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PLUS Spring Forum 2018



# West Contra Costa School Youth Commission

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# The Question

*What are the **best ways** in which to **empower the youth commission** and help them influence decision making policies in the district and at their school sites?*



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# Why do we need youth engagement?



- **24% of the population is under 19**, and presumably a part of the school system
- **14% of children are living in poverty**

- **Five cities** as well as unincorporated areas
- 47% of the population's uses **Spanish most frequently in the home** more than any other language in the district



*The question is, in such a diverse school district with so many different needs, how can you accommodate everyone?*



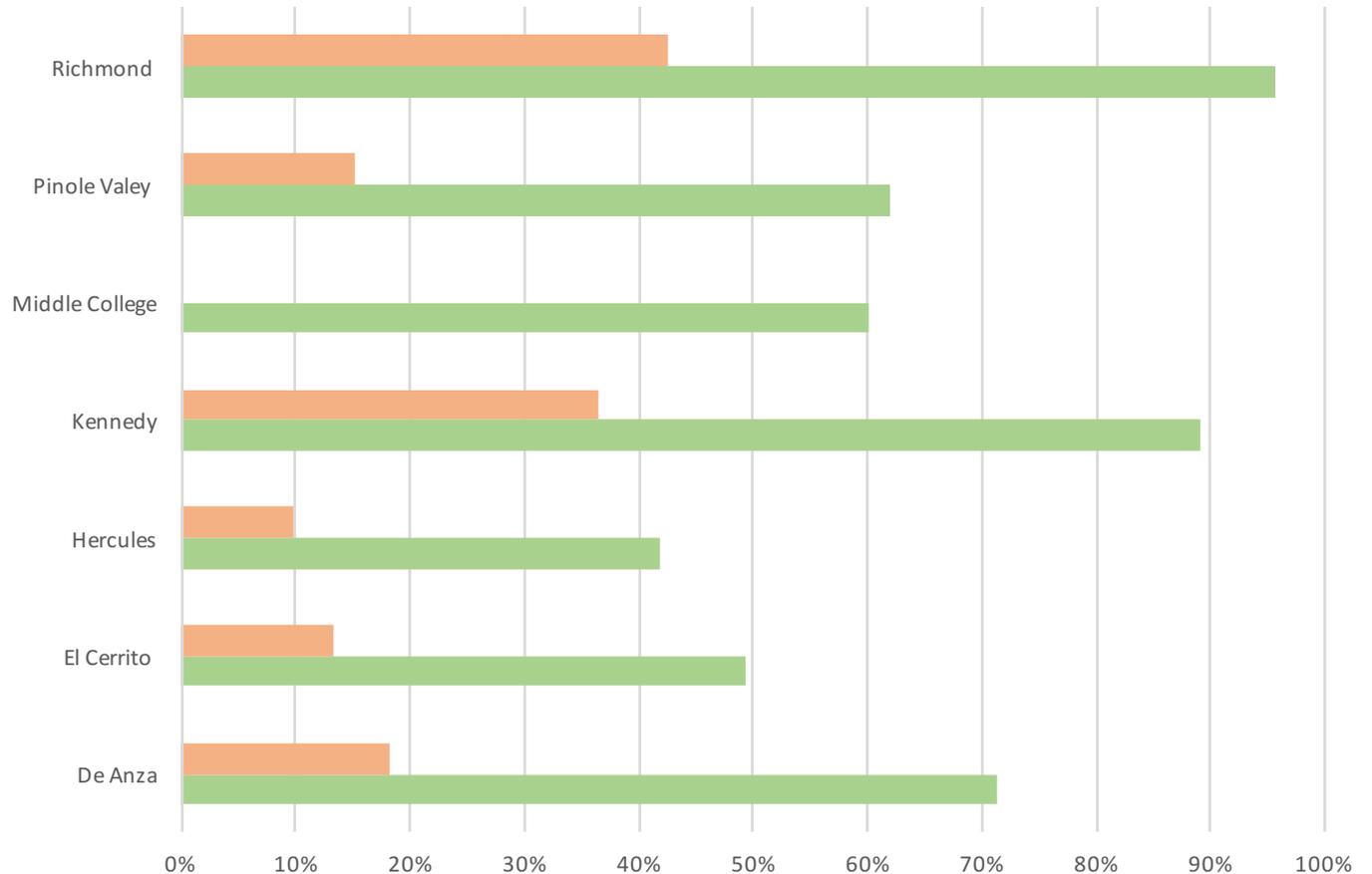
# Why do we need youth engagement?

English Language Learners and Socioeconomically disadvantaged Students in WCCSD High Schools  
2016-2017

English Language Learners



Socio-economically disadvantaged





# Opportunities

**2%** the number of respondents who in the 2016-2017 DLCAP meeting who identified as students.

**51 Million**, the 2017-2018 DLCAP Budget

**15%** Richmond High School Healthy Kids Survey Response in 2015

The total number of low income and English Language learning students is 17,993 or which is about **\$2,843 dollars per student** of DLCAP Funding.

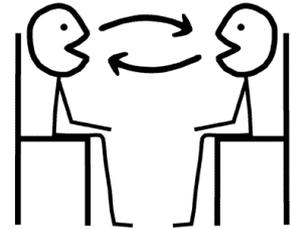


West Contra Costa DLCAP Funding  
2016-2017

# Methodology

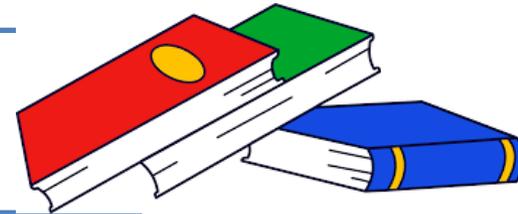
## Interviews

- Key Administration
- School Staff
- Community Groups



## Literature Review

- What's the most effective way to run a Youth Commission
- What's going well elsewhere?



## Input from Youth Commissioners

- Student survey
- Attendance of Youth Commission retreat and some meetings





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# Findings

**Students in the Youth Commission are not representative of the school district as a whole, and not all schools are present at commission meetings and involved in decision making**

**Students are not always given effective or transparent pathways to decision makers have their voices make a difference in important decisions.**

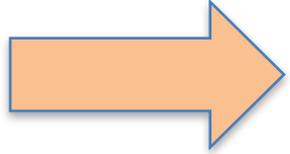
**The role of the Youth Commission in the district is not understood within different admin departments, the school board, leadership teachers or the larger student body.**

**Students, school board members, DLCAP staff, teachers and administration see the value in a youth commission and have cross-cutting desire use the commission as a way to improve the school district as a whole**



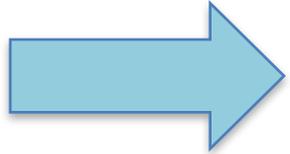
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# Recommendations



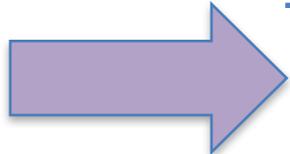
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**Committees**



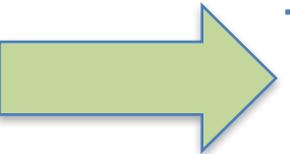
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**Compensation**



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**Mentorships**



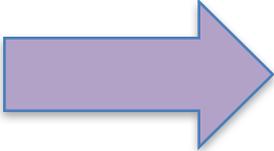
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**Visioning**

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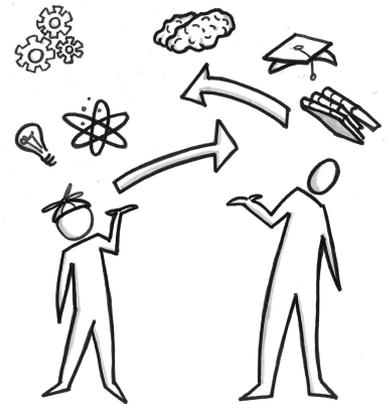


# Recommendations



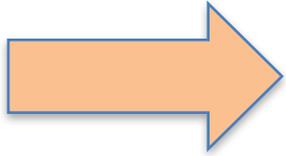
## Create more information transparency through a mentorship Program.

*“I don’t know what the current role (of the Youth Commission is, there are not current structures to connect with them. I should work to make sure that they are heard better in the school board meetings, and give that representative the space to really be engaged in the conversation. It would be cool if they could be more integrated with the administration, perhaps a mentorship program?” Mr Duffy, Superintendent*



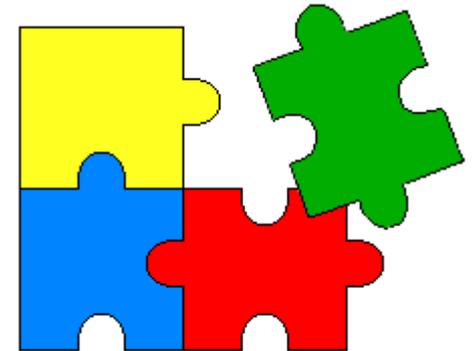


# Recommendations



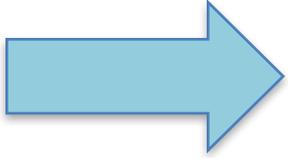
**Create targeted committees for students to represent within the commission that broadens the demographics of the current Youth Commission.**

*“Having official representatives from each school would guarantee the input of each school would be at each meeting. We don't have very many Youth Commission regulars and those who are, only come from two or three different schools.”– Youth Commissioner*





# Recommendations



## Compensate students for their time.

*Learn through doing, how to work together, how to be a leader, they should finish they year feeling like they made an impact and like they did something important.*

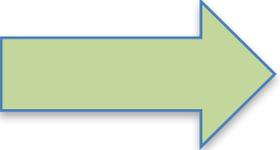
*– Mr Duffy, Superintendent*





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# Recommendations



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**Set a concrete (yet adaptable) vision of the commission for the community at large.**

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*“I didn’t even know it was a thing”  
– Leadership Teacher on the Youth Commission*





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**Thank you to:**  
**Tashaka Merriweather**  
**Deborah McKoy**  
**Anna Randoff**  
**West Contra Costa School District**  
**The WCCSD Youth Commission**



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# Reflections or Questions?