

Focus Group: Coalition for Youth

Date: 4/11/14

SWOT

1. Strengths:

- alignment of policies across levels
- training parents early on regarding system
- community involvement
- educated professionals
- contribute helpful responsive resource pool
- counselors – parents: better communication
- Resources, individuation to student needs
- Strong community
- District recognizes talent that is not just academics
- Create many clubs, various leadership opportunities

2. Weaknesses:

- Are staff (counselors, teachers?) preventative?
Establish connections with family to fully understand concerns
- Students separating into groups by ethnicity (Asian American)
- No established preventative programs
- Need to improve continuum of care to students at-risk – especially from middle school to high school
- Large jump from 8-9 (size, ac. expec)
9th grade – big risk (and able to have access to older students – 18 years old.)

3. Opportunities:

- Community expertise
- Grant fund writing
- More restrictions/ time constraints (testing, curric. expectations)

4. Threats:

- Increased testing on students
- Balancing teacher creativity with curricular needs/demands
- All the resource – can be difficult – “status” focus (disparities)

Key Questions

1. What should school look like ten years from now?

- Flexibility of time in building – needs to be examined (hands-on, interning, web-based)
- Schedule flexibility
- Tailoring student strengths to instruction
 - Inc. home-schooling ??
 - Greater individuation for students
- Entrepreneurship
- Focus on emotional intelligence and maturity – teach those skills
- Teaching students the importance of caring for others

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

- Teaching students to function as teams, work in groups, collaborative
- Conscientiousness of citizenship
- Tech Savvy-skills
- Global Awareness/ Appreciation of cultural diversity (embracing diversity)

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

- If there are valued traditions, explain the why/how behind those (elementary)
- Charity; programming to help others in community (k-12) and outside community