

Hamilton Unified School District

LCAP Questions: Public Inspection, May 14, 2014

1. Were all the suggestions from parents/staff included in the LCAP?

The suggestions that were captured in the board, staff and public workshop were included in the LCAP. We did join common themes and shortened some of the information that was like concepts.

2. How were the priorities chosen for the district?

Each of the priorities contained in the LCAP are priorities. The lists 1-10 are not ranked as we will be addressing each of them as needs for our district. While not all of the priorities will be achieved in the first year, we will do as many as possible. Some will be achieved in the first year, other the second and hopefully we complete our list in year three. We will do our best to chip away at each of these priorities as we can fit them into our resources, staffing and work/school years.

3. Document will be translated after completed?

Yes! We try to translate our documents so we include all our parents. As you know, our district was formed five years ago, while that seems like a very long time, it takes between eight and ten years to get all the services built in a newly formed district. Translation is one of those very important services we are trying to figure out on how we will provide this service regularly.

4. Is it a multi-year document?

It is a multi-year document, however, not all the priorities will be achieved in the first year. Each year, we will have opportunities for all stakeholders to hear about the progress we have made towards achieving our goals. We will ask all stakeholders to give us input regarding our stated goals and, if necessary, the goals could be modified or even changed if the needs arise requiring that we do so.

5. Per LCAP if we are to increase ELA scores by 5%, how can we do that with less reading instruction time?

In the last three years that I have been Superintendent, we have not reduced reading time. Any information to the contrary is inaccurate. We have a contract with the Glenn County Office of Education where one of the Special Education teachers works in our lower grades to provide reading support. Reading is a part of ever teachers' job and is taught in every subject presented to students K-12. There is a very old saying I learned early in my career. Reading is a part of everyone's life, we all teach reading.

As part of our goals over the next few years, we do intend to increase support of students who are in need of the most intervention in the area of reading. We intend to introduce over the next two years, reading intervention with aid support and teacher training. Specialized group and some pull out may be employed. Pull out programs are not always the answer and is not supported by the experts. The experts, such as Richard Dufour, suggest that that the behaviors of the teacher and the quality of that particular teacher's instructional practices is the greatest support that can be lent to each student's learning. Please learn more about best teaching practices at www.allthingsplc.com

6. Page 9 - #8 Staffing assignments as needed – if this is the case, why haven't we hired more teachers and reduce the number of students per class? Why are we having combination classes at the elementary school (average class size is 30)?

Class sizes in K-3 are 23.7 students per teacher. (See Grade Span Adjustment report as reported to the State of California by Hamilton Unified) As for combination classes, unfortunately, will be with our district for some time. Our district is not unlike other districts in our county and surrounding areas. Combination classes, while not optimum are the only way we can insure district solvency. Like all districts, our priority will be to reduced combination classes as much as possible when staffing and resources allow us to do so.

7. How do you prioritize facility needs elementary vs. high school?

Based on the safety and health of the students we look at projects at each site and try to care for the neediest. I.e. if an air conditioner goes out in May, which is going to be our priority. If in the winter a heater goes out, then that becomes our focus. We only have \$56,000 annually to make such repairs for all facilities in our district. Unfortunately, no school district in the state of California get additional funding from the state any longer to do repairs or make improvements.

I'm sure you're asking, why don't they put more money into repairs? To operate our schools we have about 5.9 million dollars in total funding. 78% of our total budget is earmarked for salaries, benefits and statutory deductions that come to all our employees annually. That leaves us 22% to fund, facilities, busing, food service, utilities, sports, text books, materials, copies etc... One example from our list of expenses is our PG&E bill which is \$122,000 annually.

8. Is a support ELD on-staff coach for both elementary and high school?

Our ELD program at the High School is roughly one to three class periods each year. Our high school ELD teacher, also a fully trained English teacher, has been trained in the language star methods and receives support from our ELD consultants. The on-staff ELD

coach will primarily support the elementary staff where we have the largest need of second language learners.

9. Will there be tutoring one-on-one? (10.1)

One on one tutoring is on a case by case basis as a student may need it. We have set aside tutoring time where students may receive additional help. Please see your teacher or site principal for details of when your child can receive help.

10. Is there a maintenance plan for capital repairs as well as regular operating repairs?

Prior to the financial fallout the state has suffered over the last ten years, an regular maintenance and modernization programs were available for schools on an application based process. What was known as “critical hardship money” was also available when schools had major repairs such as roofs, restrooms and HVAC systems were failing. Unfortunately, due to the state budget woes, those funds were taken out of law from the state legislature a few years ago and the districts were left to find this money through local bond measures. Hamilton Unified attempted a bond in 2009 but it failed by just a few votes. The board has voted to have a study completed that will advise the community of the need for a bond and future growth in our area that will require additional classroom and playground areas.

11. Who puts the budget together every year?

District staff with input from sites and staff put together lists of priorities. The board provides guidance in the budget process and finally approves the budget plan. Regular budget progress meetings are held at board meetings about once a quarter.

12. Who has budget input as needs of school, do staff, parents and teachers?

Yes! As stated in Question 11, we hold regular budget hearings and meets, about once a quarter where the numbers are reviewed and our expenditures and income are reviewed. The board seeks input on priorities through these meetings.

13. Do you get proposals from professionals, i.e. HVAC, plumbing, roofing etc.?

Yes! Our maintenance staff does the repairs that they can and contracts out those they can't. If a repair is in excess of \$80,000, we are required to go to bid to a licensed DSA approved contractor to complete the work.

14. How much professional unification is there between the elementary and high school?

I'm not sure of the meaning of this question will clarify if I am not getting this correct. What I think is being asked is if the teachers and staff work together from K-12th grade

to gain professional training? If this is correct then the answer is yes! Four days per year and one minimum day monthly has been set aside for district-wide staff development where teachers work to build teaching capacity in all grades. During the 2014-2015 each site will have different needs and the staff feels based on those needs, we will only meet the four Staff Development days and once quarterly in minimum days. Each year we examine the needs to staff development and create a plan.

15. If we are making it a priority to maintain our campuses clean are we hiring more janitors?

We are pleased to have received some additional funding this year that will allow for an additional part-time custodial bus driver to be hired. We are hoping that this added person will help with our efforts to maintain safe and clean campuses.

16. Why are we pulling our children out of classroom time to pick up trash?

Why this is not a practice we would want to happen on a regular basis, it is important that student be held accountable when they fail to clean up after themselves. We are teaching citizenship in this practice and ownership in the school.

17. Unclear as to identify Goal #1 at elementary; clean and safe facilities. What is the plan to address the safety of elementary school field/grass area?

The playground and hardscape at the elementary school has been a concern for me and the board; we have had many conversations about how to repair and ultimately replace it. As stated above we have approximately \$56,000 annually to repair and maintain our total district needs. We have had a recent bid for temporarily repair of part of the black top area to update the drainage and repair the blacktop to repair the cracking. The bid is \$107,000. Please remember this is a temporary repair. The current black top condition is due to a very poorly designed drainage system that was put in some 40 years ago. To repair this problem requires all the blacktop and substructure has to be removed between all buildings. Large trenches with very large drain pipes have to be installed to carry the proper amount of water off the black top to prevent the water damage we are seeing happening to our blacktop currently. A very rough estimate to fix the black top and green spaces at the elementary school is pushing a million dollars. We don't have this kind of funding. We are not sure if we can fund the repair costs of \$107,000. We will continue to work on this problem to find a solution.

18. How do you plan to improve the needs of the school for example the number and condition of the bathrooms, drinking faucets (# and condition, some in front of school); the condition of the school grounds; cleanliness of school (HES); and the number of students per class (too many students for one teacher)?

Again, the state has cut on-going modernization and facilities bond money and have the individual districts to raise funds through local bonding elections. Improvements of a bathroom, buildings and other improvements must be done through a strategic planning process. That process is being undertaken by the district board through a study process. Class size has been addressed in prior questions and is a major budget concern. I would like to point out again that in our K-3 classes our district is at 23.7 students to one teacher. Our other grades below 8th grade are at 30 to one except in one grade level that is at 35. The surrounding unified school districts grades 4-8 are averaging between 32 to 35 students per classroom. Our district is looking for ways to address student populations as our funding and resources allow.

19. How to get teachers to be supportive of parent suggestions for school cleanliness?

We are working to improve cleanliness of our school through the increase staffing we are currently hiring. We hope through our PLC process and our citizenship programs we will all gain ownership.

20. How to improve accuracy of grades communication between teacher and parents?

Teacher state it's the system causing inaccuracy. (HES)

I am a bit unclear of the question being asked, this is one I will clarify if follow up questions are proposed. I'll take a run at this by stating that by state law, teachers are the grading authority for each of their students. "The system" is a grade reporting program that is manually manipulated by each teacher. Teachers have on-line grade books, that if used by the teacher allows each parent to view the progress of their student almost on a daily basis. Grades and attendance are things we want parents to be aware of on a regular basis. It is expected that each teacher keeps grade and attendance reports accurate and available to parents. If your child's grades or attendance is not accurate, please contact your child's teacher to inquire why this is not available to you.

21. How can we prioritize hiring of more teachers?

Over the last two years we have hired the following positions:

1. Teacher on Special Assignment- this position will help to guide school improvement district-wide. The position will also help with introduction of common core content standards and staff development district-wide.
2. Two math teachers at the High School over the last two years, these two teachers are working on improving the math skills of all our students and is an area in our past district-wide testing that we have the most critical need
3. At the elementary school we have departmentalized 7/8 grade this current school year. In this reorganization plan at the beginning of this school year we added a math content specialist and a science specialist. In 14/15 we are adding a social science/ELD specialist and an English content specialist. The

focus is to allow 6, 7 and 8th grade students to gain the specific skills they will need to know as they enter high school and on and through college.

4. We have hired two instructional aides to help with support to classroom teachers at the elementary school.
5. We have hired a playground supervisor to help with student safety during break and lunch.
6. We are looking at how we can allocate additional resources we already have on staff to support students with interventions and reading intervention. More on this plan as it develops over the summer 2014.
7. We are in the process of hiring a Universal (custodial-bus driver)

22. How are the funds differentiated among sites? One fund but all schools are listed (pgs. 20-29).

For the first time in over 20 years, the State of California has changed the funding formula for schools. Under the old version of funding known as a "Revenue Limit" school would have a portion of the funds it received that were for general purposes and some of the money was very restricted and had to be spent under very specific guidelines.

With the new funding formula known as "Local Control Funding Formula" (LCFF) has changed how schools are funded. On one hand, the state has given some controls back to local districts on how these revenues are to be applied. However, the restrictions that were in place under the old formula still apply in many cases. So frankly, local control is very limited local control.

The other piece of the new funding is the requirement of the district to write a plan for the expenditures of the LCFF funding. The plan, The "Local Control Accountability Plan" is/was developed through a process that included parents, staff, students, community members and our school board. Part of that plan was to have those interested to review the draft before adoption and provide input via these questions. The Superintendent is to respond in writing to these questions.

To the Question at hand. How are the funds applied? Each of the 8 categories that the LCAP requires has to have funding applied. In some cases these funds are mandated such as the support of English language learners, special education students and those who are at risk of failing courses. These are just a sample of the students that the funding must address.

Applying the funds was proportionate to the needs of each priority. We have to calculate in our funding model monies that apply to these special populations without counting students more than once. (This means that a student in the past could have been count as a second language learner, a special education student and an at risk student in each category thus receiving funding from three different pots of money.

LCFF and LCAP ended that ability. We also had to demonstrate in our plan how the services for special populations were receiving additional services. All this is captured in our funding model.

23. Water fountains need to be included in repairs at elementary.

Currently all drinking fountains are working. We are adding a hydration station over the summer at both schools that will allow students/staff to fill water bottles.

24. Teaching staff needs to be reinstated at elementary to meet student needs.

Reinstatement is guided by a contractual agreement between the district and the teachers union. Reinstatement is always our goal but is based on funding and need of what services that our students will require to achieve. Please see the hiring list in question number 20.

25. Collaboration time for grade levels – if they are combo, who do they collaborate with? (pg. 19 3.4)

This depends on school sites. At the Elementary school teachers communicate in pods, example of a pod is Kindergarten and 1st, 2nd -3rd and 4-6 grades all work together. Grades up and downward are working together to insure students get the correct level of instruction.

At the high school, teachers work together in a different model. They work together in who school, by subject and cross curricular when the need is demonstrated to have multiple lessons that cross curricular lines.

26. Section 2, #9 – what is the time frame to repair facilities once a report is made?

Repairs are made as soon as reasonably possible, as stated prior, we do the repairs we can do in house and those we cannot accomplish and we contract out.

27. In your effort to send teachers to trainings how or what is being done to encourage teachers to attend training on their own time other than their teaching time?

Teachers normally attend training during their contract times. When a teacher is required to travel, they are compensated for the expenses of the training. If it's outside their contract days, then the training institute or the district supplies stipends to that effective employee.

If the teacher choose to go on their own to training class where they receive additional college units, that teacher may apply those units to the district salary schedule and receive ongoing additional compensation in their monthly pay.

28. What type of incentive is given to teachers when they attend trainings?

Teachers normally attend training during their contract times. When a teacher is required to travel, they are compensated for the expenses of the training. If its outside their contract days, then the training institute or the district supplies stipends to that effective employee.

If the teacher choose to go on their own to training class where they receive additional college units, that teacher may apply those units to the district salary schedule and receive ongoing additional compensation in their monthly pay.

29. How are students affected by the absence of teachers so often in the school year?

It is always best for teachers to be in their classrooms teaching students. However, it is also very important that methods and techniques are also learned so that the student receives the most up to date information. Our in-services that are offered to teachers are offered during teacher contract days which are also those days your children attend school. Teachers need to build skills so they can improve the learning environment. Unfortunately, teacher trainings are usually offered during the school year.

30. With all the data driven testing, how much teaching time is lost due to one-on-one testing?

I'm not sure what is meant by one-on-one testing? Usually testing is done in groups and at regularly scheduled times throughout the school year. A teacher may offer their own classroom assessments, chapter tests, spelling tests, reading test that we all have undertaken as students during our time in K-12 education. School-wide testing is usually quarterly and the data is used to predict the state testing that happens in the last portion of the school year. I don't think teaching time is unusually affected by the tests given.

31. What is being done to assist teachers with their large #'s in class while they are working on data driven testing?

Rarely, is the data reviews completed during instructional time. There are minimum days every Friday. During those Fridays not usually utilized for staff prep, teachers meet for data review and lesson planning. We also utilized times after school that is set aside for Professional Learning Community times. The PLC times as it is known, is for data review, lesson planning in pods of teachers and for test or unit building.

How about having more than one counselor for the high school students? Prior to the state financial crisis, we had 1.5 counselors at the high school. When the state funding was cut, we had to adapt our counseling staff and ask them to cover more areas of

school needs throughout the district. It is our hope that in future years we will find funding to restore the counseling and support services throughout our district.

32. Tutoring is very much needed.

Tutoring is offered twice weekly at the elementary school. Teachers at the high school offer tutoring before school, after school and during lunch. Please see your site/teacher for tutoring times and schedules

33. Better technology?

This is an area where I can say we have made great strides, in 2011 our district completely rebuilt our computer system from the ground up. We have one of the fastest internet connections in the Glenn-Butte and Tehama area. Our servers and systems rival that you would find on a college campus. Last year, we replaced almost half of our student computers in the district. Largely those computers went into new labs. One complete lab at the elementary school and two at the high school. The second older lab at the elementary school will be totally replaced over the summer of 2014.

Our next priority is teacher access classroom computers. We have plan over the next couple of years to have all computers up and running with the latest software and access to internet.

We are exploring a new and improved wireless access on our campuses that will open learning opportunities to students via their wireless handheld devices. More on this to come as we finish our research and develop our implementation plan.

34. Training for teachers?

The district has a staff development plan where teachers are asked to participate in several programs that will help to build the capacity of teaching and learning. An example of the kinds of services being offered for teacher training is as follows:

- Chico Math Project
- Northern California Writing Project
- Advance Placement Teacher Training
- Professional Learning Communities
- Common Core Training
- Common To the Core Glenn County Training (September each year)
- ACSA Personnel Academy
- STEM Science
- CUE Technology Conference

35. Better communication between teachers and parents?

This one I can't argue with, this statement or question is something that all school district's struggle to achieve. We have instituted several methods to improve communications, i.e. district and site newsletters, a new web page and parent lunch meetings at the elementary school.

Through this process, I have learned that parents want time with me several times a year where we can sit down and have more face to face conversations. I will be developing a schedule to accomplish this task over the summer.

Classroom teachers can use ARIES grade book to help parents monitor grades is on area we could improve. We are working on a plan where teachers will send out a schedule for 2014-2015 school year notifying parents when their children can receive tutoring or times you could consult with them.

36. More teachers – less combo classes.

As stated above, staffing is based on the needs of students' population. When fewer students attend our district then the likelihood of having combination classes is much greater. Our district tries to minimize combination classes as often as possible. I must point out that even with combinations classes; our district has the smallest class sizes on average than most unified school districts in our area.

37. More sports at the elementary.

Elementary sports are directly affected by the availability of gym and sporting field space. With only one full gym in the district, it is nearly impossible to field more teams at the elementary school because we don't have the space. One of the items we will be looking at during our facilities review is how to increase gym and green space that would support adding sports to the elementary school. Currently, we have the following sporting teams at the elementary school

- Boys and girls basketball
- Boys Football/Soccer
- Girls Volleyball

38. Need coach at the elementary for sports.

We have coaches for all sports offered at the elementary school. We have no current vacancies.

39. Is it mandatory for all teachers/staff to attend trainings/conferences?

Not usually. If training or conferences are required, the teachers are reimbursed for all costs and their work schedule is adjusted so they are compensated for the time attending the training.

40. How can we have more parent/teacher conferences to keep updated on student progress?

Parent conferences are scheduled twice annually. Parents may request additional parent conferences if they feel they need to communicate with their child's teacher. If a parent wishes to meet with the teacher, they may call the office and have the Principal help you set up time to meet.

41. How to improve communication to parents? I.e. emails, texting, (cell) phones, website, etc.

Currently, our district utilizes an auto-dialer as one of the methods we use to communicate with parents. We have also built a new computer networks system that will allow us to increase our communication abilities in the near future. We have instituted a new web page that will have many features that will allow greater forms of communication between the school and home. The new web page allows teachers to build their own page that will allow them to mass email or send mass text messages. It will take some time to institute the training program to allow teachers time to learn the new tools and then institute the process.