

Executive Summary

A result of the small group work activity

Community Engagement Session (CES) #3 • March 29, 2022

Approximately 104 participants attended the **Vision Forward** community engagement session at Word of Life Church on March 29, 2022 both in-person and virtually via Zoom.

The topic for the third **Vision Forward** community engagement program was “*Improving Student Performance - PreK - Grade 5.*” Participants heard a presentation by Mrs. Dlo DuVall, Assistant Director of Special Programs and Dr. Diane Rutledge, District Leadership Solutions. Mrs. DuVall presented on the district’s various special programs including early childhood learning. Dr. Rutledge’s presentation focused on best practices and research identified with high achieving elementary schools.

To view the presentation, visit VisionForwardsjsd.com. Following the presentation, participants worked in 16 small groups to complete the tasks discussed below. Following is a summary of the responses from the groups. Verbatim responses can be found at VisionForwardsjsd.com.

Presented below are the most common responses given across the 16 tables (virtual and in-person responses combined) completing work activities.

Task #1: *If you were sharing information with a friend, what are two positive things about the St. Joseph School District, its students or staff you could share?*

Positive News to Share	Number of times mentioned
Teachers who care and are dedicated to district	9
Grow Your Own Program	3
Vision Forward Program	3
Academic options for students - traditional or tech schools and virtual	3

Early Childhood Center, ESOL programs	3
School district is passionate about doing what's best for students	2
Diversity of students, student academic and extra-curricular success, data-driven efforts, weekly student shout outs, process to return to classroom learning, resilience of students, extra curricular options for all students, neighborhood schools, and sense of welcome for all families at all schools.	1 (each was mentioned 1 time)

Task #2: What are 3 priorities to be addressed in the area of improving PreK and Elementary academic achievement? List your top priorities on the chart. Prioritize your top 3 priorities from 1-3 - 1 being the highest and 3 being the lowest priority.

What recommendations does your group have to address these priorities in the next 5 years?

Presented below are the top priorities ranked by participants:

Top Priorities Ranked by Participants	Number of times ranked #1, #2 or #3
Improved classroom behavior and management; additional adult supports	11
Expanded Early Childhood program	8
Improved family engagement and parent/school communication	6

Suggested High Priority Topics:

Classroom Management and Student Behavior

Comments on creating classroom climates that improve learning were shared by participants at 11 of the 16 tables. Improving student behavior and classroom management was a top priority for most of the participant groups. Providing additional support such as behavior interventionists for teachers and principals were included in the several recommendations listed by attendees. Other suggestions included offering additional professional development opportunities, bringing back retired teachers to help with classroom management, reopening the center for problematic students to refocus on learning.

Early Childhood Program

Half of the groups listed expansion of early childhood services as a priority. Several groups listed increasing early intervention services, expanding the Parents as Teachers program and adding an additional Early Childhood Center as top recommendations for improvement.

Family Engagement and Parent/School Communication

Several of the groups felt improved communication and stronger engagement with parents and families as another strategy to improve academic performance by elementary students. Increasing ways to share school and classroom information with parents was identified as one of the top priorities. Also identified was ensuring a process to better listen to parents and providing parents with resources needed to help their children in school.

CONSENSUS POINTS

Points of general agreement from the work activity

- Improving student behavior and implementing strategies to improve classroom management was without question the top priority (11 of 16 tables identified as this #1 priority). Finding ways to better support teachers was overall an agreed upon priority to improve academic achievement at the elementary level.
- Expansion of early childhood services, including the Parents as Teachers program, identified by half of the tables as a priority. Adding an additional center to serve more students and families was also identified.
- Increased resources for parents and families to become active participants in their child's education was another top priority identified by attendees. Improving two-way communication between school and family was listed as a need.

**For a complete listing of all responses
see the CES #3 Verbatim Response Document**