

Focus Group: Lower Merion High School Staff

Date: April, 2014

Key Questions

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

Alternative Paths / Opportunities / Less Rigid Structure:

- Multiple paths to student success
- No grades - focus on competencies and mastery of standards
- Technology - Allowing us to see kids every day
- Students creating their own schedules and academic paths
- Different graduation requirements
- Opportunities to fail and learn from failure & feel pride from overcoming fears, adversity, grit
- Appropriate courses for all students
- On-line classes
- Teacher as facilitator – student more involved in their own learning
- Blended learning (mix of classroom and online course)
- Student - school community partnerships and internships
- Common assessments and, mastery based grading will also see itself complimented with greater hybrid classroom/online instructions.

Real World Application / Projects / Authentic Learning:

- More collaboration with business and discussions on skills needed and internship programs
- Learning to be even more student centered, project based and relevant to real world application.
- More flipped classroom more “projects” during class time
- More career education
- Globally collaborative

Other:

- Re-evaluating & reflection on our profession
- Mini-schools with unique missions within LMHS
- Holistic oriented teachers
- More interaction with other departments
- Starting times later / no skip days / No Bells
- More teacher collaboration
- More diverse student body/increased diversity around culture competency
- Flexible schedules for learning and teaching
- Multidisciplinary studies (co teachers)
- A district that has a true community feel – support each other’s ventures in athletics, music, arts, theatre
- Less testing more real application accountability for students & teachers

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

Characteristics:

- Creative
- Problem solver
- Critical thinker
- Culturally competent
- Independent learner
- Able to connect knowledge skills from different disciplines
- Professional service oriented leader
- Confidence in their ability to learn/adapt
- Self-advocate – making wants/needs known
- Responsible, gritty, resilient
- Strong work ethic and strong communication skills
- Respectful of others / person of good character
- Skillful in the using technology
- Takes responsibility for their actions, accepts consequence
- Self-disciplined in cyber-worlds
- Fluent in other languages
- Ability to sift and evaluate sources of data

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

Tradition:

- High Student Achievement
- Teacher's creativity & freedom to inspire students
- Frequent and positive interaction with students
- Sending kids to college
- Community service
- Parent input
- Sports and extra-curricular activities
- Student Creativity
- Keeping high expectations for all students

Change and Innovation:

- Teacher collaboration time
- Faculty training that is meaningful & reflects needs
- Technology
- Change our focus from grades to learning
- Co-teaching
- More connections between departments
- Addressing achievement gap
- Inclusion opportunity for student with special needs
- Students input
- Ability to reflect and make changes