

Feedback from the Group – December 15, 2009, Bayard Middle School
Strategic Planning Meeting on Excellence and Equity

General comments from participants:

- What is the process of evaluation for professional development for teachers, administrators, and parents? How do we know it is working?
- Is tutoring automatically provided to all students who need it? In school-wide Title I programs it is required
- We need to look at offering full-day Kindergarten, or providing Kindergarten “wrap” programs, to all students who need it. We need to be competitive—other districts already have full-day Kindergarten for all students.
- All students should have access to information they need about applying for and going to college. Guidance counselors need to get to every student with this information.
- We need to look at transportation issues for students who are alternatively placed in distance learning and are 16 and older. Also, we need to consider transition services.

Comments from District staff:

- We need full-day Kindergarten for all schools. Need to re-look at the ECAP program (a partial-day preschool program for low-income children funded by the state) and explore a comprehensive preschool-Grade 2 program so we can capture kids who may not qualify for ECAP.
- We should explore parental engagement teams to work with parents
- We should begin SAT prep in the 6th grade. Creating that level of rigor at an early grade would make schools more attractive to parents
- Read 180, AVID, etc. are great programs, but we need additional teachers and resources to support these programs
- In professional development, we need to train the entire staff so expectations are shared by all and are there for all students
- The social/emotional learning of preschool children is very important. We need more resources to support this. There is a trickling down affect on academics.
- The social/emotional element of learning needs to be built into the Kindergarten program
- We should explore an agreement between the community and the schools to provide professional development time for teachers on a consistent basis (example: one school system provides time one afternoon a week for teacher professional development). This will take a commitment from everyone involved.
- We need resources and funding to make equality across all schools
- We need a secondary alternative program to address students who learn in non-traditional ways to address their specific needs.
- This alternative program should be staffed with skilled people who understand students’ concerns. Teachers who develop relationships with students in their building and the community help reduce discipline issues.
- Alternative programs and “second chance opportunities” need to be offered across the spectrum. We have young people with specific needs who need a continuum of services; we should consider linking pre-K programs with adult programs; we need training programs for parents.

Additional Feedback:

- In the Student Code of Conduct, all interventions have been taken out. “Zero tolerance” needs to be abolished. We have to find a way to serve the kids who want to excel without being distracted by disruptive students, as well, while still addressing the needs of the disruptive students.
- We have got to make our high schools better and offer some alternative opportunities
- What can we do to better serve students who don’t want to go to college?
- You get the biggest return on your dollar with early education. Build parenting programs and offer help. The district doesn’t have to do all of it themselves—child care providers can help with this. Consider certification of child care providers by the district
- We need more parent training. There are lots of resources out there. We need to teach parents the things they need to know to communicate effectively with teachers and principals
- Title I parents need to have input and need to know what input they are entitled to have.
- We need more welcoming people in school offices. You can get more parents involved by making them feel like they are a part of the school
- Look around the state and see what other districts are doing and doing well. Examples—Hodgson Vo-Tech preschool training program, job programs, job experience
- We need to give opportunities to kids who may not be going to college. We need to meet the needs of students and develop a meaningful guide to take them through school and into adult life. Things like self-determination, advocacy skills, etc. What are we doing now to get kids ready for adult life?
- We need to be extremely mindful every day of the messages we give—the school environment should mimic the work environment so that students can take skills into adulthood and be successful
- We need more arts and athletics
- Children need to be able to feel a level of success somewhere. We need to provide additional opportunities for students to find success
- How can we work with the community to provide programs in the arts, athletics, vocational, etc. in partnership with existing programs?
- How can we prevent students from dropping out?
- Teen parents—how can they collectively come together?
- Mainstream teachers need an increased understanding of how to serve the needs of students in inclusion settings
- IEPs need to be done in a way that is more parent-focused, and scheduled at a time that is more convenient for parents. More teachers need to participate in IEP meetings.
- We need to improve guidance services, counseling, beginning in freshman year and seeing students every year
- We need to build relationships between students, parents, teachers, and administrators
- We should do away with study halls—put students in classrooms, gym, electives instead. Study halls are a waste of time.

- More ongoing communication on career paths every year. We need more communication between parents, teachers, and guidance counselors.
- Use study hall time to work on student success plans. Get students, teachers, and parents involved.