



## Report of Findings from Community Conversations on Student Assignment

February 2010

### Executive Summary

From November 2009 until mid-January 2010 the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and Parents for Public Schools (PPS) worked together to convene community conversations about changes to the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) student assignment system, focused on the district's six proposed options for a new system.

**We heard from over 580 people**, most of them parents of SFUSD students. **Participants reflected a broad diversity of the district's families** across differences in language, ethnicity, geography, culture, types of schools their children attend, and socioeconomic background.

This report reflects our **findings from these community conversations**. Based on the Board's timeline for making a decision about student assignment, the PAC and PPS will present our **conclusions and recommendations** for student assignment **in a separate report**.

Over the past five years, several different initiatives have engaged our communities in discussions about student achievement, school assignment, and ways to improve our schools. This was the first time parents had the chance to weigh in on specific proposals for student assignment – and they had a lot to say.

- **Parents want the ability to choose a school** that meets their child's and their family's needs – **including those who want to choose their local school**.
- At the same time, most people would **prefer sending their children to a school close to home** or to their jobs – **but only if that school is going to meet their children's needs**. Parents **don't want to feel forced into something that won't work** for their family.
- **Parents want the schools in their community to be high quality**. They want access to quality schools, and don't want to have to send their children across town to have a good education.
- **Parents emphasized the need for strong principals and skilled teachers**. They also want **principals, teachers and the district to be accountable**, and wondered why "teacher assignment" was not being discussed instead of focusing on assigning students.
- Parents were clear that **to support student achievement** the district **needs to focus on empowering families to make choices**, rather than taking away their ability to choose.
- Parents also emphasized that **much of what's wrong** with student assignment is **how the system is managed** by the district, and that **these things need to be fixed no matter which system** the Board adopts.

While parents expressed their appreciation for the PAC and PPS bringing them information about the student assignment redesign process and the opportunity to express their opinions, they are also concerned that the SFUSD is not listening to them – and we understand why.

Through these community conversations we heard many of the same questions, concerns and desires that we have heard before, and have already reported to the Board of Education and district staff. We do not see the community's concerns addressed in the district's discussions on student assignment, or in the way that information has been made available to the public.

Even parents who face enormous obstacles – including language barriers, economic hardship and neighborhoods in distress – are **dedicated to their children's education** and feel deeply responsible for their children's well being at school. We heard many parents express a strong commitment to the success of all children, and **they want to know what the district is doing** to support that success.

### What We Heard: Key Themes from Community Conversations

Consistent with our earlier outreach initiatives, we found that people in different communities have different perspectives on this process and on student assignment in general.

- People **who felt informed and empowered** within the system, or could choose options other than public schools, focused more on **how student assignment itself works**. They had more questions about how the different options would function (for example, how many choices you could select) and how to make it work to their advantage.
- On the other hand, **people who did not feel as informed** about the enrollment process, and those who were **less able to strategically navigate the assignment system** or to move closer to a desired school, **focused more on concerns about their children's current experiences** in schools - and the **desire for quality schools** in their community.

What we found in common, despite the many differences in the participants' ethnicity, socio-economic background, and language, is that parents want the ability to make a choice.

1. **Parents want the ability to choose a school** that meets their child's and their family's needs – **including those who want to choose their local school**.
2. Parents **don't want to feel forced into something that won't work** for them or their children. **Choosing a school involves a lot more than location** – parents weigh many needs and variables, including perceived quality, school programs, start times, the school culture, support services, afterschool program availability, and community involvement.

3. **Parents want the schools in their community to be high quality. They want access to quality schools,** and don't want to have to send their children across town to have a good education - or to perceive that families in other parts of town have more access to higher quality schools.
4. Parents and community members pointed out that to support student achievement, the district needs to **focus on empowering people** to make choices, **rather than taking away their ability to choose.** Families who already feel shut out of the system see limiting choice as the district being more oppressive. As one father asked: *"In what part of your life would you give up the power to choose what's best for your family?"*

Participants are concerned that many families do not fully participate in the current enrollment process and so can't choose from all the district's options. They pointed out that **taking away the ability to choose does nothing to improve schools** – and the **real priority should be to ensure that all schools serve the needs of their students.**

Parents, educators, and community members are clear about the **benefits** of going to a school **close to home.** Children wouldn't have to spend as much **time on the bus,** more parents could **participate in school** events and activities, and schools could build their **connection with the local community.** They emphasized the desire to have **quality schools in every community,** and were irritated the solution is framed as "Local Schools" vs. "Choice."

People know that **we have under-enrolled schools** in the part of town most densely populated by children **because parents won't choose schools they feel are poor quality, unsafe, or lack community resources** (including quality afterschool programs, arts and enrichment programs, language, or quality Recreation and Parks programs). Parents asked **how student assignment would address any of these concerns.**

*"Parents are looking for the best education for their kids – that's our dream. If the local school isn't meeting your expectations you want to take your kids someplace else. If you take away that choice you'll have a mob of people coming to the district. I personally would be very upset if I don't get a choice."* Parent at Sanchez ES

*"I like my children going to local schools. But I want the same opportunities on this side as they have on the other side... I don't believe a child should have to go across town to attend a quality school and get a good education."* Parent at Martin Luther King, Jr. MS

*"I don't think any of these options address the priorities that we discussed. Why don't they just make each school a good school so they don't have to move kids around? Just make it so the neighborhood schools are good enough for people to go to."* Parent at the Bayview Public Library

## Equity and Access to Quality Schools

*“For people in public housing, we want to see how local schools are going to be improved... and how training for [teachers and staff] will be implemented in the classroom.”* Community member at Parent University at Malcolm X

*“The school here is so convenient for us – but the schools all need to have high standards. It’s not that they should all be the same – you need to know the needs of the students and have different programs to meet their needs. We’re so lucky and happy to live here, we just wish the programs were better.”* Parent at Bessie Carmichael ES

*“Look what they’ve been doing with high schools all across the district – they’re developing these amazing academies in schools that emphasize different skills – real 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning, project-oriented stuff. We could do the same things for elementary schools, and then it wouldn’t just be based on test scores. So that by the time your child gets to high school it’s not just ‘Lowell or bust.’”* Parent at Galileo HS

*“Teachers that are turning over the most are the ones that work in schools that have low academics. You need survival skills to get through it and without that then the turnover will only compound the schools staying low academically.”* Educator from Mission HS

*“We are talking about moving families but I don’t hear about moving teachers.”* Family service provider

As in previous community initiatives, parents emphasized the **need for strong principals and skilled teachers**, who are **qualified** for the subjects that they teach and **who care** about their students. They also want **principals, teachers and the district to be held accountable** for educating their students, and wondered why “teacher assignment” was not being discussed instead of focusing on how to distribute students. They want to see what the district is doing – and will do – to improve schools that are struggling.

Parents recognize that teachers need **solid training and ongoing support** to do their difficult jobs. Many pointed out the challenge of living in this expensive city on a teacher’s salary, and wondered if the district could help provide housing or other **incentives to encourage good teachers to stay**.

Parents also emphasized the need to have **an engaging and relevant curriculum**, which includes art and physical education throughout the school day as well as after school.

## Questions and Concerns about Redesigning Student Assignment

*“Talking about ‘academic diversity’ or any of these diversity plans – the idea is ‘let’s sprinkle them around to different schools and put them somewhere so they don’t make such a big impact.’ It just makes it look like a better school but it doesn’t address the problem.”* Family service provider

The most common question we heard – and could not answer – was, “**How do you define and measure ‘Academic Diversity?’**” Parents expressed concern about how students would be identified, profiled, and then assigned – especially children entering kindergarten, but also older students. Parents don’t want their children’s education to be all about test scores.

Another major question was **how the district plans to close the achievement gap inside schools**, because schools that are currently academically diverse have an achievement gap within them.

Some parents of high-achieving students worry that their children will be sent to lower-performing schools and won’t have access to a challenging curriculum, while many people wondered how lower-achieving students would get the support they need to succeed.

Some parents felt that information about how the new assignment system would be implemented should be part of this conversation. Others asked about the time frame to evaluate how the new system is working. They pointed out it will take a few years to see how a new system works out, and worry about the upheaval of redoing student assignment again in the near future.

*“I’d like to see some more dialogue going on for Special Education reform. And it’s important to include program options for Special Education in more schools – there are just too few schools in the city that provide support for children in Special Education.”* Parent at Miraloma ES

*“What about inclusion? Does this mean that inclusion will be offered in every school?”* Parent of a child in Special Education

*“So they have all these options, but will the Special Ed community have its own procedure as far as the placement process goes? It’s pointless to have us put down 7 choices when 6 of them don’t meet our child’s needs.”* Parent of child in Special Education

We heard many questions and concerns about **how any student assignment system will address the placement of students in Special Education**. Parents pointed out that there is a history in San Francisco of leaving Special Education students and families out of the conversation. For example, district information about the achievement gap often ignores data about students in Special Education. *“It’s like our children are invisible,”* said one parent.

Many parents questioned why the options did not mention how Special Education students will be assigned. The statement that “Special Education student needs will be met by whichever option the board adopts” was met with great skepticism, because their needs are not being met now.

## Responses to the Board's Priorities

*"Changing the diversity around is not as important as quality teachers and enrichment. If you are African American it does not mean you are inherently going to fail. They should be dealing with how to give support and incentives for teachers to go to those schools and make them work."* Parent at Harvey Milk Academy

*"I want to add diversity to our list for quality. I like that this is an inclusion school, we have diversity of family income, people from different backgrounds. Our school also has families with same-sex parents, and it's also racially/ethnically diverse."* Parent at Harvey Milk Academy

*"Is racial isolation a factor related to quality schools? I don't think that's necessarily true."*  
*"Yes, absolutely that matters!"* Exchange between Parent Ambassadors

Many parents support the district's goal to end the racial segregation of students, and feel that student diversity is an important aspect of a quality education. Others feel the demographics of a school should be irrelevant, and that whatever ethnicity you are or background you come from, you should have access to a great education.

*"It puts a lot of strain on the district to provide services to meet all kids' needs at all schools instead of focusing or concentrating resources at specific sites."* Parent at Thurgood Marshall HS

*"If you have an academically diverse population of students, how are you going to meet the needs for all those kids?"* Parent at Sheridan ES

*"How does student assignment help with truancy, absenteeism, and the issues related to teacher turnover and teacher quality?"* Parent Ambassador

People understood the problems associated with concentrating "under-served" students in the same schools, but they also pointed to the challenges of both achieving and supporting diversity at school sites. Parents noted that schools that are currently academically and ethnically diverse struggle to serve the complex needs of their students.

Most participants questioned whether any of the options would achieve this goal, and asked why the district's priorities for student assignment did not address improving schools.

## What People Think about the Proposed Options

We did not ask people to "vote" on the options they preferred. In fact, we found that in most conversations the **participants had more questions** about how any of the options might support the district's goals **than strong feelings about which option they would want** to see in

place. For the most part, parents shared their **concerns about the district limiting their choices**, and talked about **why they choose** to send their children to **the schools they do**.

*"We all know people who live across the street from a school but send their children out of the neighborhood because the schools in our neighborhoods are so run down. I hope this isn't just a temporary solution to a larger problem. You are gonna have people bum rushing other schools cuz they don't want to go to school in Hunter's Point."* Parent at the Bayview Public Library

*"How will I make my child go to a school in my neighborhood, if my neighborhood is dangerous? I prefer to go far away, and go to a safer school."* Parent at Sanchez ES

*"People are going great distances to go to other schools because they don't trust their neighborhood school."* Parent at Marshall HS

*"I would like to see the school in my neighborhood offer all the same things that are available in other schools in other neighborhoods. If you abandon your neighborhood school then I see it as if there's no hope for that school."* Parent at Bessie Carmichael ES

*"I want to go to my neighborhood school and I want it to be a good school!"* Parent of children at Charles Drew Academy and Thurgood Marshall HS

*"I'd be banging on their door; I know what school I want my girls to go to. I want my girls to go to the neighborhood school. I remember when I was a kid, I was being shipped across the city, and I didn't like that. I'm not putting them on the bus."* Parent in Visitacion Valley

*"What if you really didn't like your local school?"* Parent at El Dorado ES

*"I think that the local school options are good if they make sure all the schools have the same opportunities, and that they all have good teachers. Because the way I see it, they would have to give everyone the same resources and financial support."* Parent at Mission HS

*"When I enrolled my children I went out of my way to make sure they didn't go to the neighborhood school. I grew up in the projects and I sure as hell wasn't gonna let my kids go to school like how I went to school."* Parent at Martin Luther King, Jr. MS

Participants in the community conversations emphasized the **desire to choose a school that works for their children** and family. Most people would prefer sending their children to a school close to home or work – **but only if that school is going to meet their children's needs**.

When we asked people to say which option they might support the most, we found hesitant or qualified support for the "Local School" options – with a strong emphasis on the **need to ensure that local schools are quality schools**.

Parents also grappled with the **complexity of addressing the contradictions** between the current conditions of schools and opportunities for students, and the district's goals of providing equitable access.

Some people preferred the “Lottery” options because they provide the most choice, and felt the district should do more to **inform and empower parents** to participate in the process, rather than getting rid of choice.

*“I don’t understand how any of these options would support increasing diversity and diminishing the achievement gap – except maybe the zones option. But that option is terrible.”*  
Parent Ambassador

*“You mean that the zone option has no choice? That’s just dumb. That’s not the way zones work in other cities – this is a false ‘option.’ Why don’t they present models that have worked in other communities as the real choices?”* Family service provider

*“In other words I wouldn’t have control over where my child goes? As a parent I would lose control over my child’s education? So I would lose my rights as a parent?!”* Parent from the Bayview, at Bessie Carmichael ES

Most **people flat out rejected the “Zones”** option because it lacks any choice, and parents worry they would be forced to go to a school that wouldn’t work for their families. A few felt zones might work to achieve diversity, but most people found **the lack of choice unacceptable**.

*“If the board assigns neighborhood schools, the parents who can afford it will just move to the neighborhood with the good schools.”* Parent at Visitacion Valley ES

*“The most diverse schools aren’t neighborhood schools – they’re the ones with open enrollment.”* Parent ambassador

*“They’ll never achieve diversity across the city, and people will move – whites live here, Asians live there, and etc.”* Parent at Roosevelt MS

*“We can’t have [some] schools doing better than others just because we have communities who can support them financially.”* Parent at Clarendon ES

In looking at the reality of San Francisco’s housing patterns and who lives in different communities, people questioned how the Local School models would increase the diversity of the schools. In fact, many parents feel **these options will lead to further inequity**, as people with higher income and mobility would move to areas with more desirable schools.

*“I would like to have option 6. I really want to have two options, to be secure to have a school in our neighborhood, but also be able to choose where my child goes.”* Parent at El Dorado ES

We are concerned that the Local School options, especially option number six (“Local School with Choice for Any Other School”), **imply more opportunities** to get a school of your choice **than would actually be true**. Parents who expressed a preference for this option liked the idea they could send their child to any school they chose – but we question how many spaces would be available to families living outside a school’s attendance area.

## Communication, Community, and Parent Engagement

*“If they don’t find a way to communicate with families better, there is no point in changing student assignment. If we don’t have our schools more people-friendly we will never get our parents to step foot into them.”* Parent at Martin Luther King, Jr. MS

As in our previous initiatives, parents and community members **consistently demand that the district improve communication with families** – from their children’s teachers and schools, and from the district itself.

Parents pointed out the barriers of language, teachers who fail to let them know when their children are struggling, and the persistent lack of timely information about district issues and policies (including the enrollment process).

*“I’d like to see more connection with community resources – we live in a world-class city so I’d like to see more world-class sports, music, the symphony and the ballet in our schools. There are such great resources around and we should be using them – like the ice skating rink at Yerba Buena. We could have some more Brian Boitanos.”* Parent at Bessie Carmichael

*“The principal, staff and parents have the responsibility to engage the community. You need that support, and that support has to be earned.”* Parent Ambassador

*“I believe this conversation allows the district to continue a problem where we can’t get parents to be involved because we are trying to get them involved in areas very far from home....”* Community member at Bayview Public Library

Parents want to be engaged, and **many face obstacles from the school or district** that keeps them from being more involved. They asked for schools to reach out and build community among the students and families, and to build connection to and support from their neighborhoods.

## Making the Enrollment Process Work

Parents and community members pointed out the **Board needs to consider a family perspective** when adopting a new student assignment process. Parents look at much more than school popularity and test scores when choosing a school. Families also need to deal with things like school start times; getting between home, school and work; and the availability of support services and afterschool programs.

Parents emphasized that **much of what’s wrong** with student assignment is **how the system is managed** by the district: the lack of communication, difficulty in getting answers to their questions, and the challenge of their experience at the Educational Placement Center (EPC). They pointed out **these things need to be fixed no matter which system** the Board adopts.

**Many students face barriers to their education** based on their family's income, primary language, need for Special Education services, or lack of transportation. **These obstacles won't be resolved just by having a new assignment policy, and need to be specifically addressed** within the implementation plan for the new system.

Many parents also expressed concern about the district's impending budget crisis, and whether the Board is considering the cost of implementing a new student assignment as they make their decision.

*"There are mechanical problems with the system that make it hard for people to understand."*

Parent at Yick Wo ES

*"Since the 1980s they haven't changed the attendance areas – why not? The people at the district – they're the boss, they're supposed to be following through. How about if I'm at my job and don't follow through on it? They're not following through on their responsibilities."*

Parent liaison at STAR school

*"I didn't like the EPC's communication style. I would never have known about the enrollment deadlines if I didn't work for the district."*

Parent of a student in Special Education

*"I work here at the school. The communication from the EPC needs to be better – not only with the parents, but with the school sites, so they can serve the community better."*

Parent liaison at a STAR school

*"The whole thing of dealing with that lottery – it's a mess."*

Grandparent from the Western Addition

*"I honestly can't see how local school options are less complicated. You would need to be educated to understand the choice of your local school vs. going to a school that is not your local school. We would still have a big issue regarding education of the public."*

Family service provider

### **How the Community Feels – about Student Assignment and the SFUSD**

*"A lot of these issues are the same issues I've dealt with since my kids were in school, and I'm still dealing with it with my grandchildren."*

Grandparent at the Native American Friendship House

*"I don't think the board really means it when they say they want to hear from the community, they are just doing it to say they did it. Because look at the time frame that this is being conducted."*

Community member at the Parent University at Malcolm X

*"I think this information [about measuring academic diversity] should already have been sent out now, before the school board makes their decision. The information needs to be sent with enough time for the parents to give an educated opinion."*

Parent at Willie Brown Academy

*“How can you make a credible decision on this when it doesn’t make sense, because we don’t have all the information? Why are we sitting here talking about it when it’s not clear?”* Parent at the Native American Friendship House

Board of Education Commissioners asked us to describe the subjective mood of the community conversations as well as the actual data and findings about the options being discussed. As in previous community engagement initiatives, we found that – even among families who are engaged in their children’s education and happy with their schools – **there is not much trust** in the SFUSD on the whole.

Throughout the conversations, but especially among families who have felt shut out of district decision-making, we found a lot of skepticism and suspicion. Parents asked why Board of Education members were not present at the conversations to hear what the community had to say, and **questioned whether the Board was going to pay attention** to this report.

Many parents said they were glad we were making the effort to come hear from them, and to let them know what was happening in the district. But people were also unhappy that the information was incomplete (for example, not being able to define how to measure academic diversity). They felt the district was showing disrespect by making a decision before sharing more complete information.

In addition, African American families and community members in the Bayview felt this process was setting them up to fail at bringing families into the process, by not giving them enough time to organize the conversations and bring people in to participate.

Others challenged the focus on student assignment as being a diversion from the district doing what’s needed to improve schools – because, as so many people said, *“If the schools were more equal in quality, who would care about student assignment?”*

We heard quite a range in parents’ satisfaction about their children’s experiences, and the quality of their children’s schools. Some parents – including those of newcomer students, and students in schools considered “less desirable” – were very happy with their child’s education. Others – including those at popular schools - are concerned about the quality of those schools.

### **Conclusion**

Through our history of listening closely to the families of students in public schools, the PAC and PPS know that even parents who face enormous obstacles – including language barriers and economic hardship – are **dedicated to their children’s education**.

Across our district **many students face barriers to their education** based on their family’s income, primary language, need for Special Education services, or lack of transportation – and **these need to be addressed whatever student assignment policy** the district adopts.

## Appendix I: Conducting Community Conversations

### Why and How We Conducted the Conversations

Beginning in the fall of 2008, members of the Parent Advisory Council and Parents for Public Schools attended many meetings of the Board's Ad-Hoc Committee on Student Assignment. It was clear that, on the whole, parents attending and speaking out at Board meetings did not reflect the population of our city's public schools.

We know from experience that when we reach out to different communities to speak with families, we often hear different perspectives, priorities and needs from what is expressed by many parents who speak at Board meetings.

The PAC and PPS worked in close collaboration with SFUSD staff to develop a joint community engagement plan that included five "Town-Hall" style public forums hosted by the district. At the same time, the PAC and PPS actively reached out to parent and community leaders at schools and community organizations to engage their members in smaller, community-based conversations, to hear from families who don't typically attend school board meetings, and ensure their voices are included in developing this important district policy.

The PAC, PPS and district staff worked together to develop a discussion guide and information packet that we used in all our community conversations. Participants discussed what makes quality schools, challenges of the current student assignment system, and the Board's priorities for a new student assignment system, as well as the six options for a new system.

Conversations were conducted by staff and volunteers from the PAC and PPS from mid-November 2009 through mid-January 2010. Most were conducted in the primary language of participants, while some had the support of an interpreter. Each event had someone to transcribe the conversation. We also conducted a short paper survey to capture demographic information, as well as additional data about parent priorities related to school choice.

### Who We Heard From

**We heard from 589 people in 36 different conversations** – including multiple conversations at a few places (to hear from different language groups). We held conversations at **21 different schools**, at **six different community centers**, and with **three community service agencies**.

Of conversations at school sites, **67% were STAR schools**. (About 41% of the district's schools are STAR schools; they are historically under-performing and receive additional support.)

While we were very successful in reaching parents who do not attend school board meetings or even larger "Town Hall" style events, we know that **participants** were parents and community members who **are engaged enough to attend meetings** at school sites or community centers.

We also found **different levels of capacity at school sites to convene families to participate** in these conversations. At some sites and in some communities, it takes more effort to engage parents in meetings – and the Board’s timeline didn’t give this process enough time for that to happen as widely as we intended and wanted it to.

Based on **survey data (from 457 written surveys)**:

- 84% of participants were parents (the rest were community members & educators)
- 88% have kids in SFUSD schools
- 6% have children of pre-school age
- 83% of participants with children in SFUSD schools did get one of the schools they chose

Participants lived in communities across the city, in **26 different zip codes** and **all 11 electoral districts**. (The top five zip codes, which made up more than 56% of the survey respondents, were, in order: 94134, 94112, 94110, 94133, and 94124).

**Their children attend these SFUSD schools:**

SFUSD Child Development Centers: Grattan, San Miguel, and Tule Elk.

Elementary schools: Alamo, Alvarado, Buena Vista, John Yehall Chin, Chinese Education Center, Clarendon, Charles Drew Academy, Dianne Feinstein, El Dorado, ER Taylor, Gordon J Lau, Grattan, Guadalupe, Harvey Milk Academy, JBBP West, Jean Parker, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lakeshore, Longfellow, Marshall, Miraloma, Mission Education Center, Monroe, New Traditions, Jose Ortega, Peabody, Rosa Parks, Sanchez, Sheridan, Sherman, Ulloa, Visitacion Valley, West Portal, and Yick Wo.

K-8 and 6-12 schools: Willie Brown, Bessie Carmichael, International Studies Academy, Claire Lilienthal, Paul Revere, Rooftop, SF Community, and Alice Fong Yu.

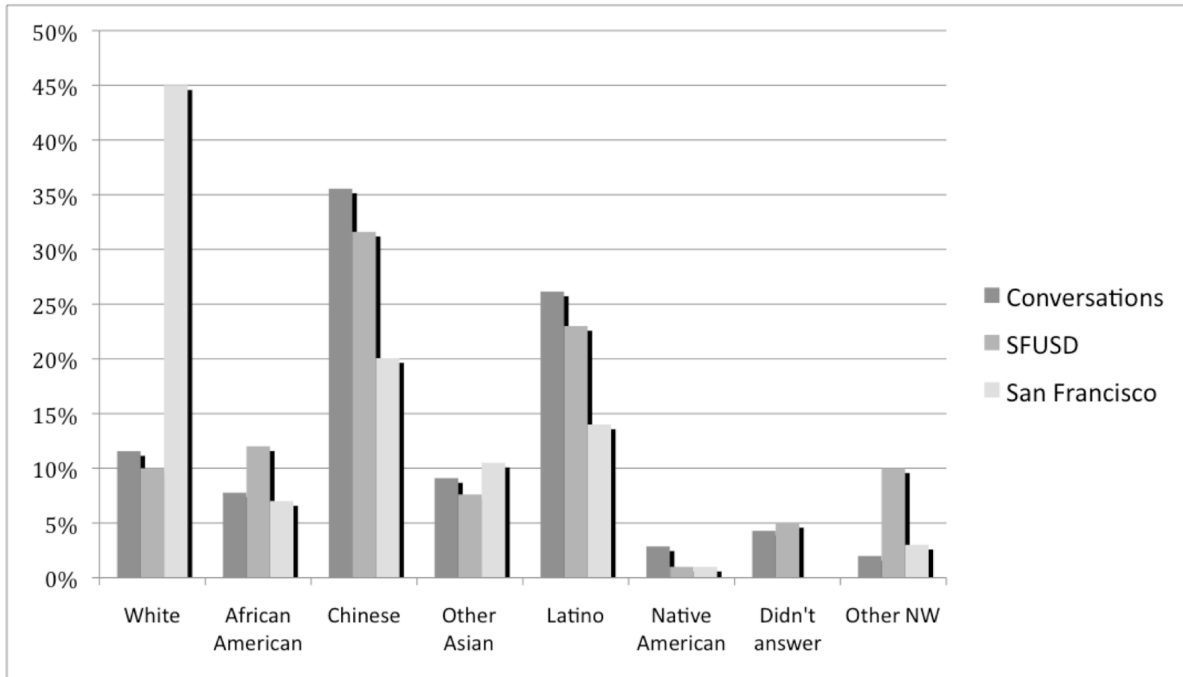
Middle schools: Aptos, Everett, Francisco, AP Giannini, Hoover, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Lick, Horace Mann, Marina, Presidio, Roosevelt, and Visitacion Valley.

High schools: Balboa, Lincoln, Lowell, Thurgood Marshall, Mission, John O'Connell, SOTA, and Washington.

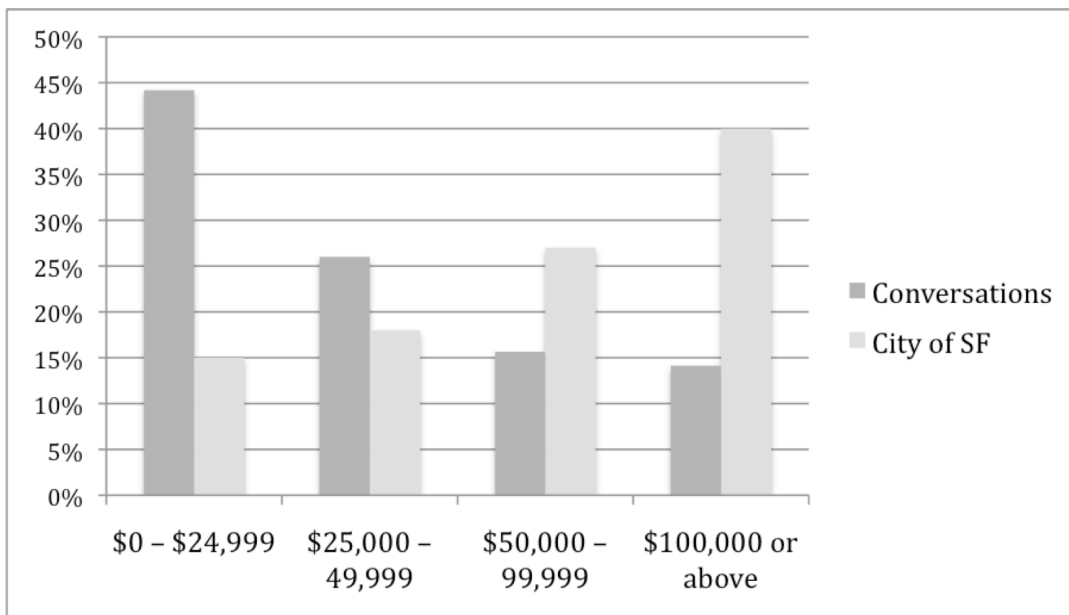
### **Participant Demographics**

The ethnic composition of students in public schools differs from San Francisco as a whole. Participants in the conversations generally reflected the ethnic diversity of our communities, sometimes in the range of difference between the city and the district. Participants slightly over-represented Latino and Asian families; slightly over-represented white families in the district but not in the city; and accurately represented African American families in the city, but not the district. “Other non-white” families were not as well represented.

**Ethnicity of participants, compared to population of the SFUSD and city of San Francisco:**



Compared to the population of San Francisco, participants over-represented families with incomes under \$50,000, and under-represented families with incomes over \$50,000. We don't have data on SFUSD family incomes, but believe they are lower than the city on the whole.



## **Where Conversations Were Held**

Willie Brown Academy
Bessie Carmichael K-8
Clarendon Elementary School – Japanese Bilingual/Bicultural Program
DCYF Community Conveners – at DCYF
El Dorado Elementary School (Spanish and English meetings)
Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School (English, Spanish & Cantonese groups)
Grattan Child Development Center and Elementary School
Gordon Lau Elementary School (in Cantonese)
Marshall Elementary School (in Spanish)
Thurgood Marshall High School (Cantonese and English groups)
Harvey Milk Academy
Miraloma Elementary School
Mission High School (English and Spanish groups)
Monroe Elementary School (separate meetings in Cantonese and Spanish)
Native American Friendship House
Parent University (at Malcolm X Academy)
PPS African American Think Tank – at the Bayview Public Library
PPS Parent Ambassadors - at the Women's Building
PPS parent group – at the Women's Building (separate meetings in Spanish & Cantonese)
PPS parent group – at Chinese for Affirmative Action (in Cantonese)
PPS parent group – at the Booker T. Washington Community Center
Rosa Parks Elementary School
Roosevelt Middle School (in English & Cantonese)
Sanchez Academy (English and Spanish groups)
SF Community School, K-8 (in English and Spanish)
SF Family Support Network – at DCYF
Sheridan Elementary School
Support for Families of Children with Disabilities (meetings in Cantonese, English & Spanish)
Visitacion Valley Elementary School (English and Cantonese groups)
Visitacion Valley Middle School (in English and Cantonese)
Yick Wo Elementary School (English and Cantonese groups)

## **Who Conducted the Conversations: Facilitators, Transcribers and Interpreters**

**Facilitators:** Ruth Barajas, Cindy Choy, Ruth Grabowski, Valerie Higgins, Mandy Johnson, Jose Lam, Natasha LaVine, Carol Lei, Michelle Menegaz, Rocio Soto

**Transcribers:** Ruth Barajas, Carla Cuevas, Ivy Chan, Walton Chan, Serena Chan, Un Un Che, Ruth Grabowski, Carol Lei, Marilyn Luong, Sonia Pina, Vicki Symonds

**Interpreters:** Oscar Arteta, Mabel Cheung, Ray Lai

## Appendix II: Findings from Surveys

In a written survey that also gathered demographic information, we asked participants about how they choose schools.

Participants were asked to pick the top 3 out of 17 characteristics they consider most important in choosing a school. **A reputation for having quality teachers and principals** was the resounding priority for families, compared to other school characteristics. This is how people ranked their priorities (the order is based on raw score; these percentages are rounded off):

<b>Reputation for quality principal &amp; teachers</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>School programs/curriculum</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Convenience of location</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Safety of the neighborhood</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Academic reputation</b>	<b>9%</b>
Safe school climate	8%
Language program	7%
Student body is diverse	6%
Afterschool program	6%
Actively involved parents	5%
Art/music programs	3%
School size/number of students	3%
Vocational/trades programs	1%
Serves K-8	1%
Other:	1%

However, when you combine the response to different characteristics that are similar or related to each other, a different ranking emerges:

<b>Curriculum and specific programs, combined</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Reputation for principal, teacher and academic quality</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Safety of neighborhood and school climate</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Convenience of location</b>	<b>10%</b>
Student body is diverse	6%
Actively involved parents	5%
School size or grade configuration	4%
Other:	1%

## **Appendix III: Options Discussed in Community Conversations**

### **LOTTERY OPTIONS**

Students could apply to any school. Students who do not get one of their choices would be assigned to a school that has openings.

- Option 1.     **Lottery with Local School Preference.**
- Option 2.     **Lottery with Academic Diversity.**
- Option 3.     **Lottery with Academic Diversity and Local Preference.**

### **ZONE OPTION**

- Option 4.     Schools would be grouped together in a large attendance area, or “zone”, that maximizes diversity. Students would be assigned to a school within their zone, with a preference for academic diversity.

### **LOCAL SCHOOL OPTIONS**

Students would have a seat in their local school, but can apply to other schools. Choice assignments would give preference to academic diversity. Students who do not get one of their choices would be assigned to their local school.

- Option 5.     **Local School Assignments with choice for city-wide programs only.**
- Option 6.     **Local School Assignments with choice for all schools.**