

Focus Group: Committee to Address Race in Education (CARE)

Date: 3/20/14

Key Questions

1. What should elementary/middle/high school look like ten years from now?

GROUP 1: ELEMENTARY BH, GL, PV

- Multicultural curriculum
- Diversity of staff
- Embracing the whole child
- Change in the way we interact with families
- Increased opportunities for students of diverse backgrounds to come together to hear different perspectives
- Culture, history is not something extra just 28 days out of the year—just as important as what they are learning
- Holistic approach—hands on approach—village aspect
- Global education
- Eliminate tracking

GROUP 2: ELEMENTARY CY, ME, PW

- Technology has a place of prominence for all students and classrooms
- Still primary place to teach the basic components of reading, math, written expression
- We have high expectations for all students (no excuses)
- Multicultural and curriculum
- Culturally proficient teachers
- Culturally proficient families
- Social justice
- There would be no more educational tracking...because we know where that leads
- Increased opportunities or students to discuss issues of identity/race in a safe space with their diverse peers (especially MS/HS)
- Hopefully, the staff would be more diverse...it would mirror some of the students we have.
- All grads equipped to attend college—academics, scholarships, internships, etc.
- Meeting the needs of the whole child
 - Embracing families in non-traditional ways
- Supportive
- Open
- Collaborative across all boundaries
- Diverse

1. What should elementary/middle/high school look like ten years from now? (continued)

- Creative
- Disciplined
- Open minded
- Connected
- Engaging
- Proud
- Accepting
- Elementary: children learn to value and appreciate other cultures
 - Idea of culture a monolithic thing is gone—culture is seen as multifaceted
- Middle: children continue to develop appreciation for themselves and others
 - All goals are achievable by all groups in a fair world.
- High School: children emerge with an appreciation for themselves and the rights, responsibilities and struggles of others.

GROUP 3: MIDDLE SCHOOLS BC, WV

- Cross-level grading
- Virtual learning
 - Global
- Flexible learning
 - Schedules
 - Information
 - Differentiated
- Thematic
- Engaged
- STEM
- Cultural diversity
- Racial diversity
- Holistic needs

GROUP 4: HIGH SCHOOLS HH, LM

- Not in classrooms as they are now
 - greater tech use overall
- Learning is not all at school
 - Internships, workplace learning
- Not discrete subjects
- Flexible small learning groups
- Multiple paths to learning with all paths being of high quality
- Parents as decision makers
- More inclusiveness and cross-race engagement

1. What should elementary/middle/high school look like ten years from now? (continued)

- More open
- More diverse
- More and more technology
 - Skype
 - Connect with others globally
- Using CD's instead of books or textbooks are web-based
- Won't have to take SAT or ACT to go to college
- In house psychology counseling facilities
- Full hospital facilities
- In house professionals as mentors
- Open, fluid, individualized
- Specific connections to race:
 - Responsive
 - Culturally proficient teaching is norm
 - Proficient in reading, writing, math
 - Global perspective in curriculum
 - More opportunities in study
 - Students learning from international peers, cross-cultural lens
 - Community, business, education connections
 - Mentors for students
- Students connecting with other students internationally
- Technology interactive (global)
- Flexible with time and space
 - Maybe instructors will not be at the pace and schedule that we know today
- Blended learning connected to global community
- Arabic/Mandarin
- No limit on devices
- Flexible school year
- Learning communities
- Valuing diversity
- Eliminating hierarchy both actual and subliminal
- Active engagement in learning
- High school should be:
 - Fluid-able to move on when the students have mastered content
 - Feedback bases-no grades
 - Longer days
- Elementary-stronger collaboration between parents, community and students to lessen cultural barriers and schools

1. What should elementary/middle/high school look like ten years from now? (continued)

- Middle-stronger focus on critical thinking and proper decision making
- High-HS-MS critical thinking to 10th grade is now 12th grade (Action)
- A lot more relaxed—it is really not that big a deal to get through the system
- Interdisciplinary courses
- More variety in course selection
- More opportunity for vocational coursework
- Closer connection b/w community/business and education
- Connected students online courses
- Blended learning community/corporate partnerships
- More individualized corporate support
- Fewer courses
- Elementary-all students proficient by 3rd grade in reading/math
 - Culturally responsive teaching-norm
 - Content-culturally responsive
- African American males competency/achieving at the same level as their white counterparts
- Blended learning
- Staggered schedule
- Online video learning followed with collaboration
- Continued supports with transition teams
- Individualization
- Personal experiences
- Access to opportunity

GROUP 5: HIGH SCHOOLS HH LM

- Authentic experiences
- Blended learning:
 - Complexity of content to generalize skills
- 21st Century skills:
 - Teams, collaboration
 - “we” v. “me”, growth mindset
- Integrated Tech:
 - Specific needs of students—choice of how and what but aligned to standards (blended, hybrid, indy)
- Core Standards
- Generalized skills
- How will we assess students?
 - Multiple assessments?

1. What should elementary/middle/high school look like ten years from now? (continued)

- Getting students to enjoy learning by opening up content from different perspectives
- Not just memorization for testing
- Student directed and driven
- Working collaboratively with others (globally)
- Using technology (fully integrated for individual needs)
- Working on individual skills with ample support to achieve success
- Responsive to needs and not reactive to issues
- Blended learning opportunities
- Authentic based projects with standards bases assessment to combine students performing predetermined skills in real world based situations to capture 21st Century skills
 - Communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity
- Middle School-small learning communities that are inclusive
 - Skills development addressed within context that is captivating to students
- Different pathways
- Blended learning
- Differentiated outcomes
- More fluid
- Global connections
- “we” oriented v “me” oriented
- Every classroom should be equipped with the latest technology (smart boards, etc)
- Every student should have access to a laptop
- Curriculums should be more aligned with common standards
- Curriculum should expose students to the world
- Growth centered
- A lot of individual and small group learning utilizing technology
 - Students feeling safe regardless of where they are in their progression in school

2. What should a Lower Merion School District graduate look like? What are the skills, attitudes, and dispositions that we want for all students?

GROUP 1: ELEMENTARY BH, GL, PV

- Globally aware
- Resiliency, flexibility
- Accepting of others; value diversity
- Self-advocacy
- College ready
- Problem solver
 - Understanding pressure of being the only one.

2. What should a Lower Merion School District graduate look like? What are the skills, attitudes, and dispositions that we want for all students? (continued)

GROUP 2: ELEMENTARY CY, ME, PW

- Globally aware
- Culturally proficient
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Social intelligence
- Emotional intelligence
- Critical thinkers
- Open minded
- Flexible
- Problem solver
- Hopeful
- Prepared
- Responsible
- Trustworthy
- Experienced with discomfort
- Able to purchase property in LM because they have rewarding careers
- Globally aware
- Contributing citizens
- Can work with others
- Value the diversity of others
- Strong sense of self
 - Self-worth
 - Self determination
 - Self-advocacy
 - Social/emotional
- A world/global learner
- Exposure to all cultures/ethnicities/economic situations
- Problem solver—focus on questioning as opposed to ?????? answers

GROUP 3: MIDDLE SCHOOLS BC, WV

- Global awareness
- Read and analyze text CP Continuum
- Work in teams
 - Collaboration
- Open-minded communication
 - Innovation
 - Writing/speaking

2. What should a Lower Merion School District graduate look like? What are the skills, attitudes, and dispositions that we want for all students? (continued)

- Listening
- Flexible thinker
- Flexible thinker
- Self-confident
- Problem solver
- Risk taker
- Intelligent curiosity
- Compassionate integrity
- STEM
- College/career ready
- Scholarly mindset

GROUP 4: HIGH SCHOOLS HH, LM

- Clear understanding of self and others—value one another
- Deep curiosity for learning
- Grit and resiliency
 - Fend for self
- Adaptable—socially and professionally
- Have empathy for others
- Sense of social justice
- Global thinkers/experiences
- Compassion/empathy
- Academically strong
- Able to take care of yourself
- Pluralistic
- Well versed
- Bilingual as a minimum
- International global perspective
- Students who are able to solve problems, communicate with others effectively
 - Confident
 - “Real-world” skills
 - Innovative
 - Acceptance/empathy/respect
 - Articulation/explanation of ideas
- Societal intelligence
- Skills-critical thinking, flexibility, confidence in skills
- Attitudes-collaborative, critical, concerned

2. What should a Lower Merion School District graduate look like? What are the skills, attitudes, and dispositions that we want for all students? (continued)

- Dispositions-patient, persistent
- Strong communication skills
- Able to solve problems
- Culturally aware (know self, know others)
- Grit/resilience
- Flexibility
- Culturally literate
- Critical thinker
- Accepting of others
- Full range of skills
 - Academic/life/motor
- Students who continue to be curious and eager to learn and explore
- Collaborative
- Flexible
- Anticipate and able to express in writing
- Studious
- Responsible
- Competent
- Leader
- Thinker
- Problem solver
- Confident and excited to apply skills to real world and productive members of society
- Empathy
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Well rounded
- Experience in real world
- Practical life skills
- Critical thinker
- Open minded
- Students who learn, maintain and share social competence respect, empathy and acceptance of all people
- Tech savvy
- Communications skills professional spoken, written mature well-mannered honest civic minded global citizen
- Self-confident
- Strong sense of identity and historical perspective

2. What should a Lower Merion School District graduate look like? What are the skills, attitudes, and dispositions that we want for all students? (continued)

- Prepared for significant competition in outside world, academically and socially
- Technology proficient
- Prepared for college
- Prepared for job search

GROUP 5: HIGH SCHOOLS HH, LM

- Resiliency
 - Social entrepreneurs
- Flexible thinker
- Learning to access and apply
- Resourcefulness
- Cultural proficient well rounded
- Risk taker
- Better listener than talker
- Resource user
- Service oriented
- Global focus
- Technology as access
- Well rounded
- Less about note and more about use of knowledge
- Understanding how to innovate
- Collaborative
- Understanding own learning—grit/resiliency
- Flexible thinkers—independent research
- Should be well rounded
- Open to differences in people and learning styles
 - Bi or multilingual
- Responsible
- Articulate
- Emotionally balanced and intelligent (EQ)
- Socially capable
- Adaptable (flexible)
- A student with a wealth of experiences in:
 - Collaborating—working well with others
 - Communicating—expressing their skills in a variety of platforms
 - Critical thinking—challenged
 - Creativity—opportunities to create

2. What should a Lower Merion School District graduate look like? What are the skills, attitudes, and dispositions that we want for all students? (continued)

- Critical thinker
- Good communicator
- Service oriented
- Well rounded
- Resourceful
- Resiliency
- Risk taker
- Opportunities for all
- High expectations for all
- Value all
- Giving/greater good

3. What do we value as a district? How do we hold onto our traditions while simultaneously embracing change?

GROUP 1: ELEMENTARY BH, GL, PV

- Opportunity for every student
- Environment where students are not the only one
- Promoting excellence for all
- Action—find a way to do it!
- Strengthen students who are only one

GROUP 2: ELEMENTARY CY, ME, PW

- Aware of place in universe
- Comfortable in own skin
- Assured of where belong
- Appreciative of rights and perspectives of others
- Expert in cultural proficiency
- Truly value diversity of others
- Steeped in social justice
- Prepared to live and work in world where they may be minority no matter what group they are a part of
- Realize there is more than one way to accomplish a goal
- Understand some values and ideas must change as we learn from others
- Value each other
- Stable financial position
- High expectations
- Innovative

3. What do we value as a district? How do we hold onto our traditions while simultaneously embracing change?

- Ability to grow and change
- Strives to ensure that all students achieve at their highest level
- Excellence for all
- Continued focus on ensuring access to rigorous learning opportunities for all students
- 1 small step at a time
- With open minds
- Ensuring that all students learn essential skills and content at each grade level
- A commitment to social and emotional learning (in addition to academic learning)
- High achievement standards (keep)
- Tolerance and ability to discuss our differences
- What do we value
 - Excellence
 - FOR ALL
 - Equity
- Think about fundamental value of tradition—is it equitable
- Does it promote excellence for all

GROUP 3: MIDDLE SCHOOLS BC, WV

- Creativity
- Value:
 - Differences
 - Human spirit
 - Education
- Well rounded
- Self-defined achievement
- Vested interest (value) in self-selected goals
- Integrity
- Safety
- Service
- Aware of what is going on around them so the appropriate skills will be selected, which will strengthen disposition

GROUP 4: HIGH SCHOOLS HH, LM

- “Go farther to serve”
- Academic excellence
 - College/career
- Difference (identity: race, gender, sexual orientation)
- Individuality

3. What do we value as a district? How do we hold onto our traditions while simultaneously embracing change?

- Confidence
- Academic proficiency
- Social awareness and compassion/empathy
- Respect
- Teachers who care and individualize for ALL students
- Life skills
- Healthy disagreement
- Respecting/valuing perspectives
- Innovative thinking
- Choice/option of course offerings
- Open dialogue
- Combining staff, community, parents, supporters
- Everyone can achieve and contribute
- Support open minds and diverse viewpoints
- Don't change too quickly
- Self-motivated learning life-long learning mature civic minded
- Better education foundation for each level and preparedness for the high school
- Skillful and inform and open minded individual
- Excellent School District that produce the skillful informed individual for the world of today and tomorrow.
- Caring community
- High level instruction
- Learning differences
- All students going to college
- Creating a personalized experience for students to thrive with their own talents and ambitions
- Keep individualization through change
- Equity
- Access
- Technology continued
- Opportunities collaboration
- Excellence in the name of public education

GROUP 5: HIGH SCHOOLS HH, LM

- Collaborating
- Diversity
- Flexibility

3. What do we value as a district? How do we hold onto our traditions while simultaneously embracing change?

- Achievement
- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Effective instruction
- Achievement
- Individuality
 - Value these in more collaborative from embracing all cultures
- Critical thinking
- Questioning status quo
- High expectations
- High achievement is a value
 - High skill and competence is the change
- Flexibility
- Compassion
- Everyone has unique strengths and talents
- Lifelong learners
- Global citizens
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Higher education
- Collaboration
- Critical thinking
- Achievement

Additional Comments

- Writing skills (communication)
- Take initiative
- Think globally
- Good listening/speaking skills
- Distance learning
- Flexible learning paths
- Multiple grade grouping
- School with no walls
- Classes and learning experience 7 days week, 24 hrs day (available)
- More collaboration
- Differentiated instruction

Additional Comments (continued)

- Resources abound
- Technologically current
- Connected!
- Laptop for every student
- Engaged children
- Thematic
- STEM
- Integrated
- Fluid
- Working together
- Teacher as facilitator
- Students take responsibility as learners
- Students having different school hours
 - All year schools
- More technology students linked to experts in various fields, other students
- Teachers connected with students at home by technology
- Academic accomplishment
- Changing demographics more students from various countries, many different languages
 - Increase in ELL's
- Able to problem solve
- Think outside of the box
- Work well with others
- Strong work ethic
- Creative
- Reach out to others
- Students with global awareness (on positive cultural proficiency path)
- Compassionate
- Giving back
- Community (other) oriented
- Forward thinking-open minded
- Flexible thinkers
- Social skills
- Confident
- Risk takers
- Intellectually curious
- Lifelong learners
- STEM proficient

Additional Comments (continued)

- Problem solving capacity
- Children that have a strong sense of self in spite of social media
- World view
- Flexible thinkers
- Addressing the whole child
- Confident, poised excellent speaker, advocate scholar
- Tech savvy
- Book smart
- Language confident
- Students will need to be more cognizant of geography and cultures of other people
- Graduate should have morals, integrity and be whole with mind, holistic needs and values
- LMSD grade skills, attitude, dispositions graduates will need
- To be able to read and analyze more complex text
- Work in teams
- Service
- Safety
- We value cultural differences, academic excellent, future success, readiness for college and career
- Good rapport between teacher and student
- Events at each school to celebrate each student (plays, French Festival, instrumental music concerts)
- Curriculum/resources
- Strength of character (integrity)
- Achievement (as defined by goals of groups and individual)
- Well-rounded
- STEM/STEAM
- Cultural proficiency awareness
- Acceptance of self and others—alternative lifestyles
- Creativity
- Value acceptance of differences across all levels
- Value excellence in education
- Value human spirit