

Overview of Student Assignment System Recommendations from the San Francisco Community 2004 - 2007

This document contains a brief overview of key findings and recommendations from previous outreach campaigns and community advisory committees on student assignment that have been convened in partnership with the district over the past four years. For the purposes of this summary, we have pulled out findings and recommendations that relate only to the student assignment system; however, within these reports, there is also rich material regarding the kinds of schools that parents and other community members would like to see. The full content of these community reports can be found at www.sfusd.edu.

CACSA: The Community Advisory Committee on Student Assignment (February, 2005)

In anticipation of the expiration of long-standing federal court supervision of SFUSD's student assignment plan, this CAC was formed in April 2004 to study then-current processes and recommend new options for consideration by the Superintendent and Board of Education. Between April 2004 and January 2005, this fourteen-member committee analyzed the system in place at the time, gathered community input through interactive focus groups, developed three techniques for allocating seats to oversubscribed schools, and made several general recommendations regarding improvements to the student assignment process.

PAC: The San Francisco Board of Education Parent Advisory Council's Summary of Findings from 2005-2006 Community Outreach Campaign (May, 2006)

The Parent Advisory Council conducted an outreach campaign from January to May of 2006 to hear from communities not usually heard from in education policy debates. PAC spoke with approximately 200 parents and received written surveys from 54 parents whose children attend SFUSD schools. Participants were primarily Latino, Chinese and African-American.

SERR: Student Enrollment, Recruitment and Retention: Community Conversations about San Francisco Public Schools (March, 2007)

From September 2006 to February 2007, the San Francisco Unified School District, the San Francisco Education Fund, Parents for Public Schools and the Parent Advisory Council partnered in leading a community engagement effort to gain a better understanding of diverse community members' aspirations for SFUSD schools; create shared knowledge about key issues facing the District; and involve multiple members of the community in addressing issues facing the District. 928 parents and community members participated in conversations and 814 attendees completed a survey.

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Assignment System & Process Findings/Recommendations	Appears in the Following Community Reports		
	CACSA	PAC	SERR
Parents, particularly elementary school parents, want a quality school close to home or easy to get to . They also want the option of choosing a school that will best meet their children's needs. Consider establishing neighborhood or community attendance areas for some elementary schools, while continuing to guarantee access to schools across the city for parents who do not wish to choose a school in their community.	X	X	X
Most parents want their school communities to reflect San Francisco's socioeconomic and cultural diversity . But for parents across the city, diversity is often trumped by a school's location and academic quality, and their own feeling of belonging.	X	X	X
Even parents who are happy with their children's schools want more predictability in the enrollment process , and are uncomfortable with a process that feels excessively complicated or random. Revise the enrollment and student assignment policy to be fair, understandable and transparent.		X	X
Parents want the District to provide clear and accessible information that will help them choose a school that is a good fit for their child . Continue to work proactively with community groups, childcare providers, media and city agencies to reach out to all families to ensure they understand the enrollment process and participate in choosing schools.	X		X
Parents want to participate fully in the enrollment process, but many encounter significant language, time and information barriers. Support parents throughout the enrollment process by making it easy for parents to access EPC counselors and enrollment information in their own communities , and making the District's website more user-friendly and accurate. Ensure that all staff that touch parents in the enrollment process (EPC staff, principals and secretaries) have the training and resources to provide clear enrollment information and excellent customer service.		X	X
The District should work with schools to identify ways to achieve greater racial diversity, particularly through outreach and program development , in cases in which more than 50% of students represent a single racial/ethnic group.	X		
The District should modify school enrollment capacities based on patterns of demand .	X		
The District's attendance areas are out of date and should be revised .	X		