



ACHIEVING EQUITY AND ACCESS IN THE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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2022 Update

February 2022

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Clark County School District
Superintendent's Student
Equity and Access Advisory
Commission

Our commitment to reflecting on the progress and shortcomings of our district through the lens of equity and access remains steadfast.

INTRODUCTION.....

The Superintendent's Student Equity and Access Advisory Commission was originally convened to thoroughly review the Clark County School District's priority areas through the lens of equity and access. The Commission identified, made visible, and offered recommendations to mitigate gaps in our community.

The Commission focused on key milestones in the education span of a Clark County School District (CCSD) student when the system was failing to serve all students equitably. With a focus on gaps between students from different family incomes, the Commission endeavored to inspire a path forward that made high quality academic programming and ultimate student success accessible to all.

Since the [initial report](#) was published in January 2020, our community and the world faced an unprecedented disruption with the COVID-19 pandemic. In Spring 2020, the Commission exemplified a strong value to equity that never relented in the midst of the pandemic. Work at the start of the pandemic created a different lens for equity, not the four failure points discussed in the initial report. The Commission rallied around and supported securing immediate access to more basic services for students and families. The realities of the pandemic in 2020 meant shrinking the digital divide and activating a nationally-respected, one-of-a-kind model to battle the digital divide in a monumental moment with urgency. Communities of color and low-income communities were hardest hit by the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. The efforts of the Connecting Kids initiative, a community-led effort, impacted the baseline wellbeing of the families we serve and made digital learning accessible to all through aggressive, monumental outreach efforts, and the mobilization of community partners. Less effort may have been devoted to the failure points in the initial report; however, equity was always a priority of the Commission as digital access and even the feeding of struggling families became an immediate responsibility of all.

Connecting Kids, while hand-in-hand with CCSD, was able to bring the digital divide down to zero by providing devices to every student in CCSD, allowing them to access distance education classes.¹ The Family Support Center mobilized immediately to call families and provide prompt support to ensure devices and connectivity were providing students access to digital learning during school closures. Family Support Center agents successfully reached out to more than 100,000 families individually to provide technology support and even personally delivered devices.

¹ On December 18th 2020, Connecting Kids announced that with an enrollment of 313,313 students, 0 students needed a device to access digital learning. <https://districtadministration.com/nevada-has-achieved-internet-devices-for-all-students/>



THE COMMISSION'S PLEDGE TO SUPPORT.....

This update represents the response from the Commission based on the charge of the Superintendent. Membership has signed below indicating unwavering commitment to the recommendations identified in the original report and update.

I. Bustamante Adams

Irene Bustamante Adams
Deputy Director and Chief Strategy
Officer, Workforce Connections

Peter Guzman

Peter Guzman
President, Latin Chamber
of Commerce

Punam Mathur

Punam Mathur
Executive Director, Elaine P. Wynn
and Family Foundation

Linda P. Cavazos

Linda P. Cavazos
Clark County School District
Trustee, District G

Lisa Morris Hibbler

Lisa Morris Hibbler
Chief Community Services Officer,
City of Las Vegas

Mary Beth Sewald

Mary Beth Sewald
President and CEO, Las Vegas
Chamber of Commerce

Brigid Duffy

Brigid Duffy
Director, Clark County District
Attorney, Juvenile Division

Ryann Juden

Ryann Juden
City Manager, City of North
Las Vegas

Javier Trujillo

Javier Trujillo
Former Director of Public Affairs,
City of Henderson

Ken Evans

Ken Evans
President, Urban Chamber
of Commerce

John Jack Martin

John Jack Martin
Director, Clark County
Department of Juvenile Justice

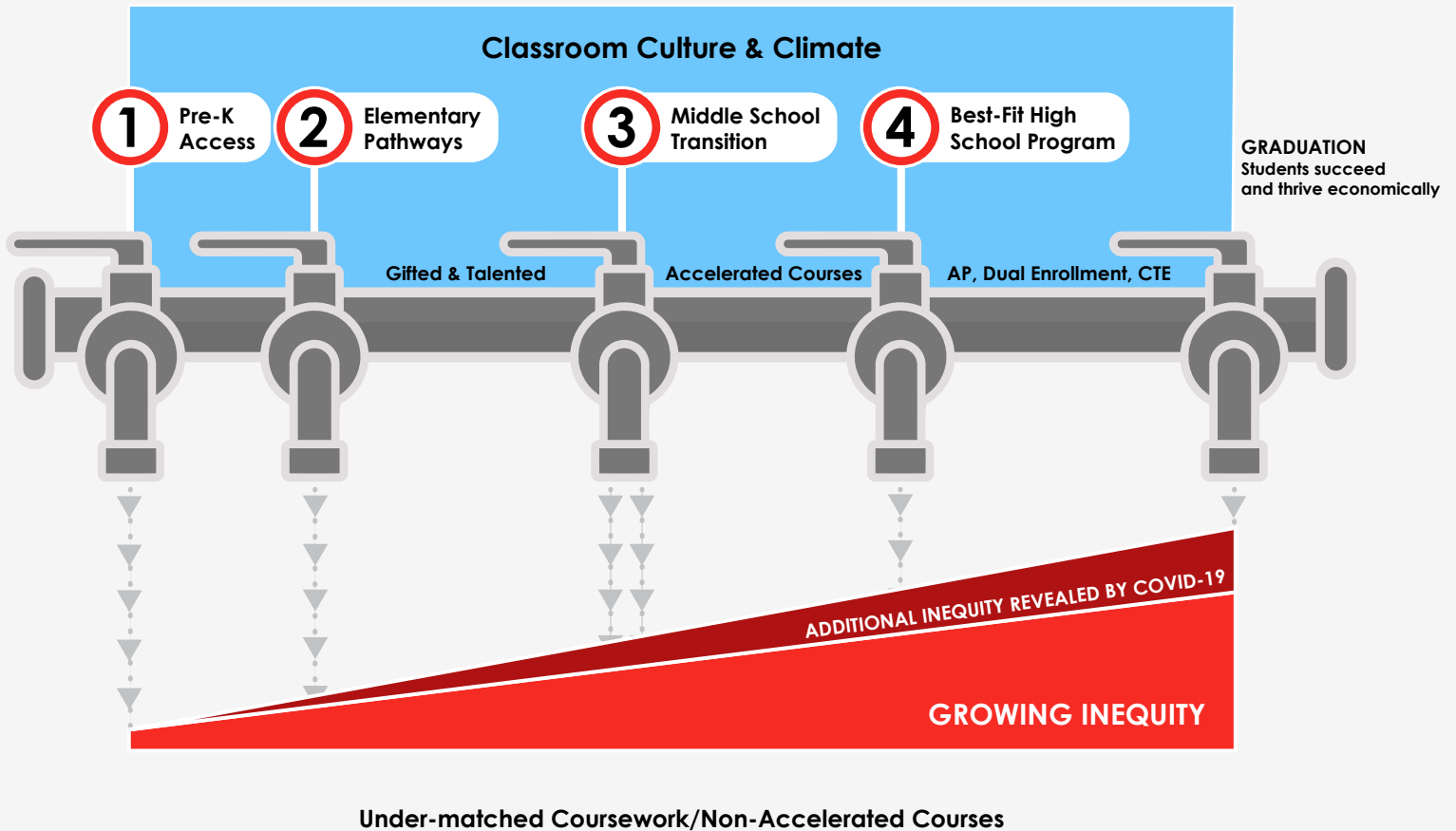
Sonny Vinuya

Sonny Vinuya
Former President, Asian
Chamber of Commerce

John Guedry

John Guedry
Chief Executive Officer,
Bank of Nevada

BARRIERS LEADING TO CYCLES OF INEQUITY



We are proud that the community's initial response was so focused on equity and access. As we continue to evolve as a school system and community with COVID-19 still very much a part of our reality, we redouble our commitments to the initial focus of this commission.

The four failure points discussed in our [initial report](#) remain. And now the impacts of COVID-19 are disproportionately impacting our students of color and students from low-income families, exacerbating inequities, as shown in the graphic above. This update to our first report highlights some progress made and outlines additional challenges we face as a system. Our commitment to reflecting on the progress and shortcomings of CCSD through the lens of equity and access remains steadfast.

PROGRESS

The District's commitment to equity and access translated to improvements in three concrete areas in the last two years even with long-term school closures and hybrid learning schedules.

Middle schools offering geometry increased from 25 schools to 38 schools between the 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 school year. Middle school master schedules now have 50 offerings of geometry sections. This translated to an overall enrollment increase across the District for middle schools. With more students accessing more advanced math classes earlier in their schooling, we are on track to have additional high school students in advanced math, like trigonometry and calculus. Increasing access is the first step towards making sure that access translates to advanced math enrollment across race, ethnicity, and family income. Disappointedly, advanced math enrollment in 8th grade is not representative of the racial and ethnic make-up of CCSD, with nearly half of all white students in advanced math while a quarter of Hispanic students and only 15% of Black/African American students are enrolled in advanced math. Our focus must turn to equity.

8th-Grade Enrollment in Algebra and Geometry

By offering concrete, clear guides to support school counselors with helping students enroll in the appropriate courses, we have removed subjectivity out of course placement in transitional grade levels. This ensures that students are enrolling in the appropriate level of academic rigor, removing more bias from the process.

Course Enrollment Guides

In the past, GATE screening has disproportionately identified white students for the program. A major root cause was the initial process of identifying students not being consistent for all students. Now GATE screening is provided to ALL second grade students. In the midst of distance learning, the GATE team worked hard to assess as many students as possible. Making GATE screening the default for all students is a fantastic example of focusing directly on a root cause of inequity; we remain hopeful that this step will result in more students of color accessing the advanced academic content they deserve.

Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)

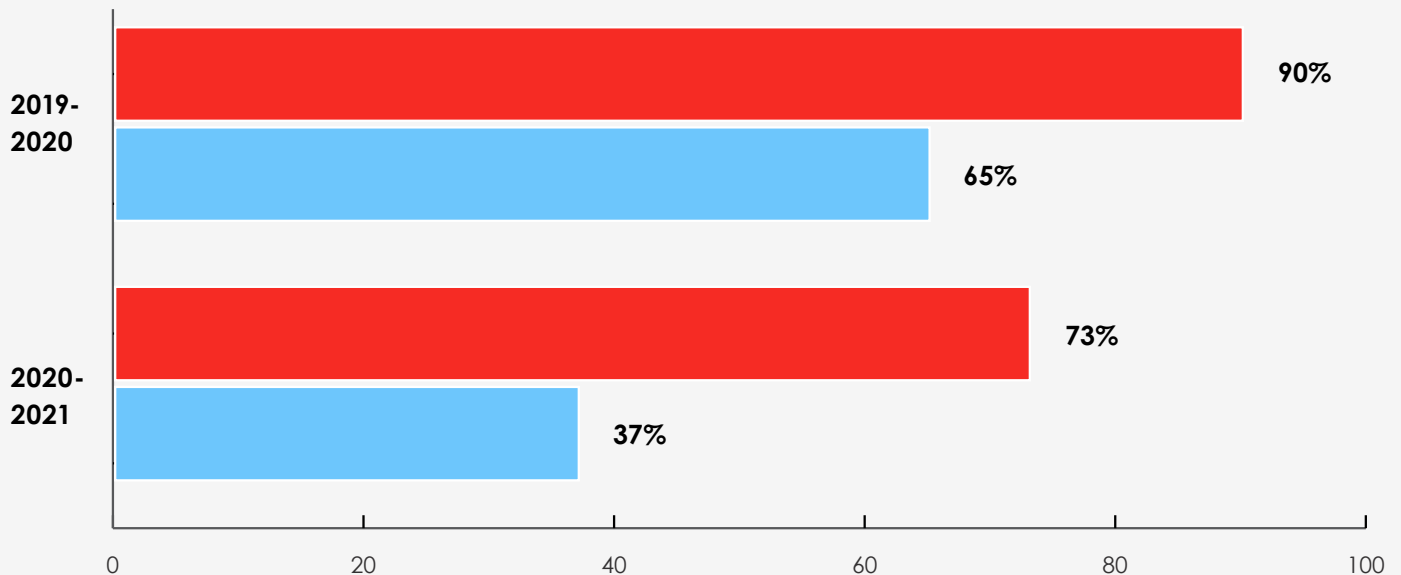
These changed behaviors and new strategies are just examples of ways that we are working to rectify the four failure points identified in the prior report. We commit to monitoring the data over time with increased frequency to see if we are achieving intended outcomes of these strategies that should impact the identified failure points.

SPOTLIGHT

FAILURE POINT #1: PRE-KINDERGARTEN ACCESS.....

Since our January 2020 report, there has been an evolution of our understanding of the Pre-Kindergarten challenge and necessary next steps. While 3,400 additional Pre-K seats are available across the District since the initial report, many of those seats are unfilled this year. While the first step of offering more opportunities for more students to enroll in Pre-K was necessary, it is insufficient if we have seats going unfilled and we are not achieving our goal of serving additional families. We have fewer students enrolled in early childhood education overall and 6,400 available Pre-K seats that are unfilled by students.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN: PERCENT OF SEATS FILLED



■ General Education Seats
■ IEP Seats

For the 2019-2020 school year, 11,501 CCSD seats were available overall, as of 9/1/2019. As of 10/1/2021, 14,902 CCSD seats were available overall.

The District specifically designs and staffs 45% of the Pre-K seats for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Significantly fewer of these seats are being filled by students. Additional work must be done to identify the root causes of these seats going unfilled, recognizing the unique context of COVID-19, while also ensuring that more Clark County students are ready to enter kindergarten.

Additionally, a lack of shared data and accountability with outside, private providers of care for Pre-K students means that CCSD does not have a complete picture of how four year olds in our community are being served. The Commission urges the community, Nevada Department of Education (NDE), and outside partners to ensure high quality programs and access to educational experiences for our CCSD Pre-K students and overall community context.

Given the evolved understanding the Commission has of the Pre-K intricacies, it is adding the following recommendations to the initial report:

- Develop a task force including members of the NDE, medical community, and family services to look at birth through Pre-K programs to monitor and support high-quality programming among both public and private providers.
- Take a holistic approach to improving learning experiences of all 4 year olds in the community to support strong health, wellbeing, and kindergarten readiness for all with a spirit of collaboration across all providers.
- On a quarterly basis, monitor and report Pre-K data for special education seats by ethnicity and gender. Additionally, the District is encouraged to review future years of longitudinal data for students initially enrolled in Pre-K seats to ensure male students of color are exiting special education services at rates comparable to other ethnicities and genders.

Equity and Access in the Era of COVID-19

The focus of this Commission remains set on the previously identified failure points in the system. It would, however, be irresponsible to focus on those areas of academic opportunity without acknowledging the unique challenges that have emerged in the last two years. The context of the pandemic has shifted the entire landscape in which our students and staff live now and for years to come.



Chronic Absenteeism

In the 2019-2020 school year almost 1 in 5 students (18%) were chronically absent, meaning they missed more than 10% of their enrolled school days. In the 2020-2021 school year, the number of students that were chronically absent almost doubled (33%). In particular, our Black and African American students, Hispanic students, and English Learners saw even higher rates of chronic absenteeism.



Staffing Shortages

Fully staffing schools was already a challenge in 2019. The need to recruit and retain high quality educators and staff is compounded by vacancies and daily educator shortages due to illness.



Mental Health

Students and staff alike are experiencing mental health challenges ranging from increased anxiety to more acute and severe mental health issues magnified by the pandemic. While the District has made strides to improve access to universal mental health screeners, connections to professional therapists, and wellness checks, it is important to acknowledge the toll on our entire community's mental health.

SUMMARY.....

Our priority and focus on equity remains steadfast, even in the midst of a global challenge and unique context that the pandemic brings.

This Commission commits to a full update in fall 2022, with a thorough account and scorecard of which recommendations have been put into place and outcome data where it is available. Look for the release of a scorecard in August as additional data measures exist and the return to face-to-face instruction continues. The Superintendent of Schools is committed to this work. With ongoing District partnerships with entities focused primarily on student achievement versus adult concerns, the forthcoming scorecard can translate to the progress needed to address the failure points. We must expeditiously repair the four failure points identified in January 2020, to help our students succeed and ultimately thrive economically.

We remain steadfast in monitoring:

- **Pre-K enrollment;**
- **Elementary pathways including access to Gifted and Talented Education;**
- **Middle school transitions with a focus on access to advanced coursework, and;**
- **Best fit high school programs, including Advanced Placement, dual enrollment and Career and Technical Education coursework.**

We encourage all community members to join us by supporting this unique cohort of young people coming of age in the midst of a pandemic that has shifted to an endemic. Their bridge from their experiences at the Clark County School District to post-secondary learning and the workforce will require support and care from each and every one of us now and for many years to come.

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