

Focus Group: Gladwyne Elementary School Staff

Date: May, 2014

SWOT

Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
Special Educational Services including Reading and Math Specialist, Gifted and Special Ed. Support/ excellent special education programs	Lack of space	Technology- infusion at all levels and a strong technology department/ teacher can expand and improve their lessons/ more effective use of technology (laptops, smart boards)	No placement assessment for incoming first graders outside of our district
Budget allotment and availability of curriculum resources Extended day for Kindergarten	Too many new things at one time or last minute Effectively communicating academic and behavioral strengths and weaknesses with parents	Extended day for Kindergarten move to midday We are happy to have this opportunity to share our thoughts	Half day Kindergarten Lack of substitutes
Working to close the achievement gap	Extended day for Kindergarten needs tweaking	Move to RTI model instead of a discrepancy model to identify children for special education and/or academic supports	Class size
Staff/ very dedicated and experienced staff that goes above and beyond for their students	Communication/ Sometimes communication between the district administrative level and building level breaks down, causing unclear expectations or misconceptions by the staff	Move to RTI model instead of a discrepancy model to identify children for special education and/or academic support	Amount of state and local assessments
Financial Resources of the district and community	Understaffing/ schools should be ration based for staffing all areas	Maybe the district could adopt a mentor program for students that do not receive support at home	Timeline to provide help for children in need of support

Morning Meeting/ Responsive classroom	Alienating Parents	the district offers many opportunities for teacher development including: conferences, grants and tuition reimbursement	Lawsuits from families who feel the system/district is not meeting the needs of their child
Gladwyne Wolf Ambassadors	Taking away authentic instruction because we are tied to a curriculum and a time line	Math is co-taught with the math specialist. This is great for fifth grade. Would like to see this happen in other grades as well	Families who refuse to agree with services that would provide necessary support for their child, which then negatively affects other students. Teachers then spend a majority of their time with that student, taking valuable time away from other students in
Supportive Administrators who recognize staff accomplishments and address student, parent and staff concerns with care	The maximum class size should be reduced to allow more individualized instruction to take place in the regular education classroom	Grade level teachers use their strengths and teach subjects they are stronger in	Outspoken parents who dictate and influence curriculum, staff and administrative decisions
School wide events help bring the school together bring the school together	There is not enough staff for our building to meet the needs of our students, especially in special education, ELL, Speech and the Challenge Program	Working on closing the achievement gaps for all minority groups	Time spent on testing take away academic time/ overabundance of testing and coinciding structured curriculum
There is a focus on safety in the school	The push to teach academic standards from the state level to meet No Child Left Behind creates less flexibility and creativity for teachers		Too much emphasis is placed on achievement results

Child focused learning happening in all classrooms	There is a need for additional curriculum resources and materials to support the gifted students in the regular education classroom	Increase in numbers as our space stays the same
Gladwyne Achievement Team works hard to identify and develop support plans for the students	Public pre-school programs in the community would benefit children who stay home until Kindergarten age	
There is a strong emphasis on education both at home and at school	Time/Schedule	
Quality Programs	Space	
Key Questions		
What should school look like in ten years from now?	What should a LMSD graduate look like? What are the skills, attitudes and dispositions that we want for all students?	What do we value as a district? How do we hold on to our values while simultaneously embracing change?
Space is an issues for children and staff. There should be ample space for children and staff to work in comfort. There should be more space for flexible grouping especially with the increasing desirability of pulling large numbers of children out for WIN	A graduate from LMSD should be able to communicate clearly and show respect for differences in culture and viewpoint. A graduate should be problem solver and a life long learner.	We value our differences and our similarities. We value building respect between/among administration, staff, families and students.

<p>Technology should be updated-mounted smart boards, ceiling projection systems.</p>	<p>A LMSD graduate should be a problem-solver. He or she should be self-sufficient, well-rounded and possess interpersonal skills. They should display confidence, leadership skills and be prepared to become a productive member of society and successful in whatever</p>	<p>We value a balance of tradition and innovation. Hold onto what we know work while embracing new ideas and methods.</p>	
<p>The school should be a place that values and celebrates the social and emotional growth of children at least as much as it values academic growth. Social curriculum and interactions must have adequate time in the school day</p>	<p>Our graduates should be critical and creative thinkers who can effectively communicate in a variety of ways (written, oral and digital). They should be empathetic, global and local citizens who respect and understand others and their cultures.</p>	<p>As a District we value a meaningful education. We value the parents in our community who often provide support and assistance when needed. We also place great value on the arts, however, we need to consider thinking outside the box to allow creative scheduling for both academic instruction and the</p>	
<p>The school should represent best practices as recognized by its professional staff and the school should be clear in the message that it sends to the community as to what it values. (eg. Test results vs creative problem solving and positive social interactions)</p>		<p>We embrace academic achievement and excellence and multidisciplinary learning opportunities for students for all abilities.</p>	

<p>Elementary schools should consist of fourth and fifth grades switching classes. There should be less time spent on testing and more time spent on academics. Smaller class sizes would be beneficial</p>			
<p>Current technology trends blended with the ideals of life long learning, citizenship and the focus on well-rounded caring students</p>			