

Community Conversations Report Out  
January 16, 2018

Community Conversations Report Out Notes  
January 16 4pm RHS Auditorium

WELCOME:

Refreshments and posters were on display before, during, and after the meeting. Posters will be displayed by the Colonial Restaurant in the coming weeks.

We encourage anyone interested in participating in any of our action groups to join us for a February 27 meeting at 4pm at Pell Elementary School library.

Colleen Burns Jermain, Superintendent opened the meeting.

Present at the meeting were 46 people representing City Council, School Committee, community members, two teachers, parents, students, and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kim Behan, Jared Vance RHS principal and Cathy Nash from the Superintendent's office. Student representatives from Young Voices along with other students were in attendance.

RECAP of DIALOGUE: Superintendent shared out the big areas that "bubbled up". They were:

- a. Communication
- b. Community
- c. Relationships- Diversity
- d. Skills, Jobs, Hands-On Learning, and Challenge - Have HIGH expectations for ALL

RECAP from FACILITATORS:

Facilitators from the five groups that conducted the four week sessions reported out to the audience. Comments from the facilitators:

1. Our group tried to reach out specifically to the Hispanic and less involved families and were not very successful. We need to think of other venues and approaches to reach our most disenfranchised populations.
2. Those that did attend contributed greatly.
3. All of the adults appreciated the students and their sharing their concerns and thoughts. The students were very impressive.
4. Students want to have more of a voice.
5. Students want to have more choices and hands on learning.
6. The facility needs attention.
7. Communication needs to improve and clear on where one goes to get information.
8. Staff needs to reflect and represent the student body; we need more teachers of color.
9. District needs to recruit more teachers.
10. Teachers do not seem to care or want to help students.
11. It is difficult to get help or we do not know where to go for help.

12. Need mentors for students.
13. Do not “pity” students- deal with them, help them, talk to them.
14. Treat all students the same- and do not think because one does not have full command of the English language that it directly correlates to their academic abilities or achievement.

The Superintendent presented certificates of appreciation to the facilitators.

#### Public Dialogue:

- Students matter and what they think matters. Expect the best from all.
- Discipline – bring issues out – respect goes both ways teacher/student; student/teacher
- High expectations for all students. Ask students what they want to do, what are their interests? What inspires them? Goals?
- Students need help with life skills and practical skills such as resumes, applications, checkbook balancing
- How are teachers going to be pulled in? Students need to know that someone cares and adults are paying attention. We have resources, but it will take everyone – parents and teachers.
- Students feel as though teachers don’t care
- Don’t treat students differently based on their academic or language abilities or their own personal situations. There needs to be equity in education – it will take everyone’s involvement.
- One Newport strategy to get the community into schools – guest speakers can talk about how their education led them to where they are – One Newport is working on this activity.
- Students want to hold focus groups for chronically absent students; one off campus, one during the school day, making a safe space, comfortable, and provide mentoring.
- Young Voices meets on Tuesday and they want to hear issues and help with solutions i.e. music rooms.
- For new students – ELL students need help in figuring things out and building relationships; how to bring kids back to school; need to start at TMS.
- ILP – each child needs a working document to document their profile and interests. Volunteers can possibly assist with this.
- Communication – one place for everyone to go for information. The tools -- many different platforms are being used. Is there a Spanish version of website? Bilingual handouts needed.
- Perceptions and stereotypes hurt students. Students at RHS are proud of their school and there has been a huge change for the better with Mr. Vance. He needs people to help him to promote change.

At the end of the meeting the Superintendent listed the topics for action:

1. Equity- Bring a committee together and charge with action steps
2. Focus on students earlier – possibilities, future, and make sure they know that adults care
3. Guidance and ILP – community members are willing to help in this effort- recruit
4. Conversations at RHS, Curriculum, and DM Group need to be brought to TMS - focus on TMS more and prepare students and families for high school
5. Keep students leading conversations- part of the groups and leading them
6. Diversity – we need more bilingual paras/teachers, RHS pilot program, and community assistance with ELL
7. Students voiced the need for more support with soft skills, resumes, balancing a check book, applications. Students notice the new building principal Mr. Vance cares and is trying to make changes, but he cannot do it alone.

Next steps – Action plan meeting - February 27