longer than three years. The small group discussed how the longer a teacher is at a school, the better their relationship will be with colleagues, students, and families. Participants also discussed the role of parents in ensuring students follow all school rules. The following is the written feedback provided on *Learning Environments*:

Data Points: Students suspended one or more times and teachers at the school for more than three years

1. 10% of teachers have been here for less than 3 years.
2. Students are not in class and are not learning.
3. The students respect the teachers experience.
4. Less funding for programs.
5. For the most part, the longer a teacher is at the school, the better the relationship with parents, students and school staff, in general.
6. Parents need to respect school rules along with students.
7. Students will not be able to graduate because they will not have the necessary credits.

STUDENT GROUPS

During the *Student Groups* small group, session participants discussed the percentage of special education students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA and Math, as well as the percentage of English learners meeting the three goals for reclassification. The small group participants discussed the lack of differentiated support available to these groups of students and how this is necessary to increase performance. One of the session participants shared her child was not receiving the adequate support to increase his math skills and instead was falling further behind. The following is the written feedback provided on *Student Groups*:



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Data Points: Special education students scoring proficient or advanced in ELA and Math as well as the percentage of English learners meeting the three goals for reclassification.

1. They should focus more on our children to prepare them for tests that are so important for their success.
2. Based on the data, that the academic achievement is not even basic; more parent involvement.
3. Based on CELDT and CST test scores, our students need better classroom instruction.
4. The teachers do not explain well to the students.
5. That teachers are more explicit in the way they teach in class in order to improve student comprehension.
6. I wish they would evaluate the children in their learning because there are children who are not very advanced and they have all children at the same level and they get bored with the same.
7. Based on the survey, have an individual evaluation of achievement with each student and in this way define the level of learning.
8. I believe we are lacking parent involvement; give us more instruction so that our children can be successful and can reclassify.
9. I also wish that they would pay more attention to ELL students because academically they are very low.
10. Training for teachers, how to teach in the classroom and give them time to know if the students comprehend.
11. I think they need to work more to increase the scores and performing better with the English learners to have a high score in AYP. You have to focus in the areas they need to be better.

II. School Plan Priorities Brainstorm

During this exercise, session participants were asked to identify priorities that would help Nimitz meet its vision of student success. The following were the themes identified by the session participants: 1) *Communication and interaction*; 2) *Academic readiness and student progress* and 3) *Student supports*. There was other feedback provided that did not fit into one of these buckets, but it is included at the end of this section.

Communication and Interaction

During the small group discussion, and based on the written feedback provided, session participants valued the communication between school, student, and parent for student success. In speaking to another parent, one of the participants expressed the need for more communication between school administration, teachers, students and parents to solve problems. Other participants agreed: "For the school, I want clean bathrooms, before and after school tutoring, and for parents to receive more information on what they can do to help their child."

One of the participants was more specific on the type of interaction he would like to see between teacher and student: "Teachers ask for respect, but they must also have respect for students." Some of the participants brought up similar concerns regarding the lack of enthusiasm from some teachers to answer questions more than once. The following is the written feedback provided on this theme:

1. Just as they demand respect for teachers an administrative staff, they should also have it for the students.
2. More communication with teachers so my daughter can be a better student.
3. That teachers support students more and they give them the respect they deserve.
4. More communication with teachers, administrative staff, students and parents.
5. More information as to where there is more help, options or resources for students.
6. Ask about options for students.
7. I would like for there to be a survey of students regarding what they think about their school and what they would change so that they work with enthusiasm with the teachers.

Academic Readiness & Student Progress

Based on the written feedback provided, the second theme identified was academic readiness and student progress. Session participants wanted students to be well prepared to continue onto high school. One of the participants expressed the following: "I want my child to do well in all academics and have the necessary supports, as well as safety, to be academically prepared." During the small group discussion, session participants identified



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the importance all students being academically prepared to succeed. The following is the written feedback provided:

1. I want for my son to be advanced in every area; clean school.
2. To be ready for the next level, security, and library to remain open.
3. I would like the library to be open because through reading, students have more understanding of different areas of study.
4. That the school level tests detect where students are advancing or lacking in their academic level.
5. Monitor advancement of our children and at the same time; focus on the areas where they are good and bad.
6. That the children who are in class regularly receive homework in order to remember what they saw in class because advanced children get a lot of homework and others sometimes get nothing.
7. For my daughter does well in all her classes; that the area where she gathers with friends is clean and safe.
8. I want my children to dominate math in all areas.
9. That the students are ready for high school.
10. My priority if for my son to reclassify.

Student Supports

According to session participants, the necessary resources and supports must be set in place at Nimitz for all students: "I want there to be more academic support services and more tutoring services, as well as engaged teachers," and, "I want my child to reclassify and for students to have better support, specifically the ones that are not doing well." Below are the comments provided that address *student supports*:

1. Support to improve classes for students in general and support for teachers for the students.
2. To have more support equipment for the students
3. Support with tutoring programs and academic interventions.
4. Offer tutoring for students after school.
5. My priority for my daughter is for teachers to give her attention when she needs help.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Some of the written comments did not fit in any of the above categories. Nevertheless, they are reported below:

Safe & Clean Schools

1. More cleanliness in the whole school.
2. A cleaner school.
3. I would like of the bathrooms to be supervised and clean.

Teacher Quality

1. That teachers have a true calling and ethics with their work.
2. Support from teachers and not just for advanced children, but for each student.

Lifelong learner

1. I wish that my son's priority is school and that he pays more attention so that he will continue to grow academically and will love learning.

III. School Priorities that Lead to a High Performing Community of Learning

Even though this activity was not completed during Session 2, participants had an opportunity to discuss and identify their priorities for the school during the Brainstorming activity discussed above, as well as during their dialogue with the planning team. At the time of this session, planning team had not finalized their school priorities.

Please see above for more info, as well as the *Dialogue with Planning Team* report.



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Session 2 Report – Dialogues with Planning Teams

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Dialogue One – Dialogue between first Planning Team and participants Diálogo Uno – Notas del diálogo entre el primer Equipo Planificador y participantes

Planning Team Name: Nimitz has no Limits

The planning team shared with session participants current student performance data and engaged them in a conversation to address potential school plan priorities to turn around student performance. The planning team mentioned it would continue to analyze school data and collect feedback to finalize school priorities by the next session.

The dialogue with the planning team first addressed school performance data points discussed by the session participants during the first activity, *Student Performance: Where is the School Now?* The Assistant Principal (AP) reviewed Nimitz's progress in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. She mentioned that over the course of two years, students were doing better on the CST's, but they were still not growing fast enough and therefore specific strategies would be employed through the plan.

The AP focused her presentation on two student groups: English Learner (EL) and Special education. The AP expressed that based on the data, the school had not been very successful with Special education students. She mentioned the student proficiency rate had decreased in 2011. The AP introduced the school's Bilingual Coordinator, a member of the planning team, to further discuss the identified needs of (ELs). He mentioned he had done research and found that many long-term English Learners were not passing their reclassification tests at Nimitz.

Based on the data and trends, the planning team told session participants the school will continue to focus on increasing ELA proficiency rates, decrease the number of long term English learners, focus on seventh grade mathematics to increase the number of students eligible for and able to pass Algebra, and improve the outcomes of Special Education students.

Session participants were interested in further discussing the needs of ELs. One of the participants expressed the need for EL students to get more support in taking the classes they need to be prepared to pass certain exams:

- "Students who are not passing the CELDTs must get more support and be guided to take certain classes to make sure they are getting the necessary curriculum. How can we make sure they reclassify?"

To answer the question, the Coordinator further explained the reclassification process to the session participants and described the three factors considered: CST scores, CELDT proficiency, and having a C or better in English. Session participants wanted to know how the school and parents could best support these students. The Coordinator explained the school employs different strategies depending on the time of year. For example, he mentioned that at certain times of the year, the school is focused on students that need to have a 'C' or better to reclassify. During this time, he works with parents to monitor their child's progress and class grades. The Coordinator also explained that all schools monitor students for two years after they have reclassified. Overall, the participants were interested in learning more about the school's impact on increasing the supports services for EL's to improve academic performance and reclassification rates.



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One of the participants described the importance of monitoring students who have reclassified, but had questions regarding the process:

- “Students are monitored two years after reclassification, so does this mean that Nimitz will monitor students who came from another school? My daughter reclassified last year, and has since moved to Nimitz.”

The Coordinator answered:

- “Yes, regardless of the school they come from, we monitor the students.

One of the parents followed up:

- “What type of monitoring do they receive?”

The Coordinator replied:

- “It depends on the need of the students.”

Session participants expressed interest in EL students receiving the adequate support to succeed on both state and level district exams. One of the session participants shared her son’s struggle in transitioning to Nimitz:

- “My child use to do well at another school on his CSTs, but he is not doing well now.”

The parent stated that in the past she had tried to have a parent-teacher conference, but will try again. The Coordinator and AP suggested she work with the school to schedule a formal conference. The planning team suggested that all personal issues should be addressed at a different time and to keep the conversation at a general level to address school-wide priorities.

There was limited time left for question and answer. For more information on the identified priorities by the session participants, please refer to the *School Plan Priorities* report.