

**NOTES**  
**Orange County Schools**  
**Visioning and Community Engagement Initiative**  
**Stakeholder Group Meeting**  
**November 5, 2014**

During this meeting we continued to analyze the responses we received to the five vision framing questions; specifically questions 4 and 5. We also discussed the development of the community's Vision Document and the Vision Statement

**All on the Wall -- Question 4 – *What* should we teach children, *who* should teach them and *how*?**

**What:**

Basics +

- Basics, 3 Rs, Arts, Technology, Science and Social Science,
- The basics; reading, math plus citizenship and responsibility
- Rigorous curriculum – Common Core to bring our schools to National Standards
- Sex education including gay issues
- True science; no creationism
- Civics, law, political science (secular concerns with no religious influence from teachers)
- Ecology and environmentalism – green campus, recycling, school gardens
- Math, ELA, science, social studies; don't think they need so many electives such as gym
- Teach basics to help them become successful adults
- The basics: reading, composition, math
- Core
- Technology; How to apply in the world today
- Teach basic academics with arts and language using today's technology
- Academic core
- STEAM
- History/literature
- Cursive writing and how to read it
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century literacy skills
- Gym, everyday

Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

- Problem solving and critical thinking
- Everyone teach skills and problem solving
- Teach how to use and manipulate information
- STEM, problem solving, critical thinking Teach problem solving skills
- 3Rs plus Critical Thinking
- "No 'Googleable' questions. What is taught is how to use, access and manipulate information. Skills and problem solving should be at the top.

## Social Skills

- Life and Citizenship Skills
- “We should strive to give them the tools to continue to exist in a sustainable, just world.”
- How to navigate life, solve problems, be productive in community
- and citizenship education through hands on experiences
- To think for themselves
- Social norms and critical thinking
- Skills for lifelong learning
- Social skills and personal responsibility
- Teach to be respectful and to come prepared to learn
- “Ethics, above all, is an important topic to be taught in concert with a sound system of humanities and science...”
- Life Skills
- Rules of our society
- Social and emotional empathy
- Peaceful communication
- Learning how to regulate one’s emotions
- Everything currently taught but with greater emphasis on social skills
- Social skills, social skills, social skills
- Civic responsibility
- Social skills, how to treat each other
- “In some way to make the world a better place...”
- “Personally, I’d like to see a revival in citizenship education to help stop the erosion of American values.”

## For College, Trades and Work

- Teach marketable skills for today’s workplace
- College prep and vocational education
- College is not for everyone; teach trade education also
- Align student success to jobs
- Electives spilt by “professions” = goal
- “Common Sense” topics such as buying a car, writing a check, taking out a mortgage.”
- How to function in an ever-changing society and be prepared for the future
- We need to work with the community colleges or the CTE program director

## **Who:**

### Empower children; they need a voice

- “Children need a voice. To empower them, bullying and violent behaviors would be nipped in the bud.”
- Come prepared to learn
- Apprenticeships
- To think for themselves
- Teach them how to think
- Teach how to think and problem solve
- Use other students
- We should teach children to think for themselves
- Independence

### Well trained and qualified teachers

- Well trained teachers in a way everyone can learn
- A good curriculum by talented people
- Qualified teachers; eliminate tenure and elevate/compensate based on performance
- Qualified teachers and assistants with assistance of parents
- Well trained; well paid teachers
- By a creative teacher who makes learning fun
- The very finest staff available
- Professional and qualified teachers, who love students
- Teachers with passion for what they do

### Teachers with Parents and Community

- Teachers from family, neighborhood and community of faith with school teachers
- Everyone in society; it is a joint responsibility
- Parents, teachers, the community need to be all working together
- Parents, educators; “the village”
- It takes a village – teachers in classrooms in a caring environment, parents reinforcing this at home, and community support
- High quality teachers working with parents and communities
- Partnership with student, parents, school, community
- Informed parents; active parents
- Also neighborhood and community of faith as teachers.
- As a society, everyone should have a part in teaching. It is a joint responsibility.
- Need to teach to those going to college and need to be sure to teach to those who will go into trades. If those programs are provided by another source in the county, okay. Otherwise need to be able to get trade education through the OC schools.
- The more you can pair up with experience in the community, the better for the students
- “It is not the responsibility of just the school system to educate our children, but that of the entire community. Parents need to play a top role in their child’s education, taking what their child is taught in school and reinforcing or adding to it as it pertains to their family’s values. In order for our children to be successful in our community,

collaboration between parents, school educators, and community members is essential.”

- The ‘who’ is everyone.
- We should all teach them by example and demonstration.

#### **How:**

##### Teach by Methods that are proven/Best Practices

- Well-established teaching techniques and parent support
- With valued methods of teaching
- Well established teaching techniques and parent support

##### Hands-on

- I think the way to teach them would be hands on, not just out of a text book or computer
- More hands-on and out of the classroom
- “A nine weeks project of working with the elderly or handicapped. Nine weeks of personal finance.”
- Creative ways, hands on, life experiences
- “Hands-on-learning provides unforgettable and life-changing scenarios for many students...public schools should provide opportunities for students to put their learned skills into motion.”

##### Multiple Approaches for multiple styles of learners

- Multiple approaches to reach all types of learners
- Teaching starts with where the child is
- Teach all students learning in all capacities
- Align to specific needs of student
- The curriculum should be taught in multiple ways to reach all types of learners. Important to have various approaches.
- Success different for students
- Understand child’s history, interests, passions, challenges, gifts
- Creatively, Soundly, Innovatively

(Subset is multiple delivery approaches)

- Year-round schools
- Use variety of methods; magnet, traditional, specialized schools, charter
- Dual languages important as we live in global community
- Using technology → laptop initiative a benefit in multiple ways; create online curriculum
- More seminar learning
- At a pace where they can understand
- Home schooling is an option
- Lower the adult-student ratio; use other students

### Modeling

- Teach by example
- Setting examples by action
- Parents and teachers by their good examples
- Parents, teachers and mentors should teach by direct example how to make their world better
- “Mentors lead and teach by direct example which, in my opinion, is the most effective strategy.”

### **All on the Wall – Question 5 –What role should public schools play in our children’s lives and in our communities?**

#### Prepare for the future

- We should be the place that the community can depend on to prepare their children for the future
- Children’s lives: Opportunities present and future
- Children’s lives: To be successful in higher education and/or workforce
- A skill or college training for career choices
- Educate children to highest expectations including literacy and civic responsibilities
- Educate our youth to grown into members of the community who are able to contribute to the betterment of that community
- Advanced training for those wanting higher education, vocational training for those who are not. Morality, ethics, and religion stays out of schools
- Teach children to analyze situations and to think rationally to solve complex problems
- Schools should exhaust all measures to prepare kids to excel at the earliest opportunity. With the presence of colleges and community colleges nearby, should have mentors to work with 5<sup>th</sup> Grade forward.
- Help for future career path
- Access to information
- Prepare students for further learning with a variety of real world options
- Expose them to world/global issues and ideas

#### Community Involvement

- Building community, providing structure, giving a place for community
- Public schools should be the center of the community instilling pride, civic responsibility and spirit of the child.
- Serve as a central element of the community and provide our children with the tools to interact positively with others.
- School is more than a place for education
- Public schools should reflect community ideas
- Provide leadership for community activities
- Work together as a team
- Should be visible and engaged

- Gathering place
- Public school facilities should be available for community activities
- Businesses and family involved
- Collaborator
- Informed –engaged partner with knowledge of non-education issues
- Connector
- Integral: receive and give input
- Two way street: Community embraces schools  $\leftrightarrow$  students are taught to positively interact with community
- I think schools should involve all families about expectations of children and parents...this can be accomplished through parent-teacher conferences, family nights, open houses at school, and maybe a home visit is needed in some circumstances.
- Schools need to be integral parts of their communities and serve as many purposes ‘other’ than education in those communities (shelters, community spaces, etc.)
- “It would be great if schools had more after school enrichment activities that not only benefited students but the community as a whole as well. Working in partnership with neighborhoods that feed into the school to make it a “village” environment would likely serve us all much better.”

### Structure

- Provide structure and reinforce appropriate behavior for personal and professional world. (Bridge gap between community and work place expectations)
- Motivate children to do well
- Teach our children the 3Rs but not religion, politics, sex Ed, etc.
- Role of “facilitator” – a tough role but schools should be attempting to get parents more involved in their child’s life and education to free educators of time spent as educator, mentor, parent figure, and counselor.
- Public Schools should play the role of a bridge between parents and community in providing our children the best opportunity to learn skills applicable to the world around them.
- Be “dominant” with our children (top of mind/large presence)
- I think schools should play a large role in our children’s lives...they spend a lot of time there.
- Socialization
- Provide safe opportunities for socialization
- School should develop character
- Give guidance
- Educate and promote responsible citizens

### Equality and Inclusivity

- “At the turn of the last century...public schools were meant to create a common denominator, leveling the playing field, being a great tool for socializing an entire population in the art of being a democracy...(over time) it becomes the tool for desegregation of races, disabilities, sex, gender, economic classes, sexual orientation,

etc... Businesses loved having an educated class as well...it should continue to play that role today: educating ALL because EVERYONE can learn and needs to learn to be a thriving democracy.”

- To educate, create equal opportunity for education; create good citizens
- Educate our kids
- Acceptance of various diversities and a respect towards all members of society and equal education or all
- Inviting acceptance of diversity
- An educational foundation that encourages curiosity
- Equal access for all children

### Supportive

- Supportive of all abilities of students
- Grow as individuals
- Mold individuals into productive citizens that instill positive self-esteem and confidence
- Qualified teachers
- Qualified administrators
- Qualified nurses
- Quality textbooks, teaching materials
- Qualified bus drivers
- Clean environment—facilities/food services
- Guiding students toward community service and healthy choices

### Safe and Secure

- Provide a safe learning environment which is nurturing and focused on seeing that every child has an opportunity to excel and learn; academics and the arts as well as sports
- Provide a safe environment for learning
- Safe haven
- Schools should be a safe and enriching “village”
- Part of the “social safety net”
- Give intervention for families having issues
- Safe, encouraging
- The public schools should be a vital part of the community where children enjoy spending time in a safe and nurturing environment.
- “Public schools should be a safe zone for students and communities...students should feel they are physically, emotionally, psychologically safe to be able to learn without distractions, express themselves as individuals and be free of bullying/tormenting, etc.”
- “In a safe, warm place, with a good lunch (not about making a profit.)

### **Drafting our Vision Document – Framers’ Meeting**

A small group from the larger stakeholder group, “The Framers” has been convened to begin the process of taking the work of the stakeholders and developing the “Vision Document” and the “Vision Statement.” The Vision Document may include:

- Executive Summary: Community’s Vision(s)  
OCS History and why we were undertaking this process now?  
Process background and goals
- Vision Charge: Call to Action  
Address Stakeholder Concerns that the Vision and Strategic Plan:
  - Grounded in reality – recognizing limits
  - Balancing competing values
  - Community’s Vision
- Appendices: Overview/Timeline of Process  
Issues Log  
Listing Stakeholders/“undersigned”

### **Drafting our Vision Statement – Small Group Discussions**

In developing our vision statement and vision document and in order to represent the community, discuss in small groups, what we’ve heard; what do we believe collectively? What have we heard across all five framing questions? What are some of the common themes that need to be reflected in the community’s vision? What are some of the implications for our work going forward? Remember we a vision for public education that will inspire the community to action!

- Community (1) needs to be involved; (2) School and all it entails plays a role in our community
- Educating for responsible citizenship (1) Giving back to the community (2) Productive and independent citizens
- Educating so that students are eventually employable/able to get a job after high school or college.
  - Students eager to learn; Students with an “I’ll try” attitude will find no limits
  - Students with an attitude of “I deserve this” will find it won’t happen
  - Concerns about being “able to learn” and “toxic stress” given personal lives
- Educating such that students are not just ready for college; ready for trades too
- Theme of “Responsive Students”; there’s been a change in society reflected in the content of education; while public values may remain constant, “there’s true north” in terms of the need for students to be eager and ready to learn while the community also wants public education to be responsive to different abilities, learning styles and life circumstances.
- All styles of learners → anxiety/afraid to try or afraid of failing- need to figure out how to counter this fear/anxiety→ how to encourage learning from mistakes
- Lifelong learning encouraged → students taking ownership of their learning; learning from mistakes



- Support teachers → families, parents and community all involved in supporting
- Alternative systems and approaches to learning
- Innovation comes from cycle of → try → fail → try → fail → try → fail → try → succeed
- We don't know what they'll need to know in the future; but we do know how to teach them to learn → learning from experience and mistakes
- Problem solving and critical thinking skills
- Learn from mistakes; confident, enthusiastic, fearless, appropriate risk takers
- Room to recognize child who is underperforming and work to find a positive way for that student
- You go to school to learn; okay not to know everything already; before you get there
- Safety and security of students
- Nurturing
- Prepare for the global world/reach of society
- Discipline in schools → Enough? Manners? Socialization? Respectful? Should this be taught in school or at home? Or both?
- Move from STEM to STEAM – develop this concept further
- Equality; equal opportunity; equal access; inclusive
- Quality

#### **Issues Log: (Additions)**

- Previous superintendent hire and resignation in 6 months → concerning
- Parents need to take control rather than “students rule the roost”
- EOG performance and Title 1 Schools → very concerning
- Toxic stress impacts learning
- Schools as a safe place always → role in our community
- We need to show our teachers and administrators that they are valued
- Reading curriculum/methods
- Desire to move to year round schools; “By using a year round school calendar...so as not student loses needed skills and knowledge because of a 3 month summer vacation time.
- Loose the tenure program; yearly evaluation and performance evaluations of teachers needed
- “I would like to see the lower grades, elementary – middle school move away from teaching solely for the “EOG”s. No work is accomplished from January through May except EOG prep. I think this is a huge injustice to our kids, as well as the teachers.”
- “More and more, teachers have to teach basic social skills, manners and character in order to create an environment where academics can even begin to be taught...As teachers, we are increasingly expected to do more and more with less and less while preparing students for an overwhelming amount of state assessments.”
- Schools are trying to do too much and we are not succeeding

Next Meeting:            Wednesday, November 19, 2014; 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
                                  Review and Vet Draft Vision Statement and Document  
                                  Develop Next Steps