

# FROM INSIGHT TO IMPACT:

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## Integrating Staff Voice into Professional Development within LAUSD's Board District 7

# Table of Contents



<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
Ensuring Equity in K-12 Math Education (8)	
Client: Board District 7 & LAUSD (11)	
Background on Professional Development and Board District 7 (16)	
<b>Problem Identification</b>	<b>18</b>
Student Math Performance (18)	
Budget Constraints (21)	
Lack of PD Data (24)	
Professional Development Options (25)	
Teacher Perceptions of Professional Development (26)	
Policy Question (27)	
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>28</b>
Literature Review (28)	
Administrator Interviews (29)	
Teacher Surveys (30)	
Research Limitations (31)	
Ethics (32)	
<b>Findings</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Policy Options</b>	<b>49</b>
Policy Option #1: Embed More Structured Planning for Teachers in PD Cycles (49)	
Policy Option #2: Professional Developments on Enhancing Learning for SWD and MLLs (50)	
Policy Option #3: Increased Teacher Autonomy in Selecting Professional Development Sessions (51)	
Policy Option #4: Collaborative Learning Community (52)	
Policy Option #5: Improve Data Collection and Evaluation of PDs (53)	
Policy Option #6: PDs Focused on Strategies for Student Engagement in Math (54)	
<b>Policy Evaluation</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Policy Recommendations</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>69</b>
Appendix A: Regression Table (69)	
Appendix B: Salary Point Scale for Credentialled Teachers (70)	
Appendix C: Interview Questions (72)	
Appendix D: Key Findings 7-11 (73)	
Appendix E: Survey Participant Demographics (80)	
Appendix F: Survey Questions (81)	
Appendix G: Flyer for Teacher Survey (88)	
Appendix H: Survey Consent Form (89)	
Appendix I: Guskey's Matrix for Evaluation (90)	

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## Glossary of Terms

All terms are defined in the context of education.

**Professional Development (PD)** - Professional learning opportunities for educators that are designed to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers.<sup>1</sup>

**Sustained PDs** - PDs that are ongoing over a consistent period of time, such as over one academic year, and focus on one key area.<sup>2</sup>

**Accessible** - Ensuring all students are able to access the same information and engage in the same learning experiences, regardless of gender, race, economic class, disability, language, sexual orientation, etc.<sup>3</sup>

**Chronic Absenteeism** - Students who have an attendance rate of 91% or less, or have been absent for 15+ days during an academic year. Chronically absent students are susceptible to falling behind academically and sustaining long-term impacts, such as lower graduation rates.

**Students With Disabilities (SWD)** - Students who have a diagnosed disability that impacts their ability to learn and progress in a general education setting without accommodations and/or modifications. Learning differences include: (1) Autism; (2) Deafness; (3) Deaf-Blindness; (4) Emotional Disturbance; (5) Established Medical Disability; (6) Hard of Hearing; (7) Intellectual Disability; (8) Multiple Disabilities; (9) Orthopedic Impairment; (10) Other Health Impairment; (11) Specific Learning Disability; (12) Speech or Language Impairment; (13) Traumatic Brain Injury; (14) Visual Impairment.<sup>4</sup> The most common disability in LAUSD is Specific Learning Disability, which categorizes general processing deficits in reading, writing, and/or math.<sup>5</sup> The most common disability under SLD is dyslexia, which impacts how students read, write, and spell.

**Multilingual Learners (MLL's)** - Students who are learning more than one different language.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rebora, A. (2011, June 29). *Professional Development Explainer*. EdWeek.

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/professional-development/2004/09>

<sup>2</sup> Sheehan, L. (2022, February 1). *Ongoing Professional Development – A Better Way*. Teaching Channel.

<https://www.teachingchannel.com/k12-hub/blog/ongoing-professional-development/>

<sup>3</sup> Teaching Engagement Program. (n.d.). *Accessibility, Inclusion, & Universal Design | Teaching Support and Innovation*. Teaching University of Oregon. Retrieved 2024, from <https://teaching.uoregon.edu/resources/accessibility-inclusion-universal-design>

<sup>4</sup> Division of Special Education. (2018). *Determining Eligibility: Los Angeles Unified School District Policy*.

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/351/eppm%20uploads%202018/weblinks%20for%20eppm%20categories%20feb.%20and%20mar.%202018/DETERMINING%20ELIGIBILITY-%20FINAL%20revised%203.12.18%20Uploaded%203.13.18.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> LAUSD Open Data Dashboard. (n.d.). Retrieved 2024, from <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard?language=en>

<sup>6</sup> Najarro, I. (2023, March 30). The Debate Over English Learner Terminology, Explained. *Education Week*.

<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/the-debate-over-english-learner-terminology-explained/2023/03>

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**Differentiated Education** - A responsive teaching approach where teachers are expected to tailor their instruction to meet the needs and abilities of all of their students.<sup>7</sup>

**Pedagogy** - The instructional strategies that teachers use to educate their students; how teachers teach the course curriculum.<sup>8</sup>

**Teacher Collaboration** - Teachers from similar subject areas (i.e. math) or grade levels meet to exchange ideas, analyze student learning data, and develop teaching strategies and curricula.

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<sup>7</sup>Tomlinson, C. A. (August, 2000). Differentiation of Instruction in the Elementary Grades. ERIC Digest. ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

<sup>8</sup> Center for Educational Innovation. (n.d.). *Pedagogy—Diversifying Your Teaching Methods, Learning Activities, and Assignments*. University of Minnesota. Retrieved 2024, from <https://cei.umn.edu/teaching-resources/inclusive-teaching-predominantly-white-institution/pedagogy-diversifying-your-teaching-methods-learning-activities-and-assignments>

## Executive Summary

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) K-12 educational system is deeply impacted by educational inequity. In LAUSD, students of color, students with disabilities (SWD), multilingual learners (MLLs), and students experiencing poverty consistently achieve lower scores than their peers across all subjects, in end-of-year benchmark assessments. This disparity stems from various factors, including inequitable access to resources and educational opportunities. Primary and secondary LAUSD schools that serve predominantly historically marginalized communities often experience low teacher retention rates, limited financial resources, and insufficient support in serving students of color and students with specialized learning needs. Many of these educational disparities have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our client, Tanya Ortiz Franklin, an LAUSD Board Member and the Board District 7 (BD7) representative, ensures equity is at the forefront of her office priorities. Tanya Ortiz Franklin is particularly concerned with the low-math performance among middle school students in Board District 7. In alignment with our client's priorities, our research endeavors to address this urgent issue and explore strategies to enhance teacher quality through professional development (PD) trainings. We listened to teachers and administrators about their perceptions of PDs, and used their insights and experiences to shape policy recommendations aimed at improving teacher professional development trainings.

Our research methodology included reviewing existing literature, surveying 48 BD7 middle school math teachers, and interviewing five BD7 administrators. In analyzing our data, we discerned six recurrent themes that teachers identified as critical needs:

1. More planning **time** to effectively incorporate newly learned strategies into lesson plans;
2. Insufficient training on educating **students with disabilities and multilingual learners**;
3. A desire for increased **teacher autonomy** in selecting PD topics and formats;
4. Greater allocation of time and resources fostering **teacher collaboration**;
5. Methods of evaluating the **efficacy of PDs** for both teachers and student learning outcomes; and
6. Challenges with **low student engagement** and cooperation, which present obstacles to effective instructional delivery by teachers.

We evaluated these themes based on the following criteria: (1) equity; (2) staff-perception; and (3) evidence found in the literature. Through this evaluation, we recommend the following options.

### Priority Recommendations

- 1) PDs on enhancing learning for students with disabilities (SWD's) and multilingual learners (MLL's).
- 2) PDs focused on strategies for student engagement in math.

### Secondary Recommendations

- 
- 3) Embed more structured planning time for teachers in PD cycles.
  - 4) Increase teacher autonomy in selecting professional development sessions.
  - 5) Facilitate teacher engagement through a collaborative learning community.

*Future Consideration*

- 6) Improve data collection and evaluation of PD's

Our primary recommendations advocate for the implementation of PDs that center student need. Our secondary recommendations cater to teacher preference in PD experiences, potentially improving teacher retention and staff climate. Our recommendation for future consideration is geared at tracking and evaluating PDs, potentially improving PD quality, and closing the gap between teacher perceptions and district perceptions of PDs. These recommendations are rooted in evidence from literature, insights from teachers and administrators, and in a commitment to promoting equitable access to learning for all students. Collectively, our outlined policy recommendations can impact teachers' ability to educate all students.

The work of the office of Tanya Ortiz Franklin and our research are both grounded in the experiences of those directly impacted by education policy analyses and recommendations. We endeavor to provide options to ensure teacher training is geared towards supporting all teachers across diverse classrooms and varied student needs.

# Introduction

## Introduction

### Ensuring Equity in K-12 Math Education

Math achievement in kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) is linked with a cascade of long-term benefits: college enrollment,<sup>9</sup> higher future earnings,<sup>10</sup> improved health,<sup>11</sup> as well as declines in unemployment, teen parenthood and arrests.<sup>12</sup> However, this positive trajectory is at risk for some students due to the deeply entrenched resource disparities in the U.S.' public education system. These inequities are particularly pronounced when comparing affluent, predominantly white schools to schools serving lower-income students (Figure 1), students of color (Figure 2), and multilingual learners.<sup>13</sup> The latter group often contends with inexperienced teachers, high rates of staff turnover, overcrowded classrooms, and a scarcity of educational materials—factors that severely compromise the quality of education provided.

The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated these inequalities and widened existing academic achievement gaps. The abrupt shift to remote learning exacerbated educational inequity, due to some students' inconsistent access to technology and a lack of support in virtual learning. Low-income students and students with disabilities were predominantly affected. Data indicates that low-income students experienced a loss of learning that was up to 60% greater than their high-income counterparts, exacerbating the educational divide.<sup>14 15</sup> The impact on students with disabilities was similarly distressing, as the National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed a concerning 7 point decline in math scores in 2022 compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2020.<sup>16</sup> The pandemic's strain extended to educators as well, as seen in the 9.1% increase in teacher attrition<sup>17</sup>. Schools that were already underperforming saw even

<sup>9</sup> Poulsen, S. (2019). The Effect of Additional Math in High School on College Success. *The Mathematics Educator*, 28(2), 76–90.

<sup>10</sup> Murnane, R. J., Willett, J. B., Duhaldeborde, Y., & Tyler, J. H. (2000). How important are the cognitive skills of teenagers in predicting subsequent earnings? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 19(4), 547–568.

[https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6688\(200023\)19:4<547::AID-PAM2>3.0.CO;2-#](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6688(200023)19:4<547::AID-PAM2>3.0.CO;2-#)

<sup>11</sup> Mitra, D. (2011). The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Education. *Pennsylvania State University Press*.

<sup>12</sup> Doty, E., Kane, T., Patterson, T., & Staiger, D. (2022). *What Do Changes in State Test Scores Imply for Later Life Outcomes?* (w30701; p. w30701). National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w30701>

<sup>13</sup> Bjorklund-Young, A., & Plasman, J. S. (2020). Reducing the Achievement Gap: Middle Grades Mathematics Performance and Improvement. *RMLE Online*, 43(10), 25–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2020.1836467>

<sup>14</sup> Engzell, P., Frey, A., & Verhagen, M. D. (2021). Learning loss due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(17), e2022376118.

<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2022376118>

<sup>15</sup> Locke, V. N. (2021). Learning Loss in Reading and Math in U.S. Schools Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Istation*. [www.istation.com/hubfs/Content/downloads/studies/COVID-19\\_Learning\\_Loss\\_USA.pdf](http://www.istation.com/hubfs/Content/downloads/studies/COVID-19_Learning_Loss_USA.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Blad, E. (2022, October 17). Special Education During the Pandemic, in Charts. *Education Week*.

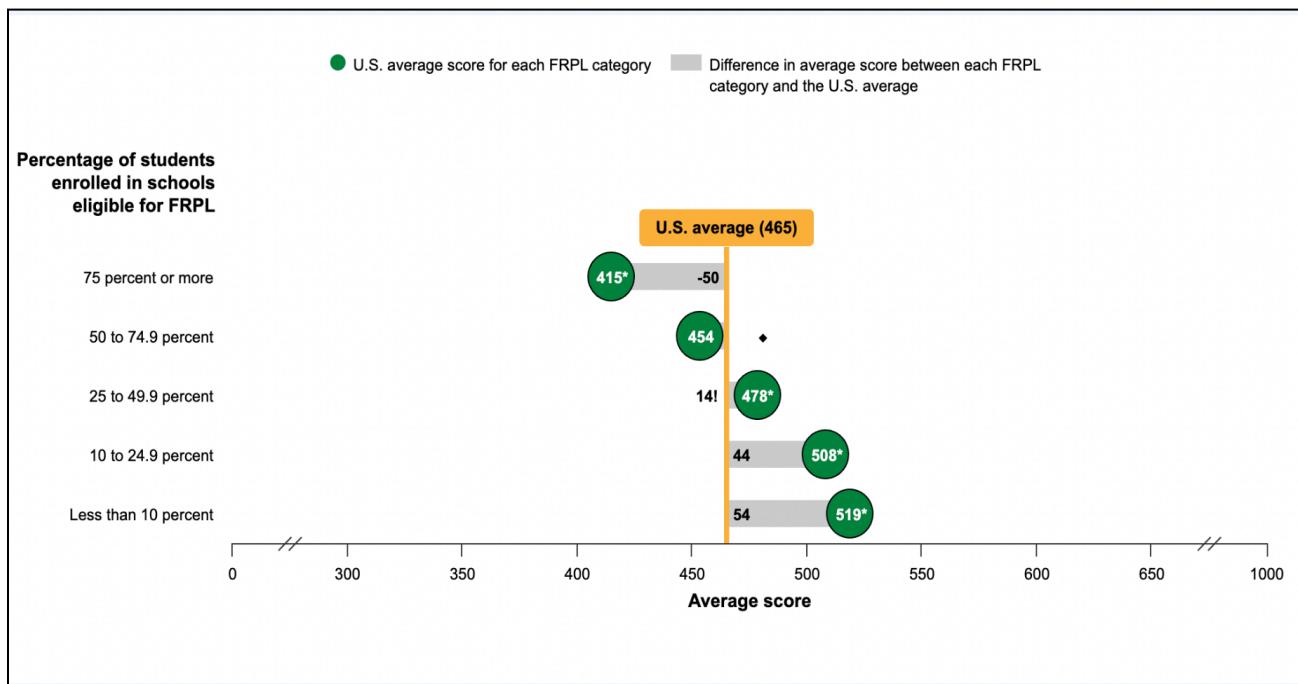
<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/special-education-during-the-pandemic-in-charts/2022/10>

<sup>17</sup> Teacher attrition refers to teachers who leave the teaching profession.

higher rates of teacher resignations, further destabilizing learning environments already in crisis.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 1: "Average scores of U.S. 15-year-old public school students on the PISA<sup>19</sup> mathematics literacy scale, by percentage of students enrolled in schools eligible for free or reduced price lunch (FRPL) based on principals reports: 2022"**

Source: National Center for Education Statistics<sup>20</sup>



<sup>18</sup> Peist, E., McMahon, S. D., Davis-Wright, J. O., & Keys, C. B. (2024). Understanding teacher-directed violence and related turnover through a school climate framework. *Psychology in the Schools*, 61(1), 220–236.

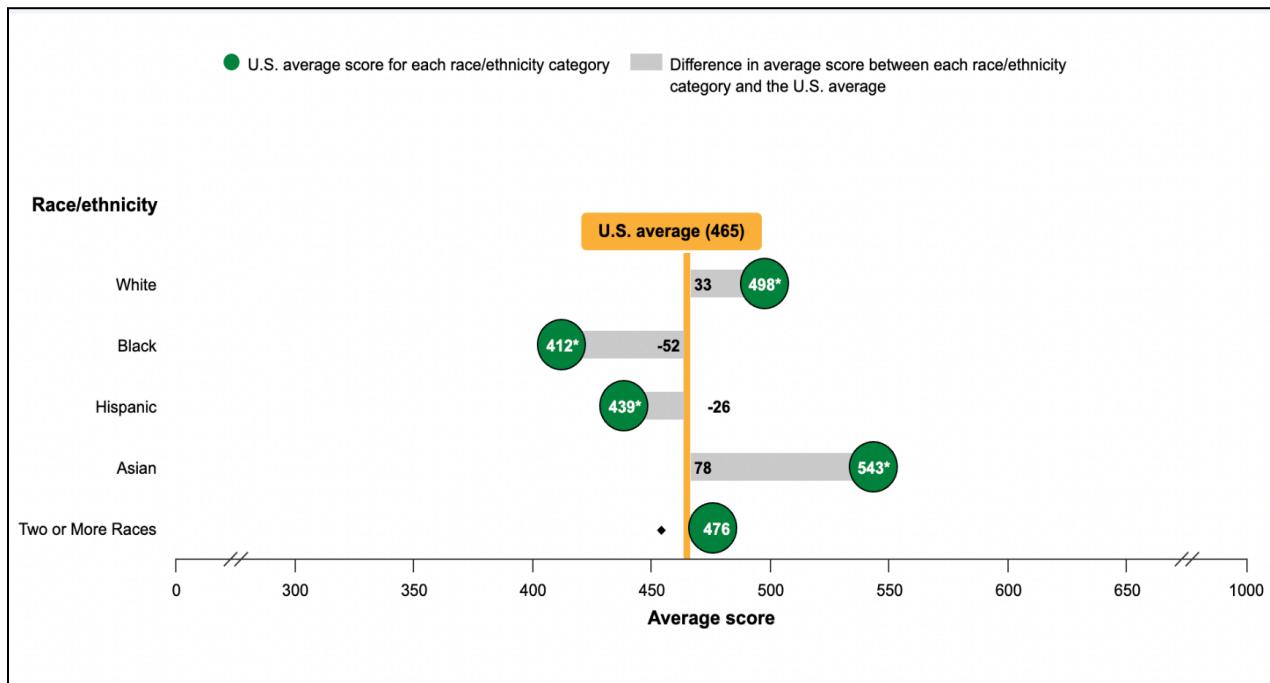
<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.23044>

<sup>19</sup> "The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international comparative study of 15-year-old students' performance in reading, mathematics, and science literacy...PISA emphasizes functional skills that students have acquired as they near the end of compulsory schooling...[The test] is coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries, and is conducted in the United States by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)."

<sup>20</sup> *Highlights of U.S. PISA 2022 Results Web Report* (NCES 2023-115). U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. Available at <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/pisa2022/>.

**Figure 2: "Average scores of U.S. 15-year-old students on the PISA mathematics literacy scale by race/ethnicity and their difference from U.S. average score: 2022"<sup>21</sup>**

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

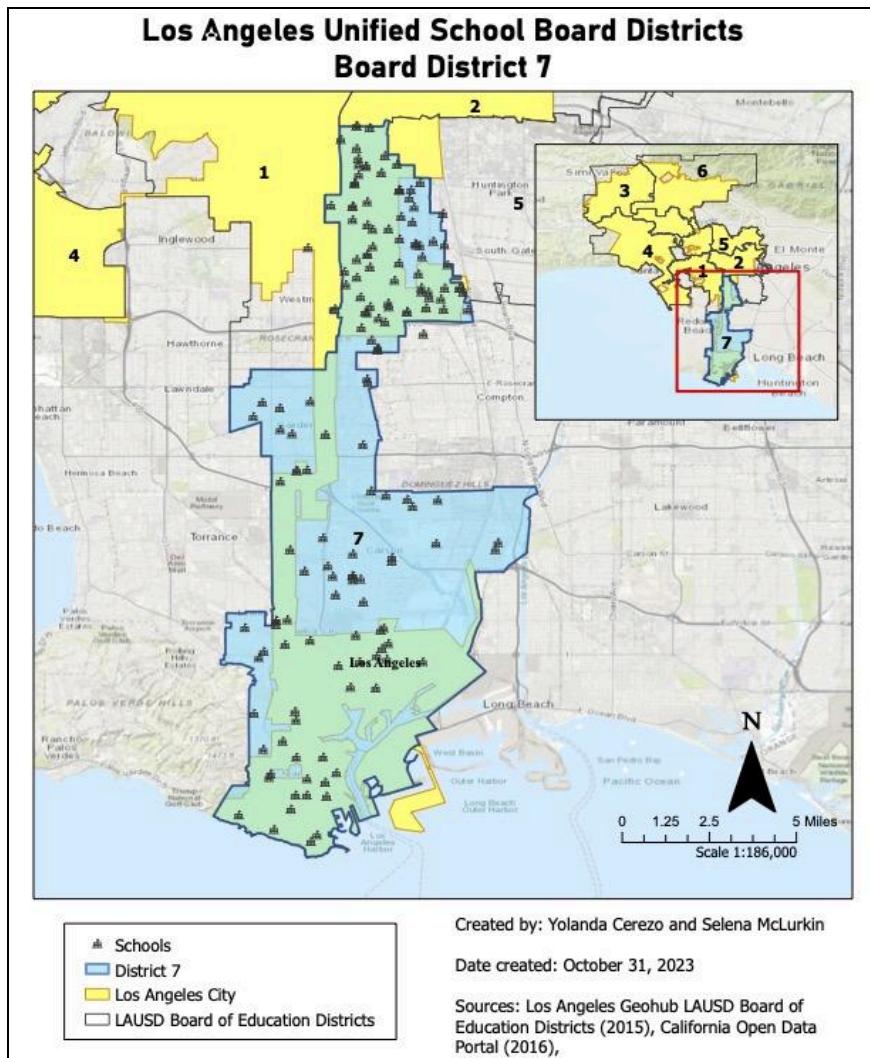


<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

## Client: Board District 7 & LAUSD

Our client is Tanya Ortiz Franklin, the LAUSD School Board Member elected to represent Board District 7 (BD7). Ortiz Franklin represents over 175 schools across diverse communities situated in the southern part of LAUSD, including South LA, Watts, Gardena, Carson, Lomita, Florence-Firestone, Harbor City, Wilmington, and San Pedro. BD7 currently serves 23 out of the 100 priority schools designated as the highest need by LAUSD.<sup>22</sup> These priority schools were identified based on attendance rates, test scores, completion of college required courses, and proportion of students who are multilingual learners.<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 3: Map of Board District 7 schools and LAUSD board district boundaries**



<sup>22</sup> LAUSD BD7 / Homepage. (n.d.). Retrieved 2023, from <https://www.lausd.org/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lausd.org%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FDomainID%3D737>

<sup>23</sup> Seshadri, M. (2024, February 29). LAUSD's 100 priority schools target district's highest-need students. EdSource. <https://edsource.org/2024/lausds-100-priority-schools-target-districts-highest-need-students/706760>

Board member Tanya Ortiz Franklin is one of seven elected Board members governing their respective districts of LAUSD. While individual board members cannot unilaterally implement policies in their respective sub-districts, board members are responsible for identifying and overseeing student achievement goals, supervising the superintendent, setting and defining district policy education policies, influencing and approving budget allocation, and collaborating with stakeholders (parents/guardians/caregivers, students, staff, and community members) to address district-specific issues. This decentralized structure allows the seven districts to concentrate on challenges faced by the schools, students, and families, in their communities. Board members are elected for four-year terms, and can serve up to three terms. Ortiz Franklin was recently elected to her second term as Board Member of District 7.<sup>24</sup>

As elected officials, board members are responsible for engaging their community and ensuring their decisions are reflective of the experiences, needs, and voices of their constituents. Tanya Ortiz Franklin relies on the voices of her constituents to propose and influence LAUSD policy decisions, with the overarching goal of devising policies that can better support BD7. Consequently, policies tailored to support BD7 must also address the needs of the broader LAUSD community. Towards this end, our research endeavors to examine and juxtapose various elements of LAUSD's student population, elucidating common themes demanding policy intervention.

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<sup>24</sup> Tat, L. (2024, March 29). *Election 2024: Final results for L.A. City Council and LAUSD school board races – Daily News*. Los Angeles Daily News.

<https://www.dailynews.com/2024/03/29/election-2024-final-results-for-l-a-city-council-and-laasd-school-board-race-s/>

## LAUSD

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the second-largest school district in the US, providing early, primary, secondary, and adult education to more than 525,000 students.<sup>25</sup>

As of the 2023-2024 school year, LAUSD's student population is roughly 73% Latino, 7% Black, 10% White, 6% AAPI. Approximately 16% of students are classified as Students With Disabilities (SWD) compared to 13% in California, and 15% nationally. 20% of students are Multilingual Learners (MLLs), 23% are Reclassified MLLs, and 6% are enrolled in Dual Language Education.<sup>26 27 28</sup> Within LAUSD, there are over 90 different languages spoken at students' homes.<sup>29 30 31</sup>

LAUSD has a higher rate of chronic absenteeism when compared to state and national averages, especially for marginalized student demographics. Chronic absenteeism is a strong predictor of academic achievement and is a crucial factor to address in understanding achievement disparities among historically marginalized groups (See Appendix A). In the 2022-2023 academic year, 36.5% of students in grades K-12 were chronically absent. For grades 6-8, the rate of chronic absenteeism was 32%. Broken down, chronic absenteeism in grades 6-8 is highest for Black students, of whom 44% were chronically absent, SWD, of whom 43% were chronically absent, and foster youth, of whom 39% were chronically absent.

## BD7

As of the 2023-2024 school year, BD7's student enrollment is approximately 18% of LAUSD's student body, and is roughly 75.1% Latino, 13.5% Black, 3.3% White, and 4.9% AAPI.<sup>32</sup> Approximately 15% of students are classified as Students With Disabilities (SWD), 19% of students are Multilingual Learners (MLLs), 21% are Reclassified MLLs, 6% are enrolled in Dual Language Education, and 86% are economically disadvantaged.<sup>33</sup> In the 2022-2023 academic year, 37.8% of students in grades K-12 were chronically absent. For grades 6-8, the rate of chronic absenteeism was roughly 35%. Broken down, chronic absenteeism in grades 6-8 is highest for Black students, of

<sup>25</sup> LAUSD Open Data Dashboard. (n.d.). Retrieved 2023, from

<https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard?language=en>

<sup>26</sup> Reclassified MLLs: multilingual learners who have reclassified by showing proficiency in English through state established academic criteria. Dual Language Education: students who are being taught both in English and in a second language.

<sup>27</sup> Yoshimoto-Towery, A., & Acosta Stephens, L. (2022). *Reclassification of English Learners* (Policy Bulletin BUL-5619.11; pp. 1–17). Los Angeles Unified School District.

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/577/BUL%205619.11%20Reclassification%20of%20English%20Learners.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Dual Language/Bilingual Programs Office. (n.d.). *Questions and Answers*. Lausd.Org. Retrieved 2024, from <https://www.lausd.org/page/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lausd.org%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FPageID%3D701>

<sup>29</sup> Numbers in following figures do not include independent charter schools or private schools.

<sup>30</sup> LAUSD Open Data Dashboard. (n.d.). Retrieved 2024, from

<https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard?language=en>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

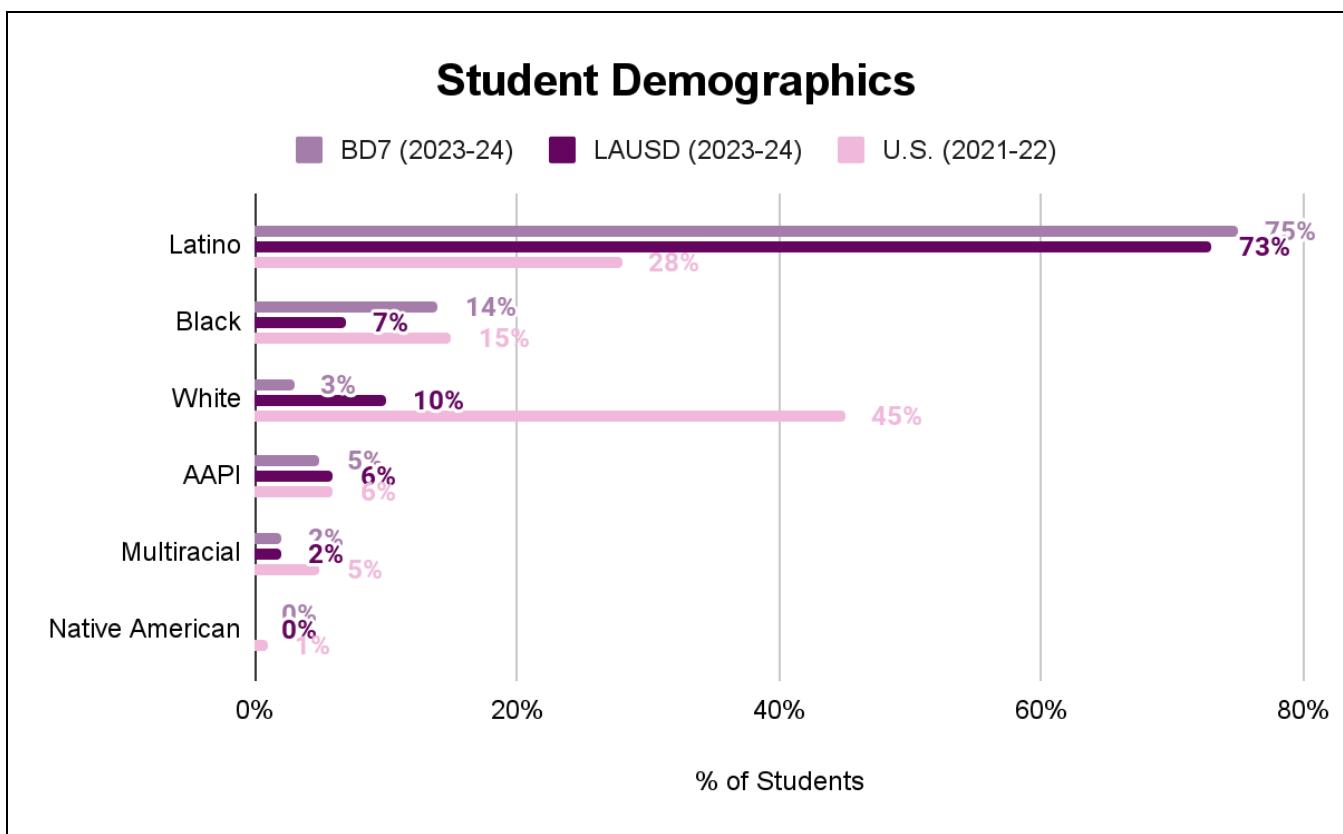
<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

whom 44% were chronically absent, SWD, of whom 44% were chronically absent, and English Learners, of whom 41% were chronically absent.

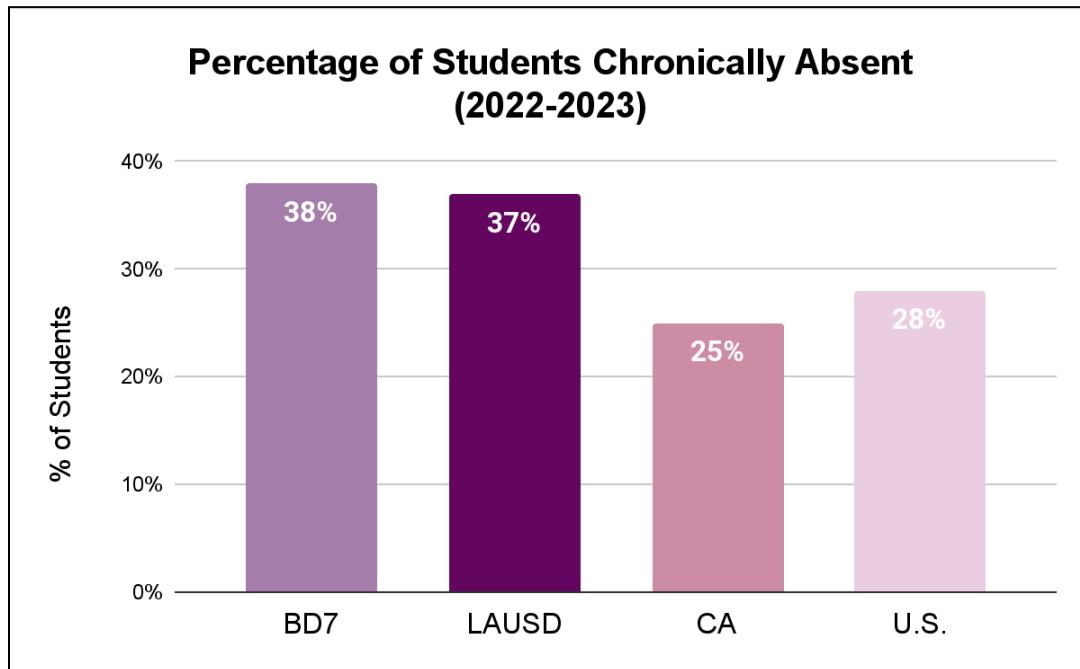
Given LAUSD's and BD7's large representation of marginalized students, it is important to utilize equitable, targeted interventions to ensure all students have the opportunity to thrive academically.

**Figure 4: Breakdown of LAUSD (2023), BD7 (2023), and U.S. (2021) K-12 public school student demographics**  
Source: LAUSD Open Data (2023)



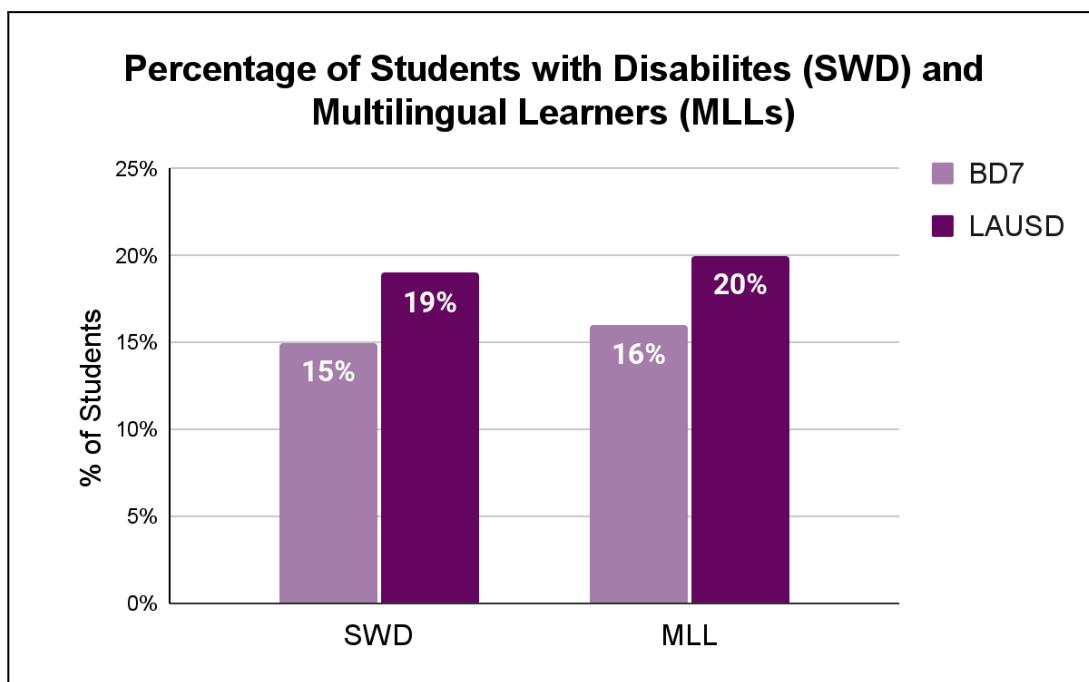
**Figure 5: Percentage of students experiencing chronic absenteeism (91% or lower attendance rate) during the 2022-2023 academic school year in LAUSD, BD7, California, and the U.S. K-12 public schools**

Source: LAUSD Open Data (2023)



**Figure 6: Percentage of students with disabilities and multilingual learners during the 2022-2023 academic school year in LAUSD and BD7**

Source: LAUSD Open Data (2023)



## Background on Professional Development and Board District 7

Various strategies exist to mitigate math learning disparities, such as increasing tutoring services, refining the curriculum, and leveraging technology. However, to maintain a focused scope for our project, Board Member Ortiz Franklin has requested we concentrate our research on enhancing teacher professional development opportunities (PD) to bolster math achievement among middle school students. Additionally, she has emphasized the importance of ensuring that our proposed policy recommendations have an explicit focus on ensuring equity.

PD is broadly defined as, “activities and interactions that can increase [teachers] knowledge and skills, improve their teaching practice, and contribute to their personal, social, and emotional growth.”<sup>34</sup> These trainings can range from structured seminars organized by school administrators to informal, unstructured learning such as conversations with teachers and teacher reflection.<sup>35</sup> Most structured PDs occur during after-school meetings, but also include daily coaching, mentoring, teachbacks, collaborative lesson planning and curriculum development.

Recognizing the significance of dedicating time and resources towards teacher training, LAUSD has implemented a 2023-2024 Professional Development (PD) plan.<sup>36</sup> This plan has sought to enhance teacher training by introducing Banked Time Tuesdays. Banked Time Tuesdays is an LAUSD policy that mandates 39, hour-long PD sessions every Tuesday, throughout the school year. On these designated Tuesdays, instructional time with students is shortened by one hour, allowing for the allocation of that hour to facilitate teacher professional development. These programs set aside time for both administrator-chosen and district-mandated PDs, covering topics like implicit bias training, literacy, numeracy, state-guided professional development for Emergent Bilinguals (EBs), and Inclusive Education PD sessions for all staff.

The PD plan also outlines optional PD opportunities on My Professional Learning Network (MyPLN).<sup>37</sup> These trainings include sessions on project-based learning (PBL), classroom management, targeted students groups (Black students, ELs, and SWD), and training specifically for new teachers. Some trainings are paid at the district training rate (\$50 per hour) or can be completed for salary points.<sup>38 39</sup> (See Appendix

<sup>34</sup> Porter, A. C., Garet, M. S., Desimone, L. M., & Birman, B. F. (2003). Providing Effective Professional Development: Lessons from the Eisenhower Program. *Science Educator*, 12(1), 23–40.

<sup>35</sup> Desimone, L. M. (2011). A Primer on Effective Professional Development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(6), 68–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171109200616>

<sup>36</sup> Baez, F., & Garcia, P. A. (2023). *School-Site Professional Development Priorities and Banked Time Tuesdays for Middle and High Schools 2023-2024* (Memorandum MEM-5788.14; pp. 1–13). Los Angeles Unified School District.

<sup>37</sup> *MyPLN / MyPLN About*. (n.d.). Retrieved 2024, from <https://www.lausd.org/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lausd.org%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FPageID%3D11478>

<sup>38</sup> Human Resources Division, LAUSD. (n.d.). *Personnel Research and Analysis / Certificated Salary Tables*. Retrieved April 10, 2024, from <https://www.lausd.org/Page/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lausd.org%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FPageID%3D4045>

<sup>39</sup> “A salary point is a unit of measure used by the District to determine placement/advancement on the salary table. A salary point is equivalent to one semester unit or 1.5 quarter units. As determined by the University of California, a semester unit requires a minimum of 15 contact hours with an instructor and 30 hours of outside preparation.” (Footnote no. 35)

B) However, most are unpaid and are taken at the discretion of the teacher. MyPLN also offers training on additional pedagogies and curricula that LAUSD currently utilizes, such as Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) and Eureka Math. These optional PDs can be instituted during Banked Time Tuesdays or completed during a teachers' personal time.

Our client was interested in improving the quality of instruction through PD trainings, ensuring that teachers feel supported to meet the needs of all their students. The office of Tanya Ortiz Franklin was specifically interested in learning about the frequency that teachers attend PDs, the types of PDs that staff perceive as most and least effective, and ideas to improve professional development training. Through researching professional development training in BD7, we hope to answer these questions and add to the growing body of research.

# **Problem Identification**

## Problem Identification

LAUSD and BD7 face a significant challenge in accelerating the student learning that was lost during the pandemic, especially for historically low-performing schools and students that already faced inequitable opportunity gaps. This challenge is complicated by district budget constraints and the end of \$2.5 billion in temporary pandemic relief funds (provided to the district to use over a period of three-years) set to expire at the start of the 2024-25 academic year.<sup>40</sup> To highlight and expand upon these challenges, we cover the following problem areas: student math performance, budget constraints, lack of data, PD options, teacher receptiveness.

### Student Math Performance

In California, 3rd-8th and 11th grade students complete the standardized Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics tests. These assessments test students' aptitude in these subjects, providing districts and schools with data on students who are and are not meeting state standards. SBAC data shows that throughout LAUSD and BD7 students are not demonstrating proficiency in math. This concerning trend has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to be exacerbated for students from historically marginalized communities.

#### *Impact of Covid-19*

BD7 math SBAC scores decreased by 6% from 2019 to 2022 (See Figure 6).<sup>41</sup> Recognizing the impact of the pandemic on student math performance, LAUSD's 2022-26 Strategic Plan,<sup>42</sup> prioritizes student math achievement.<sup>43</sup> One of their top priorities is to move all students, on average, 40 points closer to proficiency on the SBAC in Grades 3-5 and 6-8. To accomplish this goal, LAUSD has committed to various approaches. These include bolstering support for high-quality curriculum and pedagogy, integrating technology and other online learning tools into pedagogical strategies, improving the use of data and evaluation in lesson planning, and investing in staff professional development.<sup>44</sup> Our research aims to contribute to these efforts, LAUSD's ongoing efforts to improve student math achievement by promoting staff insights to improve teacher training.

<sup>40</sup> Willis, D. J. (2023, June 14). *Amounts California districts were allotted and spent in federal Covid aid*. EdSource. <https://edsource.org/2023/amounts-california-districts-were-allotted-and-spent-in-federal-covid-aid/692198>

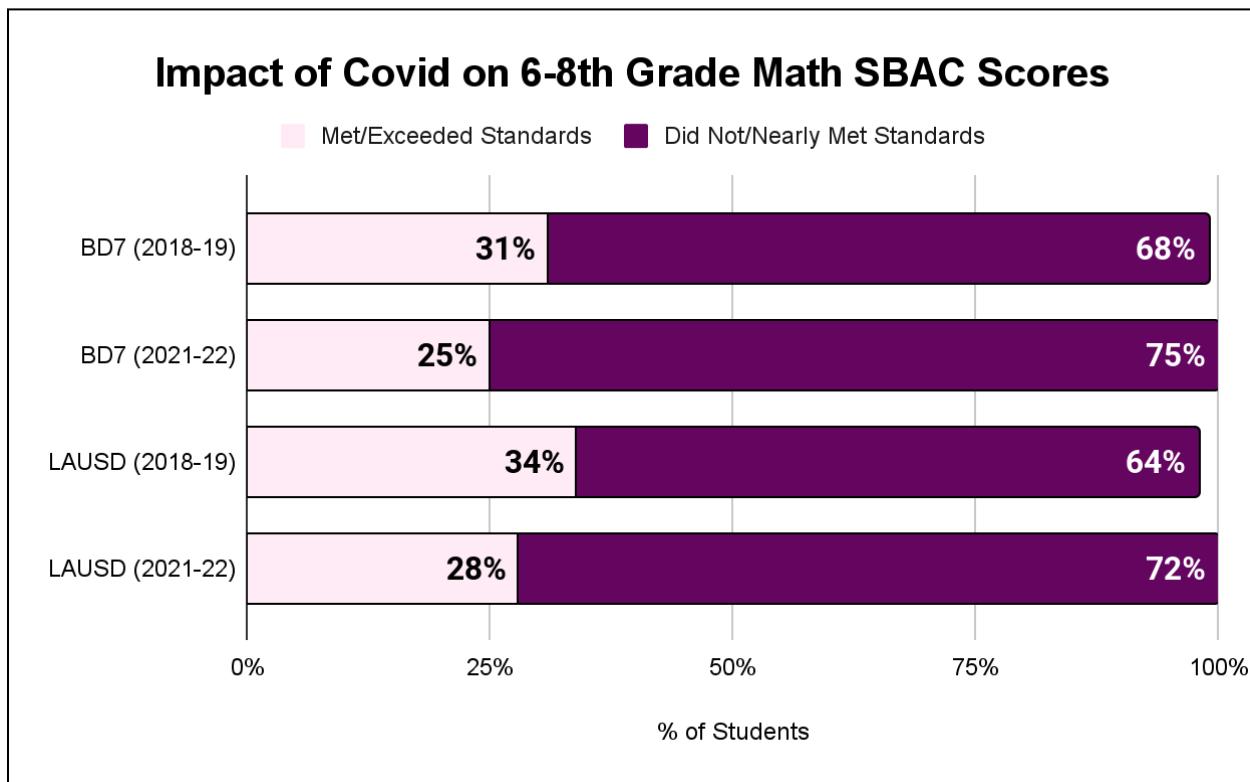
<sup>41</sup> LAUSD Open Data Dashboard. (n.d.). Retrieved 2024, from <https://my.lausd.net/opendata/dashboard?language=en>

<sup>42</sup> Gomez, K., & Carvalho, A. M. (2022). *Ready for the World: Los Angeles Unified School District Strategic Plan 2022-2026*. [https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1371/22-26\\_Strategic\\_Plan-1122.pdf](https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1371/22-26_Strategic_Plan-1122.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Between 2018 and 2023, students meeting math proficiency dropped from: 8th grade students went from 49.8% to 56%; 7th grade students went from 43.8% to 48.8%; and 6th grade students went from 40.6% to 46.6%. Cumulatively, 6-8 students meeting math proficiency dropped roughly 5-6% after the Covid-19 pandemic.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 7: The impact of Covid-19 on middle school math SBAC scores, as shown through declines in achievement from 2018 to 2022 in LAUSD and BD7**  
 Source: LAUSD Open Data (2018-2022)



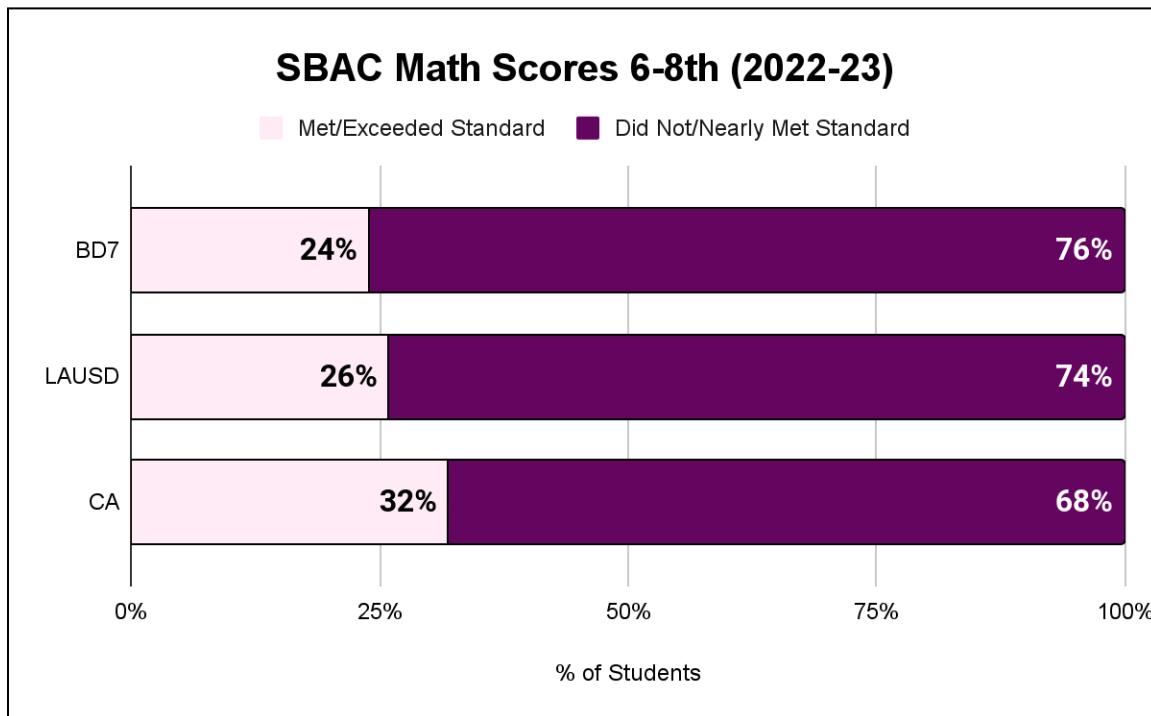
#### LAUSD and BD7: Current Math Proficiency

According to the most recent SBAC testing period (2022-2023), roughly 76% of middle school students in BD7 are not meeting math standards. This percentage is higher than LAUSD rates for students not meeting math standards (74%) and rates for California (68%).

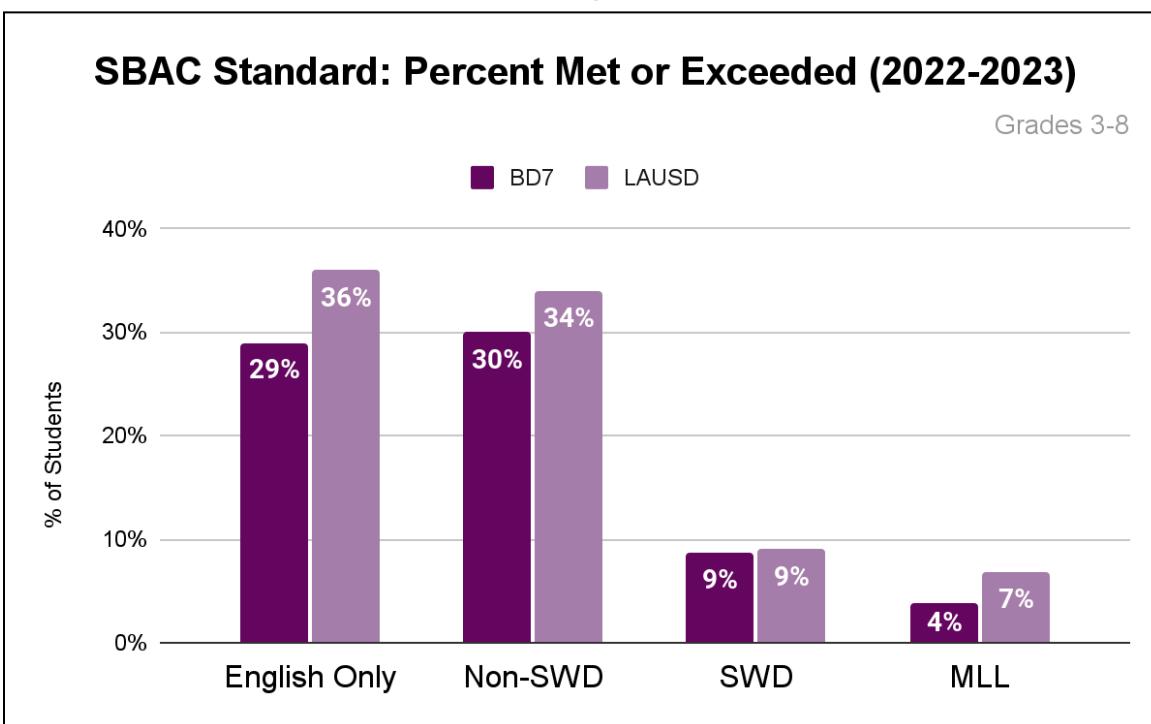
Within the 2022-2023 SBAC dataset, most students performing below the LAUSD average rate of meeting the academic standard (26%) come from historically marginalized communities. In LAUSD, 18.8% of Black students, 24% of Latino/Hispanic students, 10% of SWDs, and 7% of Multilingual Learners had met/exceeded the math standard. For BD7, 19% of Black students, 25.2% of Latino/Hispanic students, 9% of SWD, and 7% of MLLs had met/exceeded the math standard.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Data in this paragraph is for all 3rd-8th and 11th grade students.

**Figure 8: Most recent middle school math SBAC proficiency scores (2022-2023) for LAUSD and BD7**  
Source: LAUSD Open Data (2023)

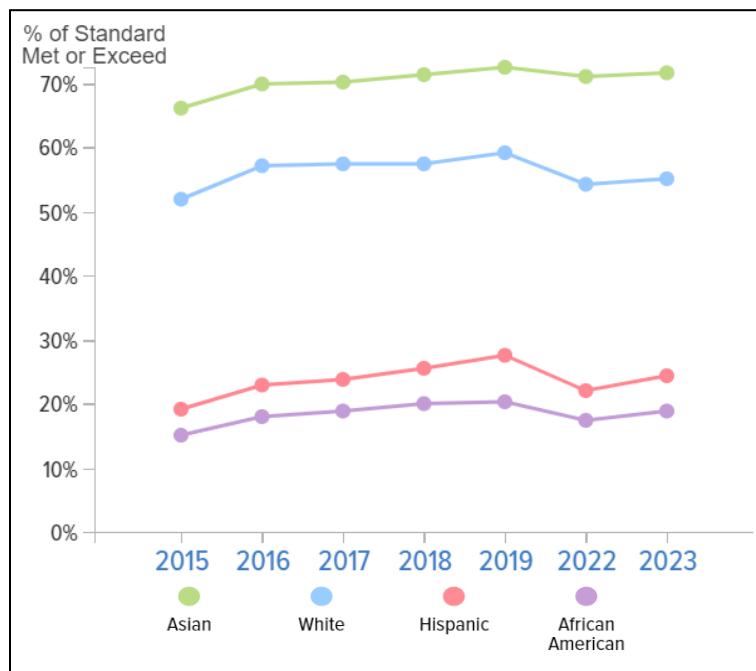


**Figure 9: Percentage of SWD's and MLL's who had met or exceeded the SBAC standard in the most recent testing period (2022-2023)**  
Source: LAUSD Open Data (2023)



**Figure 10: Percentage of students who met or exceeded the SBAC math standard between 2015 and 2023 in LAUSD, broken down by race: Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black**

Source: CAASP.Edsource.org



There is a large difference (nearly 50%) in grade level math proficiency between Asian, and Black and Brown students within LAUSD and BD7 (See Figure 10). It is evident that LAUSD middle school students are performing low in mathematics. However, there are other factors, such as structural racism and poverty, that may be contributing to this academic disparity.

## Budget Constraints

LAUSD faces significant financial challenges as it plans for the future. The district currently balances a structural deficit<sup>46</sup> and braces for the loss of \$2.6 billion in federal pandemic funding for the 2024-2025 school year.<sup>47</sup> This deficit is due to both increased expenditures and decreased enrollment.

<sup>46</sup> Budget Services & Financial Planning Division. (2023). *Los Angeles Unified School District: Final Budget 2023-2024*.

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/123/2023-24%20Final%20Budget%20Book%20-%2006.26.23.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Harter, C. (2023, June 23). *LAUSD's budget: Bountiful this year, but potentially barren the next* – Daily News. Los Angeles Daily News.

<https://www.dailynews.com/2023/06/23/lausds-budget-bountiful-this-year-but-potentially-barren-the-next/>

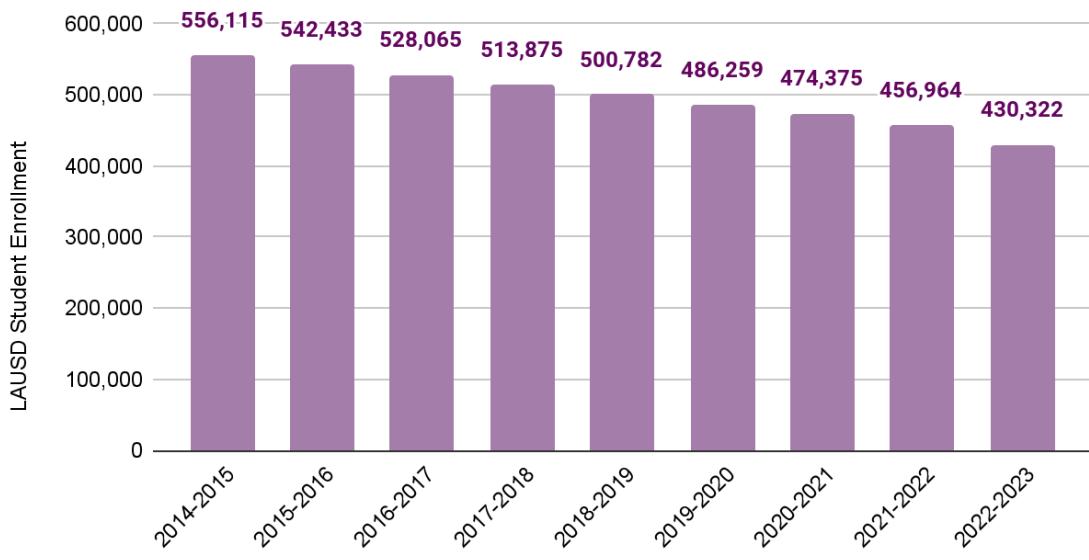
California's school districts are funded based on the daily attendance of the students enrolled, also known as Average Daily Attendance (ADA).<sup>48 49</sup> As seen in Figure 9, LAUSD enrollment, and thus ADA has been on a downward trend leading to a decrease in revenue.<sup>50</sup> The decline in enrollment rates has been attributed to lower birth rates, families relocating to more affordable regions, and enrollment in charter schools over public schools.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, the district states that it has not sufficiently reduced its spending to align with the dwindling revenue, leading to consistently spending more than it is making.<sup>52 53</sup>

**Figure 11: LAUSD enrollment in district TK-12 schools from 2014-2023**

Source: CAASP. Edsource.org

### Los Angeles Unified School District Enrollment (2014-2023)

Source: LAUSD Final Budget (2023-2024)



<sup>48</sup> Meyerhoof, B. (2022, March 16). *Attendance Issues Could Drive a Change in How School District Funding is Calculated*. California State PTA.

<https://capta.org/attendance-issues-could-drive-a-change-in-how-school-district-funding-is-calculated/>

<sup>49</sup> "California is one of seven states that use Average Daily Attendance (ADA) to determine school district funding, according to the Education Commission of the States. ADA is the average number of students in seats calculated over a state-determined period of time. Absent students are not counted in the daily count...Using ADA can result in funding inequities among districts that serve different populations, particularly communities that tend to have higher rates of absenteeism." (See footnote no. 52)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Sequeira, K. (2022, May 27). *Schools adapt in a shrinking Los Angeles Unified*. EdSource.

<https://edsource.org/2022/schools-adapt-in-a-shrinking-los-angeles-unified/672760>

<sup>52</sup> Budget Services & Financial Planning Division. (2023). *Los Angeles Unified School District: Final Budget 2023-2024*.

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/123/2023-24%20Final%20Budget%20Book%20-%2006.26.23.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> To mitigate the budget deficit, LAUSD plans to utilize funds from its Unassigned General Fund, which is allocated for flexible spending. As a result, the General Fund is projected to decrease from \$113.7 million in the 2023-24 school year to just \$10.6 million by the 2025-26 school year.

In addition to dealing with an ongoing budget deficit, the district will lose \$5.6 billion in federal pandemic funding in September 2024.<sup>54</sup> Initially, most schools used these federal funds for one-time purchases like tablets and Wi-Fi hotspots for remote learning.<sup>55</sup> As schools reopened, schools invested in ongoing programs like tutoring or after-school programs to address students' academic and mental health needs.<sup>56</sup> LAUSD allocated a portion of its pandemic relief funds to onboard new staff, supporting the salaries of more than 2,000 employees. As these federal funds are expected to dry up by the next school year, the sustainability of these jobs and essential services for students is at risk.<sup>57</sup> To navigate this transition, the district is committed to avoiding layoffs, opting instead for measures such as a targeted hiring freeze.<sup>58</sup> However, the shift of funding means that the district will need to cover the salaries of these positions using its own budget, a cost previously covered by pandemic aid.<sup>59</sup> This financial strategy will involve cutting costs by not filling vacant positions, which may lead to operational changes for many staff members, including adjustments to their job roles or work locations.<sup>60</sup> To address teacher shortages during the pandemic, the Superintendent temporarily assigned administrative leaders with teaching credentials to fill teaching vacancies. Consequently, there will likely be considerable reassignment and "bumping" of roles, along with the reduction of numerous Assistant Principal positions, to accommodate these budgetary and staffing adjustments.

In response to the budgetary pressures, Superintendent Carvalho has also restructured Primary Promise, an intervention program aimed at supporting high-need students in reading and math.<sup>61</sup> Many schools are expected to lose their interventionist – a specialized educator who works with students in small groups to address academic gaps.<sup>62</sup> The district will instead prioritize high-need schools.<sup>63</sup> This reorganization reflects a broader strategy to transition from relying on temporary pandemic funds to more sustainable funding streams.

**Given the constraints of limited discretionary funding and fewer interventionists, it's essential to strategically channel resources towards the areas with the greatest needs. This commitment to equitable resource allocation is fundamental to the district's**

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<sup>54</sup> Harter, C. (2023, June 23). *LAUSD's budget: Bountiful this year, but potentially barren the next* – Daily News. Los Angeles Daily News.

<https://www.dailynews.com/2023/06/23/lausds-budget-bountiful-this-year-but-potentially-barren-the-next/>

<sup>55</sup> Jones, C. (2024, March 5). California schools gained billions during COVID-19. Now the money is running out. CalMatters. <http://calmatters.org/education/k-12-education/2024/03/funding-for-schools/>

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Blume, H. (2023, June 21). *LAUSD's \$18.8-billion budget is flush with COVID-19 funds for one more year, but then what?* Los Angeles Times.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2023-06-21/lausd-approved-budget-flush-with-covid-19-funds-for-one-more-year>

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

strategy, aiming to overcome financial obstacles and ensure the enduring success of all students, with a deliberate emphasis on those who are most vulnerable.

## Lack of PD Data

Teaching experience is typically correlated with higher student performance. Subsequently the district is interested in improving the instructional skills of their teachers through quality professional developments.<sup>64</sup> To do so impactfully, the district wants to ensure their research is grounded in staff and student voice. However, this is challenged by the lack of PD data at the school level (the PDs schools are hosting/their staffs' perceptions) and district level (what PDs are mandated by the district). This data deficit is driven by various factors, including difficulties in measuring teacher perceptions of PD effectiveness on a district-wide level, subjectivity and variability in schoolwide PD implementation and challenges in associating PD success with student performance.

Professional development administration in schools is not a randomized experiment. PDs are administered to all teachers - there is no random assignment that utilizes untreated groups of teachers. As such, there is no baseline group for PD effectiveness to be measured against. Currently, PD effectiveness is measured through factors such as teacher perception and teacher engagement. However, these are subjective factors and they do not take into account the structural factors impacting PD variability, such as higher-resourced schools having more resources, higher baseline student achievement levels, and potentially higher teacher engagement/less teacher overwhelm. Additionally, if teacher engagement is used to measure PD effectiveness, that ignores certain biases - namely that teachers who are more engaged in PDs may be better, more passionate, and/or more skilled teachers. If PD success is measured against student achievement, then that challenges methods of obtaining data, as it is difficult to show any type of association between PD efficacy and student academic achievement. In this way, it may be easier and more statistically accurate for schools to conduct their own micro-analyses on their own, linking and analyzing direct strategies to/with direct student data.

PDs offerings can differ widely based on which schools teachers work at. While structurally they may be the same (same duration, all occurring during Banked Time Tuesdays), they differ due to subjective factors, such as who facilitates the PD, which voices are guiding/engaging in the PD, and what conversations and strategies the student data at each school necessitates. This poses barriers to measuring the effectiveness of PDs (as defined by whether or not teachers feel they can successfully implement the newly learned strategy), tracking PD attendance, and identifying demographics of attendees.

Data analysis is further challenged by the district's lack of substantial data on which PDs have the biggest returns to student learning outcomes. However, this is not unique

<sup>64</sup> Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Grant, L. W. (2011). What Makes Good Teachers Good? A Cross-Case Analysis of the Connection Between Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(4), 339–355. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487111404241>

to LAUSD. Researchers have struggled to identify characteristics of PDs that improve teaching and student's academic performance for similar data problems that stymie LAUSD and BD7.<sup>65</sup> The data that is collected from professional development training is mostly self-reported by teachers which incorporates bias and subjectivity. Further, most schools do not have a practice of following-up on PDs to check for implementation and learning outcomes of the PD.<sup>66</sup>

BD7 is interested in improving their knowledge of professional development training within their district to improve PD delivery, be more intentional in planning PDs, and leverage PDs to impact student learning. Our research emphasizes this interest, as it provides BD7 with the qualitative data to deepen their understanding of administrative capacity and teacher need relative to mandated professional development.

### Professional Development Options

Professional development trainings for teachers can focus on various elements, including specific content, pedagogy, collaborative learning, and diverse student demographics. To teach these topics effectively, PD trainings must align to evidence-backed strategies, such as being sustained, and by providing opportunities for teacher support, feedback, application, administrative support.<sup>67</sup> Assessing the efficacy of PDs necessitates a continued investigation into the staff-emphasized elements impacting PD efficacy. These elements can include the differentiation of PD topics, the format and delivery of PDs, the role of teacher self-selection in determining which PDs to attend, and the role of teacher voice in determining which PDs are offered.

In understanding the current landscape of PDs offered during Banked Time Tuesdays, it's imperative to emphasize the role of administrative discretion. LAUSD's PD plan references the need for teacher training in math, particularly in response to the unprecedented decline in LAUSD student math performance post-pandemic. However, it does not enforce specific math PDs for each session. Rather, it delegates choosing PD topics to administrators. In the event that administrators fall short in instituting high-quality math PDs, teachers may find themselves forced to learn about a pressing topic on their own, whether that's attending external training or conducting independent research. Already overworked and underpaid, teachers must often engage in math PD training driven solely by their independent, time-consuming, and unpaid research. To enhance math teacher education, it is imperative to provide easily

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<sup>65</sup> Guskey, T. R., & Yoon, K. S. (2009). What Works in Professional Development? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(7), 495–500. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170909000709>

<sup>66</sup> Broad, K., & Evans, M. (2006). *A review of literature on professional development content and delivery modes for experienced teachers*. University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. <http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/ite/UserFiles/File/AReviewofLiteratureonPD.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> Goddard, Y., Goddard, R., & Kim, M. (2015). School Instructional Climate and Student Achievement: An Examination of Group Norms for Differentiated Instruction. *American Journal of Education*, 122(1), 111–131. <https://doi.org/10.1086/683293>

accessible, effective, and sustained math teacher training that incorporates teacher interest and self-selection.

As there is currently minimal room for teacher discretion in PD options, some teachers might choose to attend external PDs outside of their schools' Banked Time Tuesday, such as those registered under MyPLN. Despite the current availability of optional professional developments, attending these external PDs poses significant challenges. Teachers must invest considerable effort in researching, requesting time off, and arranging substitute teachers and plans, making these PDs less accessible.<sup>68</sup> Virtual access to math PDs is offered; however, they are presented as slideshows or video presentations, lacking the interactive engagement emphasized in studies on effective PD delivery and training.<sup>69</sup> Due to these barriers, many teachers may not attend external PDs.

The LAUSD PD plan also highlights the importance of access to content on supporting students with diverse learning needs, such as those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)<sup>70</sup> or Multilingual Learners (MLLs). However, the plan does not outline teacher access to math-specific PDs on teaching these learners. Furthermore, should administrators choose to institute PDs unrelated to this focus area, math teachers will continue to face barriers in teaching students with specific learning needs.

### Teacher Perceptions of Professional Development

Teachers across the U.S. describe the ideal professional development as relevant (connected to what teachers are currently teaching), interactive (allows teachers to engage and collaborate with their colleagues), sustained over time, treats them like professionals, and delivered by someone that understands the teaching experience.<sup>71</sup> By these measures, current professional development opportunities are ineffective. Current PDs are heavily workshop based, with many relying on videos or PowerPoint presentations due to the ease of these modes of delivery.

Many teachers do not want to learn through workshop-based PDs. In a study by the Gates Foundation and Boston Consulting Group that involved surveys and interviews of 2,900 teachers, administrators, and education experts, researchers found that

<sup>68</sup> An example is an event on MyPLN hosted by the Division of Instruction titled "Secondary Literacy and Numeracy Interventionist". The description for the event is as follows: "This is the event hub for the Middle and High School Literacy and Numeracy Interventionist Academy meetings including onboarding, working sessions, and action seminar. Meetings are generally scheduled during the school year from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. on the 4th Friday every month, but times and locations vary depending on Region." This example highlights the inaccessibility of the training for teachers based on the time and location, but also the unpredictability of the session being held at all.

<sup>69</sup> *Mathematics / Professional Development.* (n.d.). Retrieved 2024, from <https://www.lausd.org/Page/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.lausd.org%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FPageID%3D5213>

<sup>70</sup> Students with IEPs are students with a diagnosed disability and are synonymously referred to as SWD throughout this paper.

<sup>71</sup> Teachers Know Best: Teachers' Views on Professional Development. (2014). In *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED576976>

roughly 84% of teachers report that they would prefer to spend professional development participating in lesson observations and coaching, yet only 50% of teachers report receiving coaching with a high variance in frequency and quality.<sup>72</sup> Such a large statistic underscores the importance of coaching and collaborative learning in teacher development. It simultaneously shows that many teachers are not given the resources to effectively learn from and collaborate with their colleagues. In discussing cost-effective policies to improve PDs, it's imperative to keep collaborative learning in mind. This provides schools with a low-cost method of engaging teachers and providing structured opportunities for continuous learning and collaboration. Teachers also feel that current professional development is patronizing, with instructors telling them what to do without learning about their classroom needs and challenges. They remark that they currently have little choice in which opportunities they choose to participate in - those with more choice report higher satisfaction.<sup>73</sup> This highlights the importance of diversifying PD options and empowering teachers to self-select the PDs that would be most beneficial for students.

These current fallbacks of professional developments have left teachers feeling as though attending professional developments is a mandatory chore, as opposed to a meaningful learning opportunity. When teachers are disengaged with professional development there are not only missed teacher learning opportunities, but hard-to-come-by wasted resources, such as time and money.

To equip math teachers to educate all students, those in positions of power must provide access to quality, engaging, and effective training on inclusive and accessible math education. To do so, conversations surrounding teacher PDs must be rooted in invaluable teacher perspectives. This will ensure teacher professional developments are structured as a meaningful and need-based tool for continuously developing their practices, as opposed to an obligation that many teachers feel is wasteful and unhelpful. Our research is focused on unveiling mechanisms to allow policymakers to do so. We intend to do this by harnessing staff insights to inform policy initiatives aimed at enhancing PDs and fostering teacher engagement in their continued learning.

### **Policy Question**

**How can we apply insights learned from school staff to improve professional development for middle school math teachers in LAUSD, BD7?**

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ortan, F., Simut, C., & Simut, R. (2021). Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction and Teacher Well-Being in the K-12 Educational System. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(23), 12763. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182312763>

# Methodology

# Methodology

## Overview

To answer our policy question, we primarily used qualitative research. This included reviewing 21 articles, surveying 48 BD7 teachers, and interviewing five BD7 administrators. Our interviews and survey responses helped our research team learn about BD7 school staff's perspectives about professional development training which directly informed our policy options. We planned our methodologies in collaboration with our client and with guidance from three UCLA professors. A key priority for the office of Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin is ensuring that all district decisions are grounded in the experiences of those closest to the policy impact which guided our decision in choosing our qualitative methods.

## Literature Review

The initial step of our research was a comprehensive literature review which focused on articles for the PD subtopics listed in the table below.

*Table 1: Literature Review, Topics of Study*

PD Subtopic	Explanation of Subtopic
<b>PD Content</b>	Topics that school leaders teach at professional development trainings
<b>PD Delivery</b>	Characteristics of how professional development trainings are provided to teachers
<b>Pedagogy</b>	Techniques and strategies for how teachers teach
<b>Universal Designed Learning (UDL)</b>	Education framework that guides curriculum and pedagogy to accommodate all learning styles
<b>Collaborative Learning</b>	Importance of teachers being involved in choosing and attending PDs

These topics were chosen in response to our client wanting to better understand common practices for PDs and how to improve teaching practices for educators in lower performing classrooms. We started reviewing articles on PD content and delivery to give our research team a broad scope. As we reviewed literature about content and delivery, we found the following recurrent PD topics: pedagogy, UDL, and collaborative learning. In collaboration with our client, we determined that these topics might correspond to our client's goal of trying to improve middle school math scores of low-performing students. We found academic articles through Google Scholar by searching for our PD subtopics in reputable academic journals. In addition to academic articles, we researched public documents from LAUSD such as budget plans,

professional development powerpoints, and the LAUSD website. This helped our research team understand the professional development landscape at the district level.

The literature review also informed our interview and survey questions for BD7 school staff. Our interview questions focused on salient characteristics found in the literature for PD delivery, PD content, and collaborative learning in PDs. Our survey questions were influenced by research from all five of the PD subtopics (see Table 1).

### **Administrator Interviews**

We interviewed school administrators from February, 2024 to April, 2024, speaking with four active school administrators (principals and assistant-principals), one current LAUSD district-wide administrator, and an individual who was formally both a principal and a LAUSD administrator. Initially we chose to only interview school principals and vice-principals because they oversee the planning and delivery of professional development training. However we chose to include LAUSD district-wide administrators as questions emerged about specific policies within the PD Plan. Our interview questions sought to improve our understanding of professional development training as perceived by admin, specifically successes and challenges of PDs and how administrators could be better supported in delivering PDs.

We interviewed:

- 2 current principals
- 2 vice principals
- 1 retired principal and former LAUSD, district-level administrator
- 1 current LAUSD, district-level administrator
- Total BD7 schools: 4
  - Independent charter
  - STEM Magnet school
  - Public middle school (2)

To coordinate the interviews, we looked online for contact information for each of the 30 school site's administration teams. We solicited interviews by emailing all principals (30) and vice principals (71) across the 30 middle, charter, and span<sup>74</sup> schools in BD7 (approximately 300 emails). To increase our participation rate, we also called each middle school and left a voicemail with the front office, asking to speak with a school administrator. We attribute our low response rate to the immense amount of work administrators have on their plates.

Each interview consisted of seven questions and lasted for around 30 minutes. The questions ranged from asking about the school's PD landscape to how the school supports teacher acquisition of PD skills and concepts (See Appendix C). Interviews

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<sup>74</sup> Span schools refers to K-12 schools that span multiple grade levels across elementary, middle and high school grades (i.e. a span school might offer 1st-7th grade).

were conducted by Zoom and phone, recorded and transcribed on Google Docs, and analyzed using Atlas.ti to identify common themes. Common themes found in the interview data were more planning time needed for administrators and teachers, PDs on teaching historically marginalized students, teacher choice in choosing PDs, collaboration, and evaluating PDs. (See Appendix D for findings not included in report)

### Teacher Surveys

We designed a survey that was open for middle school math teachers in BD7 from February 29, 2024 to March 13, 2024. We received 48 responses from math teachers<sup>75</sup> who worked at 10 different schools within BD7, ranging from one to 19 years of experience and 50% of teachers worked at priority schools (See Appendix E). By choosing to survey teachers, as opposed to interviews, we were able to collect teacher data from a variety of schools and backgrounds, given our short time-frame for our research. Teacher data was important to collect because they are both the recipients of the PD and best understand the learning challenges of their math students. Our survey questions provided insight into how educators perceived different types of professional development training, how useful educators felt PDs were, and how teachers thought PDs could be improved.

Our survey questions pertained to:

- Professional background questions (5)
- Professional development experience (8)
- Improving professional development (4)
- Total questions: 17

We designed our survey to consist of a mixture of questions: short answer, multiple choice, and checkboxes (See Appendix F). The survey was created in Google Forms. We piloted our survey by sending it to a convenient sample of six teachers outside of BD7, who identified redundant and ambiguous questions. We then asked two UCLA professors who specialize in Qualitative Research (Professor Hill and Professor Panofksy) to provide feedback on our survey.

Our survey was designed to be completed online, however we did not have access to the BD7 math teachers emails. To efficiently share the survey with all BD7 middle school math teachers, the research team hand-delivered flyers with a QR code to the survey to each BD7 middle school's main office (See Appendix G). About 200 flyers were then placed in math teachers' mailboxes (including math SPED instructors) by the office staff. Math teachers were incentivized to complete the survey through a \$20 Giftogram (gift card to a place of their choosing). We had enough resources to pay 50 teachers twenty dollars, which we estimated was about 25% of the population sample (48/200).

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<sup>75</sup> There are about 200 math teachers total. We surveyed roughly 25% (48/200) of the population sample.

The short answer questions were cleaned and analyzed in Excel, and the multiple choice and checkbox questions were cleaned and analyzed in R. We created descriptive statistics by filtering for teacher demographics (race, years of teaching experience) for questions on PD experience and improving PD. Tables and graphs from the survey data relied on both R and Excel. In R, we merged two school-level, public datasets with our survey data: the Student Equity Needs Index (SENI) and the Los Angeles priority school list. SENI ranks the level of school's need in LAUSD by creating a composite score that includes: school enrollment, foster youth count, homeless count, English learners counts, chronic absenteeism, low-income counts, incoming math SBAC results, and other variables.<sup>76</sup> This helped our research understand the survey PD data through the lenses varying school climate and demographics.

### Research Limitations

In order to collect and share data from BD7 staff, our research plan had to be approved by the district's Committee for External Research Review (CERR) which stipulated, among other things, the inability for LAUSD staff to engage in research from 8am to 3pm. This challenged our recruitment efforts for our surveys and especially interviews.

A major limitation for our surveys and interviews is our small sample size, particularly for our interviews. As such, patterns deduced from our findings should be treated as suggestive. Our intention is to provide these suggestive results, in the hopes that they are useful to schools across and outside of LAUSD, given the diversity of BD7 schools that our data represents.

Interview and survey respondents opted into participating in our research creating potential biases related to self-selection. We expect our sample to be more engaged in these conversations than the population sample of teachers and school administrators. This may skew our findings by having more positive and negative responses to our interview and survey questions. Our results may be capturing extreme opinions, rather than the average disposition for school staff.

We ensured to the best of our ability that only middle school math teachers completed the survey by having the flyers placed only in math teacher's boxes, writing instructions on the flyer stating it was only for math teachers, and we wrote a screening question on the survey that asked what subject the teacher taught. However, a non-math teacher or a teacher at a non-BD7 middle school could have completed the survey in order to receive \$20 without our knowledge.

Unfortunately, we did not have time to explore the implementation of any of our policy recommendations. We encourage LAUSD to engage with staff to investigate the legitimacy and implementation of our policy recommendations. We aspire for our

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<sup>76</sup> "LAUSD Unified ." *Los Angeles Unified School District/Homepage*, [www.lausd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=69729&ViewID=9fc4dc78-f943-4224-8465-6c780e58f4df&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=116180&PageID=18066](http://www.lausd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=69729&ViewID=9fc4dc78-f943-4224-8465-6c780e58f4df&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=116180&PageID=18066). Accessed 5 Apr. 2024.

policy recommendations to initiate the conversation about how professional development training can be improved.

## Ethics

The benefit of our research project being approved by CERR is that our research team had a third party verify our consent forms, methods of protecting confidentiality, and guided our research plan to be more objective.

For our interviews, participants electronically signed a consent form prior to the interview which was sent and received via email, and our survey had a consent form embedded on the first page of the survey (See Appendix H). Both consent forms stated that participation was voluntary, that participants could withdraw their participation at any time, and that responses were anonymous, unless our research team felt the participant or someone else was in danger due to the comments made during an interview.

CERR adjusted our recruitment plan by advocating for the Office of Ortiz Franklin to participate as little as possible to help our research team recruit participants. While it challenged the amount of data we were able to collect, it also made our research efforts more independent and may have led to school staff speaking more freely. For our interviews, we followed this mandate by only scheduling interviews outside of 8am - 3pm. For the survey, we did not determine a way to lock the survey during work hours and open the survey outside of work hours. Instead we opted to mention at the top of the survey that teachers should only complete it "outside of 8-3pm". We acknowledge that this was likely marginally effective at best.

# Findings

## Findings

Our findings are derived from interviews with 6 administrators, survey responses from 48 middle school math teachers, and evidence from the 21 articles reviewed in our literature review. The following predominant themes were found and are listed in order of importance (See Table 2).

*Table 2: Key Findings from Interviews and Survey*

Theme	Key Finding
<b>1. Structured Planning Time</b>	Teachers noted a significant barrier in implementing newly learned strategies is the lack of planning time. They consistently remarked that administrators and professional developments can better support them and align with their existing workload by providing them with more time to plan lessons incorporating newly learned strategies.
<b>2. Supporting Learning Gaps &amp; Diverse Student Learners</b>	Many teachers feel underprepared when it comes to teaching students with disabilities and multilingual learners. These feelings of unpreparedness were most pronounced for students with disabilities. Teachers remarked that they can be better supported by learning strategies to support students with distinct learning needs.
<b>3. Teacher Choice</b>	Teachers expressed that the current "one size fits all" approach to PD does not take into account teachers' individual needs or their heterogeneous classrooms. By giving teachers more autonomy in choosing their PDs, they are more likely to be engaged in learning new skills, ultimately benefiting student achievement.
<b>4. Collaboration</b>	Many teachers emphasized the importance of collaboration in professional developments, as it allows them to share best teaching strategies and provide each other with valuable feedback. By fostering collaborative learning environments for teachers, schools can better support and engage teachers.
<b>5. Evaluation</b>	There is a lack of PD data collection and evaluation across the country, including LAUSD. We are unaware of any system in place that tracks any type of PD data in LAUSD.
<b>6. Student Engagement &amp; Cooperation</b>	Teachers noted student engagement as an instructional barrier and expressed the need to learn such strategies in order to implement content learned in PDs. Research emphasizes the role of nurturing student engagement in boosting academic success.

## Theme #1: Structured Planning Time

### Key Findings

There is consensus among BD7 administrators, BD7 teachers, and existing literature that teachers do not have enough time to plan to implement strategies learned from PDs. Teachers mentioned that PD sessions are often too short, making it harder to plan and implement PD strategies into the classroom. Administrators also feel like they don't have enough time to research best practices to effectively lead and plan professional development training.

### Literature Review

According to literature, time is essential for teachers to plan the implementation of strategies learned in PDs into lesson plans, as well as collaborate with teachers on strategy implementation.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, districts and schools should move away from traditional models of mandatory PDs, and focus on strategies for supporting and engaging teachers through PD topics and PD attendance.<sup>7879</sup> Literature also highlights the importance of sustained (having a long, ongoing time-span) PDs in PD effectiveness.<sup>80</sup> In other words, PDs are most impactful when they are implemented over the course of a period of time (i.e. an academic year).

### Surveys

#### Key Takeaways

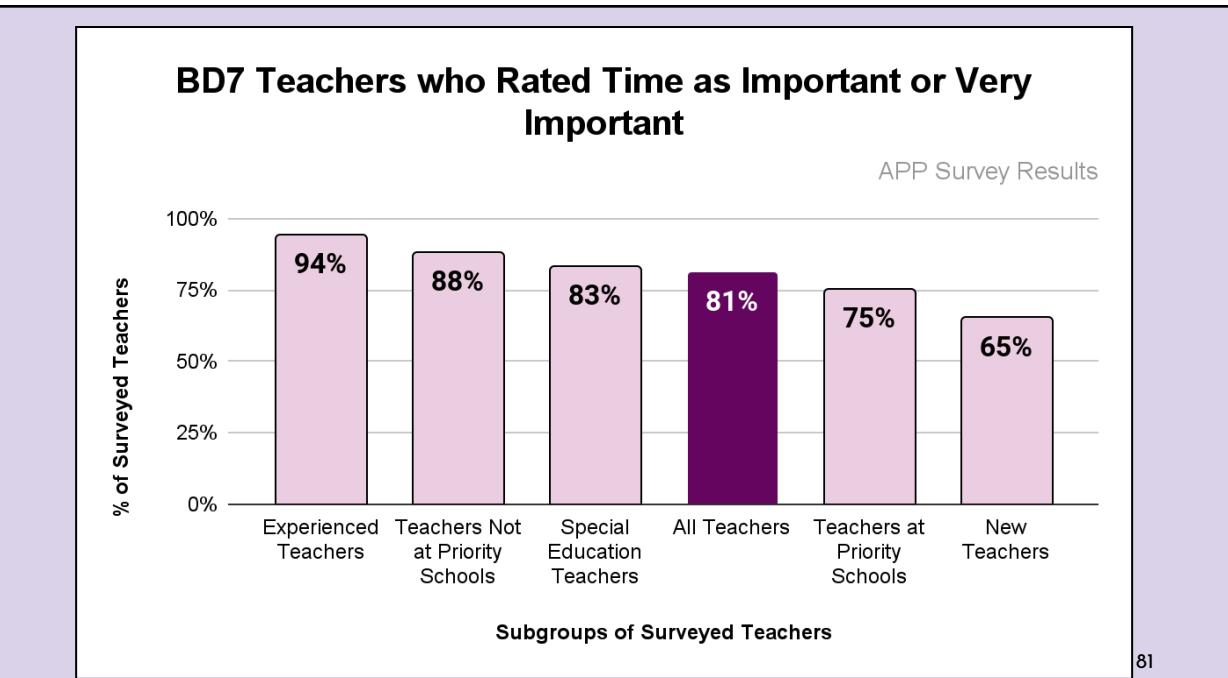
- **81% of all teachers reported that it was important or very important to have time** in the PD to make a plan to implement the strategy learned in the PD (essentially, creating the lesson plan with the new strategy).
- Teachers feel that many of the strategies they learn in PDs (examples of strategies include Three Reads, Interdisciplinary Teaching, Differentiation, Classroom Management Strategies, etc.) are being implemented simultaneously, which makes it hard to effectively implement any of them.
- PD sessions feel too short and rushed, forcing teachers to quickly learn and plan to implement the new material.

<sup>77</sup> Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (2011). Policies That Support Professional Development in an Era of Reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(6), 81–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171109200622>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Loucks-Horsley, S., & Others, A. (1996). Principles of Effective Professional Development for Mathematics and Science Education: A Synthesis of Standards. In *NISE Brief* (Vol. 1, Issue 1). National Institute for Science Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1025 W. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED409201>

<sup>80</sup> Garet, Michael S., et al. "What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers." *American educational research journal* 38.4 (2001): 915-945.



81

New teachers - 3 years of teaching or less.

#### Open-ended, short answer quotes:

Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question.

When asked what barriers teachers face in implementing newly learned strategies, teachers stated challenges such as:

- "Timing. There is a lot to cover in the time we are given. A lot of new strategies require a lot of time, as many push student discussion."
- "Not enough time to plan; too many things being implemented at the same time."
- Needing "time" and/or "time to plan and reflect."

When asked how PDs can better support middle school math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:

- "Allowing us time to plan when/how to implement strategies."
- "Including time for teachers to lesson plan."
- "Give more time to plan."
- "Give planning time and time to implement what we learn."
- "Allow time for planning and digesting the handouts and activities."
- "Providing extra time to plan what is being presented in the PD."
- "Give time for teachers to become confident in the implementation of the new strategies."

## Interviews

- **"Everyone is exhausted"**

<sup>81</sup> New teachers are educators with three years or less of teaching experience. Only 6 of the teachers surveyed were special education teachers.

- Three administrators mentioned that **teachers lack time to plan** the implementation of professional development strategies
- Two **administrators said they lacked time** to research best practices on how to effectively lead professional development trainings
- The PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) Cycle, is an 8-week cyclical PD, where teachers meet in departments, select an instructional strategy to implement, create a plan for implementation, and use student data (i.e. student work) to analyze the effectiveness of the strategy. They can then make adjustments to the instructional strategies. However, this model can lack consistency, and/or drain a teacher's energy, as it is time consuming to plan and test teaching strategies over this time period.

## Theme #2: Supporting Learning Gaps

### Key Findings

Our interview and survey data suggests that teachers need more training and support in serving students with diverse learning needs. Many teachers report feeling unprepared to teach Multilingual Learners (MLLs), students with disabilities (SWDs), students of color, and students with distinct learning and skills gaps, with the highest rates for SWD. Teachers would feel less barriers in implementing PD strategies if PDs were tailored to better support diverse student learners. These findings align with existing literature emphasizing co-teaching as a valuable teacher training model for supporting students with distinct learning needs, as well as future research and discretion in strategies implemented to support learners. These findings also underscore the importance of student-centered teacher training opportunities in meeting teacher needs and promoting student academic achievement.

### Literature Review

There is a notable lack of professional school programs and training addressing effective education for students with specialized learning needs within general education classrooms. Despite limited scholarly literature on the topic, co-teaching emerges as a promising strategy, involving collaboration between general education and special education teachers to support diverse learners. However, further research is essential in order for schools and districts to develop effective teacher training programs in co-teaching to meet the needs of students with disabilities effectively.<sup>82</sup>

### Surveys

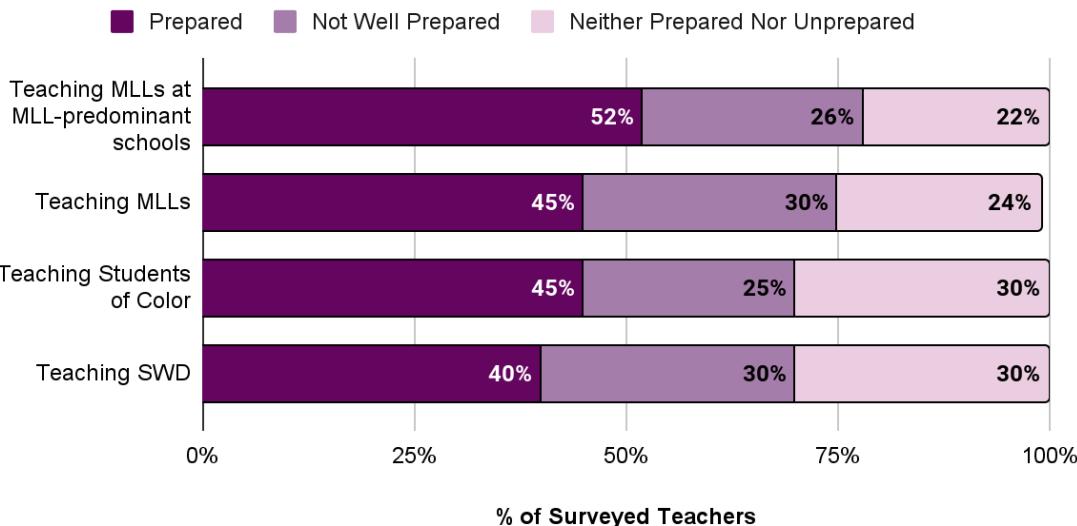
Of respondents who said they were prepared, 54% were Hispanic or Latinx.

- Of the 6 respondents who answered "Very Well Prepared", 3 were white (50%).
  - Teachers of color may have a better understanding of what students of color need to succeed as compared to white teachers.

<sup>82</sup> Friend, M., Cook, L., Hurley-Chamberlain, D., & Shamberger, C. (2010). Co-Teaching: An Illustration of the Complexity of Collaboration in Special Education. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 20(1), 9–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410903535380>

## Teachers Self-Perception for Teaching Student Groups

APP Survey Results



83

### Open-ended, short answer quotes:

Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question.

When asked what barriers teachers face in implementing newly learned strategies, teachers stated challenges such as:

- "support for racial equity in the classroom."
- "Students are missing basic concepts"
- "How to accommodate students with disabilities"
- "A lot of my students have an IEP and are placed far below grade level on iReady."
- "Many students are at "different reading levels"
- "Having students not be at grade level makes it extremely difficult to teach them things that are grade level."
- "Implementing strategies in a way [where] students of all learning styles can effectively engage."

When asked how PDs can be designed to better support math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:

- "students are not at the level they should be and should be considered during planning."
- "address students needs"
- "different strategies to support the needs of all students"
- "address student populations like black, ELs, and SPED students."
- "Use the CURRENT curriculum and have Spanish /Non-English editions available."

<sup>83</sup> MLL-predominant schools are schools where MLLs comprise more than 50% of the student body.

- “The language barriers [are a challenge] for the students who are newcomers.”

## Interviews

*No interview data on this topic.*

Administrators did not adequately discuss these students in their interviews.

## Theme #3: Teacher Choice

### Key Findings

There is a wide range of topics that professional development sessions can cover, however, all topics are not useful to every teacher in the same way. By providing teachers with agency in the professional development planning and choice process, teachers will 1) benefit more because of their diverse needs as teachers and 2) leave professional development feeling more satisfied. In effect, this can also impact student math performance, as their teachers are catering to their diverse classroom needs.

### Literature Review

Teachers feel that current professional development is incredibly patronizing, with instructors “sitting on their high horse telling [them] what to do...without getting to know [teachers] strengths and weaknesses”.<sup>84</sup> In schools where teachers have a degree of decision making in the PD planning process, teachers reported higher satisfaction.<sup>85</sup> Research also shows that teacher involvement in the decision making process, “is independently, significantly, and positively related to student achievement, after controlling for the background characteristics of schools” in math (and ELA).<sup>86</sup>

### Surveys

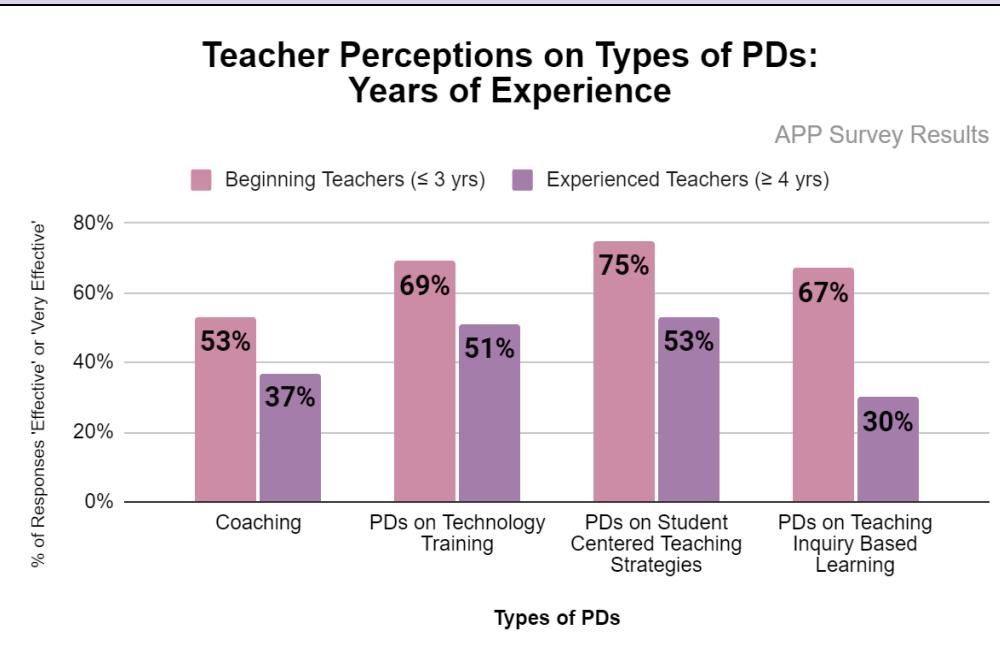
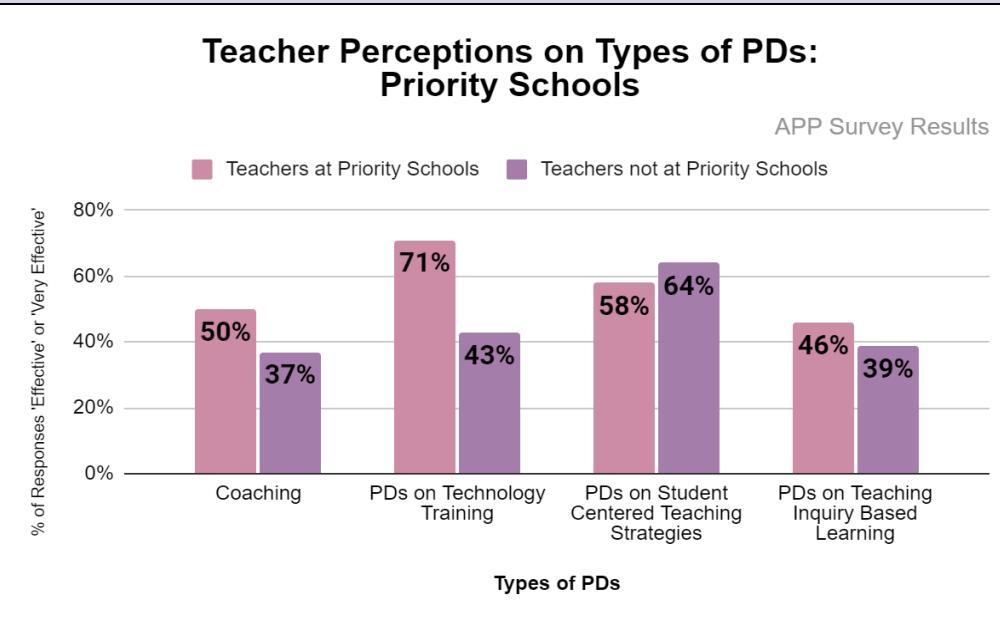
- Educators value PD's differently based on varying levels of experience and whether they teach at a priority school. <sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Teachers Know Best: Teachers' Views on Professional Development. (2014). In *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED576976>

<sup>85</sup> Ortan, F., Simut, C., & Simut, R. (2021). Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction and Teacher Well-Being in the K-12 Educational System. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(23), 12763. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182312763>

<sup>86</sup> Ingersoll, R. M., Sirinides, P., & Dougherty, P. (2018). Leadership Matters: Teachers' Roles in School Decision Making and School Performance. *American Educator*, 42(1), 13.

<sup>87</sup> Beginning teachers have three years or less of teaching experience. Experienced teachers have four or more years of experience.



#### **Open-ended, short answer quotes:**

*Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question.*

*When asked what barriers teachers face in implementing newly learned strategies, teachers stated needs such as:*

- “Culturally inclined lessons”
- “The problem with “One size fits all” strategies”
- “Sometimes PD’s strategies do not work for the types of students I have in the classroom.”

When asked how PDs can better support math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:

#### PD Delivery

- “Online professional developments or after school on Tuesdays in replace of weekly PD’s.”
- “Offer pd attendance during multiple times and dates.”
- PDs held via “zoom”
- PDs taught by “Presenters that taught in lausd schools.”

#### PD Topics

- “Ask us what we need... What I need as a veteran teacher is far different than what I hear from the new teachers I support.”
- “touch upon topics...like classroom management, or support with EL students.”
- Tailored to student demographics and teacher’s years of experience.
- “Make math learning more hands-on/ project based.”
- “We should be able to pick PDs that we feel are beneficial to our students.”
- “Integration of math concepts and strategies used in other contents.”
- “Different levels of training available. How you teach Honors differs greatly from teaching the intervention classes.”

## Interviews

- Every administrator interviewed mentioned the importance of having teachers involved in the process of creating or choosing the professional development.
- One administrator said it is important to include teachers in the decision making process because they are the ones in the classroom and know what they need to improve.
- Another administrator allows their teachers to operate their own professional developments (once the topic and agenda is vetted).
  - “Teachers set their agenda. They go through the process of looking at data and they make their tweaks without me dictating what they have to do...Based on what we’ve been hearing a lot of them want...control over what they are allowed to do...Improving teacher satisfaction with PD has definitely helped.”

## Theme #4: Teacher Collaboration

### Key Findings

The literature points to collaboration as an effective mode for PD. This is reinforced by data from our survey and interviews. The majority of teachers surveyed (83.3%) considered collaboration time during PD as important to very important. Administrators simultaneously emphasized the value of collaborative PD sessions, such as weekly grade-level meetings.

### Literature Review

Teacher collaboration is a type of professional development that involves teachers working together to improve student learning outcomes. Collaboration may involve teachers sharing teaching strategies, lesson planning ideas, etc. all of which can improve the quality of education that students receive. Collaboration among teachers has been connected to improving student achievement.<sup>88</sup> A research study, surveyed 452 teachers and the results indicated that teacher collaboration was a positive predictor of student achievement.<sup>89</sup> A second study emphasized on the significance of investing in professional development sessions focused on teacher collaboration. In a diverse school serving students with different academic needs, a collaborative approach within math teachers led to the development, "implementation and refinement of a groundbreaking equity-focused pedagogy that transformed student learning and achievement."<sup>90</sup>

### Surveys

- 75% of teachers reported that it is "Very Effective" or "Effective" to have time to collaborate with other teachers in professional development trainings.

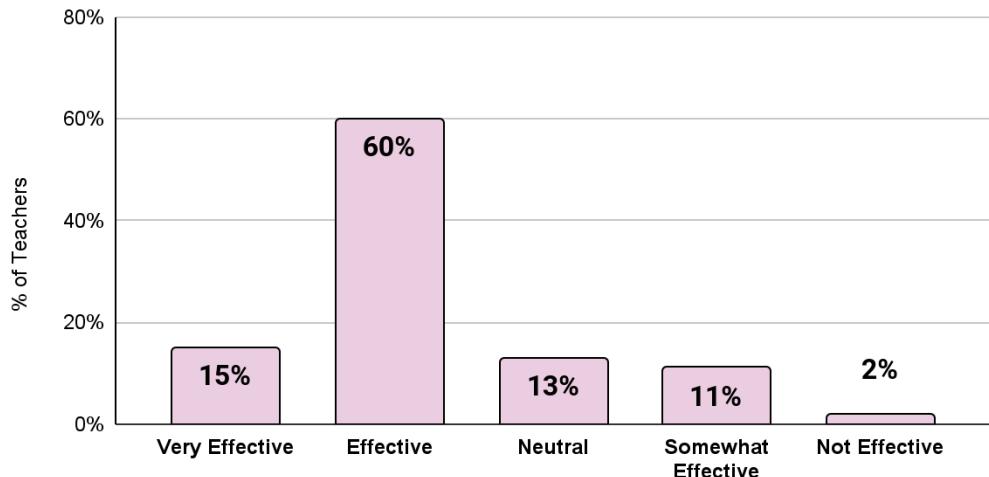
<sup>88</sup>Goddard, R., Goddard, Y., Sook Kim, E., & Miller, R. (2015). A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of the Roles of Instructional Leadership, Teacher Collaboration, and Collective Efficacy Beliefs in Support of Student Learning. *American Journal of Education*, 121(4), 501–530. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681925>

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Schleifer, D., Rinehart, C., Yanisch, T., Public Agenda, & Spencer Foundation. (2017). Teacher Collaboration in Perspective: *A Guide to Research*. Public Agenda. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED591332.pdf>

## Teacher Perceptions on Importance of Collaboration in PDs

APP Survey Results



### Open-ended, short answer responses:

Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question.

When asked how PDs can better support math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:

- "Allow more time for collaborating with disciplinary team and conduct observation rounds."
- "Having department time to work with our colleagues at the same school."
- "Giving time for collaboration."
- "I'd like to be pulled out for PD's once a month... with grade level math teachers to make collaboration and alignment more possible."
- "Looking for best strategies from other colleagues."
- "They should bring "in an array of math teachers to share and collaborate on their best practices."
- "All entities need to be in collaboration with each other."

## Interviews

- Administrators indicated the importance of having small PDs, that include observations, reflections; a professional learning community
- Two administrators indicated that weekly grade level collaboration was held as part of PD time.
- Teachers are able to provide each other feedback during this time.

## Theme #5: Evaluation

### Key Findings

Measuring and evaluating PDs impact on student learning outcomes is difficult for school districts across the country. A lack of data collection, tracking and measurement complicates school districts and research teams abilities to evaluate PDs. Our survey found that BD7 teachers assess PD's effect on math performance through student data (66%) and student feedback and engagement (17%). However it was unclear how teachers make this assessment objectively and accurately. One school mentioned having a system of administrators reviewing data on teacher's perceptions of PDs, which could be helpful for other schools. Multiple articles mentioned the Gausky matrix as the most thorough and frequently used matrix in K-12 for PD evaluation (See Appendix I).

### Literature Review

More research is needed to measure the effects of PD training on student learning outcomes. One reason more research is needed is due to the lack of data collection around teacher's perceptions of PDs, teacher's implementation of PD tools and concepts, and tracking types of PDs that teachers receive. Some literature suggests that a matrix for evaluating PDs could be helpful in both improving PD quality by serving as a checklist and as data collection for professional development training<sup>91</sup>. It is designed to be used by school administrators both before and after PD sessions, serving as a planning and assessment tool. The matrix assesses five key areas: teacher reactions, teacher learning, organizational support and changes, application of new knowledge and skills by teachers, and outcomes for student learning<sup>92</sup>.

### Surveys

#### Open-ended, short answer responses:

Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question

When asked how teachers evaluate the impact of PDs on their students' math performance, around:

- 17% of teachers indicated checking student feedback/engagement
- 66% of responses indicated using student data (including assessments and mastery levels)
  - "Through test score data or mastery assessments/assignments."
  - "Their cool down grades, FIAB, and IReady"
  - "Student mastery level"
  - "Use of assessment data"

<sup>91</sup> Broad, K., & Evans, M. (2006). *A review of literature on professional development content and delivery modes for experienced teachers*. University of Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/ite/UserFiles/File/AReviewofLiteratureonPD.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

- “The difference between pre and post tests.”

## Interviews

- Some administrators structure PDs using student's I-Ready diagnostic scores, SBAC data, and WASC<sup>93</sup>.
- One administrator shared that after a PD session, teachers self-report the PD's effectiveness and that data is collected and reviewed by admin

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<sup>93</sup> ACS WASC is the Accrediting Commission for Schools which is a six-year evaluation cycle that schools must pass in order to be accredited.

## Theme #6: Student Engagement/Cooperation

### Key Findings

Our survey data suggests that the strategies taught in PDs should be relevant to student demographics and student interest. This can foster student engagement and cooperation, which many teachers cite as an instructional barrier. This is corroborated by research which notes the importance of student-teacher relationships and environments in promoting student engagement.

### Literature Review

Many students perceive math as boring or struggle to see its relevance in their lives.<sup>94</sup> According to the literature, fostering student engagement is a key solution to improving students' academic performance in schools.<sup>95</sup>

It's essential for PDs to emphasize the importance of building positive student-teacher relationships in promoting student engagement. Effective implementation of teaching practices requires foundational trust and relationships within the classroom. Professional developments focusing on challenging and differentiated instruction must underscore the importance of trust and positive teacher-student relationships to create an environment conducive to student engagement. PDs must also focus on helping teachers understand and resolve pressures from students, must teach, model, and support strategies to improve instruction, and must provide teachers with the opportunity to reflect on connections between their instruction and student motivation.<sup>96</sup>

According to a study surveying middle school students, researchers found that what students considered 'good' math lessons involved physical activities, hands-on activities using concrete materials, and games.<sup>97</sup> Integrating games into math lessons was especially engaging for these students, underscoring research that emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning during the middle school years.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, including aspects of choice and creativity fostered a sense of empowerment for students, increasing engagement.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Fung, F., Tan, C. Y., & Chen, G. (2018). Student engagement and mathematics achievement: Unraveling main and interactive effects. *Psychology in the Schools*, 55(7), 815–831. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22139>

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Fulmer, S. M., & Turner, J. C. (2014). The Perception and Implementation of Challenging Instruction by Middle School Teachers: Overcoming Pressures from Students. *The Elementary School Journal*, 114(3), 303–326. <https://doi.org/10.1086/674053>

<sup>97</sup> Attard, C. (2012). Engagement with Mathematics: What Does It Mean and What Does It Look Like? *Australian Primary Mathematics Classroom*, 17(1), 9–13.

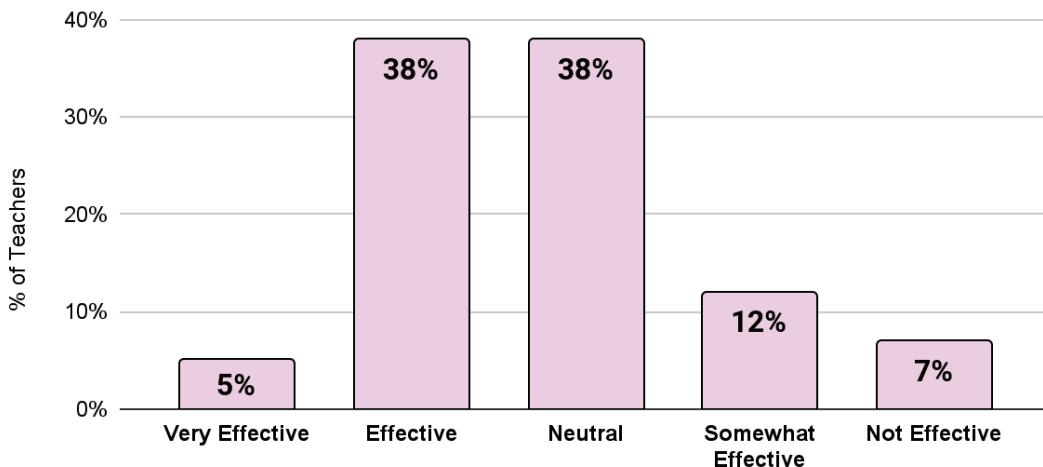
<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

## Surveys

### Teacher Perceptions on PDs Focusing on Student Inquiry Based Learning

APP Survey Results



#### Open-ended, short answer quotes:

Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question.

When asked what barriers teachers face in implementing newly learned strategies, teachers stated challenges such as:

- “Implementation is dependent on the students’ willingness to cooperate.”
- Students “are reluctant to follow instructions.”
- “Students are not all interested in academics.”
- “Sometimes [the topics] do not grab students’ attention. They require too many steps, they take too long for kids to familiarize with it.”
- “Student behavior and responsiveness to strategies.”
- “Student buy-in to math education.”
- “Student engagement”
- “Lack of [student] motivation.”

When asked how PDs can better support math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:

- Being taught “strategies to deal with [student] behaviors.”

When asked how teachers evaluate the impact of PDs on their students’ math performance, teachers stated strategies such as:

- “Student engagement”
- “Student feedback”

## Interviews

N/A

# Policy Options

## Policy Options

Rooted in our findings from our interviews, surveys and literature review, we offer six policy options for the office of Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin to consider in influencing changes in LAUSD. While our interview and survey findings were focused on schools in Board District 7, board members can only influence policies across LAUSD. Thus, our policy options are written and designed for implementation in schools throughout LAUSD, not just BD7. Our research team did not research the implementation of these policy options, so we encourage trials before widespread adoption for each of our policy ideas.

### Policy Options

1. Embed more structured planning time for teachers in PD cycles
2. PDs on enhancing learning for students with disabilities and multilingual learners
3. Increase teacher autonomy in selecting professional development sessions
4. Facilitate teacher engagement through a collaboration learning community
5. Improve data collection and evaluation of PDs
6. PDs focused on strategies for student engagement in math

### Policy Option #1: Embed More Structured Planning for Teachers in PD Cycles

According to our findings, the biggest need from teachers was more time to plan, practice, implement, observe, and reflect upon the new instructional strategies they learn in PDs.

To address this, we suggest **embedding more structured planning time for implementing the newly learned instructional strategies throughout the existing PD Cycles**. To do so, there could be an extension of the existing PD Cycle. The current PDSA Cycle is 8-weeks long and incorporates one meeting each week. However, there is not enough time within the 8 weeks for administrators to analyze data, learn new strategies, implement them, observe teachers implementing them, and then share and apply feedback. As such, PD cycles could take place across a longer time-span, allowing more time devoted to each strategy. Options for an extension could look like two 16-week cycles, or three 11-week cycles. However, it's essential to note that our study did not analyze and test for the optimal duration of PD cycles for maximal effectiveness. Subsequently, more dialogue and research on the most effective extension of PD cycle durations is essential.

**Other options that could be more impactful but less cost-effective include adjustments to preparation periods or adjusting banked time.** To ensure teachers have enough time to adequately implement newly learned PD strategies, administrators can adjust the teaching schedule to provide all teachers with additional preparation periods. On a similar note, there is currently one-hour of banked time each week in LAUSD. The district could consider extending this banked time, or finding other moments for banked time throughout the week, to ensure teachers have adequate opportunity to plan for and embed new instructional strategies in their teaching.<sup>100</sup>

## Policy Option #2: Professional Developments on Enhancing Learning for SWD and MLLs

As noted in our findings, teachers feel ill-equipped to support and educate students requiring specific accommodations/modifications to their instruction or curriculum. With the move to inclusion in many LAUSD schools, many general education teachers are now expected to teach students with disabilities, which requires knowledge about mild/moderate special education.<sup>101</sup>

To address this, we suggest an investment in providing **ALL** teachers with PDs tailored to the specific needs of students with disabilities and students who are multilingual learners. This will provide teachers with the support necessary to educate diverse student demographics. This investment resonates with our policy suggestion to increase teacher voice in selecting PD topics (See Policy Option #3), ensuring teachers are able to select PD topics that are most impactful for them and their students. These targeted PDs could be taught by experts in SWD and MLL or school leaders who received training in advance. Determining the timing, cycles, and content for these PDs should be determined by an educator task force composed of special education teachers, general education teachers, and an overseeing administrator. This ensures these PDs are reflective of teacher need and student need.

We recommend structuring these PDs using elements from the Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE's) recommendations on improving education for students with disabilities in California.<sup>102</sup> The recommendations include:

1. A basic introductory training for all teachers on the most common disabilities.
2. PDs on unconscious and implicit biases, and how to dismantle biases around learning difficulties and disruptive behaviors.

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<sup>100</sup> *Finding Time for Common Planning and/or teacher collaboration(Pathway Communities of Practice)*. (n.d.).

CCASN: College & Career Alliance Support Network. Retrieved 2024, from  
[https://casn.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/resource\\_files/S1\\_Finding\\_TIme\\_Common\\_Planning\\_Teacher\\_Collaboration.pdf](https://casn.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/resource_files/S1_Finding_TIme_Common_Planning_Teacher_Collaboration.pdf)

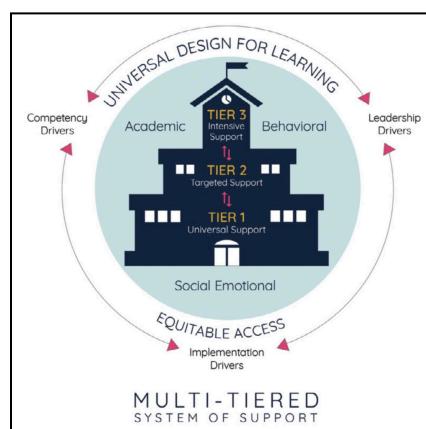
<sup>101</sup> Gilmour, A. F., & Wehby, J. H. (2020). The association between teaching students with disabilities and teacher turnover. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(5), 1042–1060. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000394>

<sup>102</sup> Stahmer, A., Oliver, K., & Schetter, P. (2020, February 1). *Improving Education for California Students via Professional Development*. Policy Analysis for California Education. Retrieved 2024, from  
[https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/pb\\_stahmer\\_feb20.pdf](https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/pb_stahmer_feb20.pdf)

3. Embedding active learning, modeling, practice, feedback, and ongoing support and supervision throughout the duration of the PD cycle.
4. Provide teachers with access to more specialized PDs, including (but not limited to):
  - a. Intensive intervention instruction in math
  - b. Social skills supports
  - c. Intensive behavior management and regulation
  - d. Pedagogical approaches for teaching SWD:
    - i. Multi-sensory and kinesthetic math techniques<sup>103</sup>
    - ii. Executive functioning skills
    - iii. Organizing information for students with dysgraphia<sup>104</sup>
    - iv. Vocabulary-building techniques beneficial for students with visual and auditory processing disorders
  - e. Pedagogical approaches for teaching MLLs:
    - i. Vocabulary-building techniques for multilingual learners<sup>105 106</sup>
5. Provide PDs emphasizing collaborative teaching strategies, such as co-teaching, in schools where co-teaching is used as a model for educating students with disabilities.
6. These PDs should all be implemented following a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework.

**Figure 12: Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework**

Source: PACE



While tailored to the specific needs of students with disabilities, it's essential to recognize the broader applicability of these strategies. Effectively equipping

<sup>103</sup> A.V, P. (n.d.). *What are Multisensory Instruction Techniques for Teachers and Parents?* Lexicon Reading Center. Retrieved April 8, 2024, from <https://www.lexiconreadingcenter.org/what-is-multisensory-teaching-techniques/>

<sup>104</sup> Morin, A., & Hollins, W. (n.d.). *Classroom accommodations for dysgraphia*. Understood.org. Retrieved April 8, 2024, from <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/at-a-glance-classroom-accommodations-for-dysgraphia>

<sup>105</sup> Sibold, C. (2011). Building English Language Learners' Academic Vocabulary: Strategies & Tips. *Multicultural Education*, 18(2), 24-28. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ951842>

<sup>106</sup> Stahmer, A., Oliver, K., & Schetter, P. (2020, February 1). *Improving Education for California Students via Professional Development*. Policy Analysis for California Education. Retrieved April 8, 2024, from [https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/pb\\_stahmer\\_feb20.pdf](https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/pb_stahmer_feb20.pdf)

educators to teach students with disabilities will support students without disabilities and students with gaps in learning. There is also a significant overlap between students with disabilities and students with gaps in learning, as students with disabilities are most impacted by the lack of early education interventions, and they were disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Policy Option #3: Increased Teacher Autonomy in Selecting Professional Development Sessions**

According to our findings, teachers and administrators believe that increasing teacher autonomy in selecting and planning professional development sessions makes PDs more effective for teacher learning and student success. Teachers vary in their experience levels and their areas of expertise. Nonetheless, they share a common mastery in discerning the unique needs of their students. As such, allowing teachers the autonomy to choose PDs most beneficial for their classrooms is crucial.

**We propose granting teachers the autonomy to choose a lesson of their preference from MyPLN for their Banked Time Tuesday.** This proposes a shift in the current practice where administrators determine topics for weekly Banked Time Tuesday sessions without much collaboration with teachers. This policy change ensures that teachers are learning from PDs that are relevant to their teaching practice and tailored to their needs. It also grants teachers a greater claim over their professional development, ultimately providing them with a more meaningful PD experience. If teachers wish to focus on the same lesson, they are encouraged to do so (See Policy Option #4).

For topics of interest that are not available via MyPLN, teachers should still have a voice in influencing PD sessions led by their administrators. This will ensure that PD efforts are responsive to teachers' evolving needs. This can be enacted by implementing **teacher-led PD committees, where teachers and administrators are jointly responsible for planning PD activities.** These committees should be diversified based on experience level (beginner vs veteran teachers), grade level, student populations they teach (gifted vs. special vs. general vs. bilingual education), and roles within the school (instructional coach, department chair, etc.) By diversifying the committees, it ensures that no teachers are being left behind in planning PDs. This collaboration allows teachers' voices to be heard, making PD feel more relevant, interactive, and delivered by someone that understands the teaching experience.<sup>107</sup>

### **Policy Option #4: Collaborative Learning Community**

Collaboration allows schools to leverage every teacher's individual teaching needs and experiences. In designing PD sessions, we recommend that schools adopt the **parallel schedule approach, where teacher's free periods will be aligned to promote collaboration within math teachers.** For instance, administrators implementing this

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<sup>107</sup> Teachers Know Best: Teachers' Views on Professional Development. (2014). In Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED576976>

can pair a new teacher (3 years or less of teaching experience) with an instructional coach, by aligning their schedules. The instructional coach will then provide guidance and feedback in developing math related teaching strategies. As a result, receiving support from an instructional coach will then allow math teachers to engage in collaborative activities. Through this proposal, teachers will be able to learn from one another's teaching strategies. Thus, this proposal will allocate more time for math teachers to support each other as a math team.

The district currently relies on a Banked Time Tuesday model. However, this model has not provided sufficient time for teachers to collaborate. **In response to this, we suggest either adding another hour to this model, or embedding additional banked time throughout the instructional week, to designate specific time for teacher collaboration.<sup>108</sup>** Under this model, students may have another day with early dismissal, providing teachers with an additional hour each week to engage in the exchange of lesson plans, sharing teaching styles, brainstorming solutions to certain subject material, and any other teaching approaches that may benefit other teachers.

**Monthly paid “unstructured structured” time is another opportunity that supports collaboration among math teachers.** This approach fosters teacher flexibility to collaborate with other teachers outside of normal school hours. Since this approach is not structured, teachers have leverage of using this time to address any student-teaching needs. We uncovered this approach from interviewing a BD7 administrator who has adopted this policy and is impressed with the results thus far.

These pathways for collaborative opportunities can be structured and implemented with the support of school administrators. The effectiveness of collaboration relies on school leaders to create and promote a professional learning space where teachers have a shared commitment to improving student learning.<sup>109</sup>

### Policy Option #5: Improve data collection and evaluation of PDs

A challenge with professional development in LAUSD is the lack of centralized data collection among schools. The district is unsure how schools are conducting their professional development, what teacher participation looks like, how this differs between schools, and the connection between PDs and student performance. There may be large discrepancies between schools in the types and quality of professional development training being offered.

To address this concern, we suggest three different paths to improve PD data collection and evaluation.

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<sup>108</sup> Legters, N., Adams, D., & Williams, P. (2011). Common Planning: A Linchpin Practice in Transforming Secondary Schools. *Academy for Educational Development*.

<https://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Common-Planning.pdf>

<sup>109</sup> Carroll, K., Patrick, S. K., & Goldring, E. (2021). School Factors That Promote Teacher Collaboration: Results from the Tennessee Instructional Partnership Initiative. *American Journal of Education*, 127(4), 501–530.

<https://doi.org/10.1086/715002>

First, in collaboration with LAUSD schools, the office of Tanya Ortiz Franklin can encourage LAUSD to modify Gausky's matrix. The matrix is currently designed to be completed by administrators as part of the planning process for a PD. The matrix focuses on "participant's [teacher's] reaction, participant's learning, organization support, participant's use of new knowledge and skills, and student learning outcomes".<sup>66</sup> The matrix includes ratings that focus on how data will be collected, what is measured and how the data will be used. We believe the current form of the matrix can be simplified, but it may provide a useful starting point in designing a district wide PD tracking and evaluation tool. A one-time district-level PD or an online recording could be created to instruct school administrators on how to best use the matrix.

Another area to improve data collection could be a **district-wide implementation of a poll** (two, multiple choice questions) that would be given to teachers after each PD. The first question could ask if teachers thought the PD was effective and the second could ask teachers if they would use the PD concept in their classroom. We recommend that LAUSD sends the poll via email and stores all the data to simplify data management and communication across the district. This could be a helpful step towards starting to track and collect PD data in LAUSD.

Lastly, an **external academic research team could be hired by LAUSD** to more deeply examine the PD landscape, the connection between PD characteristics and middle school math performance, and they may be able to recommend tools for the district to independently assess and evaluate PDs. The external research team could begin by investigating how to structure teacher work time in PDs to maximize the educator learning outcomes and implementation of PD concepts. They could also research which PD data collection tool (i.e. poll vs matrix) would have the greatest return to data collection. The research team could search for a causal relationship between PDs and student performance, but they should examine the literature discussing the difficulty in this line of research.

### **Policy Option #6: PDs focused on strategies for student engagement in math**

Responses from our teacher surveys advocate that student engagement strategies be shared during PDs. The district could create and implement PDs on math specific student engagement strategies. Engagement is described to function on three levels: behavioral, affective (emotional), and cognitive.<sup>110</sup> In a math classroom, student engagement involves: 1) Actively participating in relevant activities (high behavior), 2) Valuing the content and appreciating its relevance in their own lives (high affect), and 3) Grasping mathematical concepts and its applications outside of school (high cognition).<sup>111</sup>

Examples of strategies to increase student engagement include:

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<sup>110</sup> Attard, C. (2012). Engagement with Mathematics: What Does It Mean and What Does It Look Like? *Australian Primary Mathematics Classroom*, 17(1), 9–13.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

- Physical activities: students can walk an edge to learn perimeter or take a field trip to a grocery store to calculate discounts
- Hands-on activities using concrete materials: using algebra tiles to visually understand exponents<sup>112</sup>
- Games: students can play math tic-tac-toe with partners<sup>113</sup>
- Using real-life situations that students find relevant: divide a collection of snacks among students to learn about fractions<sup>114</sup>
- Technology: Use Kahoot to review math concepts or interactive whiteboard lessons
- Student choice and creativity- fosters a sense of empowerment<sup>115</sup>
- Group discussions: by sharing, comparing, and discussing problem-solving strategies with peers, students enhance their comprehension and learn new approaches to solve problems

To improve PDs on student engagement, one approach is to offer a comprehensive series that includes modeling, planning time, practice, and feedback. Utilizing external math curriculum consultants can be effective in teaching staff how to employ these engagement strategies. Rather than send consultants to each school, a cost effective approach would be to have the consultants train district staff who can then train individual schools. Additionally, embedding engagement strategies directly within PD sessions on new teaching methods can also be effective. For example, a PD focused on teaching how to engage students could provide teachers with strategies for integrating engaging elements into their lessons, such as games or interactive technology.

These engagement strategies also complement PDs tailored for SWDs and MLLs. Many SWDs are shown to learn better when they are taught through strategies including hands-on, kinesthetic, and multi-sensory learning.<sup>116</sup> SWDs with processing disorders, as well as MLLs, are shown to process and remember vocabulary more effectively when they can connect it to real-world applications and to words and scenarios they are already familiar with.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>112</sup>Schmit, M. (2022, October 14). *What Are Algebra Tiles and What Is Their Purpose?* Braincamp.Com. <https://www.braincamp.com/blog/posts/what-are-algebra-tiles>

<sup>113</sup> Single Digit Missing Numbers Addition Game Worksheet. (n.d.). Teachnology.Com. Retrieved 2024, from <https://www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/math/tictac/add/1dig/2/>

<sup>114</sup> Ibama-Johnson, B. (2023, March 28). *Strategies to engage students and transform the middle school math experience* [Indexes; Offices]. Regional Educational Laboratory Program (REL). <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/midwest/Blog/107077>

<sup>115</sup> Attard, C. (2012). Engagement with Mathematics: What Does It Mean and What Does It Look Like? *Australian Primary Mathematics Classroom*, 17(1), 9–13.

<sup>116</sup> A.V, P. (n.d.). *What are Multisensory Instruction Techniques for Teachers and Parents?* Lexicon Reading Center. Retrieved April 8, 2024, from <https://www.lexiconreadingcenter.org/what-is-multisensory-teaching-techniques/>

<sup>117</sup> Sibold, C. (2011). Building English Language Learners' Academic Vocabulary: Strategies & Tips. *Multicultural Education*, 18(2), 24-28. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ951842>

# Policy Evaluation

## Policy Evaluation

We evaluate our proposed policy options based on the following three criteria: (1) equity, (2) staff perception, and (3) evidence-based from academic literature. These criteria are created in coordination with our client in conjunction with the policy question. We utilized these criteria to determine which policy options Board Member Ortiz Franklin should prioritize in influencing LAUSD policy decisions. This approach ensures that our policy recommendations are aligned with the goals of our client and the needs of stakeholders in the community.

### Cost

While we recognize the importance of cost in evaluating policy options, our research team decided to exclude cost from our evaluation criteria, as we believe that the district has better knowledge of the costs associated with PD planning and delivery. However, we elected to provide some reflections about the general and relative costs of our policy options. Relative to LAUSD's budget, we do not anticipate any of our policy options to be too expensive.

**Table 3: Rank of Policy Options' Costs Relative to Other Options (starts with most costly)**

<b>Policy Option 5 <i>Improve data collection and evaluation of PDs</i></b>	<p>If LAUSD outsourced an external source to assist in data collection and evaluation, we believe that the costliest option would be policy option five. However, should LAUSD choose to only implement the two-question poll and the evaluation matrix, option five would then become one of our cheaper policy options.</p>
<b>Policy Option 4 <i>Facilitate teacher engagement through a collaboration learning community</i></b>	<p>The next most expensive policy option could be creating collaborative learning groups for teachers. This may require extending time or allocating paid time, which will require adjustments to scheduling, both for teachers and students, which could be costly both in money and in time.</p>
<p>Policy Options: 1, 2, and 6</p> <p><b>(1) Embed more structured planning time for teachers in PD cycles</b></p> <p><b>(2) PDs on enhancing learning for students with disabilities and multilingual learners</b></p> <p><b>(6) PDs focused on strategies for student engagement in math</b></p>	<p>Policy options one, two and six likely have similar costs, as they are specific to changing PD content and structure. We expect these options to be relatively affordable since the district is accustomed to planning and implementing new PD series. As we do not know the average cost of a PD series, we cannot provide a specific dollar cost.</p>
<b>Policy Option 3 <i>Increase teacher autonomy in selecting professional development sessions</i></b>	<p>We believe that policy option three could be the most affordable because it requires changing existing infrastructure. The district may have to hire and pay a programmer to make this change, and then advertise the change to teachers. However we believe that changes to existing PDs under policy option three could be facilitated and then communicated through existing administrator channels.</p>

## Criteria

### Equity

On August 21, 2021, the Los Angeles Unified Board District adopted the "Accelerating Achievement through Equity in Action"<sup>118</sup> resolution, co-authored by Board Member Mónica García (then Board District 2) and our client, Board Member Tanya Ortiz Franklin. This resolution declared that the district "must address institutionalized racism and structural oppression [that] contribut[e] to the inequitable conditions and outcomes for our students."<sup>119</sup> The resolution referred to racism, classism, xenophobia, ableism, and others as the oppressive systems that perpetuate opportunity gaps in education.

Considering equity as a criteria option in our evaluation promotes the goals set forth in the resolution by BD7. This conscious focus on equity reflects the resolution and our client's commitment to advancing educational equity. To evaluate whether a policy option promotes equity, we ask the following question:

**Does the policy option devote resources to close achievement gaps for historically marginalized students (Black, Brown, MLL, SWD)?**

<b>Low (1)</b>	The policy option minimally increases resources to close achievement gaps for historically marginalized students
<b>High (2)</b>	The policy option substantially increases resources to close achievement gaps for historically marginalized students.

### Staff Perception

Board Member Ortiz Franklin relies on the voices of her constituents to propose policy. Moreover, we emphasized staff perception as a criteria to ensure that staff voice was present in the decision-making process. The staff perception criteria aims to assess how well a policy option addresses the concerns and feedback gathered from the staff surveys and interviews. Incorporating staff feedback may also build buy-in and collaboration among teachers and administrators, ultimately enhancing support for these policy options. To evaluate whether or not an option takes staff perception into account, we ask the question:

**Does the policy option address staff needs and preferences from our survey and interviews?**

<b>Low (1)</b>	The policy option is minimally supported by staff feedback
<b>High (2)</b>	The policy option is substantially supported by staff feedback

<sup>118</sup> Ortiz Franklin, T., & García, M. (2021). *Accelerating Achievement through Equity in Action* (Resolution 003-21/22). Los Angeles Unified Board of Education.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f1jKGv3SzvPyOu0jdnxKILI\\_IDCN8BZL/view?usp=embed\\_facebook](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f1jKGv3SzvPyOu0jdnxKILI_IDCN8BZL/view?usp=embed_facebook)

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

## Evidence-based

Drawing upon our initial literature review, we recognized the importance of anchoring our policy options in scholarly literature and proven best practices identified by leading experts in the field of education. In determining which policy options to recommend, we sought to rate options based on alignment with established research findings. This approach identifies which policy options are supported by research and have the potential to produce positive outcomes in LAUSD. To evaluate whether or not an option is evidence-based, we ask the question:

**Does the literature support that the policy option improves PDs and/or student outcomes?**

Low (1)	The policy option is minimally supported by literature
High (2)	The policy option is substantially supported by literature

## Evaluation

Our research team assigned high and low ratings for each policy option, using the criteria explained above. We assigned ratings (low and high values) by first having each researcher independently evaluate each policy option. Then we accumulated all the responses, and chose the rating that was most common for the given criteria and policy option. Since we have an odd number of researchers, we were able to use the simple majority when rating was not unanimous.

*Table 4: Policy Evaluation based on equity, staff perception, and evidence-based*

Policy Options	Criteria		
	Equity	Staff Perception	Evidence-Based
Policy Option #1: Embed More Structured Planning for Teachers in PD Cycles	Low	High	High
Policy Option #2: Professional Developments Tailored for SWD and MLLs	High	High	High
Policy Option #3: Increased Teacher Autonomy in Selecting Professional Development Sessions	Low	High	High
Policy Option #4: Collaboration	Low	High	High
Policy Option #5: Improve data collection and evaluation of PD's	Low	Low	High
Policy Option #6: PDs focused on strategies for student engagement in math	High	High	High

# Recommendation

## Policy Recommendations

### Primary Recommendations

- Policy Option 2: PDs on teaching students with disabilities and multilingual learners
- Policy Option 6: PDs focused on strategies for student engagement in math

We recommend policy options two and six, as they scored the highest possible for all three criteria: equity, staff perception, and evidence-based (literature). These policy options both underscore the need to improve PDs by focusing on student need. Implementing these options could play a pivotal role in narrowing the achievement gaps experienced by historically marginalized students, as they prioritize instruction that is inclusive and adaptable to the diverse requirements of all learners. By adopting such targeted professional development, Board District 7 can make strides in creating an equitable, supportive, and enriching learning environment for every student.

Our client's initial aim was to tackle the issue of low student math performance. Moreover, aligning strategies to improve PDs with diverse student needs can help BD7 close the student achievement gap. As the district continues to strive to prioritize equity in conversations around supporting student achievement, students with diverse learning needs must be at the forefront of this conversation.

### Secondary Recommendations

- Policy Option 1: Embed More Structured Planning for Teachers in PD Cycles
- Policy Option 3: Increased Teacher Autonomy in Selecting Professional Development Sessions
- Policy Option 4: Collaboration

While our primary recommendations advocate for the implementation of PDs that center student need, our secondary recommendations cater to teacher preference in PD experiences. Implementing policy options one, two, and four would address teacher concerns, while simultaneously complementing our primary strategies. For instance, following a PD on teaching multilingual learners, educators could be allotted structured planning time to integrate these new methods into their teaching practices (Policy Option 1). Granting teachers the flexibility to select PDs that cater to their unique classroom needs (Policy Option 3) would empower educators to address challenges specific to their classroom, such as attending targeted PDs to learn how to better support a student with attention deficit disorder (ADD). Facilitating math teacher collaboration in PDs (Policy Option 4) provides educators with a space to exchange effective teaching practices and strategies, improving the math instruction received by their students. This approach improves teacher agency in improving math instruction for their students. Collectively, these outlined policy recommendations can impact teacher ability to effectively and empathetically educate all students.

## Other Consideration

- Policy Option 5: Improve data collection and evaluation of PD's

Policy option five scored low on equity and staff perception. However, LAUSD may be interested in improving PD data collection and evaluation, which could indirectly benefit equity and staff perception by improving PD quality. We advise against LAUSD trying to measure the impact of PD training on student achievement, as research has struggled to find causal relationships between PDs and students scores. Instead, we encourage the district to collect data using teacher's self-reflection and opinions on PDs. This could increase the district's knowledge around staff perception of PD, which may increase PD quality and improve staff climate.

## Conclusion

Addressing educational disparities in LAUSD requires a comprehensive approach that should include supporting and strengthening a teacher's capabilities to teach all students. Our findings suggest that educators feel unprepared to teach students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students performing below grade-level, and students with low classroom engagement. By implementing tailored PDs, LAUSD can foster a more equitable education system where every student has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of race, language, ability and family income.

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# Appendix

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Regression Table

School-level, LAUSD SBAC data predicted by school's rates of absentee students, English Language Learners, foster students, low-income students with disabilities, student's experiencing homeless, and percentage of Hispanic and African-American students

Source: SENI Index 2023-2024<sup>120</sup>  
 DataQuest: California Department of Education<sup>121</sup>

Call:

```
lm(formula = sbac ~ absenteeism + EL + Foster + LISWD + Homeless +
  hisp_afam_percent, data = seni_race)
```

Residuals:

Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
-0.38143	-0.06732	-0.00485	0.07184	0.38858

Coefficients:

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )
(Intercept)	0.7741412	0.0193260	40.057	< 2e-16 ***
absenteeism	-0.4219251	0.0562249	-7.504	2.84e-13 ***
EL	-0.2499224	0.0393960	-6.344	5.02e-10 ***
Foster	-2.3950993	0.6173175	-3.880	0.000118 ***
LISWD	-1.1363732	0.1107986	-10.256	< 2e-16 ***
Homeless	-1.4615981	0.2723004	-5.368	1.22e-07 ***
hisp_afam_percent	0.0005586	0.0004200	1.330	0.184159

---

Signif. codes: 0 ‘\*\*\*’ 0.001 ‘\*\*’ 0.01 ‘\*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 0.1089 on 501 degrees of freedom

(123 observations deleted due to missingness)

Multiple R-squared: 0.6346, Adjusted R-squared: 0.6302

F-statistic: 145 on 6 and 501 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16

<sup>120</sup> Office Of Data and Accountability. (n.d.). *Student Equity Needs Index (SENI) Rankings and Targeted Student Populations (TSP) Allocations for each School, 2023-2024 Budget Year*. LAUSD Open Data Catalog. Retrieved 2024, from [https://my.lausd.net/webcenter/portal/OpenData/pages\\_topics/budgetfinance](https://my.lausd.net/webcenter/portal/OpenData/pages_topics/budgetfinance)

<sup>121</sup> Enrollment by Ethnicity—Los Angeles Unified (CA Dept of Education). (2023). DataQuest: California Department of Education.

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## Appendix B: Salary Point Scale for Regular Credentialled Teachers

**LAUSD**  
UNIFIED  
**Los Angeles Unified School District**  
**2023-2024 PREPARATION SALARY (T) TABLE**

Personnel Policy Guide: 53

**Preparation Salary (T) Table (Regular Credentials):** The 2023-2024 table reflects a 4% increase over the July 1, 2023-December 31, 2023 rates. This table applies only to employees holding regular credentials (i.e., non-emergency, non-intern) and a bachelor's degree, or possession of certain vocational or industrial arts credentials. C Basis rates reflect 204 days. Actual paid salaries will reflect one additional day for the 2023-2024 school year for a total of 205 days.

**PAY SCALE GROUP**

(Req. Pts.)*	PAY SCALE LEVEL										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<b>20</b>	<b>C Basis</b> 5,365.11 B Basis 5,812.22 A Basis 6,867.35	64,381 5,371.46 5,819.10 8,208.40	64,458 5,428.68 5,881.05 82,506	65,144 5,428.68 5,881.05 83,384	65,831 5,492.21 5,943.04 84,263	65,907 5,492.21 5,943.04 84,361	66,013 5,501.11 5,949.92 84,479	67,905 71,399 73,563 86,918	69,491 71,515 75,282 88,949	71,886 75,782 77,876 92,013	73,930 6,160.80 80,090 94,630
<b>21</b>	<b>C Basis</b> 5,371.46 B Basis 5,819.10 A Basis 6,875.47	64,458 69,829 5,881.05 8,208.47	65,144 70,573 5,881.05 6,948.69	65,831 71,316 5,943.04 7,021.90	65,907 71,399 5,949.92 7,030.05	66,013 71,515 6,050.21 7,041.41	68,561 74,274 6,224.36 7,243.19	69,491 75,282 6,489.67 7,412.38	72,603 78,653 80,917 8,667.78	74,692 78,653 83,610 7,885.82	77,178 80,917 6,431.53 7,885.82
<b>22</b>	<b>C Basis</b> 5,428.68 B Basis 5,881.05 A Basis 6,948.69	65,144 70,573 5,881.05 6,956.84	65,220 70,655 5,887.94 6,956.84	65,607 71,399 5,949.92 7,030.05	65,826 71,515 5,959.55 7,030.05	66,013 71,515 6,161.95 7,041.41	68,256 73,943 6,161.95 7,280.59	69,7010 76,819 6,161.95 7,280.59	73,304 79,413 8,016.50 7,819.14	75,439 81,726 8,006.04 8,046.90	77,605 81,726 7,329.64 8,232.34
<b>23</b>	<b>C Basis</b> 5,435.04 B Basis 5,887.94 A Basis 6,956.84	65,220 70,655 5,887.94 6,956.84	65,907 71,399 5,949.92 7,030.05	66,013 71,515 5,959.55 7,041.41	65,907 71,515 5,959.55 7,041.41	66,013 71,515 6,161.95 7,041.41	68,256 73,943 6,161.95 7,280.59	69,7010 76,819 6,161.95 7,283.98	73,304 79,413 8,016.50 8,124.98	75,439 81,726 8,006.04 8,357.65	81,190 87,956 7,329.64 8,660.26
<b>24</b>	<b>C Basis</b> 5,492.21 B Basis 6,381.42 A Basis 7,030.05	65,907 71,399 5,887.94 6,956.84	66,013 71,515 5,949.92 7,030.05	66,013 71,515 5,959.55 7,041.41	66,013 71,515 5,959.55 7,041.41	66,013 71,515 6,161.95 7,041.41	68,256 73,943 6,161.95 7,280.59	69,7010 76,819 6,161.95 7,283.98	73,304 79,413 8,016.50 8,124.98	75,439 82,520 8,046.90 8,357.65	80,640 84,882 6,720.04 8,601.68
<b>25</b>	<b>C Basis</b> 5,501.11 B Basis 6,381.42 A Basis 7,041.41	66,013 71,515 5,949.92 7,280.59	66,220 73,943 5,959.55 7,488.83	66,013 71,515 6,161.95 7,488.83	66,220 73,943 6,338.22 7,918.37	66,013 71,515 6,701.73 7,918.37	68,256 73,943 6,961.98 7,823.98	69,7010 76,819 7,234.61 8,225.84	73,304 79,413 7,421.88 8,129.85	75,439 82,520 7,073.53 8,442.20	85,491 92,615 7,006.04 8,684.63
<b>26</b>	<b>C Basis</b> 5,713.38 B Basis 6,389.52 A Basis 7,313.12	68,561 74,274 6,620.49 7,524.63	70,544 76,422 6,620.49 7,744.27	72,603 78,653 6,554.39 8,233.96	77,194 76,488 6,688.87 8,554.49	80,199 80,421 6,701.73 8,233.96	83,340 83,544 7,240.13 8,554.49	85,430 86,815 7,523.76 8,889.62	88,404 89,063 7,712.43 9,112.54	91,912 91,822 7,980.94 9,429.80	98,074 97,126 8,478.00 9,392.35
<b>27<sup>A</sup></b>	<b>C Basis</b> 5,840.49 B Basis 6,327.19 A Basis 7,475.82	70,086 75,926 6,620.49 8,050.14	73,335 79,446 6,620.49 8,050.14	75,470 81,759 6,813.29 8,564.23	80,290 90,368 8,897.78 9,245.93	82,416 90,368 8,897.78 9,467.21	86,681 93,904 8,012.61 9,825.15	88,755 96,151 8,315.54 10,213.96	92,111 99,786 8,644.65 10,923.31	95,756 103,736 9,425.02 10,923.31	
(continued)	<b>C Basis</b> 8,574.54 B Basis 9,289.08 A Basis 10,975.38	102,894 111,469 9,329.01 131,705	103,337 111,948 9,371.67 132,271	103,809 112,460 9,411.59 132,876	104,252 112,939 9,411.59 133,442						

**Refer to the District-UTLA Collective Bargaining Agreement, Articles XIV, XV, and Appendix E for rules and requirements regarding salary, including, but not limited to: rating-in, step (pay scale level)/schedule (pay scale group) placement and advancement, salary point credit, differentials, staff development, career increments, employee filing of required documents, etc.**

\* A point is a semester unit (or 1.5 quarter units) as defined by the University of California, or its equivalent, as established by the Board of Education.  
<sup>A</sup> Rating-in limit is Pay Scale Group 27, Pay Scale Level 10.  
Annual amounts are rounded to the nearest whole number. To obtain the actual annual amount, multiply the respective basis monthly payment rate by 12.

Office of the Chief HR Officer: C/DA/Salary Tables/2023-2024 Salary Tables/2023-2024 Salary Table 4%: T 4%

Page 1



## Los Angeles Unified School District

Personnel Policy Guide: S3

## 2023-2024 PREPARATION SALARY (T) TABLE (Continued)

## (T) Salary Table

Degree Differentials:

Effective 7/01/08, degree differentials are hourly rates paid as worked.

	MA Degree	DR Degree
C Basis (6 hour)	584	1,168
	0.47696	0.95402
C Basis (8 hour)	584	1,168
	0.35772	0.71552
B Basis (6 hour)	632	1,265
	0.47696	0.95402
B Basis (8 hour)	632	1,265
	0.35772	0.71552
E Basis (6 hour)	670	1,339
	0.47696	0.95402
E Basis (8 hour)	670	1,339
	0.35772	0.71552
A Basis	747	1,494
	0.35772	0.71552

Maximum Rates With Career Increments:First Career Increment (completed 27T14)\*  
Pay Scale Group C1, Pay Scale Level 15-19

		1st CI & MA	1st CI & DR
C Basis	105,838 8,819.83	106,422	107,006
B Basis	114,658 9,554.82	115,290	115,923
A Basis	135,472 11,289.37	136,219	136,966

Second Career Increment (after 5 yrs on first CI)  
Pay Scale Group C2, Pay Scale Level 20-24

		2nd CI & MA	2nd CI & DR
C Basis	106,646 8,887.20	107,230	107,814
B Basis	115,534 9,627.82	116,166	116,799
A Basis	136,508 11,375.63	137,255	138,002

Third Career Increment (after 5 yrs on second CI)  
Pay Scale Group C3, Pay Scale Level 25-29

		3rd CI & MA	3rd CI & DR
C Basis	109,468 9,122.35	110,052	110,636
B Basis	118,590 9,882.54	119,222	119,855
A Basis	140,119 11,676.59	140,866	141,613

Fourth Career Increment (after 5 yrs on third CI)  
Pay Scale Group C4, Pay Scale Level 30+

		4th CI & MA	4th CI & DR
C Basis	111,314 9,276.14	111,898	112,482
B Basis	120,590 10,049.16	121,222	121,855
A Basis	142,482 11,873.47	143,229	143,976

An employee with a master's degree and a doctorate, or equivalent degree, shall receive the doctoral differential only.

For employees working a complete school year, the following is applicable:

C Basis annualized = 204 paid days or equivalent hours; 1,224 hours annual (6 hours); 1,632 hours annual (8 hours).

B Basis annualized = 221 paid days or equivalent hours; 1,768 hours annual.

A Basis annualized = 261 paid days or equivalent hours; 2,088 hours annual.

\*To qualify for the first career increment, the teacher must have been paid on the maximum pay scale group (PS Group 27) and pay scale level (PS Level 10-14) for five qualifying years. The two semester unit "recency" requirement was eliminated effective April 26, 2005.  
 Annual amounts are rounded to the nearest whole number. To obtain the actual annual amount, multiply the respective basis monthly payment rate by 12.

Office of the Chief HR Officer:IC/DA/Salary Tables/2023-2024 Salary Tables/2023-2024 Salary Table 4%: T-CI 4%

Page 2

## Appendix C: Interview Questions

### Administrator Interview Questions UCLA Research

#### Primary Questions

1. What is your school's year-long PD plan?
2. What elements of PDs have been successful in the past?
3. What are the biggest challenges in providing effective PDs?
4. Do you offer math-specific PDs, if so what does that look like?
5. How could the district best support your school in providing high-quality PDs?
6. How do you think PDs should be changed/structured?
7. How do you support teachers in applying teaching strategies learned from PDs?

#### Secondary Questions (Asked if there was time, in no particular order)

- Do you hold PDs specific for supporting black students, ELL students, or students with IEPs?
- How are PDs selected?
- How do you support teachers in applying teaching strategies learned from PDs?
- Do you have a way of measuring the effectiveness of PDs?
- Describe the effectiveness of PD trainings as a way to improve middle school math scores.
- How do you allocate funds, do you think it is cost effective?
  - Do you think there are ways to make PDs more cost effective?

## Appendix D: Key Findings 7-11

Our report highlights the six most supported findings from our research, however there were still notable themes to consider.

### Theme #7: Alignment With Curriculum

#### Key Findings

Our interview and survey data suggests that teachers are more engaged in PDs when the PDs are aligned with the curriculum, to rigorous standards, and relevant to the teacher and students.

#### Literature Review

PDs that emphasize differentiated, challenging, and standards-based curriculum can better support student academic achievement. Further, research suggests that teacher-preferred PDs are those that are interactive, sustained over time, and connected to what they are teaching.<sup>122</sup>

#### Surveys

##### **Open-ended, short answer responses:**

Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question.

When asked what barriers teachers face in implementing newly learned strategies, teachers stated needs such as:

- “Alignment with my pacing plan.”
- “Adjusting my classroom’s instructional routine.”

When asked how PDs can better support math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:

- “Align with concepts and what is needed.”
- “If we are implementing something that can easily be incorporated into our curriculum.”
- “Make them relevant and not space/time fillers.”
- Have PDs be “done quarterly for the upcoming unit and not held in the middle of the unit or at the end of the unit.”
- “Be compatible and realistic to what we are teaching/curriculum.”
- “Align it all with the IM curriculum.”

#### Interviews

Interview data suggests that teachers are more engaged in professional development when they are interested in the curriculum.

<sup>122</sup> Goddard, Y., Goddard, R., & Kim, M. (2015). School Instructional Climate and Student Achievement: An Examination of Group Norms for Differentiated Instruction. *American Journal of Education*, 122(1), 111–131. <https://doi.org/10.1086/683293>

## Theme #8: Coaching (Observation)

### Key Findings

There is a disconnect between teachers and administrators about how effective coaching is in improving educator's practice. Teachers with more than four years of experience and teachers who do not teach at a priority school are least likely to support coaching, and teachers that have less than five years of experience or work at priority schools value coaching the most. Teachers believe coaching can improve by creating more opportunities for teacher to teacher coaching, as opposed to administrator to teacher coaching, and more training to coaches about how to provide teachers with tangible, helpful feedback that improves their teaching practice.

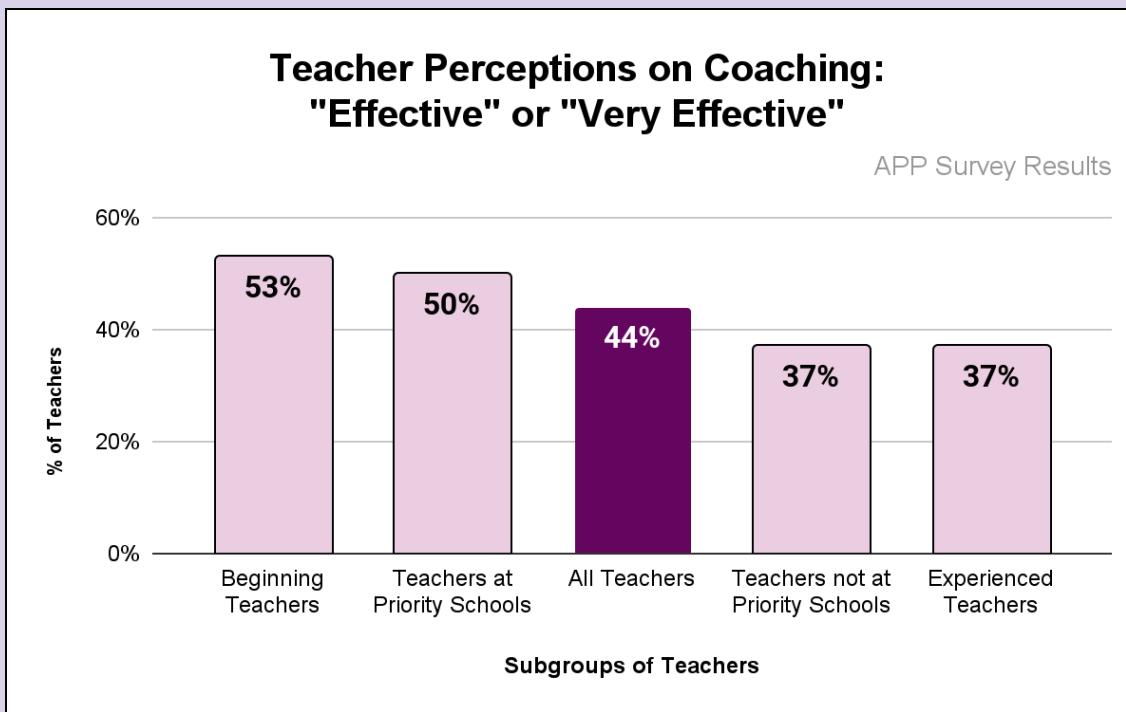
### Literature Review

The literature review results were more optimistic about the benefits of coaching than our survey results. A study by the Gates foundation found that 83% of teachers prefer coaching to other types of professional development. One reason is that teachers have credited coaching to help implement changes into their curriculum, such as implementing the Common Core.<sup>123</sup>

### Surveys

- Coaching was ranked the second least favorite PD topic.
- Only 44% teachers (20/46) thought coaching and observations were effective or very effective. This percentage decreased to 37% for teachers (11/30) with more than three years of experience.
- However more than 50% of both beginning teachers (less than four years of experience) and teachers at priority schools ranked coaching as effective or very effective.
- Teachers wanted more time to practice PD before being observed.

<sup>123</sup> Udesky, L. (2015, February 4). Classroom coaches critical as teachers shift to Common Core. EdSource. <https://edsource.org/2015/classroom-coaches-critical-as-teachers-shift-to-common-core/73730>



#### **Open-ended, short answer quotes:**

*Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question*

*When asked how PDs can better support math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:*

- “Effective coaching, we’ve become comfortable doing just enough and the students suffer because of it.”
- “Provide coaching and modeling lessons.”
- “Come in to support the teacher in implementing the new learning not writing them up but giving constructive feedback to help them grow.”
- “Allow teachers time to observe other teachers, implementing the new concepts and activities.”
- “Provide opportunit[ies] to peer observation and coaching.”

#### **Interviews**

- 100% of current school administrators (4/4) use coaching and observations to improve teacher’s effectiveness.
- One administrator perceived coaching as “the bridge between PD and effective practice [for teachers]”
- Some schools have an academic team that observes lessons, rates teachers, and provide coaching if they need it

## Theme #9: Modeling Strategies

### Key Findings

Our interview and survey data suggests that teachers feel more adequately prepared to implement PD strategies when they have had those strategies modeled for them, and when they are able to leave a PD with a lesson plan and/or a PD strategy. They also noted that it is important to have access to the resources modeled/needed for the strategy implementation.

### Literature Review

In a professional development program that focused on problem-based learning, results found that several strategies, including questioning, revoicing, making connections, and modeling strategies, were effective strategies that experienced PD facilitators used.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, a study on Responsive Classroom (RC) instructional strategies found that interactive modeling is an effective tool for enhancing engagement.<sup>125</sup>

### Surveys

*Many teachers believe that they can be better supported in implementing PD strategies, if the strategy has been modeled for them in a classroom setting, and if they are given the resources/materials modeled.*

- About 75% of teachers said that it was important or very important for them to have a tangible action item once they leave the PD. This could be a curriculum or lesson plan, but could also be a PD method that was practiced in real time with other teachers. For example, % respondents from a school said it was very important.

#### Open-ended, short answer quotes:

*Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question.*

*When asked what barriers teachers face in implementing newly learned strategies, teachers stated needs such as:*

- “How to apply in large classrooms and time management with small group activities.”

*When asked how PDs can better support math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:*

- “Provide real life implementation of strategies rather than just saying teachers have to do it.”
- “demo lessons for difficult classes and students.”

<sup>124</sup> Zhang, M., Lundeberg, M., & Eberhardt, J. (2011). Strategic Facilitation of Problem-Based Discussion for Teacher Professional Development. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 20(3), 342–394.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2011.553258>

<sup>125</sup> Ottmar, E. R., Rimm-Kaufman, S. E., Berry, R. Q., & Larsen, R. A. (2013). Does the Responsive Classroom Approach Affect the Use of Standards-Based Mathematics Teaching Practices?: Results from a Randomized Controlled Trial. *The Elementary School Journal*, 113(3), 434–457. <https://doi.org/10.1086/668768>

- “Modeling for teachers in the classroom.”
- “modeling lessons”
- “Providing class sets of resources, modeling, and clear plans for integration of PD.”
- “Model a lesson once and come back in [to observe] weekly.”

## Interviews

*PDs are structured by the ILT, and their observations/data-analysis on how to support students.*

- Schools use Instructional Leadership (ILT) composed of instructional coaches, administrators, and principals to structure/adjust PDs on how to support students.

## Theme #10: PD Continuum

### Key Findings

One element that makes professional development successful has been through this continuum of teaching practice implementation. The interviews and literature review point out to the importance of engaging educators by allowing them to implement a strategy (learned from PD) in their teaching practices. Literature review highlighted that this is more beneficial when this is sustained through a period of time. In the example of the PDSA cycle, teachers are on a 8 week cycle using student data to inform effectiveness of instructional strategies, which allows teachers to be more positive about making adjustments to their teaching practices.

### Literature Review

N/A

### Surveys

When asked how PD can be better designed to support middle school math teachers, around 2% of open-ended responses indicated that PDs should focus on one topic at a time, and then have time to revisit it.

When asked how school administrators can better support math teachers in applying what they learn in PDs, around 2% of open-ended responses indicated that having continuous/consistent classroom observations would be an effective support.

### Interviews

The PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) Cycle, weekly department meetings of an 8-week cycle where they select an instructional strategy to implement, create a plan for implementation, and use student data, like student work to analyze effectiveness of implementation and if needed make adjustments on instructional strategies during the 8-week period. However, this model can lack consistency, and or drain a teacher's energy as it's time consuming to plan and test teaching strategies over this period of time

## Theme #11: Supporting Admin Experience in Leading PD

### Key Findings

In summary, investing in professional development and or providing training for administrators can have positive outcomes. In the surveys, teachers felt strongly about their administrators having knowledge in how to facilitate workshops. Teachers also mentioned the importance of administrators having some experience in teaching, that demonstrated how a school operates. Interviewees pointed out that for professional development to be successful, administrators should also receive coaching on how to deliver high quality PDs, they indicated, "Admin are not born with learning how to teach PDs."

### Literature Review

Just as it's important for teachers to receive PD, it is significantly important to provide PD to principals, who are agents of leadership in school settings. When principals participate in leadership development, it directly impacts the teachers' learning, self-efficacy, student achievement (Fiaz et. al, 2017). A study highlighted that in 2017, public school principals in the U.S. only 50% of administrators received coaching.<sup>126</sup>

### Surveys

<sup>126</sup> Wise, D., & Cavazos, B. (2017). Leadership coaching for principals: a national study. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 25(2), 223–245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2017.1327690>

- 90% of teachers reported that it was either important or very important that those leading the PD have prior teaching experience. 100% of teachers with 10 or more years of experience said it was important or very important for this to be true.
- 77% of teachers reported that it was either important or very important that those leading the PD work at their school and understand how their school operates. 5/6 of the special education teachers that responded said it was very important, and the other said it was important.

**Open-ended, short answer quotes:**

*Data was unprompted; teachers voiced these themes when asked a specific question.*

*When asked what barriers teachers face in implementing newly learned strategies, teachers stated needs such as:*

- "I feel like there is a need for expertise in professional development. I feel like I learn best when there are experts in the room."

*When asked how school administrators can better support math teachers, teachers stated needs such as:*

- "School administrators can be specific and provide us with a list of some strategies that they would like to see implemented in the classroom."
- "Ask us what we need. They don't know our kids and their needs."
- "Areas of focus need to be real, not district mandate[d]."

*Teachers often voiced a need for admin to provide teachers with the necessary resources/materials to implement the learned strategies:*

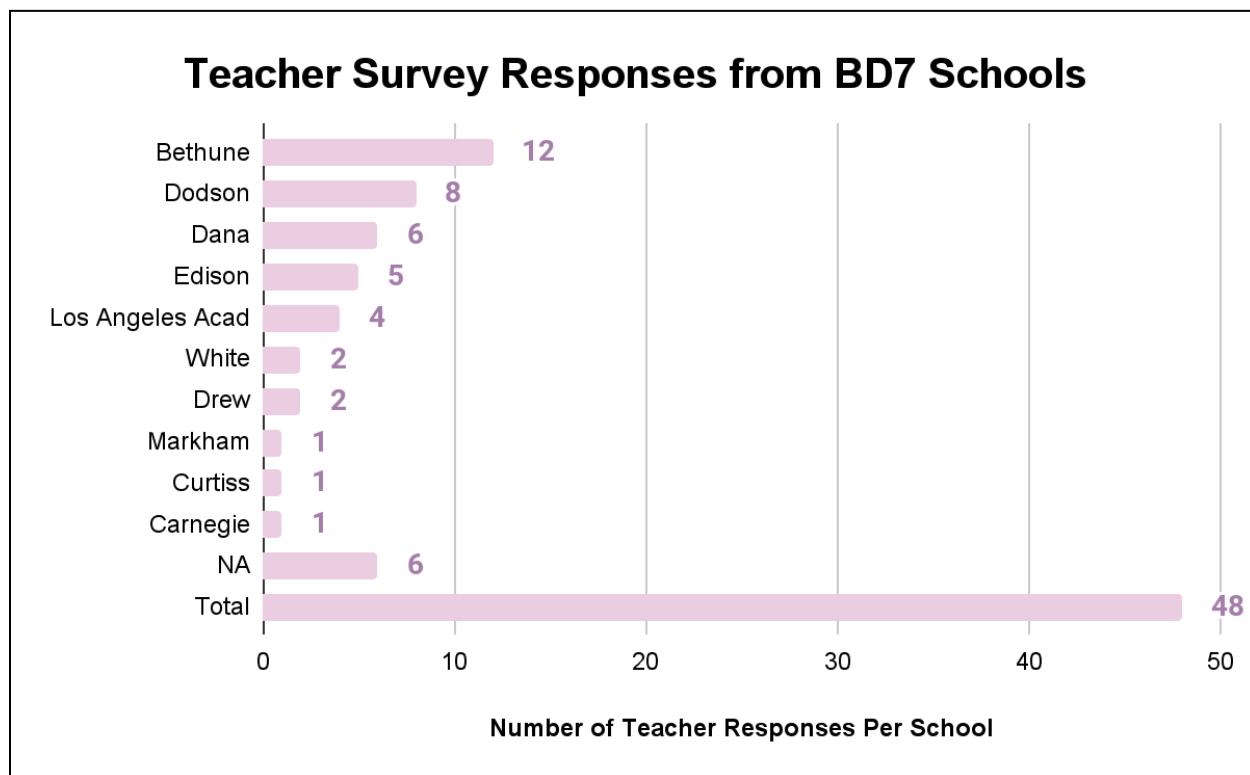
- "Make sure we have all necessary materials."
- "Providing the resources needed so teachers do not need to print/find on [their] own."
- "Not having the resources or money to implement what we learn."

## Interviews

During the interviews, administrators discussed not having the experience to lead PDs. They noted that it was important for staff to receive high quality PDs, however administrators do not receive the training needed to deliver these PDs.

## Appendix E: Survey Participant Demographics

Figure 11: Survey Responses by School



## Appendix F: Survey Questions

### Section 1: Consent Form (See Appendix H)

Today's date

Answer: -----

Email Address to receive Gift Card

Answer: -----

### Section 2: (Served as a screening question to ensure only math teachers were participating)

Teaching Subject (could only select one)

- Math
- ELA
- Science
- Foreign Language
- Other

(If the respondent answered anything besides math, they were immediately sent to Section 6.)

### Section 3: Professional Background

School Name (could only choose one from dropdown menu of BD7 district and charter schools)

- Alexander Fleming Middle School
- Alliance College Ready Middle Academy #4
- Alliance College Ready Academy #12
- Alliance Jack H Skirball Middle School
- Alliance Kory Hunter Middle School
- Andrew Carnegie Middle School
- Animo Florence-Firestone Charter Middle
- Animo James B Taylor Charter Middle School
- Animo Mae Jemison Charter Middle School
- Caroldale Learning Community
- Charles Drew Middle School
- Edwin Markham Middle School
- George de la Torre Jr Elementary

- Glen Hammond Curtiss Middle School
- Harry Bridges Span School
- KIPP Generations Academy
- KIPP Philosophers Academy
- Los Angeles Academy Middle School
- Mary McLeod Bethune Middle School
- Rancho Dominguez Preparatory School
- Richard Henry Dana Middle School
- Robert E Peary Middle School
- Rudecinda Sepulveda Dodson Middle School
- Samuel Gompers Middle School
- Scholarship Prep South Bay
- Stephen M White Middle School
- Thomas A Edison Middle School
- Watts Learning Center Charter Middle School
- Watts New Design Charter School
- Virtual Academy Arts & Entertainment
- Other

If you selected other, please type the name of your school (Optional)

Answer: -----

What grade(s) do you teach this year? (Select all that apply)

- K
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identity? (select all that apply)

- White

- Black or African American
- Asian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native American or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

*How many years have you taught (including this year)?*

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- More than 15

*Position (i.e. teacher, SPED teacher, teaching assistant)*

Answer: -----

#### **Section 4: Professional Development Experience**

*How often do you engage in professional development for math instruction? (select one)*

- Yearly
- Once a semester
- Monthly
- 2-3 times per month
- Weekly

*How often would you prefer to engage in professional development for math instruction?*

- Yearly
- Once a semester
- Monthly
- 2-3 times per month
- Weekly

*Rate the effectiveness of the following PD trainings for improving your math instruction. (Select one per category)*

	NA (not offered )	Not effective	Somewhat effective	Neutral	Effective	Very Effective
Content Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Collaborative Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Technology Integration Training	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Classroom Observation/Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Inquiry Based Learning Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Student-Centered Teaching Strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Equity and Inclusion Training	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Summer Institutes/Intensives	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>					

*If you selected other, please explain the additional techniques.*

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

*How well does your professional development prepare you to teach:*

	Not Well	Okay	Neutral	Pretty Well	Very Well
English Language Learners	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Students of Color	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Students with Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				

*How confident do you feel incorporating newly learned teaching strategies from professional development into your math lesson? (select one)*

- Not confident
- A little confident
- Confident
- Very Confident

*What barriers or challenges do you face in implementing newly learned strategies? (short answer)*

Answer: -----

*To what extent do you feel that professional development contributes to the overall improvement of student math scores in your classroom?*

- Doesn't contribute at all
- Contributes a little
- Contributes a decent amount
- Contributes a lot

*How do you measure the impact of professional development on your student's math performance. Please put N/A if you do not. (short answer)*

Answer: -----

## **Section 5: Improving Professional Development**

*Rate the importance of the following characteristics for increasing teacher engagement and implementation of PDs (select one per characteristic)*

	Not important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important

Stipend to attend PD	<input type="checkbox"/>				
PD is mandatory	<input type="checkbox"/>				
PD is online	<input type="checkbox"/>				
PD leader has prior or current experience teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Time in PD to implement or make a plan to implement the PD	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Time in PD to collaborate/problem solve with other teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Tangible product/plan is produced at the PD	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>				

If you selected other, please explain the additional techniques. (Long answer)

Answer: -----

How can professional development be designed to better support middle school math teachers? (Long answer)

Answer: -----

How can professional development be aligned with your existing workload to ensure it does not feel like an additional burden? (Long answer)

Answer: -----

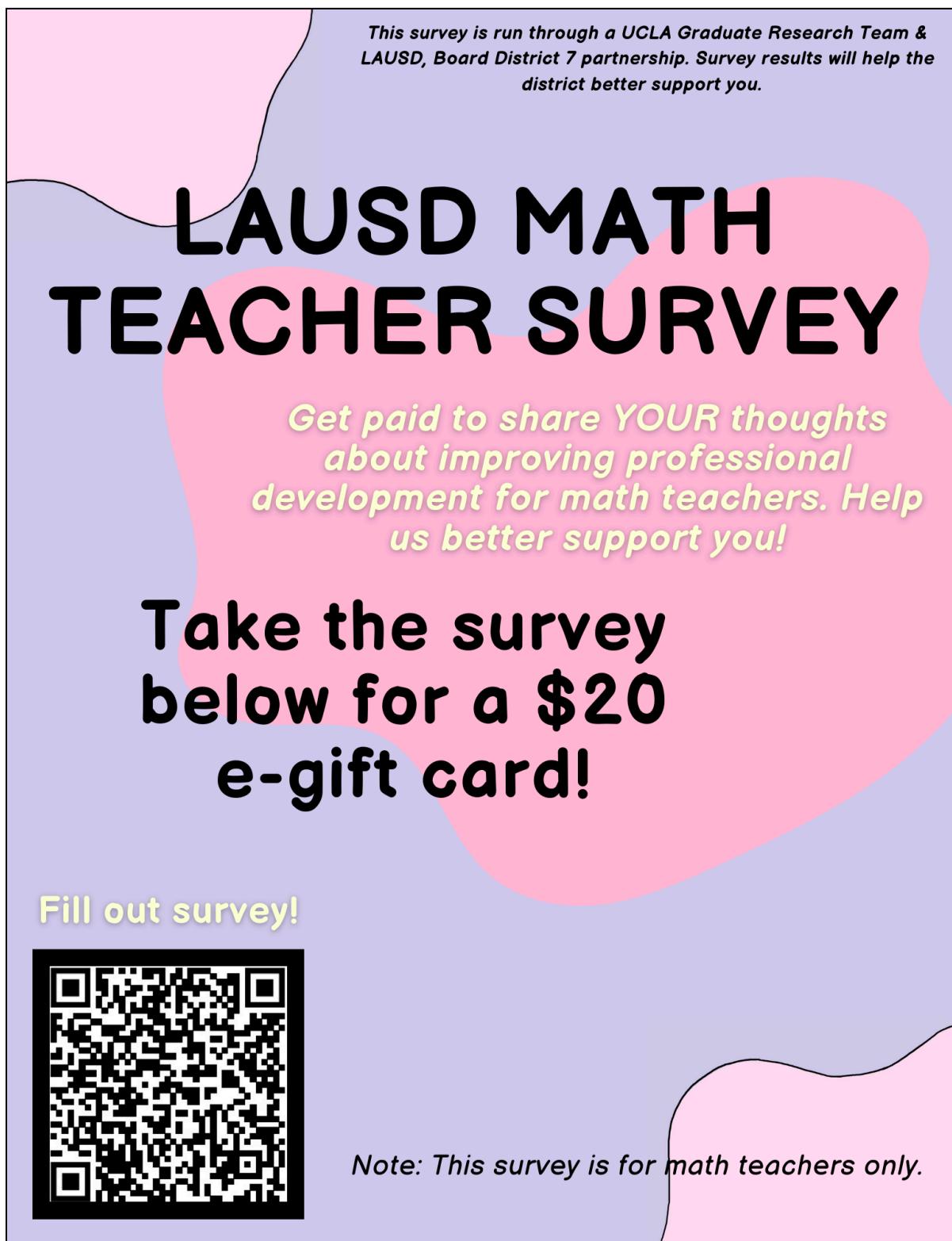
## **Section 6**

Thank you for your interest in the survey. At this time we are only interested in math teachers completing this survey.

**Section 7**

*Thank you for completing the survey. We will reach out shortly with an email containing your e-gift card. Please contact s\*\*\*\*\*@gmail.com if you have any questions.*

**Appendix G: Flyer distributed to teachers' mailboxes to recruit participants for the survey**



## Appendix H: Consent Form for Survey and Interviews

### Description of Project

Our research team is composed of five Master of Public Policy students at UCLA, and we are partners with LAUSD Board District 7 to research teacher professional development trainings in BD7. We are conducting interviews with school administrators and surveying teachers throughout BD7.

### Purpose of Project

The purpose of our research is to identify characteristics, as perceived by school staff, of professional development training that benefitted middle school math scores in Board District 7.

### Voluntary Participation

- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in a research paper submitted to the Luskin School of Public Affairs in May, 2024 and/or a powerpoint presented at UCLA in May, 2024.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities. They will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I acknowledge that only current math teachers in BD7 schools are eligible to receive the \$20 e-gift card

Please type your FIRST and LAST name below to confirm that you have read the consent form.

Answer: -----

## Appendix I: Guskey's Matrix for Evaluating Professional Developments

### Guskey's 5 Level Evaluation Scale (Guskey, 2000, pp. 45-51)

Evaluation Level	What Questions Are Addressed?	How Will Information Be Gathered?	What Is Measured or Assessed?	How Will Information Be Used?
1. Participants' Reactions	Did they like it? Was their time well spent? Did the material make sense? Will it be useful? Was the leader knowledgeable and helpful? Were the refreshments fresh and tasty? Was the room the right temperature? Were the chairs comfortable?	Questionnaires administered at the end of the session	Initial satisfaction with the experience	To improve program design and delivery
2. Participants' Learning	Did participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills?	Paper-and-pencil instruments Simulations Demonstrations Participant reflections (oral and/or written) Participant portfolios	New knowledge and skills of participants	To improve program content, format, and organization
3. Organization Support & Change	Was implementation advocated, facilitated, and supported? Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently? Were sufficient resources made available? Were successes recognized and shared? What was the impact on the organization? Did it affect the organization's climate and procedures?	District and school records Minutes from follow-up meetings Was the support public and overt? Questionnaires Structured interviews with participants and district or school administrators Participant portfolios	The organization's advocacy, accommodation, facilitation	To document and improve organization, support facilitation and recognition To inform future change efforts
4. Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills	Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skills?	Questionnaires Structured interviews with participants and their supervisors Participant reflections (oral and/or written) Participant portfolios Direct observations Video/audio tapes	Degree and quality of implementation	To document and improve the implementation of program content
5. Student Learning Outcomes	What was the impact on students? Did it affect student performance or achievement? Did it influence students' cognitive or physical or emotional well-being? Are students more confident as learners? Is student attendance improving? Are dropouts decreasing?	Student records School records Questionnaires Structured interviews with students, parents, teachers, and/or administrators Participant Portfolios	Student learning outcomes Cognitive (Performance & Achievement) Affective (Attitudes & Dispositions) Psychomotor (Skills & Behaviors)	To focus and improve all aspects of design, implementation, and follow-up To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development