

## **PUSD EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE 2005/06 RESOURCE BOOK**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In October 2005, the Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) formed an Excellence Committee, made up of a wide range of stakeholders, to identify the policies, programs and practices, which would enhance services to students across the District. Although it was recognized that PUSD is a high performing school district, the District believed that it could be even better. The committee was charged with thinking outside the box and, at least initially, to avoid being limited by funding considerations.

The committee was made up of approximately 55 members including high school students, parents, community members, teachers, site administrators and district office staff and was co-facilitated by Assistant Superintendent Cindy Galbo and community member Denise Watkins. An independent consultant, Debbie Look provided research support. A total of four evening meetings and two full-day sessions were held between November 2005 and February 2006 to complete the work of the committee. The final report was presented to the School Board on March 14, 2006 with the priority items ranked according to the committee's perception of their potential value in improving educational opportunities for all students. The findings are being shared with various stakeholder groups within the broader community for further input and discussion. Input from these discussions will then be used to further refine the list of priority items and the School Board and district staff will begin the process of identifying target areas and potential funding sources.

The committee began its work by reviewing the current PUSD Strategic Plan, the PUSD Data Source Book 04/05 and other relevant data. As the meetings progressed, additional information that was required by committee members to assist in their deliberations was identified.

### **B. RESEARCH STUDIES**

As each topic of interest was identified, the committee's independent consultant was charged with conducting a brief review of key research literature on the particular topic. The focus of this task was primarily to identify and review a sampling of the research to determine whether improvements in the particular area were likely to contribute to gains in student achievement. The consultant then prepared a paper outlining the nature of the topic and reporting on key research findings and to identify correlations, if any, between the item and positive student outcomes.

A total of eleven research papers were provided to the committee in the course of their work. These are listed in the table on the following page.

**List of research summary papers prepared for the PUSD Excellence Study:**

<b>Section #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Class Size Reduction	Looking at the impact on student achievement of class size reduction for 4 <sup>th</sup> grade through high school.
2	Technology	Considering how technology is used in schools and the impact of the use of technology in education on student achievement.
3	Counseling	The role of school counselors and a comprehensive school guidance program and the impact on student achievement and other success factors.
4	Effective Schools	Identifying key factors common to effective schools and profiling sample schools deemed to be successful.
5	School Libraries	The importance of school libraries and credentialed school library media teachers on student achievement.
6	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills	Identifying the 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills that will be needed by students as they leave high school to pursue post-secondary education, careers and citizenship.
7	Grade Configurations	Reporting various options of grade configurations, particularly for the middle grades, and their impacts on student outcomes.
8	Arts & Music	Considering the importance of arts and music as a core element in a comprehensive education and the potential impacts.
9	Foreign Languages	The value of studying foreign languages, particularly at younger ages.
10	School Health	The need for attention to school health issues and the role of credentialed school nurses.
11	Laptop Immersion	Identifying particular examples of schools and districts that have implemented laptop immersion programs.

All of these papers are included in this document.