

**Local Districts Efforts to Engage African American Parents:
An Evaluation of the Tenet 4 Implementation Process and Action Steps**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Black children are the proxy for what ails American education in general. And so, as we fashion solutions which help black children, we fashion solutions which help all children."¹

In June 2001, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) activated a steering committee, made up of central and local district staff, education advocates and community representatives, to research and to develop an Action Plan to target students of color especially African American students within the Achievement Gap. A research-based Action Plan with five major tenets presented to the Board of Education was approved in July 2001. Each of the 8 local districts were asked to develop a blueprint for the implementation of the Action Plan requirements at their district.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the progress of local districts on implementation of the Action Plan Tenet 4: Engaging Parents of African American Students and other students across all Local Districts.

The two major performance goals of the Tenet Four are:

- *To increase parent engagement and parent advocacy of African American students by seeking and gaining assistance of in-school organizations, religious institutions and community organizations.*
- *To devise strategies to use parents' cultural knowledge and capital in the way schools function on behalf of their children.*

Local district blueprints for implementation of action plan with regards to the Tenet 4 were reviewed and local district administrators responsible for Tenet 4 implementation measures were contacted for interviews along with the SEL (Standard English Language) Specialist(s) and Parent Ombudsperson. In addition, based on recommendation from Central District office staff, we also contacted a few other administrators who had responsibility for the Tenet 4 Action Steps. Of the 34 administrators contacted, 25 LD staff members completed the interviews. Overall we analyzed data from 23 interview sessions, since 2 were done in pairs.

For purposes of this analysis, Local District 1 and 2 are deemed as having largely Caucasian populations; Local Districts 4, 5 and 6 are categorized as highly Latino; and Local Districts 3, 7 and 8 are placed in the highly African American category. About one-third of the participating administrators (10 individuals) were from predominantly African-American Local District, and nine individuals responded from predominantly Latino LDs, and six from predominantly White LDs. Our findings are based on a qualitative analysis of the participants' responses. In summary, the major findings of this study on the implementation of Tenet 4 are:

1. Local District Standard English Language (SEL) Specialists hold the primary responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of Tenet 4 Action Steps.
2. According to all local district staff interviewed, the English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) and the Compensatory Education Advisory Council (CEAC) receive the majority of leadership training and Tenet 4 related outreach.

¹ Congressman Augustus Hawkins (Retired), Former Chairman of Committee on Education and Labor, U. S. House of Representatives

3. All local districts value culturally relevant literature and CRRE strategies as effective means to engage parents of various ethnicities in the education of their children.
4. Predominantly African American local districts do the most targeted intervention work with African American parents and have the greatest implementation of the Tenet 4 Action Steps reflecting the original language of the Tenet which focuses on African American students.
5. Most Tenet 4 outreach in predominantly African American LDs takes place in AEMP (Academic English Mastery Program) schools.
6. The majority of their Tenet 4 activities in predominantly Caucasian local districts revolve around the school parent centers (which exist at almost every school). However, staff do not specifically target African American parents due to their low numbers in these local districts.
7. Predominantly Latino local districts face the greatest challenges in terms of targeting African American parents for Tenet 4 implementations. There was initially a backlash amongst Latino and other ethnic parents towards the language of the Tenet 4 blueprint. LD administrators are caught between promoting more inclusive involvement of African American parents in their local districts and offending other parents of color in the process.
8. All local districts wanted central district to model or provide examples of highly functioning Tenet 4 activities at a school site and/or the surveys, data collection methods and/or proof of Tenet 4's positive effect on student achievement.

These findings indicate that Tenet 4 implementation varies by the predominant racial makeup of the local district's student population. If a local district has a low African American population, they choose to adapt Tenet 4 Action Steps that meet the need of the population of their community, rather than specifically targeting African American parents for intervention. All Local Districts struggle with increasing the involvement of African American parents in meetings and at school sites. Predominantly African American local districts have found the AEMP schools to be effective vehicles for the Tenet 4 work since most have parent centers and make culturally relevant issues the focus of their intervention already.

Although Tenet 4 Action Steps are relatively clear there are areas that still need to be defined in terms of scope and responsibility. For example, an Action Step states, *“Have school with the assistance of their Local District staff develop parent advisory groups, training sessions and leadership guidance for parents.”* What is the responsibility of local district? What type of assistance local district must provide to the school? What type of training session and leadership guidance are we concerned about? What is the deadline for these trainings, and who will provide them?

The other important issue is the frustration of the administrators and parents at local districts that have sizeable numbers of students from other ethnic/racial groups. The language of the Tenet 4 must be more inclusive, but continue to emphasize the plight of the minority groups with small number of students. It must be a program for all students even for those parents and students who represent a tiny portion of a local district population.

Local Districts Efforts to Engage African American Parents: An Evaluation of the Tenet 4 Implementation Process and Action Steps

This evaluation describes actions taken by local districts regarding the “Action Plan Initiative² Tenet Four.” The two major performance goals of the Tenet Four are:

- *The District will increase parent engagement and parent advocacy of African American students by seeking and gaining assistance of in-school organizations, religious institutions and community organizations.*
- *The District will devise strategies to use parents’ cultural knowledge and capital in the way schools function on behalf of their children.*

Tenet Four’s 14 activities or action /steps are presented in appendix A.

These action steps are based upon and correspond to current educational and social research. A meta –analysis of the impact of school, family, and community connections on student’s achievement by Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp (2002)³ makes the following recommendations in relation to parent and community involvement:

- Recognize that all parents, regardless of income, education level, or cultural background, are involved in their children’s learning and want their children to do well at school.
- Create programs that will support families to guide their children’s learning, from preschool through high school.
- Work with families to build their social and political connections.

² An Action Plan for a Culturally Relevant Education That Benefits African American Students and All other Students approved by the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education June 2001.

³ Henderson, T. A. and Mapp, K. L (2002). A NEW Wave of Evidence The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement.

- Develop the capacity of school staff to work with families and community members.
- Link family and community engagement to student learning.
- Focus efforts to engage families and community members in developing trusting and respectful relationships.
- Embrace a philosophy of partnership and be willing to share power with families. Make sure that parents, school staff, and community members understand that the responsibility for children’s educational development is a collaborative enterprise.
- Build strong connections between schools and community organizations.
- Design and conduct research that is more rigorous and focused. And that uses more culturally sensitive and empowering definitions of parent involvement.

(Henderson & Mapp pp 61-69)

This evaluation explores the extent to which the Local Districts are successful in accomplishing the tenet’s main goals, and describes the actions/steps they have taken to accomplish the Tenet Four stated objectives.

We used Atlas- ti software to perform a qualitative analysis of interviews with Local District administrators on Tenet 4 activities. We divide the local districts into 3 main categories: districts with relatively high number of African American students, districts with relatively high number of Latino students, and districts with relatively high

number of White students.

The analysis will not compare specific Local Districts, but will evaluate the interview responses of Local District administrators from the three sub-groups described above. For purposes of this analysis, Local District 1 and 2 were placed into the high Caucasian population group; Local Districts 4, 5 and 6 were categorized as high Latino; and Local Districts 3, 7 and 8 were placed in the high African American category. By tackling the data from these interviews, question by question, commonalities in the strategies, programs and facilitators become apparent, while the barriers towards parent involvement are revealed across the entirety of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Patterns based on the predominant racial make up of a particular District and the progress level of African American parent involvement activities emerged.

While the local district blueprints for addressing Tenet Four all share the fourteen Action Steps presented in appendix A, the local districts vary in the manner and degree to which these Action Steps are implemented. Local Districts have a variety of programs, methodologies, timelines and persons responsible for the implementation of Tenet 4 guidelines. To obtain information needed to answer our evaluation questions we contacted 34 administrators responsible for Tenet Four at the local districts. Of those contacted, 25 administrators agreed to an interview. This resulted in 23 interviews, since two interviews were done in pairs. The predominantly African American local districts (LD3, LD7, and LD8) had a total of 10 LD administrators interviewed. The predominantly Latino Local Districts (LD4, LD5, LD6) had 9 subjects interviews. The predominantly Caucasian Districts (LD1, LD2) had 6 interviewees. The list of targeted interviewees consisted of persons mentioned as responsible on the Tenet 4 Blueprints and

those in charge of parent outreach and/or Achievement GAP at the Local District level.

The study sample included 1 Director of Middle Schools, one Director of High Schools, one Administrator of Small Learning Communities, five Administrators of Instruction, one Title I Coordinator, one English Language (EL) Coordinator, nine Standard English Language (SEL) Specialists, five Parent Ombudspersons, and one Parents as Learning Partners/Grant Facilitator (PLP/GF). Four of the interviewees had been newly assigned to their current position within the last six months. The interview protocol contained 10 sections/questions and detailed information about all 14 Action steps taken by the Local Districts can be found in Section 3.

Section 1- Please tell me about your job and what you do with respect to Tenet 4?

With regards to this question, the most detailed answers came from the Standard English Learner (SEL) Specialists. Most SELs felt a strong sense of individual responsibility to the implementation of Tenet 4 Action Steps. Across the board, SEL specialists saw part of their job description as "...trying to make sure parents understand the initiative." One SEL specialist described her position with respect to Tenet 4 as "...a vehicle for parent engagement. I cover the Blueprint at parent meetings." Another SEL specialist said, "I use CRRE [Culturally Relevant and Responsive Education] techniques to make parents aware of their civic responsibility, and how they function in their community, city and world."

SEL Specialists in Local Districts with a high African American population focused their efforts on the Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP) schools. While having "...a responsibility to non-AEMP schools with regards to closing the achievement

gap; AEMP schools are the target of the majority of Tenet 4 works in these districts.

SEL specialists in predominantly Latino local districts more often tackled parents' preconceived notions about language support for English Speakers when explaining categorical programs with regards to SEL and CRRE. One commented, "The majority of our population is immigrants. We have to explain Standard English Language and Special Education to them. They don't understand why American-born Mexican and African Americans have language problems...Our parents can't understand why Latino [born in the USA] are not fluent. Through our presentations, many have come to me and said they changed their view of American-born Mexicans."

Across the board, The Parent Ombudspersons (PO) and the Parent Leader Program Facilitator (PLPF) believed the movement to create parent centers at every school site is an effective method to deliver the Tenet 4 message on a greater scale. The POs educate parent liaisons, parent facilitators and parent representatives on the CRRE initiatives and on Epstein's "Six Keys for Parent Involvement." In the Caucasian predominated Districts, parent centers have become the primary outreach vehicles for CRRE-related information to the community.

In African American predominated LDs, the AEMP school parent centers are becoming models for the non-AEMP schools in the Districts. In addition, Parent Ombudspersons, in high African American populated Local Districts, felt a stronger sense of personal responsibility towards the Tenet 4 initiatives. Whereas, in the Caucasian and Latino pre-dominated Local Districts, POs' initial concerns were with parent grievances and compliance related issues.

Half of the Administrators of Instruction (AI) interviewed considered themselves

to be actively responsible for Tenet 4 Action Steps. The other half seemed to fall in the camp of the AI, who stated, “I help them with Tenet 4 where I can. Make sure its programs are budgeted.” However, all looked upon the initiative implementation as a team effort. In addition, the Title One Coordinator, the EL Coordinator, the Director of High Schools, the Director of Middle Schools and the Administrator of Small Learning Communities all stated that they saw their roles as that of active support members for the SEL Specialist, deemed by all to be chiefly responsible for Tenet 4.

Section 2- Are you the only person in the Local District office responsible for Tenet 4? If not, whom do you work on this issue?

None of the LD administrators interviewed viewed Tenet 4 initiatives as their sole responsibility. For most, the vision for their methods of Tenet 4 implementation comes from their Local Superintendent’s commitment to Tenet 4. One Superintendent is credited with creating “...a climate of everyone being involved in the implementation of Tenet 4...Everyone has to have CRRE in their mindset in this District.” Another interviewee stated that her Local District superintendent repeatedly extols his belief “...in every child and their success. And he believes that a partnership with the parents is the only way to achieve this success. At the beginning of the year, the principals get this.”

The SEL Specialists, Parent Ombudspersons and Administrators of Instruction were credited across the Local Districts as those who worked together to implement Tenet 4 Action Steps. They work with the parent councils at Predominantly Hispanic Black Asian and Other (PHBAO) schools, English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) and Compensatory Education Advisory Council (CEAC). They train the parent facilitators and parent representatives to carry out CRRE-relevant programs and

“...present to them on these issues so that it will trickle down...” [to the rest of the parents.]

Instructional staff and directors receive mandatory CRRE training in every Local District and assist with the Blueprint implementation at the school level. Administrators in high African American LDs feel the work must be truly focused so that parents can bring “...it back to their schools, so that they could be empowered. We want to remove the helplessness.” They were intentional with the Latino and African-American parents. “We will never educate these kids, unless we target the parents. That’s what Tenet 4 is about.” This statement was made with regards to a parent workshop targeting “Black/Brown” hostility through a workshop on historical perspectives in the interviewee’s district.

With regards to their level of Tenet 4 involvement, an administrator in a high African American student populated LD stated about her coworkers, “I think they honor CRRE. They honor that, it needs to be done at the school sites...One in three African American males will end up in prison. Their trend in going to college is moving towards zero percent. I keep this information on the screen.”

In predominantly Caucasian LDs, parent center representatives are trained to educate parents about Tenet 4 and are chiefly responsible for implementing the majority of the Action Steps. One interviewee stated the parent representatives “...are motivated. This is not superficial involvement. Tenet 4 makes sure parents are involved in the academic lives of their children.” At the same time, an administrator, at another high Caucasian student population LD, admits, “We are lucky that we have high scores, but there is a lost group, a group falling through the cracks. We have to reach out to all our

students. Tenet 4 reminds us to reach out to parents for support of our kids.”

In the predominantly Latino populated LDs, administrators also stressed the responsibility of principals to set the tone and ensure Tenet 4 implementation. “The principals are responsible. There is accountability at every school,” stated one interviewee. EL coordinators also had a greater role in Tenet 4 measures in these LDs. Like all the other Local Districts, tremendous teamwork amongst administrators, directors, coaches and facilitators was discussed as crucial to the success of Tenet 4 initiative. However, in the Latino majority districts there has been controversy amongst parents with regards to the language of Tenet 4 and the CRRE Blueprint in high Latino LDs. When presenting CRRE, one administrator stated, we “...had to review our strategies. When we showed parents the poster and presented on Tenet 4, they weren’t happy about the racial groups. They felt African Americans were being held at a preference. We had to explain the achievement gap and CRRE to them... We needed to let them know the importance of these measures in this District. A lot of the parents see the language of CRRE as looking down on their children.” Another interviewee commented, “When we first delivered the message of Tenet 4, it backfired. Parents were offended. We are still picking up the pieces. It was either RAND or Met Life that did a study. Teachers said the biggest challenge to student learning was the parents. This is across cultures. We need to change that. We need to explain the expectations, and the standards.”

In LDs with low African American populations, Tenet 4 initiatives are seen, as one interviewee remarked, “...good strategies. We need to meet the needs of more parents. Especially African-American parents, but we don’t want to be racially

insensitive that this is only for African-American parents...We are taking the Tenet 4 concept and making it global for the needs of our district. The Tenet 4 strategies can benefit the parents of purple, pink, white, brown or red children. We can handle issues broadly. You have to work together.”

Section 3- Have the Action Steps under Tenet 4 been implemented? At what stage is the implementation?

Action Step 1: Have school with the assistance of Local District staff develop parent advisory groups, training sessions and leadership guidance for parents.

The training of the elected ELAC and CEAC parents in leadership skills, grievance handling protocol, and the understanding of the California academic standards is a team effort in all Local Districts, with the primary responsibility falling on the SEL Specialists. Parents attending the Parent and Child Advocacy Committee (PCAC) and similar councils are not under Local District supervision. In some of the high Latino and African American populated LDs, there are monthly SEL meetings for parents. In these sessions, they go over topics such as CRRE, Open Court, school safety issues, literacy lessons, and math skills. They often bring in outside service providers to educate and empower parents. Fliers, phone calls and refreshments are used to build capacity at the meetings.

Many interviewees noted that parents must feel their time is being valuably used in order to increase the current low attendance. Parents concerns are also charted by meeting facilitators and they are increasingly encouraged to voice their opinions on their local district and LAUSD as a whole. An administrator in high Latino LD, commented, “I had an African-American woman come into a meeting. It was our first meeting this

past fall. She was a very hostile. She was anti-LAUSD. She was so upset and she said, *You probably don't want me to stay* and I said, *No, I definitely do. I want your feedback. How can I help you, if I don't know your grievances?* Well, now she's at every meeting. She's become very active..."

The parent training programs challenge trainees to take on the vigorous responsibility of their children's academics. Trainees engage in mock teacher/trainee conferences. One interviewee noted, "These trainees need to be taught how to ask about their child's academics. They need to ask the teacher, *Explain to me, what is the standard and how is my child meeting or not meeting it?* It's about empowering the trainees." One high African American LD sends ELAC and CEAC members to UCLA for a 12-week program on management, where They "... went weekends and learned about building their capacity, how to be informed about the systems, how to mediate government and school, how to be assertive instead of aggressive..." AEMP schools have additional parent workshops and morning coffee meetings where parents can meet with teachers, discuss CRRE literature or learn about their rights in the LAUSD. In all LDs, bilingual materials are available for all parents.

High Caucasian Local Districts provide their parent trainings in the parent centers. In one of these Local Districts, administrators and outside providers present to the "Parent University on a monthly basis "...on topics such as instructional initiatives, gifted programs, math standards and needs assessments. In each meeting 50 to 80 parents show up. It's a great turnout. Staff and categorical programs are there to support." Parent Summits" are unique to one LD where "...parents, legislative representatives, board members and school representatives all meet to discuss district initiatives."

In high African American LDs, while there is a “tremendous buy-in from teachers and principals...” in AEMP schools, administrators still struggle to get parents to attend. One interviewee dismayed, “You expect or want 2,000 to come and only get 200.” At the same time, according to some administrators in high African American LDs, it’s not that the parents lack the initiative to be involved. “It’s just that what we’re offering in terms of conferences may not be of any interest to them or they simply don’t have the time.” To remedy this issue, the AEMP parent centers do workshops, trainings, and night time seminars on CRRE initiative and CRRE literature for parents.

Culturally Relevant strategies are seen as a vehicle for engaging parents in high African American LDs. The parent representatives are provided with overheads and any other materials they need to present by the LD staff. AEMP parent representatives, hired to reflect the racial makeup of the school community, meet six times a year for training. One interviewee said of the trainings, “We explained that culturally relevant literature is different from multicultural literature and...provided a range of reading books for the parent reps.” In high African American LDs, the movement to small learning communities is viewed as crucial to monitoring and encouraging parent engagement.

Since advisory committees often attract a “certain type of parent,” various schools in high Latino LDs have started family nights to attract a more diverse socioeconomic group of parents. However, one PO added, “But they have to have a welcoming environment at the school. There must be systemic changes. Teachers and principals must begin to look at parents as listening, supportive and collaborative rather than aggressive, difficult and complaining. Parents must be a part of this change, too. No agendas. By creating a more open environment, I think we can do this. In addition to

parent centers, the insistence on a welcoming demeanor from front office staff is crucial to making parents comfortable and willing to be positively involved in the school site and their child's education.”

Action Step 2: Provide training for parents by literacy and math coaches on how to help their children with grade level reading and math.

Across LAUSD, Local District Superintendents have become adamant that training of parents by literacy and math coaches parallels that of staff. ELAC and CEAC parents receive most of this benefit. In high Caucasian LDs, parents from these councils are sent directly to state and national education conferences. One interviewee noted, “We pay for it all. We rotate who gets to go. Then they return and report to the entire group about what they learned.”

In the predominantly African American Local Districts, the Parent Ombudsperson is the most responsible for Action Step 2 implementation (see Appendix A). They work with AEMP parent representatives, literacy coordinators and math coordinators to create “...literacy workshops for the parents regarding culturally relevant literature and discuss the literacy development of children.” Door prizes, donated by community businesses, are used as incentives to gain parent attendance. According to LD staff, family reading and science nights are always packed events. In one high African American Local District, a PO stated, that all “...initiatives we do have an accompanying parent focused model.” Through educational workshops and programs like the AEMP Backpack Program, which allows parents to borrow culturally relevant literature to read to their children, they are “...really trying to promote how parents can help out at home.”

Within Latino predominated Local Districts, SEL Specialists guide the literacy

and math coaches in their outreach to parents and make presentations to the parent councils on academic issues. One high Latino LD provides programs such as the Read To Me program and Connect with Technology program to help students while educating parents. A couple of Latino and African American predominated LDs have done pilot programs of Beyond the Bell, which is a four-week Saturday school program for those in PI (Program Improvement) status that includes a parent component. One interviewee explained Beyond the Bell as involving "...the PI4 and PI5 schools...grades 6 and 9 are the focus. Adolescence issues...those parents don't discuss with kids such as sex...I know I don't know how to talk about that with my kids. We couch the Tenet 4 in the conversations about what kids think...gang cultures, drugs, etc...No Child Left Behind, K-12 communications. We focus on closing the achievement gap, but we also focus on the issues for gifted African-American and Latino American kids." [Through Tenet 4 related interventions, the standards of parent dialogue have been raised to make them partners in the achievement of their children.]

Action Step 3: Encourage and organize means for parents, teachers, students and administration to work collaboratively to improve African American student achievement.

Latino predominated Local Districts utilize Epstein⁴'s Six Keys to target African American parents for involvement. Whether with parents or staff, one high Latino LD administrator makes a point that "CRRE is embedded in every PD. It's not an add-on. It is our student population. When we talk about standard-based lessons in math, we talk

⁴ Reprinted with permission: Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2002). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action (Second Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

about culturally relevant and responsive education. We scaffold the lesson and show how the CRRE can help the teacher to communicate it better.” At this particular LD, African American parents are encouraged to join the achievement councils and meet often with parent representatives. However, an administrator in another high Latino LD noted, “Due to the low percentage of African Americans in our district, our parents were heatedly against the language targeting African American students. They were even against displaying [the Tenet 4 poster] something exclusively targeted at African American students. They want it to include Latinos.” These LDs have approached the Central District officials about revising the language of Tenet 4 to include Latinos.

High Caucasian populated Local Districts schedule awareness seminars about the Achievement GAP, such as one explaining Brown vs. the Board of Education and others focused on data analysis of test scores, specific to their District. Through the “Advancement Via Individual Determination” (AVID) and “Gaining Early Awareness And Readiness For Undergraduate” (GEAR-UP) Programs and their parental components, students that wouldn’t go to college without the assistance are targeted. One high Caucasian LD administrator mentioned “Project College Bound” program which identifies “...low socio-economics students and minority students who have the potential to go to college, but not the resources. One interviewee said “We target them for intervention in ninth grade. We stay with them until 12th. We help them accomplish all the steps necessary to get into a four-year university. We target what classes they need to take and assist them with information on grant money. This is all done with the parents. We explain what grades their children need to get into college, and what scores are necessary.”

This type of focused intervention is an important factor for change according to some administrators in predominantly Caucasian Local Districts. With regards to Tenet 4, one interviewee said, “Traditionally, the underprivileged kids have been underserved in the Valley. The last two years...I’ve seen it really improve.” The Summer Bridge Program provides intervention for 5th graders that are far below and below basic in math. For this program, “There was a parent component. They had to come in for four meetings. We are also doing it for eighth to ninth grade. That is another crucial transition. It was so successful that we are now tracking it ...Tracking the student progress. Central District wants to model it.”

In addition, there is the “Gifted and Talented Education” (GATE) program through which culturally relevant and responsive education workshops are provided. PHBAO schools get funding and support, organizational assistance, translators and money from these LDs as well as regular meetings with their LD Superintendent. Both high Caucasian and high African American Local Districts offer “Back in Control,” a program that addresses parenting needs such as difficulty getting the children to do their homework and discipline issues. Budget is allocated for the outside service provider’s ten-week course and all parents are invited to attend the workshops.

One LD administrator in a high African American LD stated, “My personal belief is that all of us have fallen short with our parenting skills. I’m talking administrators as parents, teachers as parents and parents as parents. We all need to parent these children. We need to alter everyone’s belief system especially the parents. If your parents don’t believe that you can achieve, it is twenty times harder to do so. ”

Predominantly African American Local Districts expressed the greatest urgency

and detail in their Action Step 3 intervention plans and the largest use of outside service providers to facilitate them. Principals, teachers and parents are continually provided with heavily disaggregated data. “We look at the suspension data and the reclassification data based on race, language level and gender. We are very honest. 14.3% of our suspended students are special education students and those students are primarily African-American males. We share this with the parents so that they know what’s going on and so that we have accountability.” One African American predominant middle school has started an African-American mentorship program for every male student. Others are doing the same. There are middle school and high school workshops, just for African-American parents. All middle schools in one LD have some kind of “Girl Talk” mentoring program. In this same LD, Black/Brown Parent Cross-Cultural Leadership Seminars were held for three weeks and used to address tension in the community while promoting “the unity of experience and history.”

These intervention strategies encourage parents to become teachers of their children and other community members. In one high African American LD, the “Building Peaceful Homes” program targeted African American families and was attended by CEAC and ELAC members. “They learned so much and they brought it back to the schools and present it to others.” With the elementary schools, there is a reading program called “Tackling Textbooks.” One high African American LD funded a seminar on “Peace Games.” “We pay the lady \$5,000 to teach our parents about these games...The focus of this was to reduce and prevent racial tension in our schools, and addressing it at a young age.”

In addition, through bilingual materials, parents learn about math and reading

standards, teaching strategies, standardized tests, city libraries, and college preparations strategies. “We show them the Choose College video from Central office that is in both Spanish and English. We talk about how you need to set up things for your child’s long-range plans....I focus on the California State and UC schools as educational options, because we pay taxes for them already.” The MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement Schools) and Upward Bound provide tutoring programs for students. In addition, there are “Equity and Access Workshops” and newsletters that keep parents abreast of what going on ...culturally in the city because exposure is the only way. That’s more of a divider than race. I encourage parents that if your kid wants to ski and you can’t afford to take your kids skiing...have your kid go to the library to read about skiing.” By disaggregating data and using outside service providers, the LD interviewees see hope of educating parents about the Achievement GAP while providing additional measures for student improvement.

Action Step 4: Survey parents about how the school can best communicate with them.

The School Single Plan for Student Achievement has a parent component and this seems to be the primary method by which LD and schools are determining parental needs. Each school writes their own plan with the assistance of their Local District. The schools carry out a needs-assessment at the beginning of the year to target the wants of parents. In addition, PCAC, ELAC and CEAC members are repeatedly surveyed in all LDs. According to one interviewee, “The English Language Advisory Committee and the Compensatory Education Advisory Council both get evaluations. I compile their

comments. You can't assume your work is well received. You must document it and make the changes necessary for better implementation of the Tenet."

The interviewee also asserted that "There is also the mandatory School/Parent Compact that is available for parents in multiple languages. One high Latino LD performed resiliency and the California Healthy Kids Surveys as a means of learning more about parents' outlooks." A high Caucasian LD's interviewee keeps a database of concerns, saying "This way we are able to cross-reference data ...Let's say a certain teacher is getting a fair amount of complaints or there are repeated concerns in certain areas. Through this system, we are able to deal with situations immediately. We can also track problems that haven't been answered or parents with repeat issues. And we have a quarterly meeting of directors/principals... to discuss the tracking."

One method commonly used in one predominantly African American LD is to provide "...customer service survey forms for parents to fill out and tell us how we're doing. Just like if we were Macy's or Wal-Mart. It's a measure of quality assurance. It's right there in the main office. In most schools, they have it. These create a climate of accountability." However, the interviewee added "...but to be honest, most parents often feel they can't do that. They feel like their opinion isn't valued." Besides surveys, all LDs staff report increasing communications to the parents via bilingual newsletters, bulletins, and marquees at the school sites.

Another high African American LD posts the Tenet 4 Action Steps on poster board at every school to incite dialogue. "Each school got them in English and in Spanish. By placing them highly visible at the school sites, parents and staff can respond to them. We need their input." The same LD frequently reviews the Five Tenets with

parents, ask them fill out feedback forms and then sends the results to the LD Superintendent, Instructional Support System Coordinators, Administrators and Specialist in order to target and revise Tenet 4 implementation in their Local District. The SEL Specialist doing this work commented, “By treating their opinions as data, I can determine and chart what I am doing and on what issues we are making progress. Otherwise, this stuff is all patting on the back.” Two of the LDs had yet to administer a formal survey of parent needs, according to the LD staff interviewed. In addition, there seemed to be conflicting accounts in almost all LDs about what the Action Step 4 entailed, in terms of implementation in their LD.

Action Step 5: Assist schools in taking the cultural/language relevance of parents into full account in order to achieve the desired needs and performance targets.

Local District Administrators work with parent representatives, principals and coaching staff to ensure that CRRE strategies are in use to address the Achievement GAP. In high Latino student populated LDs, translators are provided for every parent meeting. One interviewee said, “We look at our population and we tailor it to the parents. We make the connections for them. We are respectful of the language. At our presentations, we have PowerPoint in both English and Spanish languages.”

Predominantly Caucasian LDs center their work on building culturally relevant libraries in their parent centers. These LDs provide extensive funding for CRRE materials and training of parent facilitators and representatives in these LDs. The representatives are multiethnic and/or bilingual. Parent Centers have become a key venue for parents to experience different cultures and explore them. “We try to expand their understanding

and appreciation of the differences and similarities between cultures...They (the parent representatives) create an album based on the stories of the parents. There are discussions about honoring traditions, language barrier issues, and ethnic holidays (such as Day of the Dead).” In high Caucasian LDs, it is a team effort of coordinators and coaches coordinate efforts to tie the CRRE literature (ex. *Margaret and Margarita* and *We Are Rainbows*) to Open Court for the parents.

Administrators in the high African American Local Districts stress a wide range of measures for dealing with Action Step 5: workshops on leadership, culture, professional development and conflict resolution for parents. One LD viewed the School/Parent Compacts and the mandatory requirement for every school to have a Parent Involvement Policy as a way to make Tenet 4 implementation school and parent community specific. Publishing bilingual updates on the implementation was another step taken by these local districts. In these local districts the Blueprint Action Plan is considered as a “living document.” The training of parent facilitators and representatives in the delivery of Action Step 5 is considered crucial. LD staff members provide transparencies, meeting agendas, PowerPoint presentations, activities and sample questions to ask the parents questions like “*Can you guess the population of ethnicities in your district?*” Parent representatives, council members and parent facilitators will train other parents. Demonstration lessons in CRRE teaching have yet to include both parents and teachers, but it remains a future goal. At the present, CRRE literature (like *Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad?* and *It Doesn’t Have To Be This Way*) is intended to show mothers and fathers educational materials reflective of their experiences as African Americans.

One high African American LD holds an annual AEMP Parent Summer Institute. Tenet 4 is the focus and each parent representative received a flip chart of the Action Steps on a little stand, which was to be visible at the parent centers at all times. This Local District also replicates a model parent center to show what parent representatives should be seen at the school sites. Parent centers should emphasize African-American, Latino, Hawaiian and Native American cultures, be a welcoming environment for small children and have Mainstream English Language Development (MELD), a writing center, the CRRE library and artifacts. There is heavy consideration of parent recommendations in the implementation of CRRE at the school sites. The SEL from this LD notes, “LAUSD has many people skeptical of culturally relevant and responsive education. I created a role-play that I acted out for them to address their concerns and questions.”

In all LDs, culturally relevant literature is being used increasingly with parents and instructional staff. One interviewee felt, “Communications have improved as a result. We look at prior knowledge and value the talents of the parents, teachers and administrators.” Reflection pieces are an important part. Through poetry, drawing and open dialogue, “...everyone gets a chance to express themselves. We find many of the children having adjustment issues to school have parents who had those same issues. The use of culturally relevant literature is eye opening. The African-American parents and Latino parents learn about each other’s cultures.” Translators are present and Thinking Maps⁵ are used to facilitate communication. Staff make CRRE fun. The attitude of a SEL

⁵ Thinking Maps® were developed as a language for learning in 1988 by Dr. David Hyerle. There are eight maps in this language that are used by teachers and students (K - 12 and adult education and business) for reading comprehension, writing process problem solving, and thinking skills improvement. Thinking Maps Software is now available for whole learning communities.

in one high African American LD was "...We want parents and students to be singing on their way home." [CRRE related outreach with regards to Tenet 4 must make the parents feel empowered, while at the same time be entertaining and personally enriching in order to facilitate their attendance.]

Action Step 6: Require each school to have a plan to communicate curricular matters to parents to insure that the parents know what the schools' plans are for their children.

Across the Local Districts, the Single Plan for Student Achievement, bilingual mailings, principal professional development sessions, the ELAC and CEAC meetings, and PHBAO conferences are the primary methods of implementing Action Step 6. Academic workshops with parent and components such as the Saturday School provided by Beyond the Bell for Program Improvement (PI) schools were the other methods of dealing with Action Step 6. Sharing data from student tests scores has become standard throughout LAUSD as a means to emphasize the gravity of the Achievement Gap.

Action Step 7: Have the District organize an advisory group of African American community leaders, researchers, and parents to provide continually current information on the cultural relevance of students.

All LD staff members interviewed saw Action Step 7 as inadequately, incompletely or yet to be implemented in their LD. Some felt that the Central District was responsible for this step. Others sighted ELAC and CEAC meetings as being the mode of implementation in their Local Districts. One predominantly African American Local District had taken the greatest step on this Action Step. Their LD Superintendent

created a task force of African American leaders to learn from, as well as provide options for, the school community. An administrator in a high Caucasian LD cited “The Village” program at one high school as a successful example that could apply to Action Step 7 implementation.

In the meantime, highly Latino populated Local Districts had LD staff read educational research books (*Dream Keepers* and *Subtractive Schooling*) to learn how there can be greater ownership created at the school sites. However, even with the disproportionate number of African American students in remedial and special education classes, these LDs find it “...hard to target certain parents for intervention without offending parents of other ethnic groups.” Another high Latino LD administrator frankly states, “We outreach to local businesses, but, you see, our district is mostly Latino and White, so...To be honest, we are not focusing on CRRE in that way...in terms of African Americans. It’s not our priority.” If the district did not have a high population of African American students, the necessity of an African American advisory group was called into question.

The high Caucasian LDs viewed an AA advisory council as superfluous as those issues were already handled by other channels such as ELAC, CEAC and the Parent Summits. In the high Latino LDs, the issue of targeting one racial group for intervention seems to have delayed a movement to establish such a council. Out of the 3 high African American LDs, only one had established an African American advisory council involving community leaders. Several of the LD staff interviewed seemed to be under the impression that Central Office should be in charge of implementing this action step.

Action Step 8: Implement periodically, as a first step, Parent-teacher, teacher-parent themed “teach-ins” for teachers to listen to, learn, and provide relevant feedback regarding issues raised by parents while parents share their ideas, concerns, and strategies for improving the way schools function on behalf of their children.

Action Step 8 is at varying levels of implementation at the different Local Districts. No interviewee mentioned following the specific language of Action Step 8 in his or her LD’s implementation. High African American Local Districts saw themselves to be at the first stages of this process. One LD interviewee noted, “These are new concepts...We are teaching parents and teachers new modes of parent-teacher conversations. You can come and talk to the teacher outside of the Open House and report card pickup. You (the parents) have rights...They need training on both sides about this new open relationship.” The CEAC and ELAC conferences and the elementary and secondary parent support trainings also address Action Step 8 to some extent in all the LDs. Parent Summits in high Latino LDs are used to address their educational concerns. The PCAC meetings are very interactive with an increased focus on the data with regards to student achievement.

One predominantly Caucasian LD administrator mentioned the use of Parent University program to educate parents on topics such as instructional initiatives, gifted programs, math standards and needs assessments. Through the BTSA (Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance) program, they “...train the teachers how to be culturally sensitive and how to engage with the parents.” Another LD provides morning events such as Coffee and Conversation at the parent centers as a means for teachers and parents to discourse in an informal setting. From the interview data, none of the Local Districts appear to have provided a formal opportunity “...for teachers to listen to, learn, and

provide relevant feedback regarding issues raised by parents while parents share their ideas, concerns, and strategies for improving the way schools function on behalf of their children” as stated in Action Step 8. This is an Action Step that may need to be modeled by Central office, since there seems to be confusion over the logistics and manner of implementation.]

Action Step 9: Provide parent training in the following areas: parent practices that positively influence African American students’ achievement and attendance; and revised models that make wise use of time, such as reading, watching educational/cultural programs, working on a hobby.

From the interview data it can be said that all Local Districts cited the “Back In Control “ Program⁶ as being an important outreach strategy. The outside service provider addressed “...the true needs of the parents. They taught parenting skills for African-American and Latino parents. It targeted middle school and high school students. A number of these parents are out of touch with how to relate to their kids and how to effectively discipline them.” With the dropout rates and attendance issues, parenting skill workshops are prioritized by all the LDs.

One high Latino LD administrator said, “We want them to be aware of the law and the issues of student attendance. We had a psychologist come in a talk to parents about techniques to change the behaviors of their children.” Another high Latino Local District has employed student-led conferences at many schools to increase accountability. “Instead of parents sitting in a row waiting to speak with the teacher, which was very ineffective, we have the kid come with the parents and present about their performance.

⁶ Back in Control is based on a highly successful program that has helped thousands of parents regain control of their children.

The students bring in their portfolios. The kid has to explain their rubric achievement to their parents in front of the teacher. It engages the parents. They want to make goals...The kids become in control of their academic performance. If their parents can't come, we have an adult stand-in. They have to present in front of an adult. It's a dissemination piece. There must be an audience for accountability."

The "Read To Me" and "I Am Going to College" Programs⁷ in high Latino and African American LDs are used to further engage parents in the education of their children. Outside resource information such as Healthy Start, the Boys and Girls Club, suicide prevention hotlines and counseling services are provided to these parents. Culturally relevant outreach is having the greatest impact according to LD interviewees in two of the high Latino LDs and all three of the high African American LDs. One administrator notes, "The parents love these initiatives. I had many of them cry to me, literally crying to me with joy, that they finally felt the District was validating them. And this was over a Mexican American-themed children's story book that was written in English."

Predominantly Caucasian LDs see Action Step 9 as teaching parents about effective time management; however, they do not specifically target African American students for this intervention. One administrator states that parents need "...to know we want the best for their children. We have to teach them about parent responsibility in the

⁷ The program, "I'm Going To College" simulates the first day of college for youngsters who would not typically believe that college is an option in their futures. The program was developed in 1990 by the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Early Awareness Committee. CSUSM views this early outreach program as a significant step towards addressing the "access to the academic pipeline" problem that confronts underrepresented and financially disadvantaged youths.

modern age. This is tough stuff. We don't suffer lightly with schools that inform us, *parents don't care, they don't speak the language and they don't want the best for their children.* You have to believe as a staff, and as a school site administrator. The workshops won't succeed otherwise. If you don't, what's the point? These parents manage to raise their children against many terrible odds and we continue to press for their academic achievement against many terrible odds. We have high expectations for the children and the parents."

All LD staff interviewed see Tenet 4 as providing a greater level of accountability when it comes to LD staff, school administrative staff, teachers, students and parents. Even if they were implementing outreach programs before Tenet 4, the initiative and its Action Steps have given them a justification for their work and enabled them to explicitly address the parents of students of color within the Achievement GAP.

Action Step 10: Increase parent involvement through effective systematic communication that establishes positive home and school partnerships through regularly scheduled newsletters, internet, etc.

The Parent Ombudsperson, Parent Facilitators and Parent Representatives and the Parent center staff hold the highest degree of responsibility over Action Step 10. Newsletters and educational notices are provided in multiple languages. Parent facilitators and representatives make phone trees to call parents and remind them to attend meetings. Many schools and most Local Districts have web pages. Administrators combat the tendency of middle school and high school students to throw out notes by mailing them to the homes when possible. Schools send out fliers and monthly bulletins on a regular basis.

In some schools, LD interviewees noted that the transient nature of the student population (i.e. schools with a high population of recent immigrants) and the lack of updated contact information often inhibited communication between school staff and parents. As more and more parents have Internet access, this is seen as valuable tool with which to educate parents.

Action Step 11: Increase parent leadership skills through recruiting them and training them to become leaders and then organizing them to reach out to other parents in order to advance the curriculum in the home.

All LD interviewees stated that their Local Districts are working hard to turn parents into community leaders through the election and training of ELAC and CEAC members by Central and the Local District Staff. Parent representatives are trained on a continual basis in leadership and presentation skills. One LD administrator noted, “The parent doesn’t have to be on ELAC or CEAC. We just want that parent voice.” High Caucasian LDs do this outreach through the parent centers. They provide citizenship and EL classes. Workshops on skills such as “thinking maps” to prepare parent representatives for the quarterly meetings with faculty.

In high African American Local Districts, AEMP parent facilitators conduct trainings at the parent centers. One of these LDs sends parents to a 12-week management course at UCLA. This LD also provided a Cross-Culture Leadership workshop to address the relations of African Americans and Latinos in the community. In this same high African American LD, principals are encouraged to discuss these issues in their meetings with the parents. As one interviewee said, “It is not a comfortable subject. But it is those schools that are the most advanced that are dealing with it. The ones that aren’t comfortable dealing with the Black/Brown issue are behind. We are building on the needs

in the community. We are not ashamed to target the EL students and the African-American males. We will never get out of PI status, if we don't specifically address these kids.”

Latino-predominated Local Districts send their parents to represent them at Central office meetings and national events on issues like Literacy First. Then they present to the other parents when they return. There are also organizations for the different factions of Latino parents such as Corazon for Central American parents. However, it is hard for administrators to gage the success of these measures with regards to student achievement. One interviewee from a high Latino LD noted, “We need monitoring instruments. We need the parent reps to know exactly what to do and we need more of them. If this came from Downtown, it would be really good.” The level to which Tenet 4 is effective in promoting and resulting in student achievement was a concern in one high Latino LD. Several administrators view Central District as responsible for providing a data corollary with regards to intervention levels.

Action Step 12: Have deputy superintendent assign the responsibility for researching and developing a set of lesson plans tailored for each grade level that will require: students to solicit from their parents for their life experience and knowledge (i.e. survey or interviews) on diverse issues such as police, criminal justice, etc.; history; and, share the outcome/analysis of classes with parents as an educational and empowerment tool (parents would see their life experienced as valid object of study by school).

Action Step 12 has not been implemented by any of the Local Districts; either because they felt it was not applicable to them or because they were under the belief that Central District was responsible for its implementation.

Action Step 13: Involve students in the acquisition of African cultural and historical information through such programs as the Festival of African Royalty for grades K-12.

Local Districts promote the acquisition of African cultural and historical information through a variety of field trips and presentations. In addition, parent centers and their CRRE libraries are used to impart much of this knowledge. High Caucasian LDs send parents, teachers and students to culturally relevant programs budgeted by the categorical programs department. An administrator in one of these LDs does a biannual presentation on the civil rights movement in the United States for PHBAO schools. The LD administrator in charge of this presentation remarked, "I target immigrant populations of parents. My African-American parents could teach me, but a lot of our immigrant population doesn't appreciate what African-Americans went through just a short time ago and how their struggle has provided all of us with more rights and freedoms today...I teach them about civil rights and what we all owe to those responsible for that movement. They must be aware and be thankful. African-American history is American history."

High African American LDs also target PHBAO schools for similar enrichment. One of these LDs recently sent PHBAO parents to a Brown versus the Board of Education exhibit at the African American Museum and ELAC to the Museum of Tolerance. The interviewee explained, "They voted for these trips. We had parents from Honduras, El Salvador and Korea crying at the exhibit. The Korean parents informed us about the similar discrimination they faced in Japan. The purpose of these field trips was to show them that they can take their children there. We explained that there are free days that they can visit the museum. We are raising kids that are illiterate on these topics. By giving parents a great time, they will want to bring it back to the kids."

Latino predominated LDs are providing funding and buses for students to attend events like the Queens of the Nile Festival. However, Latino American parents are the targets of the cultural outreach rather than African Americans. One high Latino administrator notes, “Action Step 13...is not the focus of our Tenet 4 work. We might pick out a reading and share it. Maybe that is something to work for. Learning about other cultures...but we concentrate on instructional strategies.”

Action Step 14: Have the principal at each school with a high percentage of African American students meet with African American parents and community groups to plan at least three parent involvement workshops.

Since Action Step 14 is school site specific and not mandated to enforce, LD staff interviewed see this step at varying degrees of implementation at the school sites. Predominantly African American Local Districts are enacting Action Step 14 to the greatest extent. They try to create parent involvement workshops and cultural activities geared towards African Americans that do not offend other ethnic groups. One school in a high African American LD has a step dance club for boys. “If the African-American boys want to participate, they have to keep up their scholastic achievement.” There are mandated parent involvement workshops for PI status schools on the plan for closing the Achievement GAP. CRRE literature is often used as a teaching tool on parent nights. One SEL specialist described how, “We read to the parents. I read *Grandpa, Is Everything Black Bad?* A very dark skin woman got up and spoke about how she had always been bothered by the prejudice within the African-American community. She cried. She was enthralled by the story.” One step at a time, these LDs seem like they are slowly, but surely increasing parent engagement in the education of their children by using culturally

relevant materials.

At workshops, Latino-predominant LDs use parent representatives and mentors to foster a “college going” atmosphere onsite at schools. One high Latino LD superintendent holds town hall meetings for greater parent engagement. With their low African American populations, High Caucasian LD interviewees did not feel Action Step 14 was applicable to them. One administrator and her staff adapted this step to target difficult issues with their Armenian population. One LD interviewee helped in the preparation of “...a half-day program for our whole staff...on Armenian culture. We had storytellers; lectures on religion, the Armenian Holocaust, food and the Diaspora; dance presentations; and videos playing in the background. We served Armenian food. We gave them a nice packet at the end of the day. Armenian bookstores donated stuff. Everyone got an Armenian carving. We had stuff donated from the churches. Then we had 6 to 8 high schools kids of Armenian descent give a presentation. Each spoke about being Armenian, their experiences as an Armenian-American, their parents, and most importantly about how to reach them. It was fascinating example of CRRE.”

While LD staff interviewed provided excellent examples of LD outreach to parents via workshops, they did not provide specific examples of instances where the “...principal at each school with a high percentage of African American students meet with African American parents and community groups to plan at least three parent involvement workshops.

Section 4- Do the Tenet 4 activities differ from other Local District parent involvement activities? If yes, in what ways?

Tenet 4 activities differ from typical Local District parent involvement activities

at varying degrees. All administrators noted that Tenet 4 parent events had more academic rigor, standards based subject matter and CRRE strategies than traditional events. Several interviewees noted that while they were doing parent outreach before Tenet 4, the blueprint helped, as one interviewee stated, "...gauge what we are doing and where we need to go. This is validation of our work." There are in-depth leadership classes for ELAC and CEAC in all LDs and mandatory parent classes for schools in PI status in several of the LDs.

A SEL Specialist in a high Latino LD noted, "Tenet 4's main purpose is to empower the parents. Parents aren't reading the mailings. We need to provide another way of contacting them. We need to have a phone tree. African-American parents like personal contact." This statement was echoed throughout the LAUSD's Local Districts with regards to the challenge of involving African American parents. Principals offering incentives to parents to attend meetings (i.e. prizes, like books for the children whose parents attend) was one such technique offered to build capacity.

An administrator in a high African American LD said, "A lot of African-American parents have not had positive experiences in our schools. The office is not cordial to them. Often, they enter and they are not acknowledged. They wait several minutes before someone addresses them...they feel invisible...Tenet 4 speaks to that." The warm environment of parent centers is seen as a means to combat the negative experience parents have had with the school staff and bureaucracy. Due to the effectiveness of parent centers, high African American LD staff view non-AEMP schools, which are often without parent centers and parent representatives, at a tremendous disadvantage. Tenet 4 activities at AEMP schools make the home/school

connection stronger. For example, the “Backpack Program” involves a backpack containing culturally relevant literature that parents can check out from the parent center for their children. Through this program, one interviewee describes, “...parents can go over the stories at home with their children. It’s especially helpful for parents that cannot afford to buy books for their kids.”

Culturally relevant literature was seen as excellent method for targeting, not only African American, but Latinos, Armenians, Koreans and so forth. An interviewee from a high Latino LD said, “We need culturally relevant literature to address these groups... We want parents to be able to identify with the story that we are sharing. They need to connect the reading with their own experience. They must be able to reflect on their own family experience.” In addition, the culturally relevant teaching strategies used in this particular LD are viewed as “...what helps us to connect to the parents. We use effective strategies such as” *peer share*” and “*looking at each other.*” The parents from foreign countries like Mexico...must be educated about modern classroom learning. It’s not to sit straight ahead and only look at the board. We are educating them about group learning.”

Tenet 4 takes culturally relevant parent activities beyond their traditional domain. One interviewee said, “It’s more than *this is Black History Month* or *today is Cinco de Mayo*. CRRE is not about *now it’s your group’s turn*. It must be all the time and it must be about achievement. We need the leadership of the teachers and parents. It must be infused, but it’s not easy.” This LD staff member goes on to say that “Many parents believe their child shouldn’t even think about going to college... Parents often do not see college as financially feasible for their children. School staffs need to acknowledge the reality of the socioeconomic status of the student population’s parents and provide

additional resources, such as bilingual materials, transportation for meetings regarding student achievement and extensive materials on financial aid and college preparation. Deficit belief systems of parents with regards to the future of their children, often rooted in the parents' experiences of discrimination and lack of opportunity, are combated through programs such as "Going to College" and "Raising a Child in Troubled Times." Parents learn to combat peer pressure that often keeps students from wanting to succeed. Creating a college going atmosphere becomes a method for detouring such influence."

Tenet 4 paints parents as a resource for student achievement and as stakeholders for LAUSD. It also directly acknowledges the severity of the Achievement Gap by being data driven. One administrator from a high African American District stated, "Tenet 4 is great because you can actually verbalize that our children are not doing well. It's data-driven. It's not fluffy like the traditional parent activities. Tenet 4 gives more muscle. We can address the data and ask parents how they're going to help us make their children achieve."

In a high Caucasian LD, one interviewee considered Tenet 4 as an effective motivator for principals to engage parents, because they realize, for example, that, "I have to get 10 more African-American students proficient to get my AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress)."

High Latino LD administrators seemed to face the greatest difficulty with the "politically correct" delivery of Tenet 4 activities. While parents are brought in to have the student portfolios explained to them, learn about Open Court, participate in math, literacy and science lessons, gain knowledge of CRRE strategies, one interviewee in a high Latino LD worried about how to target more "...African-American parents without

offending the other groups...” Another SEL Specialist in a high Latino LD said it’s difficult to “...explain to English Learner parents that the Mexican American student, born in this country, has language needs, too. There are challenges explaining the SEL student to EL parents.”

Local Districts with low African American populations use Parent Advisory Council meetings as the primary means of targeting this community. However, that often attracts only highly motivated parents and the high Latino and Caucasian LDs continue to search for more creative ways to involve African American parents. Celebrating parent diversity (such as having parents make books about themselves) and the use of food and music were seen as ways to create a unity of experience amongst the diverse groups of parents in these LDs.

In high African American LDs, there is the largest difference and most specific in Tenet 4 implementation from traditional parent activities. The need for parents and students to feel that their culture and beliefs are validated is crucial. Since AA students (especially males) are targeted too often for Special Ed and/or suspension, there are many workshops specifically for African American middle and high school parents. Parents learn about progressive discipline plans, high learning expectations, academic standards and culturally relevant teaching strategies. They also learn how to handle ethnic conflict through budgeted seminars from outside providers.

While Tenet 4 and parent involvement are preached as a crucial strategy by high LD administrators, most see the implementation of Tenet 4 as heavily school site specific with AEMP schools succeeding to the furthestmost extent. At the end of the day, principals are held responsible for changing school attitude towards parents and making

the school more welcoming to them.

There is an increasing a high level of accountability after the passage of No Child Left Behind and then the CRRE Blueprint according to administrators. An interviewee from a high Latino LD said, “Tenet 4 specifically calls for greater parent involvement from certain communities. They now know they have a voice. Given this voice, they must use it.” One administrator feels Tenet 4 and No Child Left Behind has transformed the role of parents in the schools setting. This administrator from a high Caucasian LD noted that before “principals were satisfied with a few key parents, from whom they could get needed signatures. Now they have pulled the parents in as a resource. As a result, parents feel represented to a greater extent. An interviewee from a high African American LD sees a significant change, with parents now feeling “...welcome to share and to participate. They need to feel safe in the environment of the school...There have been standing room only meetings with crowds spilling into the doorways. Grandparents, aunts and uncles are even attending.”

Section 5- How does your Local District emphasize the need for Tenet 4 in the professional development offered to administrators and teachers?

All LAUSD staff interviewed stated that Tenet 4 and issues of family inclusion are extraordinarily important components of professional development work within their Local District. They discussed professional development provided to LD staff, principals and teachers may be given to other professional development targeted at parents on how to access school, community and city services. ELAC, CEAC and PHBAO councils are provided with leadership enrichment and training workshops from literacy and math by

coaching staff. Members of parent councils who attend to topics at professional development sessions prepared for LD and school staff, as well as for other parents. x

One LD administrator in a high Caucasian LD stated, “Every administrator had to do culturally relevant training in this district. In turn, I and the other directors look for culturally relevant strategies in the classroom...It is part of their annual Stull evaluation. We look at how the parents are treated at a school site.” This administrator continued with dismay, “I have one school that I won’t name. It’s very diverse, but there is a negative culture towards lower income students. We are working with the administrators on this. We want the school to be more welcoming...this can be as simple as schools passing out student agendas to parents explaining strategies to them and sending frequent newsletters.”

These comments reflect the widespread attitude that student achievement and parent outreach are linked together. The professional development seminars for staff put data at the forefront in high Caucasian LDs. Cultural awareness presentations, workshops on Spanish terminology, translation services, volunteer recognition awards, telephoning parents and funding parent centers are covered during PD sessions in high Caucasian Local Districts.

In high Latino LDs, parent engagement levels are part the principal assessment. They use feedback from the parents and students to determine the level of outreach by the school administrators. They provide forums for principals to meet and dialogue about methods for involving parents. Family nights at the schools have been very successful and increased cooperation and dialogue amongst stakeholders. The high Latino LDs are purchasing increasing amounts of culturally relevant literature and Institute for Learning

(IfL) materials for principals and coaches. An interviewee said, “We want no excuses. At the same time, we want the rollout to be seamless. We don’t want people in the schools to look at this as an add-on. We want them to employ culturally relevant pedagogy. It’s the only way to reach our student population.” According to one interviewee, his/her high-Latino Local District makes CRRE a part of every PD and lesson strategy taught. “To boost our scores, we are embedding it in everything,” stated an administrator from that LD.

A barrier to Tenet 4 implementation in high Latino LDs is the prejudice that SELs are only for African American students. Principals and parents are learning that a Mexican American can be a SEL. One SEL specialist noted, “A lot of these people (school staff) would look at the rosters and say we don’t have a lot of African-American students, so CRRE doesn’t apply to us.” The blueprint becomes a focal point increasingly in PD sessions, since, according to one interviewee, even though “...as teachers we might be Black, Latino or White, we are teaching through a middle class European model.” The crucial issue is that many of traditional assumptions must be challenged to improve student performance.

Directly addressing the cultural and societal issues confronting students is at the heart of Tenet 4 with regards to professional development in high African American LDs. One administrator feels the urgent need to plan a principals’ conference focused entirely on Tenet 4. “We need to expand the definition of the parent environment and parent involvement. A lot of people see black mothers coming to campus, hollering and flustered, and they think these women are crazy. But who wouldn’t be. They are fighting for their children’s lives.”

Tenet 4 has become increasingly prominent in professional development sessions for all staff in high African American LDs. They target transforming teacher practice to connect concept-based lessons to their EL, SEL and SE populations. One interviewee said, with regards to her LD, “We are all about the scaffolding. Unless you are addressing the EL, SEL, and African American male students’ needs, you are not teaching. These are our struggling groups. In this respect, we are all about building up the parents’ self-esteem. Our instructional support staff is reading *Through Ebony Eyes* by Gail L. Thompson and using it in PD sessions.”

Data focused PD sessions have increased the level of accountability for instructional staff and parents in high African American LDs. One interviewee said of her LD, “We look at the data by feeder patterns. The African-American males go from being 30% proficient to 7% proficient. You need to figure out what you can do as a principal to change this terrible decrease in performance. Why does middle school seem to be harming these kids? We are specific with the principals. We ask them to monitor the attendance of the students.” Specific parents are targeted for outreach, if their child is not attending school. The focus is not on blame, but on everyone taking responsibility for student performance. Several AEMP schools are now surveying members of the community for their suggestions to improve student performance.

One high African American LD SEL Specialist goes out of her way to make sure CRRE and Achievement Gap related issues are regular parts of ISS (Instructional Support Staff) agendas. She works with presenters to make their PD offerings more culturally relevant and creates a climate of accountability by distributing a list of CRRE PD seminars to everyone in her LD. Tenet 4 becomes a team effort and the CRRE blueprint

turns into a living document through continued feedback and discussion amongst staff and parents.

Section 6- What does Tenet 4 “look like and how does it function at the school and classroom level?

According to LD staff, the level of Tenet 4 implementation is school site and teacher specific. Several administrators were not sure, as one interviewee stated, of how much had “...trickled down to the classroom.” The documentation and analysis of Tenet 4 impact is complicated and complex but tools must be devised to connect the implementation of Tenet 4 impact to student’s achievement. LD Administrators lack the time to visit each school site. More than one SEL specialist said they could only speak authoritatively about what is going on at AEMP school sites, because they lacked the time to visit non-AEMP sites. One SEL specialist remarked, “How are teachers using this Tenet to build relationships? It’s hard to say. However, I do know that since Tenet 4, parents are more cognizant than ever about their rights. And they are much more comfortable on participating and coming to the classroom. Their relationships with the teachers are improving. They see themselves valued as stakeholders in the community. With this, I mean, AEMP parents.”

In the implementation of Tenet 4, parent centers, literacy and math nights, ELAC and CEAC meetings, culturally relevant literature and bulletin boards, artifacts, scaffolding and data sharing have made the involvement of parents increasingly academic. The principal’s leadership team and the direction of their implementation are crucial in making sure the Action Steps have an effect on student performance. Many

schools are only now learning of the culturally relevant resources available to them. One interviewee explains, “It depends on the teacher attendance to our meetings and their implementation of culturally relevant and responsive education in the class. We need focus groups of parents. We want them to go to the classroom more. We’re not there yet. We are trying to embed more time for teachers to meet with SEL parents.” All LD administrators interviewed feel, as one administrator noted, it’s “... the school’s responsibility to make parents welcome. It’s their responsibility to make sure that the parents know the pathways for students after graduation. It’s the responsibility of the schools to help the parents keep the children at school. They need to initiate the relationship and the interventions.”

Unfortunately, parental attendance to meetings can be hit or miss. Centrally located meetings and providing transport have been used to increase attendance. One interviewee believes parents must be telephoned directly “...throughout the district. Whether it’s a parent rep, principal, Title I coordinator...we need them making contact.” One administrator in a high Latino LD explained, “At the culturally relevant and responsive literature meeting with parents, we had “DEAR” time “Drop Everything And Read.” We discussed the importance of quality personal time with a book. By reading to your children, you can share your life experience ...The literature will open the pathway to discussing heritage and cultural background. You need to know who you are. What were my cultural contributions to this country and this city? ...No matter their current state, they need to understand the rich legacy of their ancestors and live with respect to that.” Building the self-esteem and empowerment of parents has done much to increase their attendance at school meetings. Academic coaches and parent facilitators go over

lesson plans with parents. Family math and science nights are on the rise, with parents and children conducting experiments and working out equations together. There are food samplings events at several schools.

In the high African American populated LD, there was recently an extensive seminar for Latino and African American parents on shared cultural histories and improving race relations. Ethnic groups within the Latino community are also being acknowledged on an increasing basis. One administrator said her LD dealing was addressing an issue where “Central American parents feel we are not addressing the needs of El Salvadorians.” An administrator in a predominantly African American Local District sees Tenet 4 as progressive and as putting a positive spin on racial-related-outreach programs. She stated, “Before, if you brought up these issues, people thought you were racist” CRRE gave everyone an out. We can say something is wrong. There is an Achievement Gap not being addressed by traditional strategies. Before the Tenets, we just danced around these issues.” Culturally relevant literature study and having parents share their biographical stories in meetings are methods used to be more inclusive.

Administrators in high Latino LDs find Tenet 4 to be at the beginning stages of implementation in their schools. One interviewee from a high Latino LD lamented, “We don’t have great participation, because parents don’t understand the dates. We have the local advisory councils...But these things are standard. It’s not pushing the envelope.”

One interviewee reflected the sentiments of most LD staff when describing Tenet 4 as enabling parents “...know what is expected of them...they are learning how to support their children at home. They are partnering with the teachers. They are finding out what’s working.” Coaches use thinking maps to explore educational values with

parents. Several LD administrators mentioned that their parents are required to sign the School/Parent Learning Compact. Field trips to college campuses, healthy living seminars, and culturally relevant math, science and literacy workshops push parents to raise the standards for the future of their children. By educating and empowering parents, LD staff hope to make parents take on greater responsibility at the school sites. Parent centers provide the gateway for access. In high Caucasian LDs, almost every school has a parent center. Most have dedicated phone lines, volunteering opportunities, Internet access and a parent representative on staff.

High Latino LDs see Tenet 4 as bringing the necessary culturally relevant understanding to educating parents about progressive education and discipline strategies. An interviewee from a high Latino LD recounted an incident when a group of third grade boys were sent to the principal's office for making sexually explicit comments and the parents "...of the ringleader wanted to yell at and spank him all weekend. Now, if I went to them and said, *No, you're wrong to punish a child for being curious about sex*, they would have ignored me or told me where to go. Instead, I asked them questions. I validated them and their culture and their culture's emphasis on a certain type of discipline. We discussed outcomes. Then I gave them examples of other strategies they could use. They felt safe to try a different approach. That weekend, while he was on "punishment" or grounded, he was also held and counseled about appropriate behavior by his parents, instead of being beaten."

Tenet 4 also celebrates parents as a source of academic knowledge. One LD staff member in a high African American LD recounted how "...an elementary math coach shared a beautiful story with us. A teacher at her school was trying to explain to her

students how to check three place multiplication answers. They just weren't getting it. A little girl, in the teacher's class, shyly raised her hand and shared with her teacher and the other students how her mother taught her to check the answer. It was a technique her mother had learned in Mexico. Her mother speaks no English, but that technique became a big deal at the school. The whole school was involved in learning it. There was a bulletin board on it. Now think of how accessing that student's prior knowledge and giving relevance to the culture made the teacher, parent, administrators and most importantly, the child feel. How wonderful and empowered did that make that child?" By valuing the prior knowledge of parents and students, school staff can create a hospitable and productive learning environment.

Section 7- What factors facilitate full implementation of Tenet 4 in your Local District?

Across all the Local Districts, three elements helped facilitate full implementation of Tenet 4. They included: (1) the culture of accountability amongst staff, (2) the importance of CRRE initiatives to parents, and (3) the fact that Local District Superintendents highly valued parent involvement. According to all LD staff with AEMP schools in their districts, these schools were functioning at the greatest level in terms of Tenet 4 outreach and support services.

Active participation of parents and good communication between them and teachers has furthered the implementation of the Tenet 4 Action Steps in predominantly Latino Local Districts. The ability for parents to bring children to the SEL parent meetings and the offering of refreshments has increased attendance in one high Latino

LD. One interviewee felt “Another facilitator is that instead of always having to get a translator, we are encouraging schools to hire more bilingual staff in the office. We need to empower principals to deal with CRRE. There are EL parents we are not connecting with.” By correlating “...everything to the Blueprint...”, an administrator in one high Latino LD feels she and her colleagues are transforming the school culture to value CRRE as a necessary means to target the Achievement Gap. She goes on to note that, before the Blueprint “...concept-based lessons were not connected to EL, SELs or Special Ed...” and now “... we are changing all that at the trainings. We discuss why cooperative grouping is successful for teaching African-American kids, English learners, as well as special-education kids.” Through relating all education initiatives and standards to CRRE, the actual student population is specifically targeted for improvement.

High Caucasian populated Local Districts see their parent centers at the heart of facilitating Tenet 4 measures. Allocating significant budget to the creation of these spaces has yielded benefits in parent involvement and higher levels of participation. One interviewee said, “We tried to create environments where the parents feel comfortable to call each other and the schools for help. In addition, cultural performance groups, such as a Folklorico dance troop, were organized through a school’s parent center. They perform for the students and teachers. Computer and ESL classes are provided to parents. The parent centers become a great delivery system of CRRE.” Another high Caucasian LD staff member described the benefit of the parent center is “If you have a program, you have to have people to implement it...” through the on-site parent representatives. There is a great degree of accountability according to one predominantly Caucasian LD

interviewee. “I kept detailed attendance records. You don’t train...you don’t get the books and materials. We don’t buy things for them to sit on shelves. We need someone with that as their number one job. My position is to really watch the parent center directors and hold them accountable.” She goes on to say, “...too many districts are using outside agencies and service providers to educate their parents. There should be a culture in the schools where they would not think of operating without a parent center.”

Predominantly African American Local Districts are focused on facilitating Tenet 4 by increasing parent attendance to meetings and outreach programs. Increasingly, transportation is offered to those in need of it. In addition, the SEL specialist, Parent Ombudsperson and Administrator of Instruction work closely together and with ISS to ensure content is rigorous, engaging and full of culturally relevant material. One administrator in a high African American LD sees the “...way to combat attendance issues of parents at meetings is to make parent involvement a part of the child’s homework. Make their involvement culturally relevant. We have parents present to the classrooms. They explain their life experience and it becomes more of a community. You also need to make teachers feel welcome in the Tenet 4 implementation. They need to be thoroughly educated in how their subject matter and CRRE relate. They need to be exposed to CRRE literature.” One interviewee noted that in her LD, administrators preach to teachers “...what we are doing is mandatory, but it will create happy compliance in the long-run. The culture of the schools will be better, when most of these tests are thrown out the window.” In order to avoid miscommunication about the initiative from principals to school staff, one LD superintendent in a high African American LD writes direct letters to the teachers about the implementation of Action

Steps. Hiring parent facilitators that reflect the population of the community and allocating appropriate funding specifically to Tenet 4 work are strategies also considered essential.

LDs with high African American populations are building the culture of accountability. According to one interviewee, they are doing so by making sure teaching staff have “...those instructional conversations with parents. If it’s not going on at the school site, we come in and ask how can we facilitate implementation...It is a top-down and ground-up effort. We do culturally relevant literature circles to assist staff with that....But before we can change the beliefs of principals, teachers, and parents, we must build trusting relationships and provide trustworthy information. “

Another facilitator is the discouragement of deficit thinking by the LD Superintendents and staff and the encouragement of “courageous conversations.” In one high African American LD, district staff, principals and teachers are encouraged to eschew political correctness, rather to purposely address the reality and population specifics of those students within the Achievement Gap. LD staff members in predominantly African American LDs are extremely passionate about this work. One AI said, “Disenfranchised parents must be empowered. The students must be empowered. Parent and students must understand the standards and see how they can improve...these people have been invisible for so long and we must work on supporting them.” According to another administrator, the greatest facilitator for the future of Tenet 4 effectiveness with parents and educators is simple - “...repetition, repetition, and more repetition.”

Section 8- Are there any barriers to full implementation of Tenet 4 in your Local District?

The most common barrier shared by all eight Local Districts, with regards to Tenet 4 implementation, was the lack of time to implement and follow up on the effectiveness of initiatives. One interviewee complained that there is "...no time to meet as a team." The excessive amount of initiatives and vague mandates being thrown at schools were huge barriers felt by almost all LD administrators. This makes Tenet 4 hard to enforce and allows some schools to avoid following the Tenet 4 Action Steps. Even when the programs are enforced, high Latino and African American LDs struggle to deal with issues of poor attendance and performance by parents. Lack of transportation to evening meetings is partially to blame for this situation. There is a definite need to utilize the Internet more in order to reach out to increasingly tech-savvy parents that are unable to make it to school functions. This takes more funding which many schools seem to lack.

The second most prevalent barrier, according to LD staff interviewed, is the judgmental stance and deficit belief system that many parents, teachers and administrators bring to the table. One administrator felt that while parents and teachers were open to Tenet 4 work, adult professionals in the administration were only giving lip service to the entire Blueprint. One administrator from a high Latino LD said, "District-wide, Tenet 4 is being treated as a side thing. The AEMP branch is also a side thing. It is not looked at as a resource...If the adults have a deficit perspective on the parents; we need to challenge it from an asset perspective." Many times the culture of the school is not responsive to parents. One interviewee believed, "The principals, teachers and schools must truly see and believe in parents as partners." By the same token, she feels

that "...parents often think in terms of power groups and confrontation. They often hinder teachers from doing their jobs..." with dated and aggressive methods of handling school grievances.

Administrators in high Latino populated LDs find a barrier to be that many parents and teachers see Tenet 4 and CRRE as irrelevant to their Local District because the language of the mandate targets African American parents, which makes up a small percentage of their school populations. According to one interviewee, Tenet 4's language is seen as a problem, because "...it talks only about African-American parents ...that's in the language, and there is a very big separation because of it. There's a problem with the way it is phrased. Principals will say that's only for...the black kids..." if they don't have African Americans represented in their schools. Some staff and many vocal parents are pushing for Tenet 4 to be rewritten to include other ethnic groups in the Action Steps. In addition, one interviewee from a high Latino LD, when examining the Blueprint, became concerned because ELAC and CEAC participation were being overused as examples of Action Step implementation, where there should have been "...cultural activities such as the Festival for African Royalty...responsive lesson plans...cultural reading...especially with regards to African American students."

Local District administrators with high numbers of Caucasians felt similarly about the Blueprint. One LD administrator worried, "Does the implementation actually correspond with the goal of the Action Step? We need to revisit many things. We also need to see how it is working or not working in each school." The constant changes in leadership also affects things, according to one LD staff member. "You have to continually educate new coordinators. Money is a barrier... You need the people and the

resources to effectively implement Tenet 4...I used to like to use churches for this.”

The greatest barrier for predominantly African American Local Districts is “...the deficit belief system of several parents, teachers, and administrators and even LD staff.” “Many people are afraid of progress,” according to one administrator. “They want to see CRRE as something separate. Something isolated that doesn’t apply to them.” Since there is very little in terms of school level enforcement, one interviewee worries that without “... a change in belief systems, what difference will actually be made?” She goes on to say that “principals need to be held responsible for the culture of teacher-student relations as well as teacher-parent relationships.” They must examine their belief systems and figure out how to make the school environment less intimidating and more supportive to parents.” One administrator distributed Tenet 4 posters with the 14 Action Steps to every school for their parent centers. “I checked...about a month later...and many still hadn’t posted them.” The question becomes, with limited time and budget, how does LD staff monitor the success of Tenet 4 Action Steps in specific schools. This almost an impossible task, according to one interviewee, because “Empirical data doesn’t tell enough in this case. Participation in parent meetings and school conferences doesn’t really equate with the level of parent involvement in their child’s life.”

Yet, the drive to increase the numbers of parents attending meetings leads some administrators, in predominantly African American LDs, to personally call parents and invite them to events. In the past, one LD allowed parents to bring children to the meetings, but then they, “...had parents bringing severely disabled children...” and had to discontinue the practice. For the parents of bussed children, it’s even harder to get parents to attend evening meetings, because the majority wants to wait and make sure

their children got home safely. One administrator acknowledges, “We wrote Action Steps that we thought would be feasible. But we need more time and more money.” And more understanding, according to another administrator in a high African American LD, who feels “...the biggest barrier is for the schools and teachers to truly accept who their students are...TODAY...We make bigger barriers when we don’t truly recognize where these kids come from. You can’t have teachers saying, *Oh, my goodness, you don’t have a computer, you don’t have a car, and you have no Internet access...how are you going to get this report done?* That is our biggest problem...*The Unthinking Teacher*. Just because you eat filet mignon and I eat rice and beans, it doesn’t mean you’re better than me. They must recognize that all these kids might not be able to do a science fair poster boards, because the money in their house needs to go for food. They must offer alternative assignments.”

Section 9- At the school level has your Local District attempted to document any impact from Tenet 4?

Responses were mixed to this question. Parent Ombudspersons and SEL Specialists seemed to know most about Tenet 4 documentation. Yet, regardless of the LD staff position, several said their LD performed zero documentation or that collecting was in the infantile stages. While LD administrators and instructional staff disaggregate data to target students and families for intervention, methods for analyzing Tenet 4 impact is school site specific and considered by some to be the responsibility of the principals.

Parent Ombudspersons, for the most part, keep databases of parent complaints and comments called into the LD office. This data could be used more extensively to

target teachers and schools for Tenet 4 related intervention. Surveys of parent needs at the beginning of the school year, program and meeting evaluation forms, attendance sheets, minutes, handouts, Power Point presentations and agendas are collected. This documentation is used to form a system of checks and balances and be kept in case of audits. One LD staff member tracks the parents repeatedly attending meetings and targets them for leadership roles. Another LD administrator compiles "...the feedback from parents. I also respond to their evaluations. I give them back the compilations with my answers to their anonymous comments. I am able to defuse the comments made that might have been intended to start a ruckus. I share their responses with the faculty. I chart, graph and categorize their comments. If we see their comments as becoming more positive, maybe we are making a difference."

Tracking students' progress and test scores, with a focus on transition grades and feeder schools, and constant data analysis is of paramount importance at high African American Local Districts. One interviewee explained, "Every PD, of whatever sort, begins with the data. All data is disaggregated BY language status, Special Ed, the ethnicity and gender. Open Court and CSTs (California Standards Tests) are reviewed this way. We are serious about our action plans ...plans must be specific for results with EL, SEL, SE and African-American males. But in terms of collecting data about the parents, we're not there yet." According to one SEL Specialist in a high African American LD, AEMP parent representatives keep records, but "...in terms of qualitative evaluation, there's much we can do." However, on a positive note, she goes on to state "These conversations of the parents have changed. They are talking about the standards and not just about how some teacher took my son's potato chips away from him during

class. There's still some of that. But the trivial matters are not being addressed in droves anymore. The quality of the conversations is changing."

According to one LD administrator in a high Latino LD, "...there is not enough time or money spent on the evaluations. We need to analyze these things. Can you tell me if the Advisory Council has positively affected student achievement? It's compliance driven, but does it work?" The concerned individual goes on to say, "We need to focus on the kids. Does Tenet 4 work? Does CRRE work? Do any of these measures truly work to affect student achievement? We need to have data that these measures will really lead to results that affect student achievement. If they don't, then why are we doing this?" By making the link between school and home stronger through the movement back to small learning communities, hopefully visible results will appear. In the meantime, the same administrator suggests data can be obtained from programs such as the Read to Me program by looking at "...the percentage of parents that were illiterate who started reading after the program and... We have data of the students from Read to Me from pre-test to post-test." This type of documentation can help to demonstrate the impact of Tenet 4 on student academic performance.

Section 10- Is there anything else we need to know about the implementation of Tenet 4 in your Local District?

Most LD administrators felt that it was the responsibility of Central District to provide additional resources for implementing Tenet 4 in the future. One administrator echoed the sentiments of many when she said she would like Central District to provide all the LDs with "... a model school or some kind of model where Tenet 4 and CRRE is

100% in place. How can we truly implement something we've never seen in action? A model would be a seed from which we could grow." Another interviewee asked for "...no more vague mandates." According to her and several other interviewees, too many initiatives are thrown at the schools. She wanted "...plenty of specific ways to enact the Action Steps." For example, "Action Step 12 sounds cool," but had not been implemented, according to all LD staff interviewed, because they were waiting on directives from Central District. Additional lists of culturally relevant literature sources were desired one high Caucasian LD staff member, like "...a good children's book on the African-American experience and Ebonics." Several wanted Central District to provide "...an instrument to evaluate the effectiveness..." of Tenet 4. Data collection techniques and methods of measurement are desired to determine if Tenet 4 makes a difference in the education of students. One interviewee thinks "Tenet 4 is excellent because it gives us a common language to evaluate what we're doing in each district...but it would be nice if Our superintendent issued a mandate and sighted a model for this..." This LD administrator documented Tenet 4 progress by asking parent centers to maintain portfolios of the work they're doing.

The goal for most LD staff is to create programs with longevity in mind. One interviewee from a high Latino LD said, "The sustainability of the programs we implement is important. How specific they are is also important. Going to College was specific. It targets 5th to 6th graders. We are now starting with pre-K on that. We need to encourage parents to encourage their children to achieve. Yes, it's true that there are studies that say the parents are the strongest correlation for student achievement, but there are so few, remarkable students with the kind of drive to do it all on their own." Another

administrator from a high African American LD sees the return to small learning communities as the future of LAUSD with their success hinging "...on parent involvement and the scaffolding of lessons to be culturally relevant."

The LD staff felt that there is a need to do more Tenet 4 work to understand parents feeling and behavior. According to one LD administrator, "I've seen Tenet 4 addressed for the Cadres, the subject area specialists and the administrative staff and teachers, but this needs to be addressed more with the principals. Tenet 4 should be integral, not only to PD, but to the higher learning environment." The CRRE curriculum must be embraced as not just "another something," since principals and teachers have "...so much on their plates with the pacing plans, standards-based teaching and periodic assessments." However, according to one interviewee, principals and teachers must recognize "...students come to school with a lot of capital. It may not be economic capital, but their family, community and culture are all assets...We must not be too extravagant in what we ask of parents...or should I say, assume that parents are not supportive just because they can't attend meetings. They can support their children by providing a good breakfast in the morning before school. They can support their children by telling them to do their homework. They can support the children by turning off the TV. These are all modes of parent involvement." Mandatory reading of Geneva Gaye's book by all school staff was offered as a suggestion to increase awareness of CRRE related issues. Increased funding for the parent centers and the establishment of a parent center at every school was another.

Several administrators believe that No Child Left Behind has changed the schools view of parents for the better. It has labeled them as valued stakeholders. One

administrator in a high Caucasian populated LD commented, “Some parents will always feel left out. No matter what we do. There will always be a group left out...Parents have to have a voice. You can’t just bring them in and have them assist you with busy work. They must feel validated. We all have cultures. Allow them to voice that....Access the parent’s prior knowledge. It gives a better sense that I am really there for your kids. It is the heart of culturally relevant and responsive education.” A high African American LD staff member stated with regards to Tenet 4 “It should have been implemented years ago. It is the only way to comfortably say there is a difference. However, in my mind, like I said before, the greatest difference is exposure. This is not about color. The issue is that, historically, minorities have had to work harder, and for lower paying jobs to survive. We have to remember that a vast amount of our high school kids have to work and go to school. This is a different experience. We need to be open to alternatives.” Other administrators in high African American LDs feel the strength of Tenet 4 is its frank language and direct instructions for involving parents in assisting with the education of their children. One interviewee became emotional as she remarked, “The children we serve are surviving besides many serious issues. There are serious support needs. These children are like victims of a war. They are fighting every day just to have a smile on their face. I am so emotional about this, but I believe direct intervention is needed for them to achieve. We cannot be afraid of the issues.”

Administrators in high Latino populated Local Districts often struggle with the presentation of Tenet 4 to their communities. According to one LD administrator with regards to his LD, “It’s a very difficult subject. You don’t want to offend anyone...You need to make it about all parents. However, we are at a deficit in terms of getting

African-American parents involved.” The language of the document is the greatest cause for controversy. One LD staff member in a predominantly Latino LD stated, “My biggest problem with Tenet 4 and CRRE is that the African-American kids are pulled forward in the language. In our district, we have isolated pockets of Standard English folks and parents.” In addition, according to this administrator, those small populations are not actively involved or attending meetings. Local District staff in high Latino LDs feels they must walk a line between targeting the low participation of African American parents, while not offending other ethnic groups in the community.

Conclusions

In summary, the major findings of this study on the implementation of Tenet 4: are:

1. Local District Standard English Language (SEL) Specialists hold the primary responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of Tenet 4 Action Steps.
2. According to all Local District staff interviewed, the English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) and the Compensatory Education Advisory Council (CEAC) receive the majority of leadership training and Tenet 4 related outreach.
3. All Local Districts value culturally relevant literature and CRRE strategies as effective means to engage parents of various ethnicities in the education of their children.
4. Predominantly African American Local Districts do the most targeted intervention work with African American parents and have the greatest

implementation of the Tenet 4 Action Steps as reflective of their original language (which focuses on African American students).

5. Most Tenet 4 outreach in predominantly African American LDs takes place at AEMP (Academic English Mastery Program) schools.
6. Predominantly Caucasian Local Districts revolve the majority of their Tenet 4 activities around the school parent centers (which exist at almost every school). However, they do not specifically target African American parents due to their low numbers in these Local Districts.
7. Predominantly Latino Local Districts face the greatest challenges, in terms of targeting African American parents for Tenet 4 implementations. There was initially a backlash amongst Latino and other ethnic parents towards the language of the Tenet 4 blueprint. LD administrators are caught between promoting more inclusive involvement of African American parents in their Local Districts and offending the other parents of color in the process.
8. All Local Districts wanted Central District to model or provide examples of Tenet 4 highly functioning at a school site and/or the surveys, data collection methods and/or proof of Tenet 4's positive effect on student achievement.

These findings indicate that Tenet 4 implementation varies by the predominant racial makeup of the Local District's student population. If a Local District has a low African American population, they choose to adapt Tenet 4 Action Steps to underachieving students and their families, rather than specifically targeting African American parents for intervention. All Local Districts struggle with how to increase the attendance to meetings and involvement of African American parents at school sites.

Predominantly African American Local Districts have found the AEMP schools to be effective vehicles for the Tenet 4 work since most have parent centers and make culturally relevant issues the focus of their intervention already.

Recommendations

Although Tenet 4 Action steps are relatively clear and superior to the traditional way of parent engagement, still there are areas that need to be defined in terms of scope and responsibility. For example the Action Steps states: *“Have school with the assistance of their Local District staff develop parent advisory groups, training sessions and leadership guidance for parents.”* What is the responsibility of local district? What type of assistant local district must provide to the school? What type of training session and leadership guidance are we concerned about? What is the deadline for these trainings, and who would provide them?

Based on our interviews with the key administrators of Tenet 4 implementation we believe there is a need for a systematic evaluation of the Tenet 4 implementation in the all local districts as well as central office efforts. We need to identify our observable outcomes, design reliable and valid measure to assess the degree of attainment and correlate these outcomes with measurable student achievement.

The third issue is the frustration of the administrators and parents at Local Districts that have sizeable number students from other ethnic/racial groups. The language of the Tenet 4 must be more inclusive, w/o de-emphasizing the plea of the minority groups with small number of students. It must be a program for all struggling

students even for those parents and students who are a tiny portion of a local district population.

Appendix A

1. *Have school with the assistance of their Local District staff develop parent advisory groups, training sessions and leadership guidance for parents.*
2. *Provide training for parents by literacy and math coaches on how to help their children with grade level reading and math.*
3. *Encourage and organize means for parents, teachers, students and administration to work collaboratively to improve African American student achievement.*
4. *Survey parents about how the school can best communicate with them.*
5. *Assist schools in taking the cultural/language relevance of parents into full account in order to achieve the desired needs and performance targets.*
6. *Require each school to have a plan to communicate curricular matters to parents to insure that the parents know what the schools' plans are for their children*
7. *Have District organize an advisory group of African American community leaders, researchers, and parents to provide continually current information on the cultural relevance of students.*
8. *Implement periodically, as a first step, Parent-teacher, teacher-parent themed "teach-ins" for teachers to listen to, learn, and provide relevant feedback regarding issues raised by parents while parents share their ideas, concerns, and strategies for improving the way schools function on behalf of their children.*
9. *Provide parent training in the following areas: parent practices that positively influence African American students' achievement and attendance; and revised models that make wise use of time, such as reading, watching educational/cultural*

- programs, working on a hobby.*
- 10. Increase parent involvement through effective systematic communication that establishes positive home and school partnerships through regularly scheduled newsletters, internet, etc.*
 - 11. Increase parent leadership skills through recruiting them and training them to become leaders and then organizing them to reach out to other parents in order to advance the curriculum in the home.*
 - 12. Have deputy superintendent assign the responsibility for researching and developing a set of lesson plans tailored for each grade level that will require: students to solicit from their parents for their life experience and knowledge (i.e. survey or interviews) on diverse issues such as police, criminal justice, etc.; history; and, share the outcome/analysis of classes with parents as an educational and empowerment tool (parents would see their life experienced as valid object of study by school)*
 - 13. Involve students in the acquisition of African cultural and historical information through such programs as the Festival of African Royalty for grades K-12*
 - 14. Have the principal at each school with a high percentage of African American students meet with African American parents and community groups to plan at least three parent involvement workshops.*

“Action Plan, June 2001, Pp 24-25”