

Shaping Our Future 2.0 | October 5, 2013

Summary of Responses to Question:

“What is most important for PUSD going forward?”

Student Engagement

Engage the students.
Listen to what students are saying.
Develop structures to hear students' voices
Engage the students in defining their needs and evaluating the programs.
Differentiate learning.
A better way to engage learners -- differentiated learning, learning that's not always about the grade, learning for depth, learning through questioning, learning through mistakes.
Continue peer (from older students) education.
My kids talk a lot about grades now that they are in middle school. They are becoming more externally motivated. I don't like this.
Redefine success as engaged learning.
Redefine "whole" and move to get there.
Walk the talk. Redefine success, teach the whole child and all of the children.
Take steps to remove unnecessary stress on students. Focus on learning as success in and of itself.
Students equipped to contribute to their community, country and world.
Challenge students to take risks while having fun and learning.
Help the "average" student become exceptional.
Give students a chance to learn about their interests.
Ask students to solve real world problems appropriate to their age, both to teach analytic reasoning and show the real world use of such skills.
Define what it means to develop graduates who are creative thinkers/problem solvers.
Creativity.
Moderate competitiveness.
Temper competitiveness.
Educate whole person to be prepared for success in college and life beyond.
Help students find an intellectual pursuit they are passionate about -- be an expert at something.
Find ways to help students become more autonomous and passionately engaged.
Nurture passion.
Be supportive of kids who want to pursue their passions - make exceptions when needed!
Remember the importance of play.
Build a culture of revision and redemption.
Create opportunities for all kinds of learners, all kinds of kids.

Move to a one student one device policy at all school sites.
Teach how kids how to learn.
Encourage growth mindset.
Global mindsets.
Do It Yourself (DIY) mindset, skill sharing, Maker space
Help children develop into kind, thoughtful, capable adults.

School/Life Balance

District focus on balance in children's lives including enough sleep, unstructured time.
Balance.
Via letter to the editor, "PUSD takes backs our children and attempts to find balance for their lives". It will challenge universities to re-examine admission parameters and explain the reasoning for this innovative approach to educating/raising children.
Create more opportunities for FREE TIME, creative time.
More room to breathe.

Program and Curriculum

Nurturing life long learning, critical thinking and citizenship.
More depth, less breadth.
Long-term, project based learning in the classroom (4).
More project-based, individualized learning.
Greater emphasis on project-based learning, especially with respect to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
Project based learning -- maker style -- student motivated.
Project based learning across curriculums – i.e., integrating art with science with math with language arts into a culminating project.
Increased choice of interdisciplinary/independent study programs.
Bring diversity education into the curriculum on a deeper level.
Add lessons re appreciation of diversity (cultural, learning challenges, social challenges, etc) to new social emotional curriculum.
Broaden the definition of student success in our mission. Revisit the structure of our curriculum in a way that allows implementation of that philosophy.
Create structure to build/improve critical thinking K-12.
Teach design thinking.
World language learning.
Fully integrated language option for Spanish and Mandarin. K-12. Wont be easy, complete redesign of elementary program.
Implement integrated foreign language instruction in the intra-day curriculum from K.
Academic excellence through quality over quantity.
Academic excellence has to remain important.
Don't assume academic excellence - continue to strive for it along with focus on whole child. Does not have to be an either or. It can be a both/and.

Ensure not only academic excellence but also excellence in teaching.
Offer challenging classes at all levels so AP is not the only answer.
Reconsider AP classes in high school.
Offer a more in depth music program at K through 5 -- its not right now - no matter what they tell you.
Educate children about current events beyond Piedmont.
Integrate more community service into the curriculum.
Incorporate specific classes on Collaboration/Listening/Leadership into curriculum.
Embrace the maker movement -- it embodies many of the values we seek to instill.
Restore cuts to program.
Restore resources.
Restore/fill staffing/program holes.
Restore program cuts that are integral to "educating all our students." We can find the funds!
Be on the educational "cutting edge" with forward thinking.
Incorporate a specific class on Ethics into the curriculum, if we truly want to "teach the whole child".
More math problems that make you think.
Maintain and expand social-emotional-artistic education.
More art (2).
Integrate art into our learning.
Eco-literacy (2).
Externships

Collaboration and Professional Development

Support teachers.
Teacher support (training).
Teachers as learners.
Teacher training & collaboration across disciplines for integrated curriculum
Excellent personnel management to create safe space for teachers to excel. This may require on-going PD for administrators to keep them up-to-date with personnel management skills and techniques.
More Staff Development on differentiated teaching techniques
Give teachers efficient and respectful strategies and tools. Offer teachers resources of cash and other preferred rewards for continual self improvement and creativity. So they can model what we expect of our children.
Foster the next level of collaboration among 3 elementary schools -- student projects, sharing best practices among grades.
Encourage teacher collaboration by limiting district Common Planning Times.
Continue emphasis on staff development for Common Core and smarter testing of concept mastery.
Give teachers time and support to learn to use technology for teaching and learning.

Continue professional development that comes from the teachers... establish professional learning communities driven by teacher interests.

Maintain highly qualified teaching staff, with ongoing professional development.

Student Assessment

Grades do matter, if the grading system tests cognition.

Reduce emphasis on grades.

Reconsider if there is better way than grades to provide feedback to middle school students.

Get rid of grades for sixth through ninth. Replace with qualitative feedback-- including "needs severe improvement " kind of language as necessary.

Kids don't have grades at Havens why do they need them at PMS?

Consider written evaluation instead of grades for middle school students.

Shift assessment to mastery model and provide depth opportunities.

Question assessments.

Encourage contribution to improving the world at large (as a focus) and de-emphasize (or eliminate-- e.g. Reed College? -- grade-based evaluation. Rely on evaluative comments and continuous improvement goals.

We need to walk the talk. Are we really teaching/fostering resiliency when student's grades are weighed 75% on test w no opportunity to retake?

Test

Support Services

Define a technology plan. In particular identifying how tech tools can provide better differentiation in a managed way.

Review tech and computer curriculum

More use of technology as a teaching tool.

Help students understand technology.

Teach children to use technology responsibly.

Restore library staffing and expand accessibility.

Libraries open 5 days/week all-day in every school and robust digital (child-safe) libraries which are accessible 24/7.

College Preparation

Connect with admissions counselors at colleges to understand shifting landscape so high school is connected to what is next.

Workforce Preparation

If we're earnestly interested in preparing students for "21st century jobs" (as opposed to merely using it as a metaphor for an unknowable future), we should understand what those jobs are and actually assess our education with respect to them...

Parent Education / Parent Role

Parents should be trained on the appropriate usage of they data they see when logging onto Infinite Campus; or restrict access.
How can parents help implement Common Core?
Set good examples for our kids.
Parents need to practice what we preach.
Have parents and students work as one, not two.
Continue to provide parent education about the signals they send to their children about what is important.
Help educate us parents about the kinds of failures that are educational -- and how and where we can safely let kids fail.
Leverage parents: Have specific Parent Ed classes on "Constructive Failure" (language to use, take-aways, "redemption" strategies).

Facilities

Improve middle school outdoor space.
Expand wood shop to a back space.
Provide excellent facilities for our students and staff.
Create a maker space (2).
Physical plant/'built environment' which promotes collaborative effort, human interaction (rather than digital), and mutual successes (rather than strictly independent/individual success).

Collaboration | Innovation | Open to Change and Adaptability

Value innovation.
FUND innovation.
Always be challenging assumptions. What is true now may not be true in a few years. Be willing to embrace new ideas and expose failures.
Continue dialog with all sections of the community. Help teachers redefine our teaching model and practice to develop more active learning with more project based approaches. It takes time to turn a big ship answer can do it slowly together one step at a time. Make sure to balance sustainability of earth's resources with use of technology lest the schools become their own "optic fibers" of teaching. Touch the earth and get dirty.
Promote resiliency, higher level thinking, and self-awareness.
Don't be afraid of being wrong.

Structure of Class / School Day / Homework

Reconsider homework approach including flipped classroom.
Less homework (2).
Break down the walls between class room. End age segregation.
The school district should think about the idea of "sensivity periods" when and what

are optimal windows for learning.
More school days so teachers are not in a rush. Full days from kindergarten.
More school days and full day from kindergarten onwards.
Reduce class sizes (they are NOT where they were ten years ago).
Consider changes to school day or year.
Have art be a period instead of elective.

Personnel

Support our teachers and administrators!
Make the teachers whole and make the children whole.
More culturally diverse instructors.
Convert art teacher positions to fulltime credentialed positions in elementary (2).

Communications

Let everyone's voice be heard.
Look for outsider perspectives.
Communication and collaboration (2).
Meet people where they are.
Listening can be engaged too. Not everyone needs to be outspoken.
Ensure info gathered today will be widely distributed AND assure those who could not be here that their input is encouraged and VALUED.
Parents, discuss this with parents. Teachers, bring this day back to your departments. Both need to be flexible during this exciting time of change.
Continue to have student voice in activities such as this. Very important.
Build a buzz around the benefits of common core, strategic thinking, technology to excite people about change.
Survey parents and students to get broad feedback on goals and themes.
Teach listening skills.
Synthesize and publicize findings from today to share with the broader community.
Revamp the communication process to improve effective meeting such as curriculum forum; much talking, no teeth in the process/outcome, real work, if any, happens off-line; could result in better engagement and involvement from stakeholders.
Develop a program for the different schools to communicate helpful information between the schools.
Survey PHS alumni.
Include graduate input in evaluation process.
Emphasis on communication and accountability with district policies.
Look at external and internal communication processes for improvement and streamlining (Infinite Campus (IC) websites, calendaring, internal sharing etched).
Connection and communication improvement with students, parents, and teachers.
Share information with the community in a consistent manner. Also provide "state of the school district" each year.

Share tech plan, Readers Workshop, Social Emotional Curricula, teacher evaluation with community.
Be patient.
Messaging re: parental involvement, elimination of homework, grades, mixed age interest groups.

Community Support

Increasing involvement across the community.
Survey the broader community and distill into top 5 skills we want PUSD kids to have.
How can we get financial support from non parent Piedmont residents?
Outreach efforts to the community need to happen more frequently than just when we need to pass a parcel tax or for a fundraiser.
Be willing to take risks as a community.
Utilize the resources in our community.

Goal-Setting, Planning, Assessment, and Implementation

Critically assess what is working or not working and develop a plan to address issues.
A plan, measures, buy in, accountability, action/engagement...lift off.
Share PUSD action plans with the community.
Continue to use what works and improve toward a common goal.
Follow through with sustainability and accountability.
Understand vs. Regurgitate: High hopes for Common Core

Long-term Planning

We need to determine if the themes/thoughts generated today represent the majority of stakeholders district-wide.
A plan to implement the ideas of today into an action plan.
Show how the main themes discussed here will be implemented.
Include teacher voices in the visioning on a continuous basis.
Defining the qualities of the 2020 graduate.

Other

Remember how good it feels to read a real book.
Creating creators.
Think as one.
Be willing to work for the good of all not just what benefits a few.
Prioritize
Less "busy work"
Focus on 1 thing so as not to get pulled into too many directions and maintain listening/openness.
Continue to believe that all things are possible.

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