

Community Conversation II

Recommendations (gleaned from the feedback)

Priority #1 Parental and Community Involvement

Communication between school and parents

- Schools should schedule parent meetings and open houses in a flexible or staggered basis so that parents can attend after work or can attend more than one school should they have children in multiple schools.
- All teachers who use GradeQuick should keep parents informed of students' grades by posting them regularly to EdLine.
- Parents need to know the available resources that they or their children can access to help them improve academically.
- Translation services should be available at community meetings and parent-teacher conferences to make sure that non-English speaking families feel included and have access to needed information. Vital district written communications should also be produced in both English and Spanish.

Training for Parents

- The district and community should provide parents with training in how to advocate for their children.
- The district should provide parents with technology training, such as how to access EdLine.
- The district should make as many computer technology programs available for home use by parents and students as possible (e.g., Compass, Riverdeep, and online textbooks).

Community Involvement

- The community should establish active partnerships with schools and provide human resources (mentors, tutors) as well as financial resources.
- The business community should support schools by providing release time for parents to attend teacher conferences, establishing tutoring programs at the community facility, or providing mentors to work with students after school.
- The community should host town-hall meetings to discuss local education issues.

Priority #2 Intervention Programs for Students who lag behind

Leadership

- Principals should become instructional leaders rather than building managers.
- Principals should be held accountable for effective teaching and learning in their buildings.

Classroom Environment

- All teachers need to know how to manage classrooms effectively and maintain discipline so that learning may occur.
- The rate of teacher absenteeism must be reduced because learning suffers when the teacher is absent.
- Teachers, principals, and other school staff need training on the effects of culture on student learning.
- All teachers must, by their actions, demonstrate their belief that all students will be successful learners.

Instruction

- The most qualified and effective teachers should be placed with students with the greatest needs.
- More time is needed for instruction (e.g., lengthen school day, after-school programs, summer programs, more effective integration of subject areas during school day).
- Curriculum and instruction should be student-centered and relevant to the students' worlds.

Interventions

- Continued and increased emphasis should be given on early intervention by increasing the number and effect of three-year old and four-year old programs.
- The district and community should provide early intervention for students with social and/or emotional problems.
- Parents should be encouraged to take parenting skills courses sponsored by the district.
- Incentives should be offered to students for gains in achievement or behavior.

- The intervention programs across the district should be uniform so that highly mobile students have consistency.
- After-school intervention programs should be directly connected to the curriculum, and the topics for intervention should be determined by the data provided by frequent formative assessments.
- Parents should ensure that their children participate in recommended intervention programs.
- Parents who don't have computers at home should be encouraged to participate in the "Computer Loan" program.
- At-home computers should be used to access district intervention programs, where available, to help students eliminate skill deficits.

Priority #3 Clearly Defined Expectations for All

District and Schools

- The district should ensure that the neediest students have the most skilled teachers.
- The district and schools should ensure that teachers come to work regularly.
- The Board and administration should hold principals and teachers accountable for student achievement.
- The community and schools should provide social workers, counselors, or other personnel to help students with social and emotional problems.

Parents

- Parents should hold their children accountable for their behavior at school and at home.
- Parents should advocate for their children.
- Parents should ensure that students do their homework and that they participate in after-school or at-home instructional interventions.

Teachers

- Teachers must provide structure and discipline for students.

- Teachers should use student achievement data in its many forms to tailor differentiated instruction for students.
- Teachers should set learning goals for students and hold them accountable for meeting them.
- Teachers should provide high-quality, standards-based instruction that reflects careful planning and includes a variety of strategies.