**Working with your Cluster Group**

**Background**

* 16 Clusters in San Diego Unified (see table attached)
* A district-wide program was established by SDUSD in 2010 to increase local involvement.  Focused on each high school's "feeder pattern". Designed to strengthen student attendance in their local neighborhood schools.
* Principals, teachers, and parents from each school within that Cluster meet monthly
* The district supports these groups by providing meeting space, mandatory attendance by designated teachers and administrators, and topics to generate discussion.
* Clusters differ widely as to parent participation, events, program infusion, and achievements.
* Later there was a call to form a centralized body of representatives from each cluster group.  Dubbed the [Cluster Congress](http://www.sandiegoeducationfoundation.org/cluster-congress.html), this body became a grassroots panel for discussing a wide variety of topics, from localized issues to district policies and best practices across cluster boundaries.
* The Cluster Congress discusses what's working in different clusters, what's not working, new ideas, district decisions, and other things relevant to the program's success.
* Cluster Congress – [www.clustercongress.org](http://www.clustercongress.org) or email [clustercongress@gmail.com](mailto:clustercongress@gmail.com)
* Meets 4th Thursday of the month 6-8pm @ Ballard Center.

**Cluster Congress Goals:**

Beginning September 2013, meet monthly in order to:

* Provide a forum for cluster leaders to discuss topics of mutual interest
* Build relationships across the district
* Work together across clusters and with the district to find solutions to problems
* Become a channel for district administrators to provide information as it becomes available, with time for questions and discussion
* Create a path for providing input on decisions that impact students across the district

**Cluster Meetings:**

Vision 2020 states that schools will be organized into clusters for greater community cohesion

* Clusters will consist of a high school and the middle and elementary schools that feed into it.
* Clusters will ensure that there is continuity for the neighborhood students in the pre-K-to-12 program.
* Cluster councils will promote the schools in their communities.
* Cluster councils will work with schools, community and district staff to improve the quality of their neighborhood schools.
* Cluster councils will be a democratic representation of the school community including teachers, administrators, support staff, students, parents and community members.

**Cluster meeting info can be found at: www.sandiegounified.org/clusters**

For example, Mission Bay Cluster rotates meeting at every school and highlights students of the school at each meeting.

Area Superintendent and Board representative should be present at all meetings, not only to provide updates but to hear the parent comments.

Typical Cluster Meeting covers:

* Cluster updates – any big events, etc.
* District Updates – such as calendar issues, etc.
* Principal/School updates
* Topic of interest:
  + SBAC Scores
  + Calendar Issues
  + Urgent needs
  + Events cluster is putting together
  + Schedule changes
  + **GATE (!)**
* Parents should be leading or have a strong voice

Every parent should be on the mailing list. All PTA/PTOs should be distributing information out about cluster meeting.

Principals and parent leaders should get together to discuss topics of interest/importance.