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Division of Special Education **Listen and Learn Campaign**

**Presented by Jose Soto,
Alesha Haase and Kristin Lambert**

May 7, 2025



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Division of Special Education

Listen and Learn Campaign

Summary and Action Steps, Spring 2025



Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs

Vision Our vision is to inspire all students to reach their maximum potential as productive and responsible citizens.

Mission Our mission is to provide leadership, guidance, and support to the school community in order to maximize learning for all students within an inclusive environment so that each student will contribute to and benefit from our diverse society.

Guided by LAUSD Pillars and Priorities

Division of Special Education Priorities

Instruction

Operations

Substantial Compliance

Engagement / Communication

Connections to LAUSD Pillars

Pillar 1: Academic Excellence

Pillar 2: Joy and Wellness

Pillar 4: Operational Effectiveness

Pillar 5: Investing in Staff

Pillar 4: Operational Effectiveness

Pillar 3: Engagement and Collaboration

Listening to the Community

Purpose Gather feedback from students, families, educators, and community partners to inform special education in LAUSD.

Method Mixed-methods – 31 focus groups + over 1,200 survey responses.

Vision Ensure all students with disabilities receive a high-quality education.

Listen and Learn Process

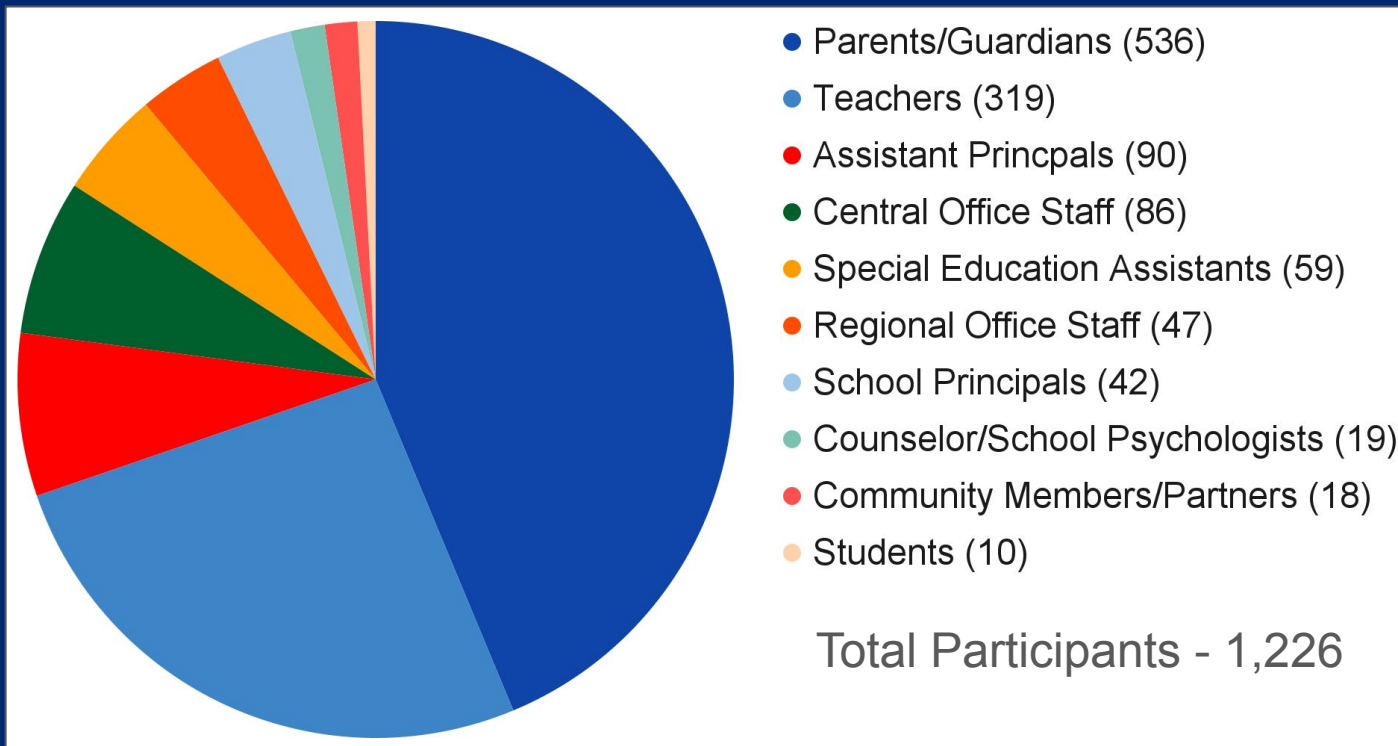


Focus Group Participants

31 Focus Group Sessions Held Across the District. Focus group sessions were comprised of:

- Parents
- Educational Partners (Regional Centers, CAC, SPED Committee, Charter School Executive Board, Deaf Education Committee)
- Assistants
- Teachers
- Assistant Principals, EIS
- Principals
- Regional Leadership

Survey Participants



Professional Expert Collaboration



Kristin Wright

Executive Director of Equity,
Diversity, Prevention, Early
Intervention, and Title IX,
Sacramento County Office of
Education; Former CA State
Director of Special Education



Victoria Graf, Ph.D.

Former Academic Program
Director for Special
Education at Loyola
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Chuck Flores, Ed.D.

Associate Professor, Cal
State LA; Program
Coordinator for the
Educational Administration
Program.



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Findings and Next Steps for Pillars 1 and 2

Academic Excellence Joy and Wellness

Presented by Alesha Haase

Pillar 1: Academic Excellence

Emergent Themes

Respondents shared:

- The variety of program options and digital tools improve access.
- Inclusive classroom opportunities are growing for students
- Instructional consistency and additional training to address behavioral difficulty is needed.



Pillar 1: Academic Excellence

HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION

Current Practices

- Development of Special Education **Classroom Look-Fors**
- Creation of a Division of Special Education **Instructional Resource Guide**
- Implementation of a **structured literacy aligned reading intervention**
- Introduction of a **Diploma with the Alternate Assessment Exemption**
- **Professional development** for teachers, paraprofessionals

Actions to be Taken

- **Expand trainings** for teachers and paraprofessionals
- Increase availability & topics of **trainings for general education teachers**
- Collaborate with Division of Instruction partners to embed instructional best practices for students with disabilities in the **2025-2026 Banked Time** professional development sessions
- Expansion of **behavior symposiums** for paraeducators to include administrators and teachers

Pillar 1: Academic Excellence

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES/LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Current Practices

- **Micro-Credential** program for general education teachers
- Organize District-wide sessions for lead inclusion teachers
- Provide **summer professional development** choice sessions for general education teachers
- Facilitate ongoing **professional development** opportunities for teachers and parents

Actions to be Taken

- Conduct surveys and **focus groups**
- Expand District-wide implementation of **Universal Design for Learning**.
- **Expand Micro-Credential** program
- Co-present to educational stakeholders with partners
- Development of inclusive **model classrooms**
- Expansion of **inclusive Extended School Year (ESY)** models.

Pillar 2: Joy and Wellness

Emergent Themes

Respondents shared:

- Students feel greater belonging in inclusive environments
- Wellness supports like psychological services are helpful
- Student self-advocacy in the IEP process can be improved



Pillar 2: Joy and Wellness

STUDENT VOICE AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Current Practices

- Development of Student **IEP Participation Toolkit**
- Assistant Principal/Assistant Principal, Elementary Instructional Specialist, training that addresses **best practices in student IEP participation**
- Monitoring of **student participation** in IEP meetings

Actions to be Taken

- Train teachers on **student engagement** strategies
- Engage families to share the importance of **student voice** in shaping the IEP process
- Highlight and celebrate students for their **self-advocacy** and participation in the IEP process

Guiding Questions



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Findings and Next Steps for Pillars 3

Engagement and Collaboration

Pillar 3: Engagement and Collaboration

Emergent Themes

Respondents shared:

- Parent engagement is increasing through Ambassadors and workshops
- Community partnerships are growing to support families.
- Families need more accessible, clear information.



Pillar 3: Engagement and Collaboration

ENHANCING PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Current Practices

- Website updated, includes a comprehensive list of family resources.
- Special Education Local Plan Area Plan **videos** for Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- **Collaborative meetings** with the Office of Student, Family, and Community Engagement
- **Region Ambassadors** that includes three annual learning sessions
- **Virtual workshops** are available on the website

Actions to be Taken

- Special Education Parent and Family **Resource Fairs**
- Parent Center “**watch parties**” during parent workshops
- Engage families in Regional Listen and Learn, “**Coffee with Regional Special Education Teams**” and through surveys
- Organize **workshops** for parents focused on strategies to support their child’s educational needs at home.

Pillar 3: Engagement and Collaboration

FOSTERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Current Practices

- Collaborate with partners to promote service delivery in the LRE.
- Partner with the **Department of Rehabilitation** (DOR)
- **Project SEARCH** at hospitals
- Center for **Advanced Transition Skills** at LACCD campuses
- **Very Special Arts Festival** in partnership with the Music Center
- Dyslexia Working Group

Actions to be Taken

- Meetings with **Institutes of Higher Education**
- Workshops for parents and staff focused on supporting students with disabilities in the LRE
- Annual events that raise awareness about disabilities
- Expand the partnership with the **Division of Adult and Career Education**

Pillar 3: Engagement and Collaboration

ENSURING EQUITY IN COMMUNICATION

Current Practices

- Website platform allows users to select **preferred language**
- **Multilingual support** for publications, documents, videos, and communications
- Collaboration with local community organizations to support both language assistance and the effective distribution of materials.
- **Computer-generated translation** of IEP documents provide instantly translated copy of the IEP

Actions to be Taken

- Explore expanding available language options for recorded parent workshops
- **Integrate visual aids** in all presentations and publications
- Use **AI-recorded videos**
- **Expanding computer generated translations** to languages other than Spanish

Pillar 3: Engagement and Collaboration

DEMYSTIFYING THE IEP PROCESS

Current Practices

- Resources and tools on website
- Enhance ability to address and resolve parent concerns during IEP process
- Updated the **“IEP and You”** and **“The ITP and You”**
- Informational **parent workshop sessions** that guides families through the LAUSD IEP document
- “Empowering Families During the IEP Process: An Introduction to Special Education” presentation on Division of Special Education website

Actions to be Taken

- Develop **video module** for parents entering the initial assessment stage
- Produce video module about key aspects of Section 504 and IEPs
- Overview of IEP process and the supports available to Parent Center representatives
- **Special Education presentations** at individual school sites twice per school year by a school administrator responsible

Guiding Questions



Findings and Next Steps for Pillars 4 and 5

Operational Effectiveness

Investing in Staff

Presented by Kristin Lambert

Pillar 4: Operational Effectiveness

Emergent Themes

Respondents shared:

- Accurate and timely data is helpful in improving student outcomes
- There is a strong focus on using data to adjust practices to better meet students' needs
- Additional training on data use is needed



Pillar 4: Operational Effectiveness

DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Current Practices

- Regularly scheduled data discussions
- Distribute compliance **data** to regional leadership & special education teams
- School site administrator training to ensure compliance with federal, state, and district requirements
- Monthly data **office hours** hosted by the DSE data team
- Use **data trends** to design professional development

Actions to be Taken

- **Highlight schools** who consistently meet or exceed compliance standards
- Continue to deliver a comprehensive ESY program to support eligible students in maintaining academic progress

Pillar 5: Investing in Staff

Emergent Themes

Respondents shared:

- New teacher academies offer strong onboarding
- PD opportunities are increasing across roles
- Staffing shortages and paraeducator training remain areas of need



Pillar 5: Investing in Staff

EDUCATOR GROWTH

Current Practices

- Provide **training and coaching** on research-based strategies
- Partner with **Human Resources** to offer a 5-day New Special Education Teaching Academy
- Hold regular meetings with curriculum partners
- Foster strong and consistent collaboration with the **Multilingual Multicultural Education Department** and the **Division of Instruction**

Actions to be Taken

- Develop additional specialized training for educators in program-specific roles
- Expand **training opportunities** for general education teachers to support students in inclusive general education environments
- Offer comprehensive onboarding and sustained **professional development for paraeducators**

Pillar 5: Investing in Staff

GROWING AND RETAINING OUR WORKFORCE

Current Practices

- Collaborate with institutes of **higher education** to develop strategies for recruiting, training, and retaining special education and deaf education professionals
- Create pathways for the **placement of university interns** and student teachers
- Actively engage in job fairs and **recruitment** efforts

Actions to be Taken

- Explore the development of a **Career and Technical Education** pathway for careers in **special education** and **deaf education**
- Expand partnerships between internal LAUSD departments
- Strengthen collaboration with the Intern, Credentialing, and **Added Authorization Program**

Guiding Questions

Coming Soon



The Division of Special Education will be publishing the Listen and Learn Campaign Booklet soon in both hardcopy and digital formats.