

CRAFTING A PROACTIVE NARRATIVE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

THURSDAY, APRIL 9 AND FRIDAY, APRIL 10
LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
RICHARD D. BROWNING HIGH SCHOOL
2180 OBISPO AVENUE
LONG BEACH, CA 90804

MEETING AGENDA

DAY I: THURSDAY, APRIL 9

- 8:30 am **Breakfast.** Light breakfast will be available outside the multipurpose room.
- 9:00 am **Convene Meeting.** Joel Knudson will convene the meeting with opening remarks, introductions, and an overview of the agenda. Jill Baker will welcome the group to Long Beach Unified School District.
- 9:40 am **Update from Napa Valley Unified School District.** Superintendent Rosanna Mucetti will share an update on developments in her district since the Collaborative met there in October 2025.

SESSION I

Reviewing Evidence of the Prevailing Narrative(s) in K-12 Public Education

Articulating a clear and proactive message about the value of public education requires a deep understanding of the prevailing and emerging perspectives that parents, policymakers, and others hold about the goals and performance of the K-12 enterprise. In recent months and years, Collaborative members have shared anecdotal accounts of how they see perceptions of public education shifting in negative ways. This portion of the meeting will create space for meeting participants to examine the evidence of those perceptions through a variety of lenses, including public opinion polling, student performance data, public statements from leaders who shape policy and perceptions, and influential voices in the social media landscape.

Session Purpose: Develop a shared understanding of the prevailing narrative(s) around public education and consider the degree to which these are grounded in evidence of system progress versus misconception or polemic.

- 9:50 am **Review of Artifacts in Small Groups.** To help foster an evidence-based discussion, participants will review a range of artifacts that capture common narratives related to public education.
- 10:45 am **Break.**
- 11:00 am **Report Out and Discussion.** Representatives from each small group will share key takeaways from their group’s conversation.
- 11:45 am **Review of Data in Small Groups.** To help illuminate the degree to which common perceptions of public schools accurately reflect the performance of the system, participants will review data on education spending and student achievement.
- 12:30 pm **Lunch.**
- 1:30 pm **Report Out and Discussion.** Representatives from each small group will share key takeaways from their group’s conversation.

SESSION II

Making Sense of the Problem Space

Some perceptions about K-12 public schooling are likely to reflect fundamental and persistent shortcomings of the education system. Others might reveal misinformation that distorts the circumstances surrounding and performance of our public schools. Still others grow from differences in values. All of these perceptions take place in a cultural and political context that shapes people’s priorities, the challenges they perceive, and the solutions they seek. It is beyond the scope of a single meeting to solve all of the problems revealed through an exploration of public narratives. Nevertheless, by exploring the substance and origins of these narratives, we might highlight those for which more productive messaging can contribute to progress.

Session Purpose: Analyze various narratives about K-12 public education and identify the underlying reasons why those narratives gain traction.

- 1:50 pm **Unpacking Narratives.** Participants will return to the narratives highlighted earlier in the morning to consider the broader cultural context, priorities, and anxieties that enable them to take hold.
- 3:00 pm **Break.**

SESSION III

Crafting a Proactive Narrative for Ongoing Investment in K-12 Public Education

Having explored the stories and messages that tend to characterize education in the public consciousness, meeting participants will begin crafting a narrative designed to inspire continued investment in California public schools in a variety of forms. Such messaging should proactively respond to the current conditions

of public schooling and articulate common beliefs of group members. This process will aim to develop consensus around the most salient messages about K-12 public education in California, including those that highlight existing strengths, dispel misconceptions about perceived problems, and acknowledge persistent challenges and shortcomings.

Session Purpose: Articulate components of a narrative about public education that can resonate with intended audiences.

- 3:15 pm **Small Group Message Crafting.** Taking into consideration meeting participants' views and evidence about the prevailing narratives about public education, participants will work in small groups to identify key components of a message designed to encourage continued investment in public education.
- 4:45 pm **Summary and Reflection on the Day's Discussion.**
- 5:00 pm **Adjourn for the Day.**
- 6:00 pm **Reception Followed by Dinner** at Parkers' Lighthouse.

DAY 2: FRIDAY, APRIL 10

8:30 am **Breakfast.** Light breakfast will be available outside the multipurpose room.

SESSION III (continued)

Crafting a Proactive Narrative for Ongoing Investment in K-12 Public Education

9:00 am **Updates from the Collaborative.**

9:10 am **Strategies for Communication During Times of Stress.** Representatives from the Center for Risk Communication will share key insights from research about how people process messages in high-stress situations and the strategies that are most effective for reaching intended audiences that can win their informed support.

10:00 am **Small Group Discussion.** Participants will return to their small groups from the previous afternoon to refine the messages they began developing during that time.

10:40 am **Break.**

10:55 am **Report Out and Discussion.** Representatives from each small group will share key takeaways from their group's conversation.

SESSION IV

Leveraging Trusted Messengers to Move Hearts and Minds and Inspire Action

Research tells us that an audience needs to trust a messenger before a message can be heard. Moreover, in times of stress, trust depends on that messenger's level of caring and empathy more than any other factor. If members of the education community are to build the informed support of partners, parents, community members, and other stakeholders, they must strategically identify and partner with the messengers who are most likely to connect with their intended audiences.

Session Purposes: Explore messengers and formats most likely to be successful for enlisting informed support for continued investment in public education.

11:15 am **Discussion of Messengers and Formats.** Meeting participants will explore the messengers and message formats most likely to resonate with current and potential supporters of the public education enterprise.

12:00 pm **Lunch.**

SESSION V

Mapping Next Steps

Any effort that can effectively shape the thinking and behavior of the broader public must extend beyond the Collaborative members and guests participating in this meeting. Our convening will conclude with a discussion of next steps that can help to refine and deliver a new, more proactive narrative about the value of public education. Participants will consider ways in which the Collaborative can leverage the insights generated by this group and the potential contributions of other partners into steps and resources that provide value for participants and members of the broader K-12 education community.

Session Purpose: Specify next steps for Collaborative members and staff.

12:30 pm **Discussion of Next Steps.**

1:45 pm **Summary and Reflection on the Day's Discussion.**

2:00 pm **Adjourn Meeting.**