District 5 Summary of Key Themes

INNER SUNSET, UPPER/LOWER HAIGHT, FILLMORE, WESTERN ADDITION, PART OF CATHEDRAL HILL, PARNASSUS HEIGHTS, JAPANTOWN, HAYES VALLEY, PART OF ASHBURY HEIGHTS
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared by Bright Research Group on behalf of the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF).

DCYF contracted with Bright Research Group, an independent group, to produce this report. Founded in 2010 by Brightstar Ohlson, Bright Research Group is a community-centered design and research firm based in Oakland, California. Bright Research Group is a women and minority owned firm and certified small local emerging business in Alameda County. Learn more at www.brightresearchgroup.com.

We would like to extend a special thanks to Supervisor Vallie Brown and her Legislative team, San Francisco Unified School District’s Ida B. Wells High School, Buchanan YMCA, Intergraphics, Mestiza Catering, Alain McLaughlin Photography, and Katherine O’Toole.

Production of this publication was managed and supervised by: Sarah Duffy (Project Lead), Dori Caminong, Emily Davis, Michelle Gallarza, Colin Kimzey and Celeste Middleton.

Authors

Brightstar Ohlson, MS
Kristina Bedrossian, MPP
Vanetta Thomas, MPH
Holly Joshi, MA

Suggested Citation: Ohlson, B. et. al (2019) “District Summaries”. Prepared by Bright Research Group for the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families.

Comments, questions, and requests for additional information can be directed to:
Sarah Duffy, Data and Evaluation Manager
San Francisco, Department of Children, Youth and Their Families
(415) 554- 8416
sarah.duffy@dcyf.org
On December 5, 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 5 and to learn about the lived experience of families in the district, including the greatest pain points in their daily lives, what is working, what could work better, and how the city should improve their quality of life. The summit began with opening remarks from Supervisor Vallie Brown 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 33 community members participated in the breakout table discussions, including 26 family members and 7 providers. Of the family members, 16 were youth, and 9 were caregivers. Four breakouts took place—one family group, one youth group, and one provider group were facilitated in English, and one family group was 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**
Parents were asked about the easy and difficult parts of a typical day in the life of their families. Parents who lived within walking distance of their children’s school identified its proximity as an asset. Both parents and youth find reprieve during the evenings and nights, when they get to relax and spend time with their families.

Early school start times, bus delays, limited extracurricular programs in their neighborhoods, and completing homework were commonly identified challenges among families. Families that do not live within walking distance of their schools cited traffic congestion and bus delays as sources of stress in their mornings. Parents also said it is challenging to access engaging free/low-cost after-school programs within their neighborhoods. Getting homework completed was also a common challenge mentioned by families; Chinese-speaking mothers stated that they are unable to help their children with homework because they cannot read the material. Bilingual homework help, extracurricular activities closer to home, and later school start times would relieve some of the stress that families feel throughout their day.

**Needs of Families**
Family members also discussed common needs and assets in their communities. Early childcare and after-school programming, including equitable access and affordability; street safety and homeless support services; and healthy school lunches were the biggest concerns of District 5 families. Additionally, youth emphasized the need for more workforce development and life skills training.

Parents are concerned that all youth in San Francisco are not provided with the same level of access to services, including early childcare and after-school programs. Day-care and prekindergarten providers have closed or relocated due to the high costs of renting building space. Parents expressed a need for more-affordable early childcare and pre-kindergarten programs. Several parents recommended free preschool, as it would not only provide equitable early education to all San Francisco children under five years old but also increase diversity in pre-schools.
Parents are also concerned that there are not enough affordable aftercare programs to enroll their children into. Some parents feel that subsidized programming is prioritized for newcomers and that the city should provide more subsidies to all low-income families, regardless of ethnicity or immigration status. Parents are also concerned that a minority of organizations receive a majority of the city’s funding. Black families feel like they are being pushed out of the city the most, and it is reflected in the available programming for San Francisco youth. Both Black and Latin@ families feel that because they are not organized as much as other minority groups in the city, their needs go unnoticed or ignored.

Parents are concerned for their personal safety and that of their children when walking outdoors and using public transit. Several parents spoke about being harassed and mentioned that there is no longer a “sense of neighborhood” and community kinship. Parents and youth spoke of drug use and mentally ill homeless people as concerns that impact their safety. Families spoke of seeing needles in the street, especially around Golden Gate Park. Families would like for the city to provide more options for substance-abuse treatment and targeted homeless outreach.

Both parents and youth are concerned about the quality of the food that is served in San Francisco public schools and feel that the meals served do not reflect the school population. Parents felt that their children’s schools serve too much pizza and fried and salty foods. Youth reported that healthy options available to them are not fresh, sharing examples of receiving salad with wilted yellow lettuce and sandwiches in which mold has begun to develop on the bread. Youth also felt that the portion sizes at lunch should be increased. Families asked the city to put more effort into serving quality food in SFUSD schools.

**Additional Youth Needs**

Young people talked about the need for more internship and professional-development opportunities as well as support in obtaining internships. Youth noted that while some schools provide students with help on writing a résumé or professional email, many do not and that there is an expectation that they know how to do these things without training.

Young people expressed concern that they are not being properly prepared on how to be civically engaged, well-rounded adults beyond high school. One young person spoke of the impact that taking a cooking class had on them and noted the importance of being able to cook for oneself. Another transitional-age youth talked about not knowing anything about taxes or how credit works and the importance of learning these things while in high school. Young people would like schools and after-school programs to spend time teaching life skills, such as how to open a bank account and create a budget.

Additional needs that came up throughout the family breakouts, included an expansion in affordable housing, improved transit to and from schools (e.g., Muni buses specifically for students), better marketing of the resources available to families and improved community and city-wide engagement of families (e.g., science fairs, neighborhood basketball tournaments, cross-communication between PTAs); increased youth exposure to
outdoor safe spaces (e.g., parks, hiking, bike trails) and increased language support and interpretation services (e.g., improve translation pages on city-government websites and provide more adult English classes).

**KEY THEMES FROM PROVIDER BREAK-OUTS**

Providers spoke about their concerns for the safety, health, and well-being of people of color living in the city and focused their discussion on African American youth and families. They explained that Black youth experience SFUSD as an unsupportive and punitive environment and described the regularity with which Black students are sent out of classrooms and into hallways and offices for minor issues. They expressed concern over the lack of supportive adults present within schools and stressed the need for Black students to see and have access to successful African American role models. Providers recommended incorporating Black history into the daily school curriculum and teaching and supporting youth activism. In addition, providers expressed concern about the dwindling numbers of African Americans in San Francisco and described a need for intentional efforts to preserve and revive Black culture through support and investment in Black businesses and leadership cultivation. Providers expressed concerns about the safety of African American youth, explaining that they are regularly harassed by the police, sexually harassed on the streets, and seen as a threat by others in the community.

Providers discussed the growing need for mental health supports for youth and families and described the prevalence of depression in the communities living in public housing. Many parents and caregivers are struggling with debilitating mental health issues that impact the well-being of children and youth. Providers cited a need for culturally competent, holistic, family-centered supports that recognize and respond to generational and vicarious trauma and community violence. Providers suggested funding and support for community wellness events and advocated for increased access to mental health supports for frontline staff working directly with impacted populations.

Providers discussed the need to increase youth engagement in positive programs. They described the transition from middle school to high school as an important and vulnerable time and expressed a need to fund street and school outreach staff capable of reaching vulnerable youth and connecting them with programs. Providers stressed the criticality of hiring staff who reflect the population of youth being served both in terms of culture and lived experiences. After youth are connected to programs, keeping them connected is challenging, and
providers described the importance of paid jobs, internships, and stipends for retention. They explained that young people need financial supports, described the positive impacts of stipends in the lives of youth, and advocated for access to year-round paid positions.

Providers suggested that the city be more intentional in designing supports that are responsive to specific community needs and stressed the importance of evaluating needs by district. Other areas of concern mentioned by providers included the need for college preparation, financial literacy, and vocational training; the importance of field trips and outdoor education; and challenges with transportation.

**PARTICIPANT QUOTES**

“SFUSD is not supporting African American kids. They’re getting in trouble for the dumbest things, and instead of staff dealing with it, they just send them to the hallway or the office.”

—Provider, D5

“I as a youth can’t walk out at night and be safe. A child-friendly city is a place where a child can go safely from point A to point B.”

—Parent, D5

“When I was in high school, no one taught me how to open a bank account, how taxes work, how credit works. I think we should have a program that focuses on things like that.”

—Parent, D5

“In those teenage years, you get more aware of what’s going on. You start seeing more about bills, and now it’s bothering me. So they can’t consciously have fun or just go to school. They start feeling like they need to contribute.”

—Provider, D5