



*Verbatim Response Document*  
SMALL GROUP WORK ACTIVITY  
**SESSION #4**  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2014

## ACTIVITY

### VERBATIM RESPONSES

#### **TASK: SUGGESTED EDITS/REVISIONS TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Review the draft statements under each heading. Come to consensus on any comments or suggestions that your group believes would strengthen the statement. Provide those comments in the space provided under each statement. *Suggestions consistent from a majority of the groups will be reflected in updating or revising the statements.*

34Next Community Engagement Sessions (CES) began in September and this is CES #4. At each of the CES key information has been learned from two sources—the formal presentation and the consensus (general agreement) of participants in response to specific tasks in small group discussions. As a result of information learned during the 34Next program, a draft set of “Statements of Recommendation” has been created. When finalized, these statements will be 34Next 's official recommendations to the Board of Education.

***Note: Numbering of Recommendations is for reference purposes only, and does not represent any order of priority or importance.***

# 1. COMMUNICATING POTENTIAL IMPACT OF PROGRAM CHANGES

Develop a new model of communication on the potential program changes that clearly explains the connection of educational and financial impacts. The Board of Education should work to confirm the community's understanding.

TABLE #	SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive communication</li> <li>• Community nights @ school on periodic basis – combine w/ events w/ specific purpose</li> <li>• Provide pre-meeting work for parents/info/data</li> <li>• Fairly present all sides – not sound bites</li> <li>• Do not create a new paid position</li> <li>• Do not put info into links; put in email</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Method – Involve teachers, room parents, to increase sharing</li> <li>- Material – Include information such as class size, etc.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o In the past not all information is shared. Some of this information would mobilize parents. Room size &amp; Math program changes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Timing – If info is released too late – then parents can react.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o example Dist 34 email about SB16 not sent until last week.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Material con't – Class size counting – how the students care counted, are special services students counted the same?</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't confuse over communication w/ effective communication</li> <li>- Consistency across schools should be considered.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Currently different from each principals, PTA's, etc., Teachers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Communicate the <u>model</u> so people know where to look for what.</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This recommendation is too broad.</li> <li>• Classroom sizes and curriculum programs (particularly the new common core standards) need to be addressed specifically or separately. They are both of high interest topics to the community.</li> </ul>
8	<p>as long as this includes the benefits/costs of <u>class size</u>, Senate Bill 16, communicating &amp; educating non-parents (i.e. 80% of community don't have kids in Dist schools), rationale behind decisions that have been made ( i.e. why we don't offer mandarin in middle schools)</p>
9	<p>District 34 Newsletter focuses on past events, repetitive of prior communications. Missing "RIGHT NOW" details. We think all residents, especially without kids in school, care a lot about our schools &amp; seeing their taxes at work. Communication must validate the value of property taxes.</p>

## 2. UNDERSTANDING DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS

Provide community and parents with a more comprehensive understanding of District assessments.

TABLE #	SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simplify/explain education language</li><li>• Provide explanation of each test</li><li>• Provide a testing calendar – complete for entire year</li><li>• Reporting – compare to other feeder schools.</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Timing – Are parents addressed in timely manner of assessments and changes of them</li><li>- Method of – teachers &amp; schools</li></ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• much needed!! Not just because of changes – all new parents etc. need guidance<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ which assessments by year?</li><li>▪ what will they be learning in future to prepare</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• Based on results → what should they learn.</li><li>• How do our children do vs. other school districts – Northbrook 60% cost/student</li></ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yes, this is necessary. But communication is not enough.</li><li>• Also review the necessity of testing, is it valid? Is it worth time about from instruction to administer tests?</li><li>• Are students being taught to test? What are they missing out on, if so?</li><li>• What is the purpose of each test and how is each test/results utilized?</li></ul>
8	<p>Understand &amp; justify <u>what</u> tests are being given, <u>why</u> they're being given, what's required vs. discretionary testing &amp; why, how do test scores assist teachers in how &amp; what they teach as a result of the tests</p> <p>Example: reading test scores will allow librarian to be able to recommend book levels for individual students based on scores from exams. NOT criticizing just understanding</p>
9	<p>Lower priority. Assessments will always be there, changing every few years. Takes away from learning opportunities..."over testing"</p> <p>We want to see specific category/subject area comparisons to <u>adjacent school districts</u>, not just national or regional. Dig deeper into local comparisons. Validates why we moved to D34.</p>

### 3. STUDYING FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

The Board of Education should conduct an extensive study on educational need/value and feasibility of full day kindergarten.

TABLE #	SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous study should be reviewed &amp; updated</li> <li>• Constraints on space</li> <li>• Impacts to children – expensive babysitting?</li> <li>• Comparison of curriculum</li> <li>• Opt-in, opt-out option</li> <li>• Task force</li> </ul>
3	As long as not negative impact on other portions
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does the spending if full day compare vs. if we spent on something else. (ex: vs. smaller class size)</li> <li>- Are we investigating other districts best practices</li> <li>- Cost benefit analysis</li> <li>- How will it be decided</li> </ul> <p>Does #34 communicate &amp; share best practices w/other districts? Which districts have full day kindergarten? Costs? Benefits? How were decisions made w/n to have full day kindergarten</p> <p>Will this be an issue brought before Board? Yes – when? No – why?</p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, this should be done asap.</li> <li>• What is the timeline for starting this study?</li> <li>• Most of the community was of the understanding that this was underway</li> <li>• Study should include a review of effectiveness of kindergarten curriculum and benefit of full day kindergarten</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the costs for it?</li> <li>• Educational benefits/science behind it?</li> <li>• Conduct study with recommendations being set for within a set period of time</li> </ul>
9	We agree!

#### 4. EVALUATING TECHNOLOGY

Evaluate the appropriate use of technology to ensure there is an educational advantage; and, communicate that to the public.

TABLE #	SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wasn't this evaluated prior to introduction?</li><li>• Communicate research &amp; benchmarks</li><li>• Coordination w/ high school use of technology</li><li>• Parity among/across teachers</li><li>• IT issues/frustration</li><li>• Class reinforced thru technology</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concern w/ striking balance.</li><li>• Benchmark<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ w/ other dists</li><li>○ age groups</li><li>○ what/how used</li></ul></li><li>• Track time use. In class &amp; off hours</li></ul>
5	Consistency w/ teachers → kids going from 1 grade to another Prepared for computer based tests.
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yes this needs to be done.</li><li>• Ensure technology is used as a tool, of learning, as appropriate. Not to be relied on or replace traditional educational resources.</li></ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• at all grade levels &amp; not replace pen &amp; paper</li><li>• ensure learning same fundamentals without technology</li></ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't need to start technology full on in kindergarten. Losing early development skills due to reliance on iPads &amp; other tech.</li><li>• Treat it as a support tool, not the basis of everything.</li></ul>

## 5. RECOGNIZING AND COMMUNICATING WITH ALL D34 POPULATIONS

Recognizing the diversity of the D34 community, additional measures should be made to ensure the District is reaching, communicating and engaging all populations.

TABLE #	SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Needs communicated thru teachers → by demand</li><li>• Pair families – buddy system</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Seemed the effort for 34Next was good but the attendance was not reflective</li><li>- Sending material in more than 3 languages</li><li>- Include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Translators – volunteers could be culled from parents</li></ul></li><li>- Likely increase in children who are English learners means need for further engagement of community</li></ul>
5	Confusion @ table how to utilize strengths of diversity
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are not clear on why this is here as a recommendation</li><li>• Clarify what measures are in place for communicating to all populations and what is missing?</li><li>• Please clarify and expand the meaning of this recommendation</li></ul>
8	Encourage multicultural parents with non-multicultural parents so that parents benefit from each other & our kids benefit too. Engage those parents (40 different languages) so they want to more involved. How do we tap into the vast community diversity so we can all be broadened & enriched.
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find a way to leverage our wonderful diversity</li><li>• Integrate into daily class routine:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Have kids teach their language (basics) &amp; cultural specialties to the class</li></ul></li><li>• Include in “all populations” socio-economic make sure/get confirmation we are reaching all lower income families</li></ul>

## OTHER — WHAT DID WE MISS?

Add any other statement of recommendation your group felt emerged during the 34Next sessions.

TABLE #	OTHER STATEMENT OF RECOMMENDATION:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foreign language earlier</li><li>• Music earlier – instrumental learning</li><li>• What are other districts getting we are not?</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Cost of Aides as alternative to teachers to limit class size</li><li>- Cost of targeting reduction class size to younger students</li></ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate class size \$ impact spread across all students, what is amount increase to accomplish smaller class sizes – study, referendum?</li><li>• Some simple math says that if we lower class size from 28 to 16 (the recommended class size by experts to make a difference) the total cost would be <math>\\$2.6M \times 3 = \\$7.8M</math>. When the yearly budget is in the \$60M range the \$7.8M cost seems small, just 12% more other districts around 34 are spending 60% more than 34, but their property taxes are similar. Where is the money going, if its not getting to our schools?</li></ul>
7	As an educational tool of the parents and families of this community, D34 should first and foremost focus on providing each child, of whatever means and background, an equal opportunity to learn basic time-tested educational standards, equipping each with skills and values reflective of this community and preparing them for a bright future.
8	
9	