The Education Trust—West

Educational Equity Audit
Novato Unified School District
June 2019

CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

About The Education Trust–West

The Education Trust–West is a nonprofit organization that works for educational justice and the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, pre-K through college. We expose opportunity and achievement gaps that separate students of color and low-income students from other youth, and we identify and advocate for the strategies that will forever close those gaps.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2018, Novato Unified School District (NUSD) partnered with The Education Trust-West (ETW) and Marin Promise Partnership (MPP) to conduct an Educational Equity Audit (EEA). The purpose of the EEA is to closely analyze college and career readiness for NUSD students, with a focus on equitable access and success within schools, among schools, and among groups of students. Participation in the EEA is an essential component to the county-wide initiative coordinated by MPP -- *Keeping Every Door Open for Every Student.*

In December 2018, the NUSD Board of Education approved the district's Equity Imperative, which includes the Universal Goal: "All students will demonstrate proficiency in the academic and social skills identified in the Graduate Profile, which includes meeting the UC/CSU entrance requirements upon graduation so that they are prepared for and successful in college and career." The Equity Imperative outlines targeted strategies that include professional development with the National Equity Project, the development of learning targets and proficiency scales, and the study of effective grading practices. These initiatives provide a good foundation to further explore and disrupt the underlying causes and conditions that contribute to disparate outcomes for students within NUSD. They may also help to implement systemic changes so that equitable outcomes can be achieved for all students.

To conduct the Educational Equity Audit, ETW conducted interviews with district leaders and focus groups with administrators, students, parents, counselors, and teachers at each of the three high schools -- Novato High School, San Marin High School, and Marin Oaks High Schools. ETW also gathered survey data from 1,088 students, 234 parents, and 68 school staff members. Additionally, ETW and district staff facilitated community conversations with 50 family and community stakeholders who shared their ideas on ways to support students to become college and career ready. ETW also conducted a transcript analysis for the Class of 2018 and reviewed artifacts such as master schedules, course catalogs, and budget documents.

Using those data, ETW identified ten categories and grouped key findings and recommendations into the following topic areas:

1. Course access and success
2. Curriculum and instruction
3. Student supports and interventions
4. School culture and climate
5. College and career readiness supports
6. Certificated staff diversity and professional learning
7. Community and family engagement
8. English learners and students with disabilities
9. Alternative schools
10. Allocation of resources

This report includes key findings from ETW's data analysis, such as:

- There are significant gaps in enrollment in and successful completion of the full a-g course sequence by gender, ethnicity, and income, with ethnicity as the strongest predictor of a-g completion.

- There is a lack of support for English learner students (ELs) in content courses and insufficient professional learning opportunities focused on supporting ELs and students with disabilities in content courses.

- There are insufficient systemic supports for students' social-emotional wellness.

- Alternative school options (Marin Oaks and Nova) are greatly appreciated by students and families, but improvements are needed in the transition process.

- The College and Career Readiness course presents a good opportunity, but needs revision to address students' needs.

- Initial efforts to norm around educational equity and culturally proficient pedagogy have been uneven and have not yet translated to systemic change.

Key findings and recommendations included in this report will inform the Blueprint for Equity Action Planning process to occur during the 2019-20 school year.

We want to recognize and thank the district and school leadership, staff, families, and community members for their collective commitment to this EEA process and to the students of NUSD.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<div style="background:#8B1A1A; color:white; padding:4px 8px;">TOPIC 1: COURSE ACCESS AND SUCCESS</div>

Equitable access to a well-rounded course of study helps prepare students for college and careers. The Education Trust–West (ETW), in partnership with School by Design, conducted a transcript analysis of the Class of 2018 to examine access to and success in college preparatory courses for all students. The transcript analysis highlights key areas for improvement as well as successes to learn from. The transcript analysis also provides a baseline for the development of the Blueprint for Equity Action Plan. Key findings and recommendations in this topic area should inform the development and implementation of actions that advance equitable access to and successful completion of courses which prepare all students to excel in college and career.

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. District-wide, 47% of students in the Class of 2018 were **not** enrolled in the full a-g course sequence. *Data source: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figure 6.*	1A. Adopt graduation and course placement policies to ensure that every student is enrolled in the full a-g course sequence with appropriate supports, which could include a combination of the following: differentiated teaching methods (including Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English sections), push-in supports, primary language supports, and simultaneous support classes.[1]
2.There are significant gaps in enrollment in and successful completion of the full a-g course sequence by gender, ethnicity, and income, with ethnicity as the strongest predictor of a-g completion. *A-G Completion Rates:* *By Gender: Female, 52%; Male 33%.* *By Ethnicity: White, 55%; Latinx, 24%.* *By Income: Economically disadvantaged, 51%; Not economically disadvantaged, 23%.* *Data sources: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figures 8 and 17-22.*	2B. Establish monitoring systems that routinely notify counselors, teachers, students, and parents of students' progress towards meeting a-g course requirements and develop clear plans for effective interventions when students fall off-track.[2]
3. District-wide Advanced Placement (AP) enrollment is disproportionate to overall student enrollment, with male students, English learners (ELs), Latinx students, economically disadvantaged students, and students in Special Education being the most underrepresented. *Data source: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figure 4.*	3A. Adopt and implement a district-wide equitable access policy for AP courses that includes clear and transparent outreach efforts to underrepresented groups, and enrollment processes that remove gatekeeping mechanisms.[3]
4. District-wide, 43% of students passed all a-g subject areas (with a C or better).	See recommendation 2B above.

An additional 15% passed six of the seven a-g subject areas. Of the 15% who fell one subject area short, 30% fell short in English, 29% fell short in Language Other than English (LOTE), and 21% fell short in math. *Data sources: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figures 7 and 10.*	
5. English and math were the subject areas with the lowest completion rates (61% for both). Electives (94%) and Visual and Performing Arts (88%) had the highest completion rates. *Data source: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figure 9.*	5A. Analyze current patterns in students' math course-taking and achievement to develop math pathways for all students that result in college and career readiness.[4] Areas to consider include: • Increase the high school graduation requirement to three years of math[5] to align with California's state standards in mathematics and the minimum entrance requirements for California's public universities.[6] • Establish a-g-approved math pathways to include more college preparatory courses with an application-based approach (such as Statistics).[7] 5B. Ensure that all students – including ELs[8] – have full access to four years of a-g approved English classes that are aligned with California's state standards for English Language Arts and English Language Development.
6. Math was the subject area with the lowest access rate (enrolled in three years of a-g courses) for Latinx (49%), Redesignated Fluent English Proficient (61%), economically disadvantaged (47%), and Special Education (12%) students. English was the subject area with the lowest access rate (enrolled in four years of a-g courses) for ELs (21%). LOTE was the subject area with the lowest access rate (enrolled in two years of same language) for White students (72%). *Data sources: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figures 15-20.*	See recommendations 5A and 5B above. 6A. Partner with community colleges to help meet the demand for courses in LOTE. Ensure that community college courses are systematically included in students' high school academic records in order to obtain dual enrollment credit. 6B. Partner with the California World Language Project for support in expanding the district's World Language Program.[9]
7. For every student group except ELs and Special Education students, the largest gap between access (enrollment in required a-g courses) and success (passing a-g courses) was in English.	7A. Examine grading practices to ensure that students have fair and ample opportunities to demonstrate mastery of course standards.[10] When specific standards are not met, provide students with opportunities to re-learn those standards using a variety of approaches, including personalized online learning, support classes during the school day, and opportunities before and after school.

For ELs and Special Education students, the largest gap between access and success was in history. *Data sources: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figures 17-22.*	7B. Examine instructional practices in all subjects – with a focus on English and history – to ensure that they are aligned to California's state standards and provide students with rigor, cognitive challenge, and opportunities to communicate using academic language.[11]
8. District-wide, 55% of students were on-track for a-g completion after 9th-grade. This percentage dropped to 44% after 10th-grade, to 35% after 11th-grade, and improved up to 43% by the end of the 12th-grade. This trend held consistent across most student groups. *Data sources: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figures 11a – 11g.*	8A. Focus on 9th-grade success[12] using a combination of strategies, including: • Ensuring a smooth transition from 8th- to 9th-grade through frequent dialogue between middle and high school counselors, teachers, and administrators. • Offering summer bridge programs, with specific attention to students identified as needing additional support. • Re-structuring the College and Career Readiness course to address issues of socioemotional wellness as an essential component to college and career readiness. • Building in academic tutorials during the school day. 8B. Ensure that there are robust academic and socioemotional counseling supports in 9th-12th grade to ensure that students are staying on-track.
9. No student who received and "F" grade in English, history, or lab science in 9th grade ended up being a-g eligible at the end of 12th-grade. *Data source: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figure 12.*	See recommendation 8A above.
10. Although Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are growing, the vast majority of students in the Class of 2018 never took a CTE course. *Data sources: Class of 2018 Transcript Analysis, Figures 13 and 16.*	10A. Develop full pathways for CTE and ensure access to the full sequence for students.

TOPIC 2: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

High-quality curriculum and instruction are key to ensuring that all students have equitable access to meet California's college and career-ready standards. California's English Language Arts, English Language Development, mathematics, and science standards all require instructional shifts that emphasize greater focus on academic language, cognitive rigor, and critical thinking.[13] Schools and districts that effectively prepare traditionally underrepresented students for college also ensure that their instruction is responsive to their students' cultures and communities.[14] This means that they intentionally include students' knowledge, experiences, and backgrounds to inform pedagogy, while also meeting district and curricular requirements and expectations.[15]

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. The district has implemented a dual immersion program in grades TK-2 with plans to grow this program to span TK-12. *Data source: District Office Interviews.*	1A. Seek out guidance, expertise, and resources from state-wide organizations (such as the California Association for Bilingual Education[16] and Californians Together[17]) related to the California English Learner Roadmap to plan for and expand bilingual course offerings and a TK-12 dual immersion program.
2. While some initial work regarding culturally responsive teaching has begun, there has not been a widespread implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Teacher Focus Groups.*	2A. Support site-based leaders to develop an inclusive, culturally responsive, and sustaining instructional vision in collaboration with department leaders, instructional coaches, and Equity Teams. 2B. Utilize the Cultural Competence rubric as a tool for teams of teachers to identify, practice, and refine professional and instructional practices and curricular content. Practices and content should embody cultural competence, recognize students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as assets for learning, and routinely use multiple perspectives from multiethnic and multicultural sources in the curriculum.[18] 2C. Ensure Professional Learning Communities convene to work on proficiency-based instruction and are supported in developing a lens for culturally relevant curriculum and culturally responsive teaching practices.
3. While the district made investments in Project-Based Learning (PBL), there is little evidence that PBL is widely practiced at the secondary schools. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Teacher Focus Groups.*	3A. Develop a framework to monitor and assess the effectiveness of PBL and other investments. Create systems to ensure a feedback loop between classroom teachers and site and district leaders to understand if and how programs and practices are being implemented, what the barriers are, and what the impact on student learning has been. 3B. Provide training for new faculty and staff and refresher trainings as needed to sustain growth and improve instructional practices.
4. School master schedule development does not clearly prioritize the needs of students with the greatest academic needs (i.e. English learners). *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Master Schedule Analysis, School Leader Interviews.*	4A. Engage site teams in analyzing how the master schedule is developed, with a particular focus on: • How adult and student needs are prioritized. • Which students have access to the most qualified teachers.[19]

	- How scheduling priorities (such as creating common planning time for teachers, which is a valuable practice if the time is used well) can have unintended consequences for students. - How tracking or grouping in one subject area can impact students' overall schedules. - How to build in appropriate course options for students who may enroll mid-year (i.e. newcomer students). Consult master scheduling resources such as the College and Career Academy Support Network at UC Berkeley.[20]

Students thrive when they know that faculty and staff at their school care about them[21] *and* have high expectations for their success.[22] While access to high-quality courses is vital, monitoring students' progress in those courses and developing systems to ensure that interventions and supports are aligned with students' needs are equally important.

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. While online credit recovery is offered during the school day, there are concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the current program. *Data source: District Office Interviews.*	1A. The district should evaluate the effectiveness of the current credit recovery program and consider restructuring it to focus on the standards or proficiencies that a student has not yet mastered, rather than repeating an entire course.
2. While the district has implemented successful support programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination for some students, the schedules of the traditional high schools offer limited time for assistance or support during the school day for most students. (Novato High School and San Marin High School plan to offer tutorial time during the school day, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year.) *Data sources: Master Schedule Analysis, School Leader Interviews, Student Focus Groups, Teacher Focus Groups.*	2A. When implemented, monitor the impact of the new tutorial programs at each school and consider modifications if necessary. Analyze the benefits and challenges of the different programs to determine the most effective model for each school site.
3. Academic counseling services appear to be focused on 11th-grade students, with 9th- and 10th-grade students having limited counseling support. *Data sources: Counselor Focus Groups, Student Focus Groups, Family Focus Groups, Student and Parent Surveys.*	3A. Explore alternative counseling models and partnerships[23] to provide greater student access to socioemotional, academic, and college- and career-counseling services, especially in 9th- and 10th-grade.
4. There are significant unmet needs for students' socioemotional health and wellness. *Data sources: Counselor Focus Groups, Teacher Focus Groups, Students Focus Groups, Family Focus Groups, Student and Parent Surveys.*	4A. Consider revamping the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Course curriculum to include topics of socioemotional health, wellness, and self-care. This revamping may include curriculum integration between the CCR and health courses as well as collaboration between CCR and health teachers. 4B. Ensure that all students and families (including those who do not speak English) are informed of the socioemotional health and wellness resources available at school and in the community. 4C. Advocate for bilingual counselors and service providers. 4D. Prioritize creating structured opportunities (such as advisories or support classes) for building positive relationships between adults and students, and among students. Consider expanding peer academic and socioemotional support programs.[24]

TOPIC 4: SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Helping students build college-going identities requires that districts and schools deliberately take steps to understand and value the cultures of students, families, and communities that they serve. By considering the assets students bring to schools (particularly underrepresented students of color, low-income students, and English learners), and refraining from deficit viewpoints, districts and schools can help students navigate their college and career pathway.[25] Using a culturally sustaining pedagogy to foster a strong sense of community that embraces cultural pluralism[26] has been associated with higher levels of college and career preparation rates for traditionally underrepresented groups. In contrast to assimilation, a school culture rooted in humanizing practices honors and respects the history, experiences, and perspective of students and makes them a fundamental part of students' educational experiences.[27]

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. The Equity Teams at both traditional high schools provide a safe and supportive group for faculty and staff to discuss issues of identity and bias and reflect on their own practice. *Data sources: Focus Group with Equity Team (San Marin High School) and Observation of Equity Team Meeting (Novato High School).*	1A. Provide opportunities for the Equity Teams at each site to share learning with each other. Invite Equity Teams to lead equity-focused professional learning opportunities and to share learning with site teams. Consider offering additional entry points into these equity-focused conversations through book or article clubs, online chats, or other mechanisms. 1B. Create environments where students of color feel empowered to voice their concerns and recommendations. Invite the voices of students of color into the Equity Teams and other spaces to help adults on campus understand the experience of students of color from their own perspective.
2. There is a stated belief that some administrators, teachers, counselors, and staff have deficit viewpoints, and express lower expectations for students of color and English learners. *Data sources: District Office Interviews Teacher Focus Groups.*	2A. Intentionally recruit and support diverse team members[28] who consistently demonstrate caring and demanding, asset-based belief systems for all students and who are courageous in addressing how implicit bias manifests in everyday acts of microaggression. 2B. Normalize discussions and vocabulary about identity, bias, privilege, and race, while always providing concrete examples of how these concepts manifest in our classrooms, schools, and workplaces. Establish team cultures that create safe places for people to challenge deficit viewpoints in a constructive, open manner.
3. While students expressed feeling varying levels of academic support from teachers, several expressed that teachers lack an understanding of their lives outside of school. *Data sources: Student Focus Groups, Student Survey, Teacher Focus Group, Community Conversation.*	3A. Prioritize creating structured opportunities (such as advisories, support classes, or other school-wide practices) for building positive relationships between adults and students.[29]

TOPIC 5: COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS SUPPORTS

Economically disadvantaged students and students of color benefit greatly when school administrators, faculty, and staff promote high expectations.[30] However, educators are more likely to have lower educational expectations of these students than their White peers.[31] Academic counseling, especially for these students, is too often focused on meeting graduation requirements, rather than a-g completion and college readiness. As a result, low-income students and students of color are less likely to be enrolled in college preparatory coursework, resulting in lower levels of persistence and success in college.[32] In a 2019 research study, The Education Trust–West found common practices among schools and districts with the best a-g completion for low-income students and students of color: they implemented more course placement policies and intentionally focused leadership responsibilities on a-g access and completion.[33]

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. The district appears to lack a systemic way for families and students to be regularly updated about students' progress towards meeting a-g or CTE pathway requirements. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Parent Survey.*	1A. Utilize existing tools such as Data Matters, progress reports, report cards, and Naviance to provide timely and regular communication to parents and students about their progress towards meeting a-g and CTE requirements. 1B. Develop systems to trigger interventions and support services when students are deemed to be off-track or at risk for falling off-track.
2. The implementation of a College and Career Readiness (CCR) class provides important awareness and planning support for a college and career path. However, the content and timing of the course should be examined to optimize this opportunity. *Data sources: Counselor Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Student Focus Group.*	2A. Consider revamping the CCR course curriculum to include topics of socioemotional health, wellness, and self-care. This revamping may include curriculum integration between the CCR and health courses as well as collaboration between CCR and health teachers. Also consider offering the course — or revisiting components of the course — later in high school to support students and families as they explore college and career options, and submit college, internship, and financial aid applications.[34]
3. Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, the Science Technology, Engineering, and Math program, the Marin School of the Arts program, and applied math and science courses provide students with rigorous and relevant learning opportunities. However, the vast majority of the students in the Class of 2018 never took a CTE course. *Data sources: Master Schedule Analysis, Transcript Analysis, School Leader Interviews.*	3A. Build out more complete CTE Pathways leading to certifications at all three high schools in order to provide students with more diverse options for college and career preparation.
4. Various stakeholders expressed that college and career readiness has been too narrowly focused on preparation for a four-year college. *Data sources: Counselor Focus Group, Community Conversation, Student Focus Group.*	4A. Strive to establish the expectation that all students should have the opportunity to pursue all post-secondary options — including a four-year university, a two-year college, or a career pathway. Ensure that students and families have the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions that are aligned with the particular goals for each student, and validate these choices as positive.

TOPIC 6: CERTIFICIATED STAFF DIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Having a diverse and qualified staff is essential to providing students with meaningful access to rigorous and supportive learning environments. There is a growing body of research that shows that all students, not just students of color, benefit from having at least one teacher of color.[35] In addition, teachers of color who share the same race as their students tend to set higher expectations of them than other teachers[36] and improve the reported school experience for students of color.[37] In addition, schools staffed by leaders and teachers of color expose students to positive role models and help counteract negative stereotypes that misrepresent people of color.[38]

Due to the significant shift in teaching and learning that college- and career-ready standards call for, educator professional learning must also shift significantly for effective implementation. High-quality professional learning focuses on teacher knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, and instructional practice. The combination of changing teachers' mindsets and instructional practices is the engine behind improved student achievement.[39] Research-based recommendations for professional learning structures that lead to improved student achievement include: 1) teacher collaboration supported by strong principal leadership;[40] 2) sustained, high-quality professional learning opportunities for networks of educators focused on developing practice through extended institutes, collective inquiry, action research to solve complex problems of practice, and coaching; and 3) flexible structures within the teaching day and year that provide time for teachers to participate in collegial planning and job-embedded professional learning opportunities.[41]

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. District certificated staff are predominantly white (90%), while the student population is 52% non-white. District and school leaders expressed a desire to hire teachers that are more ethnically representative of the student population. *Data sources: Enrollment and Staffing Data (CDE), District Office Interviews, School Leaders Interviews.*	1A. Develop a plan to recruit and retain teachers, counselors, and administrators of color, which includes strategies addressing: • The added value of teachers of color on student learning outcomes.[42] • The development of a local pipeline of teachers. • Professional learning opportunities designed for educators of color.
2. There is an identified need for general education teachers to learn instructional strategies for serving students with disabilities in the general classroom; current Special Education professional development typically does not include general education teachers. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Teacher Focus Groups.*	2A. Ensure that teachers receive professional learning and ongoing support to adequately meet the needs of students who receive Special Education in all courses. Build time into collaboration schedules for Special Education teachers to collaborate with subject area teachers.
3. While some teachers have received training in Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English and differentiation, there has been a lack of ongoing support and coaching for the implementation and improvement of these strategies. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Teacher Focus Groups.*	3A. Build upon initial investments in professional learning by providing teachers time and structures to collaboratively plan, observe instructional practice, and debrief. 3B. Build teacher and administrator capacity to engage in cycles of inquiry around problems of practice related to the teaching and learning of English learners.

4. There has been a lack of professional learning tailored to counselors' roles in advancing college and career readiness for all students. *Data source: District Office Interviews.*	4A. Include counselors in professional learning communities with teachers and provide structured time for counselors to work together to examine how current practices and policies help or hinder student access to college preparatory courses.
5. Teacher collaboration is typically within departments and not across departments. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Teacher Focus Groups.*	5A. In collaboration with teachers and site administrators, establish expectations for the goals and use of department collaboration time so that it is prioritized to address instructional strategies to support student learning and equitable assessment practices.

TOPIC 7: COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The value of parental and familial participation in improving students' college readiness is well documented in research.[43] The manner in which schools engage parents is reflective of the values and culture of the school, and the school leaders' underlying beliefs about families' contribution to the school community and learning environment. It is essential for school leaders to establish a culture that truly values the opinions and cultures of its families, supported by processes and structures to facilitate family engagement.[44]

In addition to nurturing positive relationships and collaboration with families, thriving schools also forge meaningful partnerships with community-based organizations, businesses, and higher education institutions to support students in college and career preparation.[45] Most importantly, partnerships allow districts and schools to achieve things that are difficult for them to accomplish on their own. For example, some districts partner with organizations to support students and their families in completing the FAFSA or Dream Act applications, or to provide parent-engagement programs. Students also greatly benefit when districts partner with local colleges and universities to offer support services along with dual-enrollment opportunities. Industry partners help students prepare for future careers through Career Technical Education (CTE) course partnerships, internships, and employment.[46]

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. Parents shared that written communication from the district is primarily in English and wanted more bilingual materials. Community Liaisons provide direct support and translation for Spanish-speaking families. *Data source: Family Focus Groups (English and Spanish).*	1A. Ensure that written communication from district, schools, and other school-related organizations (PTA, sports teams, arts programs, etc.) is provided in the language of preference for each parent or guardian. 1B. Prioritize hiring bilingual staff at all levels to provide a more welcoming and inclusive school culture for non-English speaking families. 1C. Provide opportunities for current staff members to learn Spanish (or other languages spoken by district families).
2. Parents expressed feeling disconnected from school counselors and desired more communication from them, especially regarding students' progress towards graduation and meeting college-entrance requirements.	2A. Work with counselors to establish baseline norms, expectations, and practices for communicating with families. 2B. Establish systems (perhaps using Data Matters) to ensure that all families have access to regular and updated information about their students' progress towards meeting graduation, a-g, and CTE pathway requirements.

Data sources: Family Focus Group, Parent Survey, District Office Interviews.	
3. Much of the communication from schools is electronic and there is concern that many families without regular access to email are not being reached. *Data sources: Family Focus Groups (English and Spanish), District Office Interviews.*	3A. For the most important notifications, allow parents or guardians to select their preferred form of communication, including email, text, or regular U.S. mail.
4. Community partners such as College of Marin, Marin Promise, and 10,000 Degrees provide valuable services and support to district students and staff, but members of the district community would like to see more opportunities for student internships, college tours, career and trade fairs, support for basic needs, and bilingual after-school tutoring. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Counselor Focus Groups, Community Conversation.*	4A. Work with community partners and the Marin County Office of Education to support the coordination of community programs and resources to ensure that services are allocated equitably and efficiently. 4B. Seek community partner support to provide more career preparation opportunities for all students, such as internships, and career and trade information sessions.
5. Community members and families expressed a desire for the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking communities to have more opportunities to engage with each other. *Data sources: Family Focus Groups, Community Conversation.*	5A. Work with the District English Learner Advisory Committee and PTA leaders to find ways to bring the community together around common goals. Conduct meetings together, with the primary language alternating between English and Spanish (with translation services provided).

TOPIC 8: ENGLISH LEARNERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities and English learners (ELs) often face additional barriers to becoming college and career ready, including being precluded from enrolling in college preparatory courses and social isolation on school campuses. However, in 2018 the California Assembly signed AB 2735 into law, which prohibits a district from denying an English learner access to the "standard instructional program," including college preparatory courses.[47]

Schools and districts that have higher college preparation rates for students with disabilities and ELs have systems in place to ensure that they understand the particular learning experiences of these students and implement specific practices aimed at increasing their sense of belonging, pathways to college and career, access to college preparatory coursework, and in-school interventions to support their success.[48]

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. There is a lack of a coordinated English Language Development (ELD) program for serving different English learner populations at the secondary level, including long-term English learners and newcomers. Teachers reported that the Kevin Clark Consulting strategies are not meeting the needs of high school ELs. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, School Leader Interviews, Counselor Focus Groups, Teacher Focus Groups.*	1A. Engage ELD teachers in a district-wide process for determining the areas of need related to ELD programs and services, including differentiation for long-term ELs and newcomer students. Identify curriculum and strategies that are effective for secondary students.
2. There is a lack of bilingual supports for ELs, including bilingual teachers, counselors, tutors, and instructional materials. *Data sources: Student Focus Groups, Family Focus Group, Community Conversation, Counselor Focus Groups.*	2A. Prioritize hiring bilingual staff at all levels to provide additional academic supports and access to the academic curriculum. 2B. Leverage the flexibility allowed by Prop. 58 (California Multilingual Education Act of 2016) to identify high-quality instructional materials in students' primary languages and integrate them within the academic curriculum. 2C. When feasible, provide bilingual academic instruction.
3. Content teachers need better supports, strategies, and coaching to serve ELs in their classes. In addition, there are no Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English classes or sheltered sections at San Marin High School. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Teacher Focus Groups, Counselor Focus Group, Master Schedule Analysis.*	3A. Provide meaningful access to a-g courses by offering course sections with the intentional use of instructional strategies aimed at increasing ELs' access to college preparatory content and skills.
4. Special Education students require more supports in general education classes and teachers need training and support to better serve them. *Data sources: Teacher Focus Group, District Office Interviews.*	4A. Continue to provide expanded access to standards-based courses with sufficient supports for students with disabilities, including the use of assistive technology, paraprofessionals, and co-teaching models. Support co-teaching teams with common planning time and coaching.

TOPIC 9: ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

In the Class of 2018, 10% of students attended alternative programs — 7% attended Marin Oaks and 3% attended Nova. While traditional school accountability measures are not always appropriate to apply to alternative and continuation schools, which often have different goal than traditional high schools, it is nonetheless important to focus on the extent to which all district students, including those served in alternative settings, are being prepared for successful transitions to college and career pathways.

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. Marin Oaks High School offers English Language Development (ELD) courses, expanding access to the program for English learners (ELs). *Data sources: School Leader Interview, Teacher Focus Group.*	1A. Continue to ensure that ELs at Marin Oaks have access to ELD courses and access to standards-based content courses.
2. The Bridges Program and partnerships with local community programs helps to facilitate the transition from Marin Oaks to post-secondary options. *Data sources: Counselor Focus Group, School Leader Interview, Student Focus Groups.*	2A. Consider expanding the Bridges Program so that all Marin Oaks students benefit from it.
3. Parents did not receive sufficient information about the reasons for their child's transfer from the traditional high school to Marin Oaks and would have liked more communication about the transition. *Data source: Family Focus Group.*	3A. Develop a more transparent and inclusive transfer process that engages staff from the sending school, staff from the receiving school, students, and families.
4. Parents of Nova students expressed that the district did not provide information about the Nova program, even when their children were having significant socioemotional challenges at the traditional high school. *Data source: Family Focus Group.*	4A. Ensure that families are informed of all district resources and programs for which their children are eligible. Provide clear and transparent information about eligibility criteria and the transfer process while holding student well-being and success as priorities.
5. Marin Oaks High School provides students with a safe and supportive learning environment. Staff work to ensure that each student has an adult on campus that they feel connected to through the Connections List practice. *Data sources: Counselor Focus Group, Student Focus Groups, Family Focus Groups, Teacher Focus Group, School Leader Interview.*	5A. Provide opportunities for cross-school engagement. Use these opportunities to share successful practices for building and nurturing safe and supportive learning environments for every student at every school.

Under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), districts are called to strategically use funds to ensure that all students have equitable access to standards-based coursework, high-quality instruction, and the supports they need to be successful, with a particular goal of increasing and improving services for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth.[49] Districts who are successful in increasing college-going rates for students of color and low-income students allocate resources to ensure that courses are a-g approved, and provide additional academic and wellness-counseling services for underserved students and their families.

Key Findings	Recommendations
1. There are significant disparities between the PTA fundraising capacities for different school sites, leading to disparities in services and programs paid for with PTA funds. *Data source: District Office Interviews.*	1A. Engage PTA leaders in discussion around resource equity to develop strategies to ensure equitable access to services and programs.[50]
2. Students in the Marin School of the Arts (MSA) program at Novato High School (NHS) have more art electives and classroom resources than NHS students who are not in the program. *Data sources: Teacher Focus Group, Budget Analysis, Master Schedule Analysis.*	2A. Consider how classroom resources can be shared between art classes and how non-MSA students can have expanded access in under-enrolled MSA course sections.
3. It is unclear if staff allocation formulas are based on the needs of the student groups identified in the LCFF — English learners, low-income students, and foster youth. They appear to be calculated on a per school or per total student enrollment basis. *Data sources: District Office Interviews, Budget Analysis.*	3A. Consider revising all staff allocation formulas to account for student need as defined by the LCFF.

Conclusion

The Educational Equity Audit is intended to serve as a catalyst for advancing NUSD's efforts to understand and address opportunity and achievement gaps among district students. The findings and recommendations drawn from this audit can inform the development of concrete changes in policies and practices that transform which courses students take and how their success is supported. Equally important is the collective reflection on underlying beliefs about students and educators' expectations of what students can achieve.

In Phase Two — Blueprint for Equity Action Planning process — ETW will work with NUSD to facilitate opportunities for a diverse group of district stakeholders to simultaneously reflect on implicit biases and beliefs while they develop and commit to bold, yet achievable actions. The Education Trust–West looks forward to working alongside the district to sharpen its focus on equity and continue to advocate for all the students of NUSD.

ENDNOTES

1. Anjalé D. Welton and Melissa A. Martinez, "Coloring the College Pathway: A More Culturally Responsive Approach to College and Career Readiness and Access for Students of Color in Secondary Schools," *The Urban Review* 46, no. 2 (June 2014): 97-223.

2. California State Auditor, "College Readiness of California's High School Students: The State Can Better Prepare Students for College by Adopting New Strategies and Increasing Oversight," Report 2016-114, (California State Auditor, 2017).

3. "Finding America's Missing AP and IB Students" (Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust and Equal Opportunity Schools, June 2013), https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED578802.pdf.

4. See *Catalyzing Change in High School Mathematics*, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2018), as a helpful resource.

5. According to PPIC, 65% of California's school districts require at least three years of math for graduation, while only 25% only require the state minimum of two years. See Niu Gao, "Upgrading High School Math Requirements," Public Policy Institute of California (2017), https://www.ppic.org/blog/upgrading-high-school-math-requirements/.

6. See Pamela Burdman, "Don't Look to College Admission Policies to Fix High School Inequities," Just Equations (2017), https://justequations.org/news/dont-look-to-college-admissions-policies-to-fix-high-school-inequities/.

7. "Many Pathways to Student Success in High School Math Course Sequences and Placement Decisions in the Math in Common Districts," (San Francisco, Calif.: WestEd, August 2016), https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/1453257122resourcemanypathwaystostudentsuccessinmathematics-3.pdf.

8. Laurie Olsen, "Reparable Harm: Fulfilling the Unkept Promise of Educational Opportunity for California's Long Term English Learners," (Long Beach, C.A.: Californians Together, 2010), http://www.ctdev.changeagentsproductions.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/ReparableHarm2ndedition.pdf.

9. See https://csmp.ucop.edu/cwlp for more information about the California World Language Project.

10 Craig Hochbein and Marty Pollio, "Making Grades More Meaningful," Phi Delta Kappan, 98(3) (2016): 49-54.

11. Leticia Rojas and Daniel Liou, "Social Justice Teaching Through the Sympathetic Touch of Caring and High Expectations for Students of Color," *Journal of Teacher Education* 68, no. 1 (Dec. 2016): 28-40.

12. "What Does 9th Grade Success Mean and why is it Important?" *Education Week* (2018), https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/urban_education_reform/2018/06/what_does_9th_grade_success_mean_and_why_is_it_important.html.

13. "California Content Standards," California Department of Education, https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp.

14. Welton and Martinez, "Coloring the College Pathway", 97-223.

15. Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," *American Educational Research* (1995).

16. See CABE's Dual Language Immersion Planning Guide at http://www.di.gocabe.org/.

17. See Californians Together Multiple Pathways to Biliteracy Guide and Resources at https://www.californianstogether.org/multiple-pathways/.

18. See Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice,* Teachers College Press (2018)

19. Anne Podolsky, Linda Darling-Hammond, Christopher Doss, and Sean Reardon, "*California's Positive Outliers: Districts Beating the Odds*," (Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute, 2019)

20. College and Career Academy Success Network Master Schedule Guide at https://casn.berkeley.edu/master-schedule-guide/.

21. Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*, (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1999).

22 .Rojas and Liou, "Social Justice Teaching", 28-40.

23. Charis McGaughy and Andrea Venezia, *Supporting the Dream: High School-College Partnerships for College and Career Readiness* (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin, 2015).

24. See Californians for Justice, "Relationship Centered Schools," http://caljustice.org/believeinme/.

25. Welton and Martinez, "Coloring the College Pathway", 97-223.

26. Django Paris, "Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice," *Educational Researcher* 41(3) (2012): 93-97.

27. Lilia Bartolome, "Beyond the Methods Fetish: Toward a Humanizing Pedagogy," *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(2) (1994): 173-194.

28. Anne Podolsky, Tara Kini, Joseph Bishop, and Linda Darling-Hammond. "Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators." (Learning Policy Institute, September 2016).

29. Valenzuela, "Subtractive Schooling".

30. Pedro A. Noguera, "The Trouble with Black boys: The Role and Influence of Environmental and Cultural Factors on the Academic Performance of African American Males," *Urban Education*, 38(4) (2003): 431-459. Donald G. Solorzano and Ronald W. Solorzano, "The Chicano Educational Experience: A Framework for Effective Schools in Chicano Communities," *Educational Policy*, 9(3) (1995): 293-314.

31. John B. Diamond, Antonia Randolph, and James P. Spillane, "Teachers' Expectations and Sense of Responsibility for Student Learning: The Importance of Race, Class, and Organizational Habitus," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 35(1) (2004): 75-98.

32. Andrea Venezia and Michael W. Kirst, "Inequitable Opportunities: How Current Education Systems and Policies Undermine the Chances for Student Persistence and Success in College," *Education Policy*, 19(2) (2005): 283-307.

33. Forthcoming College and Career Readiness research from The Education Trust–West (Expected July 2019).

34. See https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Final 2017 Pre-College and Career Readiness Curriculum for Students (and their Families).pdf.

35. Amy Stuart Wells, Lauren Fox, and Diana Cordova-Cobo, "How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students," (New York, N.Y.: The Century Foundation, Feb. 2016), https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/production.tcf.org/app/uploads/2016/02/09142501/HowRaciallyDiverse_AmyStuartWells-11.pdf.

36. Lindsay Fox, "Seeing Potential: The Effects of Student-Teacher Demographic Congruence on Teacher Expectations and Recommendations," (Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association, Jan.-Mar. 2016), http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2332858415623758.

37. Joel Mittleman, "What's in a Match? Disentangling the Significance of Teacher Race/Ethnicity," June 2016, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2796150.

38. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, "The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce," (Washington, D.C., 2016).

39. Susan Jenkins and Joachim Jack Agamba, "The Missing Link in the CCSS Initiative: Professional Development for Implementation," *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 17(2) (2013): 69.

40. Elizabeth Leisy Stosich and Travis J. Bristol, "Advancing a New Focus on Teaching Quality: A Critical Synthesis," Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2017

41. Linda Darling-Hammond, Gene Wilhoit, and Linda Pittenger, "Accountability for College and Career Readiness: Developing a New Paradigm," *Education Policy Analysis Archives/Archivos Analiticos de Politicas Educativas, 2014*: 22.

42. Travis J. Bristol, "The Troubling Shortage of Latino and Black Teachers — and What to Do About it," *The Washington Post*, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/05/15/the-troubling-shortage-of-latino-and-black-teachers-and-what-to-do-about-it/?utm_term=.e85721747703.

43. William G. Tierney, "Parents and Families in Precollege Preparation: The Lack of Connection Between Research and Practice," *Educational Policy*, 16(4) (2002): 592.

44. Alexander Jun, and Julia Colyar, "Parental Guidance Suggested: Family Involvement in College Preparation Programs," in W. G. Tierney and L.S. Hagendorm (Eds.), *Extending their Reach: Strategies for Increasing Access to College*, (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 2002): 195-215; Annette Lareau, "Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships: The Importance of Cultural capital. *Sociology of Education*, 60: 73-85; and Claude M. Steele, (1992), Race and the schooling of Black Americans. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 269(4), 68-78.

45 Charis McGaughy and Andrea Venezia, (2015), *Supporting the dream: High School-College partnerships for college and career readiness*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

46 Forthcoming College and Career Readiness research from The Education Trust-West (Expected July 2019).

47 See http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB2735.

48. Maria Santos, et. al., *Preparing English Learners College and Career: Lessons from Successful High Schools*, (New York, N.Y.: Teachers College Press, 2018); and College and Career Readiness and Success Center at the American Institute of Research, "Improving College and Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities" (2013).

49. See https://www.cde.ca.gov/FG/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp.

50. For an example of a Bay Area school district that worked with local PTAs to equitably reallocate PTA fundraising resources, see: Emilie Raguso, "Albany School District Levels Parenting Fundraising Playing Field". *San Francisco Public Press*, 2014, https://sfpublicpress.org/news/2014-02/albany-school-district-levels-parent-fundraising-playing-field.