

NOTES
Orange County Schools
Visioning and Community Engagement Initiative
Stakeholder Group Meeting
October 8, 2014

Welcome and Announcements

- Strategic Planning Phase of this initiative is also now underway
- Two members of the Stakeholder Group are also members of the Strategic Planning Committee – Rev. Sharon Freeland and Vaughn Compton

Reading Assignment Discussion – *Preserving the Public in Public Schools*

We reviewed the Public Values Framework which is presented in the book, Preserving the Public in Public Schools and then engaged in both individual reflection and small group discussions of:

- How did you read the book?
- What were your “take-a-ways?”
- What does your reading of the book suggest for this community engagement and visioning process?

Key Discussion Points:

- Problems we face are on-going; just new iterations
- Public values form public policy
- Leading by discussion; involve more people in this process
- I flagged pages of the book; grew to like the book over the course of reading it, it reflects my experience, we teach for now and the future
- Developing responsible citizens
- Reading about the gold standard/ “ideal?” Question → Are real issues coming out?
- Politics versus governing of schools → is it undermining the profession of teaching?
- Why are people seeking other models; choices? → Charter schools, Year-round; is it a by-product of alternative schools? → Relief from?
- Values not changing but the world is → system needs to evolve
- No two districts are alike
- Public Values structure is good structure to use to go through the visioning process
- Identifying values helps us think about complicated issues
- One value brought to the surface is: “Quality of Life” page 175 of the book, “Art overlooked here.” Needs more emphasis in our community’s vision → artistic expression
- The more things change, the more they stay the same → discussion re: Cost of living increases and pricing people out of Orange County
- Frustration → wanting to “jump in and do” and yet need to go through the process to develop a collective vision

Interview Assignment Discussion— Key Visioning Questions

Reviewed the assignment questions from which each stakeholder was assigned one question and asked to interview and discuss the assigned question with ten people in their community. Questions are:

1. Why educate the *next* generation?
2. Why invest in *public* education?
3. What *purposes* should public schools serve?
4. *What* should we teach children, *who* should teach them, and *how*?
5. What *role* should public schools play in our children's lives and in our communities?

Stakeholders were grouped by like-question and discussed their experiences with each other:

- Who did you interview, what kinds of folks did you talk with?
- How easy or difficult was it to get folks to talk about your question, and what did you do to help them if they had difficulty?
- Once they got started, what did they have to say?
- What public values did you hear expressed?

Key Discussion Points:

Question 1: Why educate the *next* generation?

- Students → What they want to see for their children → more diverse AP and Honors Classes; more arts choices
- Innovators or Followers?
- Not so much emphasis on grades /scores as benchmarks of success but also on participation and completing assignments well
- Safety/drug abuse prevention
- Concerns around dress codes; difference and not judging people
- Critical thinking → learn to learn; life long process

Question 2: Why invest in public education?

- Diversity → broader experiences; people
- Available and Affordable
- Investing in teachers → need to do a better job of this

Question 3: What purposes should public schools serve?

- To develop citizens
- To benefit the community

Question 4: What should we teach children, who should teach them, and how?

- This question of "What" freaked people out → had lots to say; community, getting along, STEAM, Common Core
- "Who" → credentials, but also people with the personality to teach; someone who likes kids

Question 5: What role should public schools play in our children's lives and in our communities?

- Some of the people interviewed, were uncomfortable writing their answers while person there
- Answer to this question requires an essay to complete it
- Excited to say something and to have a voice in this process
- Some people are angry and fed up; "won't do it anyway," "haven't been heard in the past"
- Get back to basics; what kids need to know
- Why turnover in our leadership? Keep someone long enough to move forward → Career administrators and building resumes
- Partnership between school system and parents (electronic survey to get input?)

Implications of the reading and the questions for the work of this group:

Large group discussion:

What does all this mean for your work as stakeholders as you think about Public Education in Orange County Schools and as we develop a Vision?

- Hearing similar messages → better messaging by the schools to the public?
- This group can help with better messaging to the public about the schools
- Getting public's input, not just the politicians' input
- Have teachers be able to express thoughts and concerns? Include teachers
- Email questions to folks; and feel free to speak with people
- What has happened to courage? Isn't it more important to go forward with an idea than to worry about politics/fallout?
- We create a safe haven for the community and others to speak their mind
- Breaking down silos → how to send/provide input → "Tribe Inc." Ask questions and get answers for all to see
- Incorporate openness into what we envision

What Worked Well/What Can We Improve

- + Questions stimulated good conversations
- + Like buns better than thinwiches
- + Chicken salad was good
- + Small group discussions went well; well set up/designed
- △ Survey sent out to some parents? To the community? Will we hear back about that? – find out what this was (if possible) and report back to the Stakeholder Group
- △ Of the five assignment questions, Question # 4 is hard; hard to get responses to

Meetings Moving Forward – Timeline and Focus

October 22	Review and Analyze Responses to Questions
November 5	Review and Analyze Responses to Questions and Discuss Next Steps
November 19	Review and Vet Draft Vision
November 24	BOE Vets Draft Vision (Monday before Thanksgiving)
December 3	Review Revised Draft Vision Stakeholder Consensus? Next Steps?
December 8	BOE Meeting Present the Vision to the BOE and Community
December 22 - January 2	Winter Break for Students

Before the next meeting: - Wednesday, October 22, 2014; 11:00 to 1:30 p.m.

Finish Reading Preserving the Public in Public Schools

Complete Your “Ask 10 People 1 Question” Assignment – see questions above

Check out Materials and Links on website: <http://www.orange.k12.nc.us>