



TASK: SUGGESTED EDITS/REVISIONS TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Review the draft statements under each heading. Come to consensus on any comments or suggestions that your group believes would strengthen the statement. Provide those comments in the space provided under each statement. *Suggestions consistent from a majority of the groups will be reflected in updating or revising the statements.*

34Next Community Engagement Sessions (CES) began in September and this is CES #4. At each of the CES key information has been learned from two sources—the formal presentation and the consensus (general agreement) of participants in response to specific tasks in small group discussions. As a result of information learned during the 34Next program, a draft set of “Statements of Recommendation” has been created. When finalized, these statements will be 34Next's official recommendations to the Board of Education.

Note: Numbering of Recommendations is for reference purposes only, and does not represent any order of priority or importance.

The estimated number of participants at the November 5, 2014 CES-4 was approximately 36. In addition to the participants, attendees also included Facilitating Team members, Board of Education members and District administrators.

Since this was the final 34Next Community Engagement Session Community Co-Chairs Bill Utter and Dan O'Brien presented a summary of key findings from sessions one through three. Bill and Dan organized the findings in the following categories: celebrations, surprises and concerns. Then, they presented five recommendations that had been developed by the Facilitating Team, based on the key findings (see the PowerPoint on the 34Next website). Participants then worked in 6 small groups (approximately 6 participants per group) to complete the task listed above. Following is a summary of the response from the groups.

The groups generally agreed with and supported the Statements of Recommendations then proceeded to suggest actions that could be considered relative to implementation. Some of those suggestions are listed below under each statement. However, there seemed to be a recurring theme from the groups about the recommendations—they reported that some of the recommendations were possibly too broad and needed further clarification or specificity.

Statements of Recommendation

1. COMMUNICATING POTENTIAL IMPACT OF PROGRAM CHANGES

Develop a new model of communication on the potential program changes that clearly explains the connection of educational and financial impacts. The Board of Education should work to confirm the community's understanding.

Key themes among the suggestions for this recommendation indicated that communication should be:

- rational of decisions – the "why" should be communicated
- 'proactive,' not reactive
- effective (it is not the volume of communication, but clear, targeted messages)
- consistent messages (across schools)
- timely (make sure messages are delivered in time for parents and the community to respond appropriately)
- high interest topics (information that truly impacts parents and the community)
- communication provided in multiple languages

2. UNDERSTANDING DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS

Provide community and parents with a more comprehensive understanding of District assessments.

Key thoughts from the groups for this recommendation included the following:

- communicate more detail/explanation of each test/assessment
- provide a comprehensive calendar and purpose for each assessment indicating the value to the student and the District, as well as the utilization of the test results
- show more comparison of D34 test results with 'neighboring local' school districts

3. STUDYING FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

The Board of Education should conduct an extensive study on educational need/value and feasibility of full day kindergarten.

Key summary comments/questions regarding full-day kindergarten included the following:

- what are the space (facility) constraints
- what is the 'true' educational value (needs to be more than a babysitting service)
- the study should show a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis including benefits of and comparison to other districts
- indicate the timeline for the study and, if implementation, when

4. EVALUATING TECHNOLOGY

Evaluate the appropriate use of technology to ensure there is an educational advantage; and, communicate that to the public.

Summary themes from the groups included the following:

- make sure the tools and usage of technology is responsive to research (does the benefit match the investment of money and time)
- there is a concern that there is a balance of technology usage along with other effective instructional tools, methods, and practices
- monitor the availability and use of technology to insure parity among the schools and staff
- provide the appropriate support to staff via professional development and equipment maintenance

5. RECOGNIZING AND COMMUNICATING WITH ALL D34 POPULATIONS

Recognizing the diversity of the D34 community, additional measures should be made to ensure the District is reaching, communicating and engaging all populations.

Common themes from the groups for this recommendation included the following:

- utilize staff and the 'daily class routine' to assist in implementing this recommendation
- more clarification is needed for this recommendation—what measures are currently in place and what are we missing
- consider publishing more material in multiple languages
- include 'all' populations, including low-income families

OTHER — WHAT DID WE MISS?

Add any other statement of recommendation your group felt emerged during the 34Next sessions.

Some of the themes/concepts that were suggested for additional statements of recommendation included the following:

- Consider providing foreign language and instrumental music at an earlier age
- Class size—consider classroom aides as way to reduce class size, consider reducing class size for the younger students
- What are other districts getting we are not?

One group recorded this comment: *As an educational tool of the parents and families of this community, D34 should first and foremost focus on providing each child, of whatever means and background, an equal opportunity to learn basic time-tested educational standards, equipping each with skills and values reflective of this community and preparing them for a bright future.*

For a complete listing of all responses, see the November 5, 2014 CES-4 Verbatim Response Document