Board District 5 Report: Elevating the Voices of Board District 5 Constituents

An analysis of the education issues and concerns of the constituents in the Los Angeles Unified School District Board District 5.

BACKGROUND
The residents of Board District 5 have been left without representation and engagement in critical policy decisions occurring at the LAUSD Board of Education for far too long. In response, the Alliance for a Better Community (ABC) and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles created a process to elevate the voices of Board District 5 (BD 5) constituents to ensure that parents and students shape the narrative about what is most critical for academic success during this special election. ABC has centered parents and students in this special election in three ways: 1) a survey that asked constituents to prioritize education issues that impact them the most; 2) parent and student focus groups where participants provided their stories and experiences about public schools in BD 5; and 3) a training for parents and students that prepared them to help lead candidate forums. This report outlines the key findings from an analysis of data from 452 surveys of Board District 5 constituents, as well as data from focus group conversations with 75 parents and students across Board District 5.

SURVEY DATA
452 total constituents surveyed from 30+ schools across BD 5 which include the southeast, northeast, and south portions of Los Angeles

The survey asked respondents:
- To prioritize education issues
- Their views on the supports provided to schools, teachers, and subgroups of students
- Their views on the value of multilingualism
- What characteristics their next school board member should have

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS
Elevating the Voices of Board District 5 Constituents

#1. There are tremendous needs for parents, students, and teachers of Board District 5. All issues are a high priority. The majority of respondents reported that 16 education issues are “high priority” issues that the next BD 5 board member should address.

Spanish-speaking respondents prioritized some issues higher than English-speaking respondents. Spanish-speaking respondents reported English learner student supports, the budget deficit, and equitable school funding as a “high priority” at a higher rate than English-speaking respondents.

A large majority of respondents did not view teachers to be strongly supported. Less than a one-third of respondents reported teachers to be “strongly supported” at their school.

#2. Barriers persist for Spanish-speaking parents, special education, and English learner students.

English-speaking respondents have more positive views about their school. They were 14 times more likely to report that their school is “headed in the right direction” compared to Spanish-speaking respondents.

Spanish-speaking respondents reported more difficulty in obtaining help. They were 3 times more likely to report that it is difficult to obtain help for their child.

Special education and English learner students are the least “adequately supported” 22% and 17% of respondents reported that special education and English learner students, respectively, do not have adequate support.
#3. Multilingualism and the assets of English learner students are overwhelmingly valued in BD 5.

The majority of parents (73%), across differences in home language and neighborhood, reported multilingualism as being “very valuable” for high school graduates.

More than 90% of respondents agreed with various statements relating to valuing the home languages, cultures, and instruction of English learner students.

#4. Respondents believe their next board member should have a background in education and speak Spanish.

90% and 84% of respondents reported it is “important for their next school board member to have a professional background in education and be a Spanish-speaker, respectively.
FOCUS GROUPS

75 total constituents of Board District 5 – 55 parents and 20 students across the northeast and southeast portions of Board District 5

Listening spaces that asked participants open-ended questions:

- What do you like about your child’s school?
- What do you not like about your child’s school?
- What does an ideal school look like?
- What are the biggest challenges your child/you face in school?
- What are the biggest challenges your school faces?

FOCUS GROUP DATA – WHAT WE HEARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Sizes</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class sizes are too big and make it difficult for students to learn. Combination (multi-grade) classes should be avoided</td>
<td>Schools need more resources. Critical tutoring programs have been cut due to loss of funds. Not all students have access to technology.</td>
<td>School facilities need improvement and care. Not all campuses are clean. Some buildings are falling apart. Sometimes students have to bring their own bathroom soap.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Enrichment Classes</th>
<th>Special Education</th>
<th>English Learner Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students want more access to enrichment classes like art, dance, music, and robotics.</td>
<td>Special education students are not supported adequately. School staff need more training to support students with IEPs.</td>
<td>English learner students need more support to reclassify before 6th grade, particularly in reading and writing.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Bullying</th>
<th>Health &amp; Wellness</th>
<th>Parent Engagement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bullying is a big issue in schools. Not all students feel safe and supported on campus.</td>
<td>Students need critical health and wellness supports to succeed. Schools need more nurses, counselors, and mental health professionals.</td>
<td>Parents need more workshops on how to help their kids in schools. School staff that speak Spanish is important.</td>
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