

## **Focus Group: LMEA Officers**

**Date: 4/2/14**

### **SWOT**

#### **1. Strengths:**

- a. Resources, like revenue and parent support
- b. Human resources, like teachers and support staff
- c. Quality of facilities/learning environment: well equipped, safe, and clean
- d. LMEA (labor) and the District (management) have negotiated a contract that helps to recruit and retain highly-qualified staff

#### **2. Weaknesses:**

- a. Timely communication from central administration to staff
- b. Clear communication from central administration to staff (i.e., emails can be confusing and/or ambiguous)
- c. Central administration seems detached from those who they supervise and who carry forth initiatives
- d. Initiative fatigue
  - i. Puts stress and strain on our system
  - ii. The system becomes less productive because it is overloaded
- e. Time for training; a message is delivered, but the time to implement the message isn't planned for

#### **3. Opportunities:**

- a. Expand summer school offerings
- b. Partner with local colleges
- c. Expand use of technology
- d. Participate in pilots; help teachers to feel empowered to take risks and try new ways of thinking and doing

#### **4. Threats:**

- a. Conformity; too much emphasis on the same programs and same approaches in the elementary, middle, and high schools
- b. Standardized testing that drives instruction and students' experiences in school

### **Key Questions**

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

- a. More autonomy within the buildings among teachers
- b. More time for teachers to collaborate
- c. More autonomy within courses for students to personalize their learning

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

- a. Enthusiastic about learning
- b. Creative, inventive thinkers
- c. Active citizens

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

- a. Cohesion (i.e., collaboration and cooperation) between professionals and support staff
- b. Collaboration between LMEA and central administration
- c. Uniqueness; not being a "cookie cutter" approach to education