District 1 Summary of Key Themes

RICHMOND, VISTA DEL MAR, LONE MOUNTAIN, LINCOLN PARK
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On October 26, 2019, the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) convened a family summit to hear about the needs of children, youth, and families. The goal of the summit was to hear feedback from the community in District 1 to learn about the lived experiences of families in the district, including the greatest pain points in their daily lives, what is working, what could work better, and how should the City and County of San Francisco improve their quality of life. The summit began with opening remarks from Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer and DCYF staff. Participants listened to a presentation about DCYF and the Community Needs Assessment process, then engaged in breakout table discussions, facilitated by Bright Research Group, for approximately 50 minutes.

PARTICIPATION IN THE FAMILY SUMMIT

A total of 40 family members and 16 providers participated in the breakout table discussions. Of the family members in attendance, there were 19 parents and 13 youth. Participants were broken into six focus groups—two provider groups, one family group and one youth group were facilitated in English, and two family groups were facilitated in Chinese.

*Data in figures includes all community members who registered at the summit. Some participants did not register. Some attendees did not participate in the breakout discussions. Registrants were asked to select all applicable race/ethnicity categories.

Bright Research Group analyzed data by key theme. DCYF made the decision to redact the names of community-based organizations named by family members and youth as sources of support, out of concern that organizations have different levels of capacity when it comes to organizing their participants to attend community events.
KEY THEMES FROM THE FAMILY BREAKOUTS

A Day in the Life
The school-assignment process and the transportation problems it creates for families was a major theme across all the groups. The SFUSD approach to the lottery system and the school-assignment policy creates many pain points in the day-to-day life of a family, with many children attending school outside their neighborhoods. Free Muni rides for low-income youth helped alleviate this stress. Mornings are tough for many families, especially those who have to take multiple buses or have children attending different schools. Getting children from school to aftercare, if the aftercare is not co-located at the school, was a challenge for some parents. Similarly, picking children up at the end of the day is also a major pain point. Parents who get off from work at 5:00 p.m. downtown can’t get back to the Richmond to pick up their children from day care or aftercare until 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. Parents whose children could walk to school or had reliable aftercare close to school and home were appreciative of the availability of these resources.

Transportation issues specific to the Richmond include unsafe crosswalks on Geary Boulevard, the indiscriminate placement of stop signs, and poor signage/crosswalk markings. Parents want their children to be able to walk to school on their own. They recommended more crossing guards and investments in creating safer routes to school and improving the walkability of the neighborhood for children and youth.

Additional recommendations from family members included: continuing to invest in aftercare and early-care programs; addressing housing, displacement, and affordability, especially for middle-income families, improving neighborhood safety, infrastructure, transportation, and public safety; and, supporting the health and mental health of youth and families.

Chinese Youth
A separate group was held with Chinese youth and facilitated in English. Youth spoke about housing affordability, job training, and a lack of healthy food. Chinese immigrant youth reported that their parents are working all the time to stay in San Francisco. Youth in the breakout group attended the summit on their own — their parents were working. They emphasized that the high cost of housing and the decreasing affordability for families means that in two-parent households, both parents need to work. This is creating more stress on a day-
Youth recommended more job opportunities and training for immigrant parents and youth alike as well as more healthy lunch offerings at schools.

**Chinese Families**

Two separate breakout groups were facilitated in Chinese. The groups were multigenerational and included parents, grandparents, and single adults. Similarly, Chinese parents reiterated the needs and pain points referenced above in relation to housing, transportation, and out-of-school-time care. Chinese immigrant parents were looking for support with navigating cultural differences with their children. One parent of a 17-year-old high school student said she was not able to connect with and talk to her son and wanted the assistance of a social worker or other professional to help her navigate the cultural gap. Another single mother with a six-year-old kindergartener currently lives in a one-bedroom and is not able to afford a larger apartment. As her son gets older, she would like him to have his own room, but she does not qualify for any affordable-housing programs due to income.

Grandparents and seniors also emphasized high rent, long wait lists for affordable housing, and a lack of senior housing. They would like more senior centers in the community; currently, there are long wait times to use equipment, and some activities are full at the recreation center in the neighborhood. Many travel to Chinatown to participate in activities in a senior center there. Grandparents take care of their grandchildren during the summer, school breaks, and holidays; they suggested that DCYF expand programs for children during school breaks and holidays.

**English-Speaking Families**

In addition to the needs related to housing and transportation, English-speaking families spoke about out-of-school-time care, the need for better use of public spaces, and the lack of child-centered communication about services and programming. Parents reported that they are making decisions blindly without all the information they need. Parents have to consider transportation, special needs, after-care, the pickup and drop-off times for their other children, etc. For example, when parents are enrolling their children in school, information about enrollment in aftercare is not always provided. For example, many aftercare programs require that parents enroll their children at the end of the school year for the subsequent year. Many parents may not know about this and miss important deadlines and programmatic information. Parents view schools as natural hubs at which to learn about programs but report that schools are not currently serving as this anchor for information for services that are of interest to children, youth, and family. One parent indicated that private schools do an excellent job of serving as information hubs for parents, but public schools do not currently do this well. Instead, parents come across what they need by accident and through informal networks. Parents recommended a parent app on which information sharing could occur more easily.

English-speaking parents also recommended that the city do a better job of activating publicly available spaces, unused/unrented retail environments, parks, and school playgrounds. Parents want access to public spaces in the afternoon and evenings and recommended that vacant storefronts be made available to community-based
organizations to offer programming. With more pressure to provide, parents need more community spaces to come together formally and informally.

**Key Themes from Provider Break-Outs**

*Needs Identified by Providers*

There were two provider tables, with a number of different organizations represented, including aftercare providers, community-center staff, advocates for foster youth and youth with disabilities, and those who serve transition-age and immigrant youth. The major themes surfaced by providers focused on housing, gentrification, aftercare, and the impact of rising inequality impacting the nonprofit sector. Specifically, nonprofits are increasingly struggling to attract and retain workers because they are unable to pay a living wage to those workers. In the past, organizations were able to attract a diverse pool of San Franciscans from the community. Now they can attract only college students—which leaves many positions vacant for months. While there is a desire to professionalize the sector, organizations cannot spare staff to attend trainings, nor do they have the resources to compensate staff as professionals.

Rising inequality is also showing up in the demand for aftercare programs. The families with children who are left in the city need all adults to be working and contributing to the household, with many parents working two jobs. The demand for out-of-school-time care is rising, and community providers are seeing longer wait lists and an inability to meet demand. Providers note that this is particularly acute in the Richmond because Presidio Middle School and Washington Elementary School have very large student bodies, with students traveling from across the city to attend these schools. They recommended that DCYF factor in the size of the student body and the length of wait lists when determining funding allocation by district or school site.

Other concerns mentioned by providers included the displacement of foster-care youth out of San Francisco, out of the Bay Area, and—increasingly—out of state; lack of available inclusive programs for youth with disabilities, especially high-school-age youth; lack of information about services and trauma-informed supports for young parents enrolled in community college who are also parenting; the need to expand mental health services for
children, youth, families, and providers; and the need to expand free or low-cost services to parents who are middle income but low income by San Francisco standards

**Participant Quotes**

“We need more certainty in terms of where you can send your children. It’s the uncertainty that’s causing parents to be unsure about sending kids to public school – really need to look at the lottery system.”

—Parent, D1

“Washington High School serves so many students, but only two bus lines come out here, so between Presidio and Washington, we’re serving 3,500 students. Students are coming from across the city. The issues of stress for the families and the issue of transportation comes up the most.”

—Provider, D1