



**We interrupt this crisis—
with our side of the story**

Relationships Between South Los Angeles Parents and Schools
OCTOBER 2004



About the Organizations that Produced this Report

Community Asset Development Re-defining Education (CADRE) is a grassroots community organization based in South Los Angeles since 2001, whose members are African American and Latino parents of children attending schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Our mission is to solidify and advance parent leadership to ensure that all children are rightfully educated regardless of where they live. Through outreach, membership, training, leadership development, activism, and issue campaigns, CADRE is working to eliminate institutional and political barriers to parent engagement and participation in local schools.

CADRE believes that quality schools in South Los Angeles must have relationships of mutual trust and respect with parents in the communities they serve. In order for schools to improve, they must hear and respond to parents' voices, and embrace parents' collective will and power to seek social, racial, and economic justice for their children.

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Community Asset Development Re-defining Education

[A project of Community Partners]

Justice Matters Institute (JMI) is a social justice organization based in San Francisco. Its Educational Justice Program conducts research and policy development to further racial justice in the school system. JMI believes that a racially just school system prepares all students to lead a full life in which they are equipped to contribute to their family, community, and society.

A racially just school system:

- has respectful, caring relationships with students and families
- incorporates and builds on the cultures and languages of its students
- uses instructional approaches that are engaging and rigorous enough for all students to reach their potential
- actively addresses discrimination and unhealthy power relationships.

JMI believes that community organizing is a central strategy for bringing about racial justice in schools. We collaborate with community organizing groups and support their campaigns for racial justice.

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Community Asset Development Re-defining Education and Justice Matters Institute

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND THE ROLES OF CADRE AND JMI IN PRODUCING THIS REPORT

CADRE and JMI came together in early 2003 to create a parent-led research project that would examine relationships between parents and schools in South L.A. This collaborative project explored the experiences of South L.A. families with their schools and examined research literature that talks about issues related to the topic. Parent members of CADRE reviewed and analyzed both of these streams of knowledge to help develop a conceptual framework for the report and CADRE's impending campaign. This report was written by CADRE and represents the voices and experiences of CADRE members – all of whom are South L.A. parents. JMI provided the education and policy research and analysis support for this project, as well as technical and editorial support for the publication of the report preview and this report.

October 2004

Dear South Los Angeles Parents:

As parent leaders in CADRE, we are tackling one of the most difficult matters facing our children on a daily basis—their educational experience. We are dedicating ourselves to finding solutions from within the community. There is a serious need for us as parents to come together across racial lines to fight against common negative experiences at the school level, which children and parents, African American and Latino, face day in and day out.

Our schools need us and we need our schools. This community will never fully prosper until our schools improve. We need South L.A. schools to be places where our children thrive and where their strengths and talents are deepened. More importantly, we need our schools to be places of social and racial justice, where our children experience equity, dignity, and respect.

We ask you to read this report with all of the community's children in your minds and hearts. Our message to other parents is that we need to come together and ensure that schools embrace us as activists for our children. We, as parents, invite you to join CADRE and be a part of a parent organization that believes in your leadership. In joining, we will all become stronger and be able to collectively work towards our children's educational progress and the future of this community.

Dear School Officials:

We call upon you to read this report with open minds and hearts. We ask that you listen to the voices of South Los Angeles parents reflected in this report. We are very unhappy with what takes place in our South L.A. schools. We know that this community and our children deserve better.

We are fighting for something we believe in but have never seen – a quality education with schools that care for and respect our children regardless of their color, family income, or life experience. We have watched you attempt to make our schools better over many years, and yet conditions in South L.A. schools have only gotten worse—no one, including you, would accept these conditions for your own children. So, we call upon you to work together with African American and Latino parents to develop a common agenda concerning our children.

One way of addressing our educational crisis is by involving parents in problem solving and finding the right solutions that serve this community. Schools must raise their standards about the relationships they need to have with parents in this community. We ask that schools face and answer our tough questions. Engage us, so that we fully play a role in addressing this crisis.

IN SOLIDARITY, CADRE'S DIGNITY AND RESPECT PARENT TASKFORCE

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And a special thank you goes to the 122 South Los Angeles parents who were willing to share their time and stories with us—we deeply appreciate the fact that you made this report possible.

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Executive Summary

Who is CADRE?

Community Asset Development Re-defining Education (CADRE) is a grassroots organization of African American and Latino parents of South Los Angeles children. We came together because of our concern for education in South Los Angeles. We have all been gravely disappointed about the fact that race, ethnicity, culture, language, class, immigration status, and the history of our communities in the United States negatively impacts how our children are educated and how we are treated by schools. We have witnessed children across South L.A. fall through the cracks of overcrowded and under-resourced schools. Recognizing that the only choice before us was to become advocates for educational justice, we began to organize for change in 1999.

The Crisis in South L.A. Schools

We interrupt this crisis—with our side of the story represents the voices and research of South L.A. parents who want to repair the cracks in schools. In this report, we show some of the stark data that paint a picture of the tremendous urgency we face as parents. We know that South L.A. schools are not graduating our youth -- our future -- who are needed in South L.A. to change the harsh and sometimes devastating impact of poverty that we face day in and day out.

Parent-School Relationships

We have not stood idle, as oftentimes African American and Latino parents are portrayed, but instead we have gone to our schools to get informed and get answers. However, we have been pushed back, ignored, ridiculed, and humiliated by schools. Not surprisingly, parents are also falling through the cracks—disappearing from an institution that does not value the wealth of knowledge that we have to offer to strengthen our schools. We decided to prioritize addressing parent-school relationships as a key strategy for turning around the crisis in South L.A. schools.

Asking Parents New Questions About Parent-School Relationships

In early 2003, we started a project with Justice Matters Institute—the project leading to this report. Justice Matters Institute—an educational research and policy organization—provided support to design and carry out this parent-led research project. We knew that schools must take proactive steps to build and sustain strong relationships with us to improve our schools, but we wanted to know more—we wanted to get a deeper understanding of how parents in South L.A. experience their relationships with their schools. We developed the *2004 Survey of South L.A. Parents/Caregivers on Parent-School Relationships and Experiences* to help us systematically collect parent responses to questions rarely asked. How are parents treated by schools? Do parents feel that schools take responsibility for their actions? Do schools invite them in to share their knowledge? Do schools ask them to help come up with solutions? Do they feel that their cultures are respected by schools? What advice would they give to schools? We used the survey to ask these kinds of questions to over 100 South L.A. parents.



The Answers We Heard

Schools, researchers, and policymakers rarely ask parents these types of questions. With new questions, we heard some very important answers. Some key findings include:

- 66% of parents surveyed say that schools sometimes or almost never understand the strengths and challenges of their community;
- 62% of African American parents feel that their opinions are sometimes or almost never taken into account by schools when important decisions are made about their child's education;
- 71% of Latino parents responded that when their children are facing a challenge at school, their opinions are sometimes or rarely taken into account by the school; and
- Parents overwhelmingly—74 percent—responded that schools sometimes or almost never listen to community concerns.

Our research challenged the conventional perception that South L.A. parents are a part of the problem—92% percent of the parents we surveyed feel that parents can improve the quality of our schools. Survey results also showed, however, that overwhelmingly both Latino and African American **parents feel that schools have biases based on race, class, immigration status, and language that stand in the way of quality relationships between parents and schools.** When we asked parents to share their advice for South L.A. schools, we heard strong messages about parents wanting non-racist school practices, cultural understanding, and dignity and respect from school personnel towards parents, children, and the community at large.

Our Response: Advancing a New Vision for Parent-School Relationships in South Los Angeles

This report not only captures some of the most important findings from our research, it also summarizes our vision for transforming parent-school relationships into genuine alliances. Our vision is based on three values that repeatedly came up in parents' open-ended responses: **cultural inclusion, engagement, and accountability.** These are the values we seek to have schools adopt. These values are interconnected, and all of them lead schools to policy and practices that truly reach out to and include parents. Although these values overlap and lead to similar practices, they each bring a distinct spirit and meaning to efforts to build partnerships with parents.

CULTURAL INCLUSION

Valuing the inclusion of all cultures means believing that the full recognition and expression of each culture in a community makes the community strong and successful. Schools that value cultural inclusion understand that families' "cultures" are deep life experiences and values shaped by many factors. Staff in such schools know that it is important to build familiarity with the cultures of students' families, so that the school can reflect and respect all cultures equally within the learning environment. Schools that value cultural inclusion are more likely to see parents as knowledgeable and having important insights to contribute because staff are aware of the cultural assets that parents bring and also because their perceptions are not distorted by negative cultural stereotypes.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement means truly valuing connection with the community. A school that values engagement wants parents to be actively involved in shaping what happens in the school so that the school will genuinely reflect the community. Schools that value engagement create a range of accessible and meaningful opportunities to generate input and contributions from parents to the teaching and learning environment. True parent engagement fully includes parents in decision-making surrounding their children's education, and ensures that parent input is seen as equal to that of school personnel. Schools that genuinely engage parents make input and decision-making opportunities part of the schools' culture and structure; school personnel set aside time, resources, and energy to deliberately support the process necessary for equitable parent-school decision-making to take place.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Valuing accountability means schools genuinely believe that they are answerable and responsible to parents. When schools feel accountable to parents, they embrace and respond to parents acting, individually or collectively, to ensure that schools are sincere, trustworthy and dependable in serving the best interests of all our children. Such schools do not act autonomously but feel an obligation to have the buy-in and support of parents for all of its policies and actions. Schools that value accountability to parents ensure that parents have the information, tools, access, and power to examine a school's standards, practices, strengths, and weaknesses. When parents demand improvement and change, accountable schools feel an immediate responsibility to meet higher standards and maintain the trust of parents.

By assessing how South L.A. schools currently embrace or ignore these values, and comparing it to how we define them in this report, we have also developed concrete ideas about how schools can begin to demonstrate the values of cultural inclusion, engagement, and accountability.

It's All About Relationships: Addressing the Crisis with Mutual Trust and Respect

In order for South L.A. schools to improve, they must hear and respond to parents' voices, and embrace parents' collective will and power to seek dignity, respect, and justice for their children. We believe the first step starts with schools intentionally building relationships with South L.A. parents, in ways that allow parents to be equal participants in determining how education can best meet their children's needs. We believe that parents should be allowed to discern for themselves whether to support, question, challenge, or organize around schools' policies and practices that impact the success of our children. When change is needed, South L.A. parents must be part of the solution from the outset.

This report serves as the basis for CADRE's work over the next several years. As we organize and develop parent leaders, we will be focused on initiating parent-led, strategic partnerships with local South L.A. schools that share our values. It is time for parents and schools to work together with mutual trust and respect.

Introduction: How CADRE Parents Came Together Around a Common Experience



***“Of all the different issues and crises that parents have—
—the bottom line is their need for social justice.”***

Imagine suddenly receiving a letter in the mail letting you know that your high school son or daughter attending a local South Los Angeles high school failed the California High School Exit Exam, a critical exam that is required for graduation. The letter indicates that the school will hold a meeting the next day for you, as parents, to learn about the options your children have to re-take the exam and be better positioned to pass it. Imagine making special arrangements to attend this meeting, only to find that no school officials show up, and that you are left standing there with a group of other parents, waiting for over one hour. When one parent finally goes to the front office to ask about the situation, the school staff informs her that there is no meeting scheduled despite the letter she holds in her hands.

On the other side of South Los Angeles, imagine another parent whose son has been complaining about headaches during class. After speaking with her son, she takes him to get a complete physical, and finds out that her son has a problem with his eyesight. She receives a note to put in her son’s medical file with the school nurse. This parent then asks the nurse to see her son’s medical file several times with no result, and is told along the way that her son was probably lying about his eyes because he was just lazy. Dissatisfied with this response from the nurse, she then requests to speak with the school principal everyday for the next two weeks. She is only able to speak to the vice-principal, and receives her son’s shot records in the mail, which is not what she

requested—she wants to see the medical records that the school has on file for her son, and include the note about her son’s eye problems. This parent finally gets a meeting with the principal after three weeks, but only after her son gets injured during recess and there is the possibility of the school being held responsible.

Imagine another parent whose child is in special education and is having continuing difficulties in his middle school. By the fourth month of the school year, he has been suspended several times, and after each incident the parent had meetings with the school staff. Right before the winter holiday the student is suspended again, but this time the parent is told to keep him at home until further notice because he had been suspended one too many times—the school is working on transferring him to another school but has not yet found an alternate placement. The student ends up missing an additional four months of instruction before the parent realizes that this arrangement is completely out of compliance with the child’s status as a special education student. Like most parents, this father had assumed that the school was following up and looking out for his child’s best interests. When he approaches the school finally, the school tells him to simply bring his child back to the school until they can figure something else out, because the school realizes that they could not transfer the child without doing a new Individual Education Plan (IEP) assessment. In fact, this parent’s son has not been assessed since elementary school.



**ve—they all have a unique story that is very important
ice, dignity and respect.”** —KENNETH HILL, Founding Core Member of CADRE

Public schools play an important role in our society as the institution responsible for educating all children and providing them with the tools to be self-determining members of a democratic society. Community Asset Development Re-defining Education (CADRE) is a grassroots organization of parents of South Los Angeles children. A group of African American and Latino South Los Angeles parents came together over the past five years because of stories like the ones mentioned—these are our stories—and because of our belief that while all of our children can succeed, the schools they attend do not measure up to our ideals of public education.

When we look at the faces of children inside our public schools, we see the enormous potential of South L.A.’s future generations. We recognize that our children have the right to a quality education and we have been gravely disappointed when we face the reality of how race, ethnicity, culture, language, income, immigration status, and the history of our communities in the United States negatively impact how our children are educated. We have witnessed children across South L.A. lose their futures in the public school system because a few adults along the way have determined that their lives and families were not worthy of investment.

Contrary to the negative stereotypes that South L.A. parents are rarely concerned with education, many of us have fought individually to make sure that our children are educated with dignity and respect. Many of us, in our

homes, neighborhoods, and places of worship, invest in our children’s futures and education in ways that schools may not recognize. While what we do individually is to be expected from parents, we realized in 2001 that it was not enough. The promise of public education has virtually been ignored in South L.A., and as a result, we have had to come together as advocates, activists, and united members of an organization so our voices and our children’s voices are heard. We needed schools to be our allies—to hear our stories, and to meet our advocacy with dignity and respect—and so we began to organize for change.

One of our first steps was to talk to other parents in South L.A. After speaking to nearly 3,000 grassroots parents between 2001 and 2003, we realized that other parents also felt that schools did not seriously take into account parent voices or roles when it came to the education of their children. This was especially true in critical moments, such as when their children were on the verge of failing a grade or being suspended. We heard similar stories from both African American and Latino parents; both groups expressed the desire for dignity and respect in how schools treated them as parents. We were concerned when parents described how schools mistreated them because we believe that having better schools in South L.A. means having strong parent and school relationships, and especially, removing racial, cultural, and economic barriers to parents and schools working together with dignity and respect.

Therefore, we set out to document the current state of relationships between South L.A. parents and our local schools in order to understand how to improve these relationships. In early 2003, CADRE began working with Justice Matters Institute (JMI), a policy research organization, to develop a parent-led research project that would shape CADRE's upcoming grassroots campaign for new standards for relationships between South Los Angeles parents and schools. Together we reviewed and analyzed research and theories related to parent-school relationships. We used the understandings that we developed through this process to develop a survey for South L.A. parents and went on to survey more than 100 parents.

Through this research project, we learned that parents across South L.A. were interested in improving the quality of their schools and becoming equal, active partners for school reform. As our survey results show, parents are ready to be active members of a true school-community partnership and create excellent schools for their children.

This report gives voice to another side of the story—the story of low-income parents of color, when asked about: whether they feel part of their school community; whether they are engaged to be leaders and problem-solvers around their children's educational journeys; and whether they feel any power and standing to ensure that their children receive a quality education. These are questions rarely asked of parents, and we found them to be extremely significant. We invite you to consider the ideas represented in this report as the beginning of a new political consciousness and willingness to get organized among South Los Angeles parents.

***Both African Americans (96%)
and Latinos (87%) feel that
parents can improve
the quality of our schools.***

BARRIERS TO PARENTS BEING PART OF THE SOLUTION

Parents must be an integral part of changing public schools in South L.A. Nonetheless, when we organize or advocate for our children, we are often met with harsh resistance and disrespect by school bureaucracy and personnel. Here are examples of school practices that illustrate the institutional hurdles that we must overcome when advocating for our children:

- school personnel making parents wait for an excessive amount of time before being able to talk to staff;
- documents not being translated into parents' primary language;
- meeting notifications being sent home too late – on the day of, or even, the day after, a meeting has taken place;
- not allowing parents to visit classrooms when they want;
- threatening to call the police when parents attempt to advocate for their children;
- using bureaucratic rules and policies as an excuse for inaction by school personnel;
- parents being treated rudely, disrespected, or falsely accused by school staff;
- the absence of open, two-way communication between parents and school; and
- schools not proactively seeking parent input for problem solving.

ABOUT



Co-founded by a South L.A. parent, Rosalinda Hill, and a local community activist, Maisie Chin, the vision for CADRE took hold in late 1999. After both co-founders had reflected on their experiences as advocates for children and better schools, they recognized that no organization existed solely for the purpose of organizing South L.A. parents for educational justice, nor was there an organization led by South L.A. parents, both African American and Latino. This was seen as the missing piece, and the most critical one if low-income communities of color were to achieve equity in public education. After two years of meeting in living rooms and building a core leadership group of parents, CADRE opened its office and began organizing a South L.A. parent base in the summer of 2001, targeting the neighborhoods surrounding Crenshaw, Washington Preparatory, and Locke High Schools.

Built on the notion that CADRE should become an autonomous, community-based membership organization, driven and led by South L.A. parents specifically, CADRE has used grassroots, door-to-door community canvassing to speak with over 4,000 parents since 2001. Nearly 1,500 parents have volunteered to support and become involved in CADRE's network since our inception. After three years of expanding our core leadership and developing parent committees that have become the organization's central planning and decision-making bodies, CADRE will be chartering its first paid members throughout 2004.

Central to CADRE's organizing model is the value of equity and unity among all South L.A. parents (including family caregivers and foster parents), regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, income, language, education level, immigration status, or neighborhood of residence. We strive for and currently maintain a parent network that is nearly fifty percent African American and fifty percent Latino/a. Although our parent network is 95% female, we actively recruit and involve fathers and male caregivers.

ABOUT THE CADRE DIGNITY AND RESPECT TASKFORCE:

CADRE's Dignity and Respect Taskforce is one of our core planning and decision-making committees. Convened in October 2003, the Taskforce is made up of seven parents (six African American, one Latino) who wanted to increase their participation in CADRE by shaping our first major project, our upcoming Dignity and Respect for Parents Campaign. With this purpose in mind, we have become the sounding board and steering committee for the Campaign during our research and planning phase. This report, *We interrupt this crisis—with our side of the story: Relationships Between South Los Angeles Parents and Schools*, is our first major accomplishment. The Taskforce will continue to serve as the decision-making body as we plan, prepare for, launch, and carry out our Campaign.

The Odds Are Against Our Children: Why Schools Can No Longer Keep Parents at a Distance

Unjust economic and social conditions pervade South L.A. despite our long history of political struggle. These include concentrated poverty and economic and political isolation. While politicians continue to ignore the on-going poverty that affects our community, we are left to confront quality of life issues such as lack of public safety, the lack of affordable housing, unemployment, failing schools, and under-funded social services. We persistently negotiate with public institutions and decision-makers without broad political support, as if the effects of poverty were not the problem of the entire region, of both rich and poor communities, but of individual South L.A. families. We find this to be false. The reality is that the crisis of poverty in our community is systemic, and larger than any one of us. Many systems from which we are supposed to benefit and overcome poverty have not matched our changing needs, have not utilized our strengths, and simply have not provided economic and social power – nevertheless, we must depend on them for daily survival and opportunity. The public schools we have in South L.A. are a prime example of this double jeopardy.

Education—the failed promise in South L.A.

A central mission of public education is to provide equal opportunity to all students for economic and social mobility. However, our children cannot reap the benefits of public education if they are not staying in school in the first place. Schools have not met their needs, and everyday South L.A. is losing a fraction of its most precious resource—our African American and Latino children and youth—to the juvenile justice system or the ranks of students who disappear through truancy and dropouts. Over the years, these fractions have added up to hundreds of lives that are relegated to another generation of poverty. It would be easy for us to get embroiled in a debate over whether poverty causes schools to fail, or failing schools cause poverty, but this would only distract us from our conviction that poverty does not excuse any public school from providing equal chances for children to learn. If more children in South L.A. are disappearing from the school system than in other areas of the state, we find this to be ample evidence that our children's chances at educational and economic success are not in fact equal.

POVERTY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTYⁱ

- Los Angeles County has the largest population of people living in poverty compared to any other metropolitan area in the nation.
- The unemployment rate for young workers, age 16-19 years old, was 24% in the year 2000, with 37% of young people not in the labor force at all.
- 18% of all L.A. County residents live below the poverty level.
- 25% of all children in L.A. County grow up in poverty.
- 46% of poor families with children have full time workers in the family but most of these jobs pay minimum wage, which is not enough to raise their status above the poverty level.

* All statistics taken from the United Way's report (2003), *A Tale of Two Cities: Bridging the Gap Between Promise and Peril*, Executive Review of the State of L.A. County.

“This is a poor community. You need to understand that.”

—South L.A. Parent and Survey Respondent

ADDING UP THE LOSS

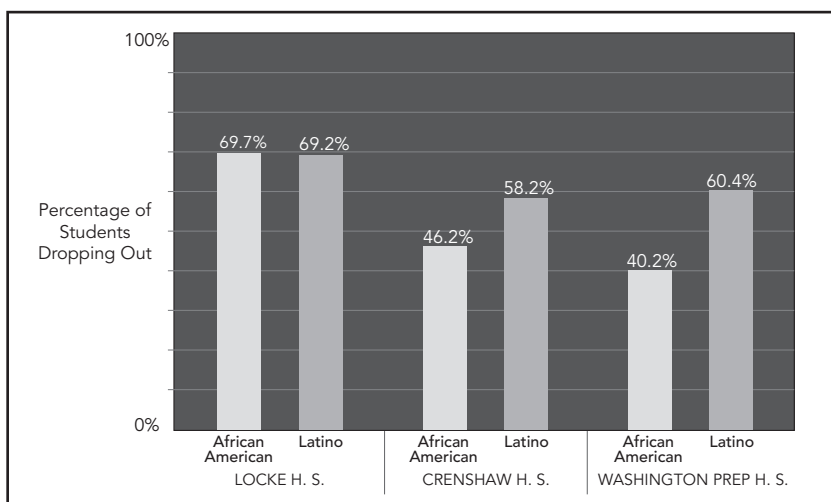
The potential earnings return on education is a reminder of how important education is in alleviating poverty.ⁱⁱ Unfortunately, a greater financial investment is being made to incarcerate youth rather than to educate them.

- The average annual income for a high school dropout is \$18,900, compared to \$40,000 for someone with a Bachelor's degree.
- A college degree is increasingly important in California where wages have increased only for those with a college degree and have decreased for those with lower levels of education.
- The state of California spends \$6,837 per student every year, 11% less than the national average of \$7,640.
- The state spends \$43,800 per year to incarcerate one teenager in a county or state facility.
- In 2002, there were 1,575 teenagers who were incarcerated in state or county facilities in Los Angeles. The total cost for this was more than \$68 million.

* All statistics taken from the United Way's report (2003), *A Tale of Two Cities: Bridging the Gap Between Promise and Peril*, Executive Review of the State of L.A. County.

The following statistics paint a grim picture of what is happening in the three school communities where CADRE focuses its work. The information is from three South L.A. high schools—Crenshaw, Washington Preparatory, and Locke – and the elementaryⁱⁱⁱ and middle^{iv} schools that feed into them. It is unacceptable that more than 40% and in some cases as much as 70% of our students are dropping out of high school. Figure 1 shows the percentage of African American and Latino students who dropped out of Locke, Washington Preparatory, and Crenshaw High Schools in the 2002-2003 school year. These dropout rates far exceed the already high 29% dropout rate for the state of California overall.

FIGURE 1 African American and Latino Drop Out Rates at Three South Los Angeles High Schools, 2002-03 Academic Year

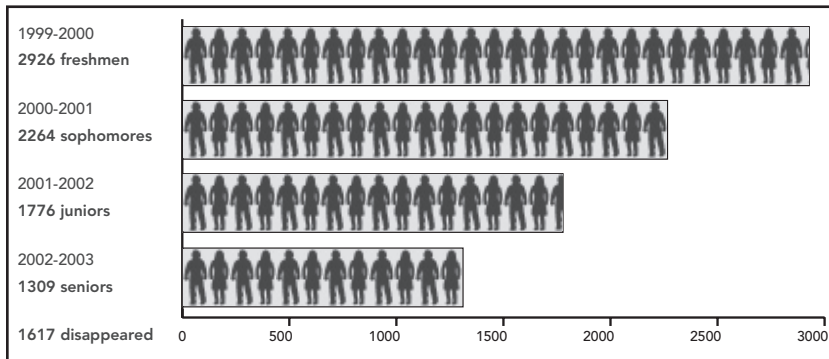


Enrollment and graduation data from the California Department of Education web site, DataQuest, <http://data1cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

Figure 2 shows that combined, **over 1,617 students who started Crenshaw, Washington Preparatory and Locke High Schools in 1999 did not graduate four years later in 2003.** These disappearances from 9th to 12th grade may have “official” explanations but the crisis in our schools is clear, and we find it unacceptable to allow this to continue and do nothing.

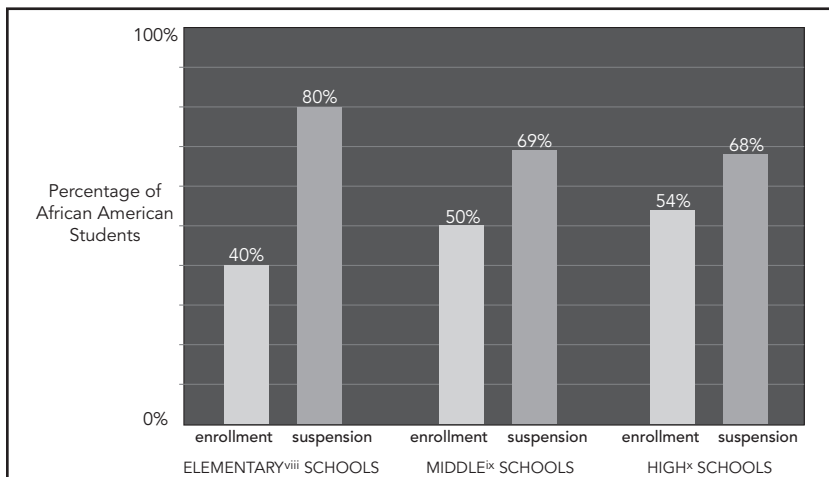
For the students still in school, many face discriminatory treatment. The suspension rates for African American students alone in these particular schools are alarming (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 2^{vi}: Disappearance of Students from 9th to 12th Grade in Three South Los Angeles High Schools



Data from the California Department of Education web site, DataQuest, <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

FIGURE 3^{vii}: Enrollment and Suspension Rates for African American Students in CADRE’s Targeted South L.A. Communities, 2002-2003 Academic Year



*Enrollment and suspension rates for the elementary schools and middle schools that feed into and including Crenshaw, Washington Preparatory, and Locke High Schools.

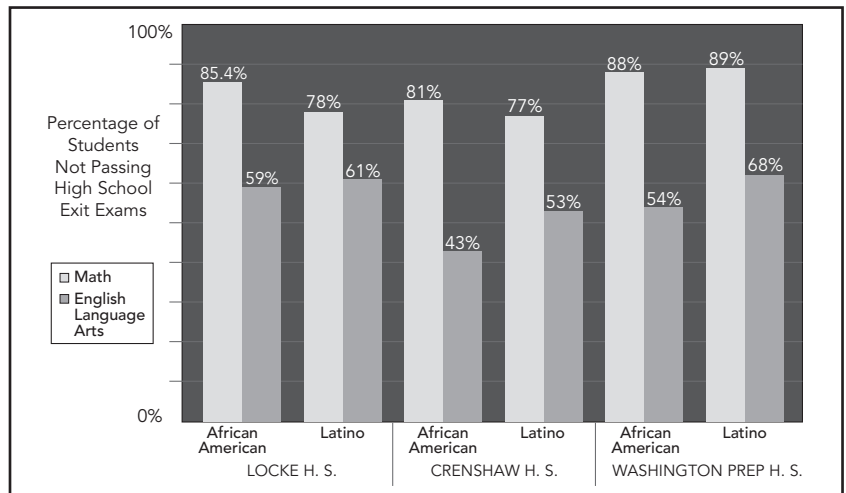
*Enrollment and suspension numbers from the Los Angeles Unified School District website, <http://www.lausd.net>





Looking at a measure of academic success, the California High School Exit Exam, shows that our students are also failing to acquire key skills at alarming rates. Figure 4 shows the percentage of students who **did not pass** the 2002-03 California High School Exit Exam. This exam is now a state requirement for receiving a high school diploma starting with the Class of 2006.

FIGURE 4^{x1} 2002-03 California High School Exit Examination Results for Three South Los Angeles High Schools: Percent Not Passed



Data from the California Department of Education web site, DataQuest, <http://data1cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

The statistics and graphs do not lie. As the situation currently stands, we know firsthand that our children face *incredible* odds against their pursuit of a quality education, one that equips them with what they need to overcome the social, economic, and political isolation of South L.A. If we accept this current reality, we will have to live with disappearance and failure rates that will disable our community for the next two generations.

We at CADRE are not accepting it, however. We no longer want the South L.A. community to pay the steep price of poverty when our children's needs are not met in school. Avoiding parents, or keeping us at a distance so that we are not fully informed or positioned to ask questions, seriously jeopardizes our children. We want to know where the cracks exist in schools that allow our children to disappear, and we want the schools to work with us to repair them. Not only have students disappeared from the school system, but so have parents. Schools have neglected to bring parents in as problem-solvers and decision-makers to address this crisis, and when they do, it is often too late.

“This [school] is not a prison, and the kids [are] not coming to school to be treated that way.”

—South L.A. Parent and Survey Respondent

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

CADRE and Justice Matters Institute used “participatory research” approaches in this project. Participatory research is an interactive process where the goals, experience, and expertise of the members of the community play a major role in shaping the research. This process engages community members in generating the research questions, analysis, understandings, and conclusions. This research approach is used to produce knowledge that can promote change that “is consistent with a vision of a more equitable society.”^{xii}

CADRE and Justice Matters Institute took the following steps:

Literature Review

- Justice Matters Institute selected and summarized relevant literature on parent engagement and school culture.

- CADRE parent members reviewed key literature on parent engagement and school culture.

Survey

Developed the bilingual (Spanish/English) *2004 Survey of South L.A. Parents/Caregivers on Parent-School Relationships and Experiences* which included the following key steps:

- After reviewing the literature and reflecting on their collective experiences with parent involvement and school-family relationships, CADRE Taskforce members generated a list of issues that they felt were connected to parent-school relationships.
- Justice Matters Institute categorized these issues to develop a comprehensive list of themes that could be explored through the survey; categories were

cross-checked by all staff and the Taskforce.

- The survey was piloted in both Spanish and English to check for general question comprehension in both languages.

Who was surveyed^{xiii}

- The survey was conducted over the phone (one survey administered in person) with individuals whose information are part of CADRE’s database of contacts made through its various community outreach efforts in South L.A.
- Of the 680 people called, a total of 122 people responded to the survey.
- 114 respondents were women and 8 were men.
- 64 respondents were Latina/o, 53 were African American, and 5 identified as “Other.”



A Parent-Driven Vision for Parent-School Relationships in South Los Angeles

How do we bring parents back into our schools?

Our purpose in surveying South L.A. parents was to document their experiences with local South L.A. schools, and to identify the specific gaps that generate the extreme disconnection between schools and parents that we observe today. We were primarily interested in parent perspectives on how schools were treating them, and what recommendations they would make to schools. Since CADRE is calling on schools to intentionally build stronger, more respectful relationships with parents, we found it important to present schools with community perspectives on how to go about this process.

The survey results illuminate many of the problems parents have when attempting to engage their schools, and it is clear that South L.A. schools are not responding to parents' concerns. Our survey results bring to light a common experience shared by both African American and Latino respondents: ***Parents feel that schools have biases based on race, class, immigration status, and language that stand in the way of quality relationships between parents and schools.***

Parents are also calling, in unison, for changes in school policies and practices that demonstrate a sincere understanding of community strengths and challenges so that mutual trust can be built. Parents' survey responses point to specific school practices that help accomplish these changes. These practices are the foundation necessary for truly including parents in the struggle to address South L.A. children's educational challenges in a manner that fosters equity and justice. This section summarizes many of our key findings, which have also guided us in articulating and presenting a new, parent-driven vision for parent-school relationships.

Three Key Values in Building Parent-School Alliances in South L.A.

The patterns in the survey responses suggest that for parents to feel that they are treated as full and equal participants, three key values must drive school relationships with parents: **cultural inclusion, engagement, and accountability.** These values are interconnected, and all of them lead schools to policies and practices that truly reach out to and include parents. Although these values overlap and lead to similar practices, they each bring a distinct spirit and meaning to efforts to build partnerships with parents.

If parents had more positive and respectful experiences at schools when it comes to expressing their culture and life experiences, participating in making important decisions, and getting a response when they have problems, we believe that South L.A. parents and schools would be more likely to become allies in the pursuit of an equitable school system.

Valuing **cultural inclusion** leads schools to seek parent participation because of the cultural knowledge parents bring, and because schools see parents from all cultures as knowledgeable people. Valuing **engagement** leads schools to seek parent participation because the school wants to reflect and be connected to the school's community. Valuing **accountability** leads schools to seek parent participation because the schools feel responsible to their parents.

In the following tables, we present the key survey findings that led us to identify each of these critical values in parent-school relationships. We also share our experiences and critiques of how South L.A. schools currently define and practice cultural inclusion, engagement, and accountability, and compare these definitions with what we feel are necessary alternatives. Finally, we identify, on behalf of the parents we surveyed, our expectations for how schools would start the process, in the short-term, of transforming parent-school relationships into ones of mutual trust and respect.

CULTURAL INCLUSION

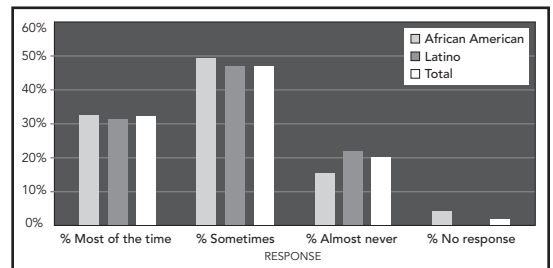
Valuing the inclusion of all cultures means believing that the full recognition and expression of each culture in a community makes the community strong and successful. Schools that value cultural inclusion understand that families’ “cultures” are deep life experiences and values shaped by many factors. Staff in such schools know that it is important to build familiarity with the cultures of students’ families, so that the school can reflect and respect all cultures equally within the learning environment. Schools that value cultural inclusion are more likely to see parents as knowledgeable and having important insights to contribute because staff are aware of the cultural assets that parents bring and also because their perceptions are not distorted by negative cultural stereotypes.



What South L.A. Parents Told Us

A number of findings from our survey^{xiv} tell us that South L.A. parents are not experiencing cultural inclusion to the fullest degree.

- According to 50% of Latino parents and 42% of African American parents, schools “sometimes” and “rarely/almost never” respect their cultures. [Q34]
- More than 60% of both African American and Latino parents said that they were “rarely/almost never” asked to contribute their knowledge for school teaching. [Q32]
- 53% percent of Latino parents and 55% of African American parents said that they were “rarely/almost never” asked to contribute their knowledge towards helping the school work with their children’s behavior and self-esteem. [Q33]
- **Do you feel that the school understands the strengths and challenges of families in your community? [Q36]**
Both groups, African Americans (64%) and Latinos (69%), said that the school “sometimes” or “rarely/almost never” understands the strengths and challenges in their community.



How We Currently Experience South L.A. Schools

- Culture in schools is relegated to a few isolated elements—holidays, special occasions, food and costumes—that are used to simplify a cultural experience.
- Some schools have teachers and administrators that share the same culture, race, or language as their students, but the schools are still not culturally inclusive.
- The community’s cultures are not incorporated into the school’s culture, curriculum, or norms.
- Schools play a role in perpetuating social divisions based on culture.

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS—
PARENTS GIVE ADVICE
TO SCHOOLS...**



Don't stereotype parents

*Understand the cultural roots
of the community*

*Stop treating parents like
children, and respect them
as adults*

*Treat families as you wish to
be treated*

Stop the racism



Our Vision

We want South L.A. schools to make a commitment to include all voices of their communities in the way they operate and educate. Schools and their personnel demonstrate cultural inclusion when they:

- understand the families, children, and communities they serve;
- regard “culture” as deep life experiences and values shaped by many factors;
- seek out parent knowledge as an important resource;
- incorporate references and subjects into curricula and assessments that are relevant to students’ cultural and social experiences;
- resist sorting, tracking, and labeling patterns that perpetuate stereotypes and inequalities of the community’s children and families; and
- rely on community strengths to solve educational challenges rather than assign blame.

Our Expectations for Short-Term Change

A culturally inclusive school in South L.A. should begin with:

- policies that ensure inclusion and respect for all parents’ and students’ cultures throughout the entire school community, with a deliberate goal of achieving equity among languages, communication styles, and life experiences, and the elimination of discriminatory practices resulting in vastly different educational outcomes for different groups of students;
- parent and community-led orientations for teachers and school staff about the students, parents, and community they serve, focused on increasing understanding of both strengths and challenges, and with the purpose of fostering dignity and respect for the entire school community;
- mandatory classes for teachers and school staff about teaching South L.A. community history and culture and fostering positive self-esteem;
- regular surveys of teachers, school staff, and parents regarding their perceptions and understanding of each other, and the quality of their relationships with one another; and
- quarterly parent-school dialogues to engage different cultures within the school community, build trust between racial and ethnic groups, and collectively address potentially divisive issues.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement means truly valuing connection with the community. A school that values engagement wants parents to be actively involved in shaping what happens in the school so that the school will genuinely reflect the community. Schools that value engagement create a range of accessible and meaningful opportunities to generate input and contributions from parents to the teaching and learning environment. True parent engagement fully includes parents in decision-making surrounding their children's education, and ensures that parent input is seen as equal to that of school personnel. Schools that genuinely engage parents make input and decision-making opportunities part of the schools' culture and structure; school personnel set aside time, resources, and energy to deliberately support the process necessary for equitable parent-school decision-making to take place.



What South L.A. Parents Told Us^{xv}

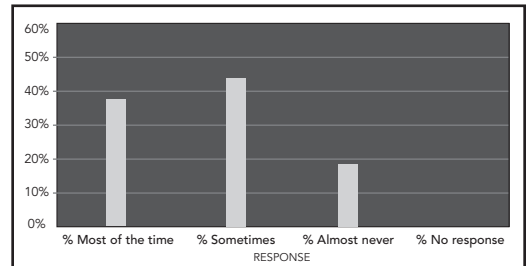
Parents want to and do make active efforts to participate in their children's schools.

- Both African American (96%) and Latino (87%) parents feel that parents can improve the quality of our schools. [Q12]
- 70% of parents reported having attended a school meeting [Q6]. When their children were having problems, 85% of African American and 74% of Latino parents said they had spoken to someone at the school. [Q9]

Survey results show, however, that schools are not sufficiently engaging parents in decision-making regarding the school or their child's education.

- 76% of Latino parents and 51% of African American parents said they "sometimes" and "rarely/almost never" feel they have control over important school or education decisions that impact their child. [Q22]
- When important decisions are made about your child's education, do you feel your opinions are taken into account by the school? [Q23a]

62% of African American parents feel that their opinions are sometimes or almost never taken into account by schools when important decisions are made about their child's education.



- 54% of Latino parents say they "rarely/almost never" feel like a partner in the school. [Q14]
- in open-ended responses parents expressed deep dissatisfaction about their relationships with schools.^{xvi}

How We Currently Experience South L.A. Schools

- Typical parent engagement activities include volunteering at school events, supervising with homework, and participating in school-sponsored parent organizations.^{xvii} Traditional forms of parent engagement are not adequate for meaningful participation.
- These activities are based on a white, middle class model of parent involvement^{xviii} and are not relevant to or sufficient for real change in South L.A. parent-school relationships.

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS—
PARENTS GIVE ADVICE
TO SCHOOLS...**



*Be more open with families—
listen, talk, and be friendlier
with them*

*Make it a positive,
welcoming atmosphere for
parents to feel comfortable
asking questions and getting
involved*

*Include parents in finding
solutions to the problems
that affect their children*

*Ensure that non-English
speakers can have the same
communication in meetings*

*Respect our decisions and
opinions*



Our Vision

We want parents to be actively supported and respected to make significant decisions that determine the quality of South L.A. schools. Meaningful parent engagement reflects the following:

- institutional commitment to viewing parents as primary stakeholders in decision-making and actively engaging parents in the process; and
- meaningful relationships with parents through regular dialogue and joint problem-solving, going above and beyond the minimum requirements of school-home communication.

Our Expectations for Short-Term Change

True parent engagement in South L.A. should begin with:

- open and clear communication to parents about their right to visit their children's schools and classrooms;
- structured opportunities for parents to give input, have information, and help make decisions in matters affecting the quality of their child's educational program;
- informing parents in a timely and clear fashion as to when and how to participate in those opportunities;
- policies that ensure all parents, especially across cultural groups, have equal access to and information on engagement opportunities;
- teachers and school staff adhering to an "early warning" system that identifies and documents children's educational challenges as soon as possible to maximize parents' participation in addressing them; and
- parents having concrete opportunities to make recommendations to teachers and school staff on the quality of their parent engagement strategies and efforts.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Valuing accountability means schools genuinely believe that they are answerable and responsible to parents. When schools feel accountable to parents, they embrace and respond to parents acting, individually or collectively, to ensure that schools are sincere, trustworthy and dependable in serving the best interests of all our children. Such schools do not act autonomously but feel an obligation to have the buy-in and support of parents for all of its policies and actions. Schools that value accountability to parents ensure that parents have the information, tools, access, and power to examine a school’s standards, practices, strengths, and weaknesses. When parents demand improvement and change, accountable schools feel an immediate responsibility to meet higher standards and maintain the trust of parents.



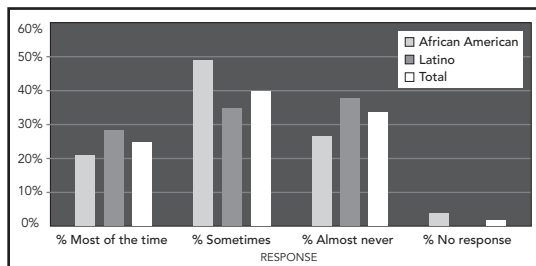
What South L.A. Parents Told Us^{xix}

Being adequately informed, being heard, and getting timely responses are key first steps to parents feeling that schools are accountable to them. Specific findings from our survey reflect significant gaps in these areas:

- Nearly half (46%) of both African American and Latino parents say that they are “rarely/almost never” given information on how the school is doing academically. [Q28]
- 56% of Latino and 55% of African American parents say the school “rarely/almost never” informs them of who is responsible for the quality of the school environment. [Q20]
- 53% of African American parents say that their schools “sometimes” and “rarely/almost never” respond in a satisfactory manner when they have complaints or problems with the school. [Q21]

• Do you feel that the school listens to community concerns? [Q15]

Parents in both groups overwhelmingly—74 percent—responded that schools “sometimes” or “rarely/almost never” listen to community concerns.



How We Currently Experience South L.A. Schools

- Current discussions of accountability focus on standardized test scores, which are used as the sole marker for a school’s and student’s success.
- Schools presently do not feel answerable in any way to their parents.
- There is complete disregard for parents’ opinions about the quality of schools and our desire for change.
- When parents take action to hold schools accountable, whether it is in regard to their own children or the entire school, parents are treated as troublemakers and are no longer welcomed at school.

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS—
PARENTS GIVE ADVICE
TO SCHOOLS...**

Take parents into account when they come and talk about their children

Listen, recognize, and respond to the concerns of parents—especially when it is more than just one parent with the same complaint

Don't retaliate against a parent when they demand change

Respond to the questions that parents have

Be able to find solutions to the problems parents identify

Our Vision

We want South L.A. schools that are genuinely accountable to the community. True accountability, that goes beyond standardized test scores, encompasses the following:

- leadership and commitment among school personnel to a true accountability structure and process;
- schools openly sharing information, communicating their successes and failures, and proactively responding to parents' concerns and grievances;
- overall transparency in schools' policies and procedures, including: decision-making policies and process; acquisition and expenditure of funds; school staff roles and responsibilities; and political representation of parents; and
- clear problem-solving and grievance procedures with an external and independent oversight mechanism^{xx} to ensure due process for all parties involved in resolving a grievance.

Our Expectations for Short-Term Change

Accountability in South L.A. schools should begin with:

- regular, parent-led school forums at which school staff must be present to hear and respond to parent assessments of school quality and outcomes;
- policies that protect parents' right to monitor the implementation of educational programs and practices without retaliation;
- parents equipped with information on who is responsible for all aspects of the school environment, including clear chains of command;
- trainings for parents on effectively holding schools accountable;
- parent-led assessments of schools to identify areas in which schools must have more accountability;
- policies that outline clear grievance procedures parents can use to file complaints, and how grievances will be resolved, including how due process for all parties will be achieved in the process; and
- establishment of a clear process of recourse if parents' grievances are not resolved with adequate due process, timeliness, and transparency.

Dignity and Respect for Parents is Part of the Solution

Parents are an enormous untapped resource for South L.A. schools. Our survey produced findings showing that parents almost unanimously believe that they can improve our schools. Yet, our survey results also show that a majority of parents do not feel like they are equal partners with the schools. Their overall experience with the schools is negative, and the majority of parents called for a change in treatment, based on dignity and respect. Not only have the schools failed to provide an excellent education for all children in South L.A., they have also failed to establish relationships with the parents in the community.

By schools practicing the values of cultural inclusion, engagement, and accountability as CADRE has defined them, the role of parents in education and in schools becomes more political, powerful, and meaningful. Cultural inclusion requires that all cultures that are part of the school community have an influence on shaping the school environment, norms, curriculum, and assessments. Engagement of parents is necessary to incorporate parents' opinions in decision-making in all aspects of schooling. Accountability allows parents to hold school officials responsible for their actions. It also allows parents to play an active role in evaluating, assessing, and improving schools. Schools must ensure that parents' race, socio-economic status, education level, immigration status, or language and communication style are not barriers to advocating for and contributing to their children's rights to equal opportunities to learn in a thriving, positive environment.

It is the obligation of schools to work with parents who are willing to develop collective solutions that address the obstacles their children face. While this active participation from parents is what schools claim to seek, they often shut out the low-income parents of color who challenge the beliefs, attitudes, practices, and responsiveness of schools. CADRE parents are calling on South L.A. schools to work with parents to turn this situation around and build the mutual trust and respect that are at the heart of any true partnership.



Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize of Education, Racial and Social Justice: Closing and Future Direction

Imagine receiving a letter in your language from your child's school that informs you about the institution's commitment to making sure that you feel comfortable and welcome at the school, and acknowledging that the families in the community have many gifts to offer the school. This same letter invites you to make recommendations to the principal and teachers at any given time because your input is equal to that of school personnel. This same letter lets you know that the school values positive relationships with all parents, and is especially concerned that parents and school staff across race, culture, and language learn how to support each other. Picture a school office in which everyone is acknowledged, regardless of age, language, or race.

Imagine getting a telephone call from each of your child's teachers that lets you know what your child is doing well first, and then what challenges she or he is facing. Each teacher asks to meet you and your family personally, whether it is at school or at your home. You always get a phone call in time to deal with a problem so that it does not get worse or become irreparable. When you are face to face with each of your child's teachers, you are acknowledged for your contributions as a parent, given equal time to talk and ask questions, and are able to get clear answers and/or follow-up. Your child's teachers ask you what motivates your child, how to bring out his or her best, and how you would like his or her learning environment to be.

Imagine that you are extremely concerned with the fact that your child was suspended recently without any warning or prior notification that there was a problem with her or his behavior. After talking with your child, you discover that the teacher does not seem to know how to create a positive, respectful relationship with his or her students, and seems to send students out of his or her class every time there is a problem. You find out that a dozen other parents of students in that class are also upset and experiencing the same situation with their children. Imagine going as a group to the principal's office and asking for a meeting to discuss this teacher's pattern. Your group is told your effort to bring this matter to the school's attention is important for making the school a better place, and that there will be a series of meetings immediately to hear from all sides and find out the best way to resolve this matter. You are asked to bring even more parents to those meetings and are assured that students, parents, the teacher, and administrators will have equal say in developing a solution that is in the best interests of the students, and reduces the use of suspensions, because they only criminalize children.

"If you [the school] respect me, I will respect you 100%."

—South L.A. Parent and Survey Respondent



These images are merely starting points for picturing what is possible if South L.A. schools valued dignity and respect in their interactions and relationships with parents, and would only begin to move us towards equity and justice for African American and Latino children and parents. Parent-school relationships may seem like an insignificant issue in light of the many other challenges South L.A. schools face; however, CADRE strongly disagrees. The current conditions of schools are completely unacceptable, and we recognize that as the rightful owners of public education, it is our duty to eliminate the injustices our children face as they pursue their dreams. This duty requires us not just to be involved in our children's education, but to be organized, unified, and committed leaders, advocates, and policy changers. To do this, we must have higher standards of parent-school relationships in place so that we can truly be at the problem-solving table.

In the near future, we will be calling upon South L.A. schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District to establish strategic alliances with CADRE parent leaders. We expect that these alliances will create the political opportunity to address the challenges of parent-school relationships in South L.A. We will be taking the initiative over the next several years to identify schools and school personnel who understand the benefit of working with parent leaders such as ourselves, who believe in the community, and who

are willing to establish new standards of cultural inclusion, engagement, and accountability in their relations with parents. We are seeking teachers and school staff who are committed to social justice for children of this community. Through these strategic alliances with specific schools, we will work to transform the role of parents, and create the conditions necessary for **all** parents to be respected and included in solving South L.A.'s educational crisis.

Our eyes are on the prize of social and racial justice for our children, which depends on educational justice. We know that our work is an instrumental step towards making our schools places where our children thrive on knowledge, confidence, and unconditional faith in themselves and their community. On a daily basis CADRE will continue to advance our mission of solidifying African American and Latino parent leadership through vigilant grassroots outreach and relationship-building with the parents that schools rarely reach, supporting their journey towards advocacy and activism, and integrating them as members of our organization. It is our intention to harness the knowledge and insights of the parents of South L.A. into a source of new policies and practices that will level the playing field for both parents and children. Our schools should and will be places of dignity and respect.



Endnotes

- ⁱ All statistics taken from the United Way's report (2003), *A Tale of Two Cities: Bridging the Gap Between Promise and Peril*, Executive Review of the State of L.A. County.
- ⁱⁱ All statistics taken from the United Way's report (2003), *A Tale of Two Cities: Bridging the Gap Between Promise and Peril*, Executive Review of the State of L.A. County.
- ⁱⁱⁱ The elementary schools: 42nd Street, 54th Street, 59th Street, 61st Street, 66th Street, 74th Street, 95th Street, 99th Street, 107th Street, 109th Street, 116th Street, 118th Street, 122nd Street, Angeles Mesa, Barrett, Century Park, Cimarron, Figueroa, Hyde Park, Manchester, Manhattan, Raymond Avenue, West Athens, Western and Woodcrest Elementary Schools.
- ^{iv} The middle schools: Clay, Gompers, Bret Harte Preparatory and Horace Mann Middle Schools.
- ^v Drop out rate calculated as: Drop out rate = # students disappeared/ # 9th grade enrolled * 100. (# students disappeared = # students enrolled in 9th grade for 1999-2000 - # 12th grade graduates for 2002-2003).
- ^{vi} Enrollment data from the California Department of Education web site, Data Quest <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>.
- ^{vii} Suspension rate for African American students= total # of African American students suspended/ total # of all students suspended *100.
- ^{viii} The elementary schools: 42nd Street, 54th Street, 59th Street, 61st Street, 66th Street, 74th Street, 95th Street, 99th Street, 107th Street, 109th Street, 116th Street, 118th Street, 122nd Street, Angeles Mesa, Barrett, Century Park, Cimarron, Figueroa, Hyde Park, Manchester, Manhattan, Raymond Avenue, West Athens, Western and Woodcrest Elementary Schools.
- ^{ix} The middle schools: Clay, Gompers, Bret Harte Preparatory and Horace Mann Middle Schools.
- ^x The high schools: Crenshaw, Washington Preparatory and Locke High Schools.
- ^{xi} Percent not passed, for Math and English Language Arts, is the average number of students tested in 10th, 11th and 12th grades. Percent not passed = # students not passed/ # students tested * 100.
- ^{xii} From the Center for Popular Education and Participatory Research web site at UC Berkeley, <http://www.cpepr.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=Sections&file=index&req=viewarticle&artid=3>.
- ^{xiii} See Appendix B.
- ^{xiv} See Appendix C.
- ^{xv} See Appendix C.
- ^{xvi} See Appendix D.
- ^{xvii} From Joyce Epstein's model of the six types of parent involvement, taken from Henderson, A., & Mapp, K. (2002). *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Austin, TX: National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools. (p. 22)
- ^{xviii} Okahara, A. (1999). *Power and Parent Involvement*. Pre-qualifying paper for the Ph.D. in Social Cultural Studies in Education, University of California, Berkeley.
- ^{xix} See Appendix C.
- ^{xx} Role of an Ombudsperson for the Right to Education. From Sullivan, E. (2003). *Civil Society and School Accountability: A Human Rights Approach to Parent and Community Participation in NYC Schools*. New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy.
- ^{xxi} Due to translation oversight, this survey question, Question 23, was asked slightly differently in English than in Spanish.

Appendix A: Survey Questions

2004 Survey of South LA Student Parents/Caregivers on Parent-School Relationships and Experiences

For Questions 1 and 3-13, respondents were asked to select from one of the following:

1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Don't know

1. Do you have children attending schools in South LA or in this community?

For Question 2, respondents were asked to list their children's schools and years of attendance:

2. Which school(s) are they currently attending and for how long?

3. Does your school regularly give you information about school programs and activities?

4. When they give you the information, is it in a language that you understand?

5. The school has informed me about my rights regarding my child's education.

6. Have you attended a school meeting?

7. In that meeting, were parents or were you asked to share your opinions or concerns about what is happening at the school?

8. Do you feel like you are taken seriously when you are in a meeting at the school?

9. Have you ever spoken with anyone at the school about a problem your child was having or a concern you had with the school?

10. If your child had a problem or if something was troubling you about the school, is there someone at the school you would turn to?

11. Are there people at the school office who can speak to you in your home language?

12. Do you think that parents can improve the quality of schools?

13. When your child first registered at the school, were you given information about how to be an informed, active parent?

For the remaining questions, respondents were asked to select from the following:

1 = Most of the time 2 = Sometimes 3 = Rarely/almost never

14. Do you feel that you are a partner with the school's employees (teachers, principal, and staff) to make the school a better place for your child?

15. Do you feel that the school listens to community concerns?

16. Do you feel that the school lets you know about the positive things going on at the school?

17. Do you feel that the school lets you know about the challenges that the school faces?

18. Do you feel that the school lets you know about its plans for making the school a better place?

19. Do you feel that the school carries out those plans?

20. Does the school let you know who is responsible for the quality of the school environment?

21. Do you feel that the school responds in a satisfactory manner when parents have complaints or problems with the school?

22. Do you feel that you have control over important school or education decisions that impact your child?

23a. When important decisions are made about your child's education, do you feel your opinions are taken into account by the school?

24. When your child is facing a challenge at school, are you consulted to help come up with a solution?

25. Does the school give you, or do you feel it will give you, sufficient information to resolve issues regarding your child?

Appendix B: Background Data

2004 Survey of South LA Student Parents/Caregivers on Parent-School Relationships and Experiences

ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS:

Total called	Total surveyed	Females	Males	Latino	African American	Other	Average time to administer survey
680	122	114	8	64	53	5	18 minutes

AGE GROUP

Total respondents	under 20 years old	20-29 years old	30-39 years old	40-49 years old	50-59 years old
114	0	9	45	43	17

EDUCATION LEVEL

Total respondents	Did not complete elementary school	Elementary school	Middle school	High school	Some college	College/university	Graduate/professional school
121	17	26	19	24	30	3	2

SCHOOL AND WORK

Total respondents	Public school in this country	No public school in this country	Public school in South L.A.	No public school in South L.A.	Working	Not working
121	79	42	57	64	59	62

LATINO AND AFRICAN AMERICAN RESPONDENTS:

	Total called	Total surveyed	Females	Males
Latino	211	64	61	3
African American	469	53	49	4

AGE GROUP

	Under 20	20-29 yrs old	30-39 yrs old	40-49 yrs old	50-59 yrs old	Total respondents
Latino	0	8	27	22	7	64
African American	0	1	16	21	9	47

EDUCATION LEVEL

	Did not complete elem. school	Elem. school	Middle school	High school	Some college	College/university	Graduate/prof. school	Total respondents
Latino	15	26	16	1	4	2	0	64
African American	0	0	3	23	23	1	2	52

SCHOOL AND WORK

	Public school in this country	No public school in this country	Public school in South L.A.	No public school in South L.A.	Working	Not working	Total respondents
Latino	26	38	22	42	30	34	64
African American	49	3	33	19	27	25	52

Appendix C: Survey Results

2004 Survey of South LA Student Parents/Caregivers on Parent-School Relationships and Experiences

Question		# Yes	# No	# Don't know	# No response	% Yes	% No	% Don't know	% No response
1. Do you have children attending schools in South LA or in this community?	Total	122	0	0	0	100%	0	0	0
	Latino	64	0	0	0	100%	0	0	0
	African American	53	0	0	0	100%	0	0	0
	Other	5	0	0	0	100%	0	0	0
3. Does your school regularly give you information about school programs and activities?	Total	91	24	7	0	74.6%	19.7%	5.7%	0
	Latino	45	14	5	0	70.3%	21.9%	7.8%	0
	African American	42	9	2	0	79.2%	17%	3.8%	0
4. When they give you the information, is it in a language that you understand?	Total	97	4	3	18	79.5%	3.3%	2.5%	14.7%
	Latino	43	2	3	16	67.2%	3.1%	4.7	25%
	African American	49	2	0	2	92.4%	3.8%	0	3.8%
5. The school has informed me about my rights regarding my child's education.	Total	76	36	10	0	62.3%	29.5%	8.2%	0
	Latino	33	26	5	0	51.6%	40.6%	7.8	0
	African American	41	9	3	0	77.4%	17%	5.6	0
6. Have you attended a school meeting?	Total	84	38	0	0	68.9%	31.1%	0	0
	Latino	57	7	0	0	89.1%	10.9%	0	0
	African American	25	28	0	0	47.2%	52.8%	0	0
7. In that meeting, were parents or were you asked to share your opinions or concerns about what is happening at the school?	Total	53	19	9	41	43.4%	15.6%	7.4%	33.6%
	Latino	35	16	5	8	54.7%	25%	7.5%	12.5%
	African American	17	2	4	30	32.1%	3.8%	7.5%	56.6%
8. Do you feel like you are taken seriously when you are in a meeting at the school?	Total	52	21	9	40	42.6%	17.2%	7.4%	32.8%
	Latino	34	17	5	8	53.1%	26.6%	7.8%	12.5%
	African American	17	3	4	29	32.1%	5.7%	7.5%	54.7%
9. Have you ever spoken with anyone at the school about a problem your child was having or a concern you had with the school?	Total	97	23	2	0	79.5%	18.9%	1.6%	0
	Latino	47	16	1	0	73.4%	25%	1.6%	0
	African American	45	7	1	0	84.9%	13.2%	1.9%	0
10. If your child had a problem or if something was troubling you about the school, is there someone at the school you would turn to?	Total	92	19	9	2	75.4%	15.6%	7.4%	1.6%
	Latino	45	10	8	1	70.3%	15.6%	12.5%	1.6%
	African American	44	7	1	1	83%	13.2%	1.9%	1.9%
11. Are there people at the school office who can speak to you in your home language?	Total	117	3	2	0	95.9%	2.5%	1.6%	0
	Latino	59	3	2	0	92.2%	4.7%	3.1%	0
	African American	53	0	0	0	100%	0	0	0
12. Do you think that parents can improve the quality of schools?	Total	112	5	5	0	91.8%	4.1%	4.1%	0
	Latino	56	4	4	0	87.4%	6.3%	6.3%	0
	African American	51	1	1	0	96.2%	1.9%	1.9%	0
13. When your child first registered at school, were you given information about how to be an informed, active parent?	Total	67	46	9	0	54.9%	37.7%	7.4%	0
	Latino	30	31	3	0	46.9%	48.4%	4.7%	0
	African American	35	13	5	0	66%	24.5%	9.5%	0

Question		# Yes	# No	# Don't know	# No response	% Yes	% No	% Don't know	% No response
14. Do you feel that you are a partner with the school's employees (teachers, principal, and staff) to make the school a better place for your child?	Total	29	41	52	0	23.8%	33.6%	42.6%	0
	Latino	9	20	35	0	14%	31.3%	54.7%	0
	African American	19	21	13	0	35.8%	39.7%	24.5%	0
15. Do you feel that the school listens to community concerns?	Total	30	49	41	2	24.6%	40.2%	33.6%	1.6%
	Latino	18	22	24	0	28.1%	34.4%	37.5%	0
	African American	11	26	14	2	20.8%	49.1%	26.4%	3.7%
16. Do you feel that the school lets you know about the positive things going on at the school?	Total	40	47	35	0	32.8%	38.5%	28.7%	0
	Latino	17	27	20	0	26.5%	42.2%	31.3%	0
	African American	22	18	13	0	41.5%	34%	24.5%	0
17. Do you feel that the school lets you know about the challenges that the school faces?	Total	28	32	62	0	23%	26.2%	50.8%	0
	Latino	12	17	35	0	18.7%	26.6%	54.7%	0
	African American	15	15	23	0	28.3%	28.5%	43.4%	0
18. Do you feel that the school lets you know about its plans for making the school a better place?	Total	31	51	40	0	25.4%	41.8%	32.8%	0
	Latino	15	29	20	0	23.4%	45.3%	31.3%	0
	African American	15	22	16	0	28.3%	41.5%	30.2%	0
19. Do you feel that the school carries out those plans?	Total	19	41	22	40	15.6%	33.6%	18%	32.8%
	Latino	6	22	14	22	9.4%	34.4%	21.8%	34.4%
	African American	12	19	8	14	22.6%	35.9%	15.1%	26.4%
20. Does the school let you know who is responsible for the quality of the school environment?	Total	24	29	69	0	19.7%	23.8%	56.6%	0
	Latino	8	20	36	0	12.4%	31.3%	56.3%	0
	African American	15	9	29	0	28.3%	17%	54.7%	0
21. Do you feel that the school responds in a satisfactory manner when parents have complaints or problems with the school?	Total	33	49	36	4	27.0%	40.2%	29.5%	3.3%
	Latino	8	31	22	3	12.5%	48.4%	34.4%	4.7%
	African American	24	18	10	1	45.3%	34%	18.9%	1.8%
22. Do you feel that you have control over important school or education decisions that impact your child?	Total	43	43	36	0	35.2%	35.2%	29.6%	0
	Latino	15	27	22	0	23.4%	42.2%	34.4%	0
	African American	26	15	12	0	49.1%	28.3%	22.6%	0
23a. When important decisions are made about your child's education, do you feel your opinions are taken into account by the school? (asked only to English speakers, 63%)	Total	21	25	13	4	35.6%	42.4%	22%	0%
	Latino	0	0	1	0	0	0	100%	0
	African American	20	23	10	0	37.7%	43.4%	18.9%	0
23b. When your child is facing a challenge, do you feel your opinions are taken into account by the school? (asked only to Spanish speakers, 71%)	Total	14	23	22	4	22.2%	36.5%	34.9%	6.3%
	Latino	14	23	22	4	22.2%	36.5%	34.9%	6.3%
	African American	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
24. When your child is facing a challenge at school, are you consulted to help come up with a solution?	Total	44	38	40	0	36%	31.1%	32.9%	0
	Latino	23	17	24	0	35.9%	26.6%	37.5%	0
	African American	18	21	14	0	34%	39.6%	26.4%	0
25. Does the school give you, or do you feel it will give you, sufficient information to resolve issues regarding your child?	Total	48	45	29	0	39.3%	36.9%	23.8%	0
	Latino	22	22	20	0	34.4%	34.4%	31.2%	0
	African American	24	22	7	0	45.3%	41.5%	13.2%	0

Question		# Yes	# No	# Don't know	# No response	% Yes	% No	% Don't know	% No response
26. If they do give you information, do you understand all of the information the school gives you in order to make decisions about your child's education?	Total	60	52	10	0	49.2%	42.6%	8.2%	0
	Latino	27	29	8	0	42.2%	45.3%	12.5%	0
	African American	28	23	2	0	52.8%	43.4%	3.8%	0
27. Can you easily or readily obtain important information (for example, your child's file) about your child's education?	Total	45	39	30	8	36.9%	32%	24.6%	6.5%
	Latino	23	18	22	1	35.9%	28.1%	34.4%	1.6%
	African American	20	20	6	7	37.7%	37.7%	11.3%	13.3%
28. Does the school give you information that tells you how the school is doing academically?	Total	38	28	56	0	31.1%	22.9%	46%	0
	Latino	19	16	29	0	29.7%	25%	45.3%	0
	African American	18	12	23	0	34%	22.6%	43.4%	0
29. Do you feel that you respond or take action when the school asks you to do something to help?	Total	70	37	10	5	57.4%	30.3%	8.2%	4.1%
	Latino	40	18	5	1	62.5%	28.1%	7.8%	1.6%
	African American	27	19	5	2	50.9%	35.8%	9.4%	3.9%
30. Do you feel that you could do more to get the information you need to better understand your child's education?	Total	69	42	11	0	56.6%	34.4%	9.0%	0
	Latino	37	21	6	0	57.8%	32.8%	9.4%	0
	African American	28	20	5	0	52.8%	37.7%	9.5%	0
31. Is the information sent home from the school translated into a language other than English?	Total	76	32	14	0	62.3%	26.2%	11.5%	0
	Latino	37	21	6	0	57.8%	32.8%	9.4%	0
	African American	37	9	7	0	69.8%	17%	13.2%	0
32. Are you asked to contribute your knowledge for school teaching?	Total	21	20	80	1	17.2%	16.4%	65.6%	0.8%
	Latino	12	11	41	0	18.8%	17.2%	64%	0
	African American	8	9	35	1	15.1%	17%	66%	1.9%
33. Are you asked to contribute your knowledge towards helping the schoolwork with children's behavior and self-esteem in the classroom?	Total	22	34	66	0	18.0%	27.9%	54.1%	0
	Latino	12	18	34	0	18.8%	28.1%	53.1%	0
	African American	8	16	29	0	15.1%	30.2%	54.7%	0
34. Do you feel the school respects your culture?	Total	63	44	12	3	51.6%	36.1%	9.8%	2.5%
	Latino	32	26	6	0	50%	40.6%	9.4%	0
	African American	29	17	5	2	54.7%	32.1%	9.4%	3.8%
35. Do you feel that your child can feel proud of their culture in their school?	Total	78	35	8	1	63.9%	28.7%	6.6%	0.8%
	Latino	43	16	4	1	67.2%	25%	6.3%	1.5%
	African American	32	17	4	0	60.4%	32.1%	7.5%	0
36. Do you feel that the school understands the strengths and challenges of families in your community?	Total	39	57	24	2	32%	46.7%	19.7%	1.6%
	Latino	20	30	14	0	31.3%	46.9%	21.8%	0
	African American	17	26	8	2	32.1%	49.1%	15.1%	3.7%
37. Do you feel that the school has a positive atmosphere?	Total	43	44	35	0	35.2%	36.1%	28.7%	0
	Latino	21	23	20	0	32.8%	35.9%	31.3%	0
	African American	20	21	12	0	37.7%	39.6%	22.7%	0
38. Are you allowed to visit the school and your child's classroom without an appointment?	Total	53	19	48	2	43.4%	15.6%	39.4%	1.6%
	Latino	19	12	33	0	29.7%	18.8%	51.5%	0
	African American	32	6	13	2	60.4%	11.3%	24.5%	3.8%

Appendix D: Survey Results, Responses to Open-Ended Question

2004 Survey of South LA Student Parents/Caregivers on Parent-School Relationships and Experiences

Survey #s and Response to Open Ended Question #39:

If you had to give advice to your child's school about how to treat families in your community, what would you say?

1. That there should be equality [at the school] amongst all children and parents of the school.
2. [The school should] Treat the parents that come to the school in a good way.
3. That there should be translation [at the school] for Non-English speaking parents, especially in parent / teacher meetings. The school must guarantee this.
4. [The school should] Always listen to parents. Don't [the school] throw our opinions to the trash. Always [the school] take into consideration the opinions of parents.
5. [The school] Treat families in a good way. [The school should] help parents find what they need.
6. [The school should] Pay more attention to families and the children.
7. They [the school] should respond to the questions parents have and they should do it in their language. They [the school] should be courteous with people.
8. [The school should] Listen to parents more. Respond accordingly to the questions that parents have.
9. [The school] Listen to the concerns of both parents and student, e.g. safety, the behavior [are concerns that parents have] of children.
10. [The school should] First of all include parents and see how parents and school can support each other. Work together (parents and school) to improve school atmosphere. They [the school] should not be racist or have preference over one race. They [the school] should inform parents about the good and bad that happen at the school.
11. The school should respond immediately. They [the school] should facilitate parents with help to their problems. They [the school] should face the problem at that moment.
12. [The school] Be accountable to the families. [The school] Do not leave parents unattended when they come up to the school. Listen to the concerns of parents. That there should not be any discrimination [from the school] towards parents. The school principal should select staff that has these qualities with families.
13. The school should treat students in a better way. The school should behave in a good way with students and families, to be able to obtain mutual respect between families and school.
14. [The school] Don't discriminate the families.
15. They [the school] should have more programs for parents so that they can support their children in the academic area.
16. [The school] should have more attention towards its students. The teachers should help and give their attention to the students. [The school should have] Fewer students in a classroom.
17. [The school should] Treat them with respect and speak to them in their native language so that they can feel comfortable and be able to have a conversation.
18. [The school and teachers] Respect the students so that they respect the teachers. The teachers need to establish trust with his/ her students. Teachers should include the parents in finding solutions to the problems that affect their children. If the problem cannot be resolved there should be a process were one can take the problem to highest instance, (e.g. the principal) to find a solution.
19. There needs to be more communication with the parents. Especially [the school should] take into account the difference of language, ensure that non-English speakers can have the same communication in the meetings. Suggestions [to the school] for the meetings are to have the meetings separated by language, one in English and the other in Spanish.
20. I would tell them [the school] to be more open. That they [the school] should have acceptance of parents at the school. Let parents integrate themselves more in the school without any limitations.
21. [The school should] Listen and pay more attention to the needs of the children in the yard and classroom.
22. Treat everybody the same; don't scream at the kids.
23. Need to provide more information on racial issues, [by] getting parents together to solve this issue. Making a mandatory meeting for students & parents to discuss the issues at hand.
24. Stop treating parents like a child[ren], and respect them as adults.
25. I would want them to treat us with respect, period.
26. Treat each family as a different family, not based on the families you have came in contact with. When you work in the community you have to be a certain way, an example to others leave [your mess] some things at home, [basically respect.]
27. No matter what culture the family is, the school should provide the language they speak; that way they will communicate better.
28. I don't know...

29. I don't know, I think they do a good job...
30. [I would], tell the school, if schools & parents work together, they would have parents more informed and connecting to address different issues the youth is having.
31. They [the schools] need a better understanding of parents and students, towards a better relationship.
32. I have no idea.
33. Treat families with respect & open communication, so when problems arise they work together to solve the issue.
34. Treat families with respect, in a friendly environment; a clean environment, talk about kid's attitudes.
35. They need to get the parents of the children better, and communicate more with parents.
36. Try more creative ways to get parents involved in the child's education.
37. [The school should] Listen to the parents. [The school should have] Respect towards the parents and students.
38. Communication is very important [the school should] make phone calls to make sure that parents received information. There [the school should have] should be more programs after school to support families that work.
39. That they [the school] need to treat us better and provide families with more attention. More safety and vigilance for the children [at the school].
40. First of all they [the school] need to communicate in the parents' native language.
41. [The school should] Treat families good. [The school] Have translation and more communication with non-English speaking families.
42. To be more open with families, listen and talk to them, be friendlier with them. Make it a positive, welcoming atmosphere for parents to feel more comfortable in asking questions and getting involved.
43. Try to pay more attention [the school] to what parents say to be able to find solutions to the problems parents identify, e.g. issue of safety. [The school] Listen to the concerns of parents. The school should take action towards these concerns.
44. First of all there shouldn't be any racism [in the school]. [The school] Don't ignore parents for not speaking English. [The school] Treat all the parents kindly.
45. [School personnel should] Be kind with parents. When parents have a problem the school should be able to provide them with some orientation a response to what parents are looking for.
46. I would tell them if you punish one child, than punish the other child, [not just one].
47. Treat families fairly; [fair treatment of parents.]
48. Treat families as you wished to be treated.
49. They [the school] should stop racism. [The school should] Educate parents on how to stop the racism. [The school should] Provide us with multicultural classes so that we can learn how to respect each other.
50. To be open minded, and listen to parents.
51. [The school should] Treat parents in a better way and pay more attention to parents without putting any importance to their race. [The school should] Listen, recognize and respond to the concerns of parents. Especially when it is more than just one parent with the same complaint.
52. This is a poor community; you need to understand that – [meaning] understanding their situations. Single parent [household] etc, [and] money is a big problem in this community.
53. [The school should] Put more bilingual staff in the school.
54. Treat families how you want to be treated.
55. Stay doing what there doing, it's positive.
56. They should listen more than they do.
57. More open judgment, let kids & parents express themselves.
58. The staff, [the whole] administration needs to be a little more respectful of children and families.
59. Treating families in a respectful manner.
60. Treat families in a professional adult manner.
61. [The school can] Begin by giving their attention to the community. [The school should] Respect and assist the community. The community is the parents and the students of the school. [The school should] Give your respect to each human being.
62. The school should be more kind. Have more people [school personnel] that can speak Spanish so that they can assist Latino families.
63. Do something to get families coming in [to the school] to get involved.
64. No comment on this one.
65. I don't know...
66. [I would] tell them to treat all races the same. Blacks are getting the short end of the stick; everyone should speak English. This is an English-speaking country; they're not paying enough attention to black students.

67. I don't know...

68. Need to put people that know how to talk to the parents, that's concerned about their children, [and] more understanding of parents.

69. [I would tell them to] Treat families nice...

70. There should be more care for the children [at the school]; I would like to volunteer in this area. For the benefit of the children the school should come up with concrete goals and follow thru with them in the area of safety and improvement.

71. [The school should] Take five minutes to look for someone that can speak the language of the parents. [The school should] Treat everyone the same. [School should] Give attention and treat families with quality. [The school] Allow us to check up on our children. [The school] Inform us about the good and bad about our children. Informing us only about the bad is not sufficient.

72. The school needs to promote respect amongst the students.

73. [The school] Don't ignore parents, you should treat them in the same way always, not just when it is convenient [attendance for meetings] for you like at your meetings. [The school] Don't retaliate against a parent when they demand changes.

74. [The school should] Understand the cultural roots of the community; [teachers and personnel that can] speak more Spanish so that they can communicate with non-English speaking children. Teachers should receive training on how to understand the cultural roots of their students.

75. Treat them with the utmost respect...

76. [The school should] Pay more attention to what families ask from you [the school]. [School should] Take parents into account when they make a petition.

77. Listen more to the parents & students...

78. They need to be more understanding of parents & youth, listen [to them]. Value parent's opinion...

79. Some children need more understanding [from the school] and care so that they can change their behavior. The school should understand the experiences that these children have been through [problems they've had in the past]. The school needs to be patient and it should not push children a side or treat them bad because they are problem children.

80. Take time to listen to the parents.

81. [The school should] Be kind and treat the families well. This already exists but we must remember that it is important.

82. The school should treat families well because sometimes they [the school] treat them [families] bad. They [the school] should behave well with families, [the school] don't scream at them

[parents]. [The school] Don't ignore parents because they [parents] don't speak English. [Teachers and personnel] Don't abuse our children or lower their grades because of behavior [a way of punishment].

83. The school should welcome parents because parents come to find out about their children.

84. I don't have a suggestion everything is fine.

85. [The school should] Treat the families well give them the opportunity to be able to communicate with a person that can speak their language. There should be a person [in the school] that can speak Spanish so that parents can communicate their problem and needs.

86. First of all, that [Latino] families deserve the same attention [from the school] that other races receive, maybe [the school] because of language they leave us waiting till the end.

87. The school should take parents into account, so that problems can be avoided and we can better communicate with the school.

88. [The school] Be friendlier with parents. [The school] Make parents feel welcomed. [The school] Answer their questions and help the [parents] meet with teachers.

89. Learn how to talk to people when you want information and when they want information.

90. They [the school] should be a bit more kind and cordial with the families. They [the school] should have more personnel that can speak the language of the families [speak Spanish].

91. I have no idea.

92. The parents need to be more open, when it comes to their children's education. Teachers [need] to be more responsible for informing [parents about anything].

93. Most of all they need to talk more to the students to get their input and see what they want to see [happen]. Most of the time their voices aren't heard [they feel they don't have a voice].

94. Treat people individually, and don't stereotype parents because every situation is different.

95. The school needs to speak with parents to be able to carry out a good education for children

96. First of all that somebody [at the school] can understand your language. Secondly, someone [at the school] should listen to you when you have a problem. Be equal with everyone [parents/ families] regardless of race. They [the school] should be more communicative with Spanish speaking families.

97. [The school should] Continue treating families like you have been treating them: they speak to you in your language and they respond and try to resolve the concerns and problems of parents.

98. In Pre-K, I am satisfied with the attention that has been given to me [from this part of the school].

99. [I would] ask them to find some kind of outside activities for the kids to participate in, because most youth don't feel connected to school.

100. [The school should] Take parents into account when they come and talk about their children. Basically [the school should] take parents into account.

101. They need to be more open with families, in school environments; letting them know exactly what's going on with their child's grades ahead of time, [not when it's too late].

102. More patience with families has to say, [take parents] more seriously.

103. Best way for the school to involve parents is to inform them right away, not when it's to late.

104. They should have more parent conferences and counseling.

105. Be more considerate.

106. [The school] Needs to be more respectful. [The school] Should respect everyone. If you [the school] respect me I will respect you at a 100%.

107. [The school] Treat the children the same regardless of race. [The school] don't be racist and understand that Hispanics also can. [The school] sometimes they hold our children [Hispanic children] back.

108. Teach classes in all languages; everything should be taught in English.

109. [The school should] Try to talk more with parents, so that there can be a closeness between parents and teachers.

110. Better service and treatment [of families] answer the phone, not having to make an appointment to or speak to someone.

111. I would say it's very important that they take action, and contact me.

112. [I would] say for them [the school] to treat us, as they want to be treated.

113. Treat parents with dignity and respect.

114. This is not a prison, and the kids are not coming to school to be treated that way.

115. [The school should start] Respecting our decisions and opinions, sometimes one [the parents] feels that [the school] they don't take you into account in important decisions.

116. There should be more order [at the school]. [The school should] Be more orderly when students need to leave campus.

117. When one [the parent] goes and asks [the school] for help they should listen to. [The school should] Be more communicative with us [parents].

118. [The school] Respect everyone. Have people [at school] that can speak one's language, so that there is an efficient communication [between parents / school]

119. Tell them to keep encouraging the parents and communication with each other.

120. I think they do a pretty good job... no comment on this one.

121. I would say they should be fair-minded, and don't cater to one culture. That there [are] many differences in our children and they should be respected as such.

122. They need to donate to families in need.



Community Asset Development Re-defining Education

[A project of Community Partners]

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