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