

Venice and Mar Vista Forum Reflections

Great public schools ensure students achieve their fullest potential, not only by providing great classroom teachers and principals, but also by engaging parents, families, and community partners to collectively move the school forward. With this in mind, LAUSD Board Vice President Nick Melvoin hosted a community forum on April 16 at Westminster Elementary School with the purpose of discussing the strengths of the community of schools, opportunities for improvement, and vision for the schools that serve families in the Venice and Mar Vista communities.

Nick and his team invited all stakeholders in the Venice and Mar Vista community – parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and community partners – to contribute to the conversation about their vision for the future of public education in this community. The forum also included an overview of key data, which included current and historic enrollment trends, student demographic and attendance, and academic achievement.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Beethoven Elementary
- Braddock Elementary
- Broadway Avenue Elementary
- Coeur d'Alene Avenue Elementary
- Grand View Boulevard Elementary
- ICEF Vista Elementary
- Mar Vista Elementary
- Short Avenue Elementary
- Stoner Avenue Elementary
- Walgrove Avenue Elementary
- Westminster Avenue Elementary

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- Animo Westside Charter Middle School
- Marina Del Rey Middle School
- ICEF Vista Middle Academy
- Mark Twain Middle School

HIGH SCHOOLS

- Animo Venice High School
- Phoenix Continuation High School
- Venice Senior High School

SPAN SCHOOLS

- Goethe K-8
- Westside Global Magnet K-8

EARLY EDUCATION

- Marina ECE
- Westminster ECE

SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTER

- James J. McBride Special Education Center



What We Heard

STRENGTHEN PATHWAYS AND INCREASE COLLABORATION

Parents and stakeholders are yearning for strong, focused pathways that serve students from elementary school through high school with high-quality options (e.g. STEM, dual-language immersion, arts) at every grade level, as well as a more cohesive “community hub” to support the growing educational community. Participants shared that:

- **They would like to see more efforts to develop aligned and clear instructional and programmatic pathways from kindergarten through 12th grade.** In addition, parents and stakeholders shared the need to invest in improving academic achievement at underperforming schools to ensure every student attends a great public school.
- **They would like to see the Venice and Mar Vista educational community as a “Community Hub,” which would thrive on sharing best instructional practices,** bringing different stakeholders together to collaborate and organize, and augmenting the high levels of parent engagement that already exist in many schools.
- **There is a lot of diversity – racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically – when compared to other parts of Los Angeles,** which contributes to a strong sense of community and identity that is reflected in these schools.

REDUCE RED TAPE TO IMPROVE FACILITIES AND BOOST PARTNERSHIPS

Parents and stakeholders envision a school system with state-of-the-art facilities and strong partnerships to support their local schools. The community is striving to move away from compliance driven (i.e., “red tape”) to impact-driven (i.e., “what’s best for students”). Participants shared that:

- **Many school facilities are in need of repair and modernization,** which often makes it hard to promote schools to prospective parents and ensure opportunities are available to students.
- **They are appreciative of strong community partnerships supporting academic endeavors** and the role they play in providing resources and support to our schools. Parents want to ensure that these partners are welcomed, and their contributions valued.
- **They would like to see policies streamlined to remove barriers and bureaucratic hurdles** that often make it hard for parents and community partners to maximize their support of a school.

ADDRESS THE UNDERFUNDING OF SCHOOLS

Parents and stakeholders envision their schools being well-funded and well-resourced enough to provide the best learning opportunities for every child. Stakeholders shared that:

- **Their schools are underfunded and/or under-resourced and,** as a result, they feel pressure to raise funds to support critical programming at their school. The community would like to see increase in funding to better resource schools and ensure vital programming and opportunities are provided to students.
- **They would like to see an increase in arts and music programs** to minimize the demand on parents to fundraise.

Going Forward

1. SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Share additional thoughts in our community survey here: <http://bit.ly/survey-melvoin>

2. SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Sign up for the latest information here: <http://bit.ly/signup-melvoin>

3. JOIN THE PARENT PARTNER COMMITTEE

Sign up for the Parent Partner Committee here: <http://bit.ly/parent-melvoin>

4. CONNECT WITH US

Email Clayton Rosa at clayton.rosa@lausd.net or Allison Holdorff Polhill at allison.holdorff@lausd.net with any questions or comments.



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