



Incline Schools Focus Groups Notes

Group: Elementary parents

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Summary Comments / Notes:

1. Are you satisfied with the level of education students are receiving?

No. Teachers are nice, but seem rushed...only have five hours of instruction time. That's too little time to drill down in the instruction.

Science is getting short shrift. School day is too short. Gifted children are bored.

Standards are too low since they come from the state level. There are low expectation for the students.

Yes, fairly satisfied. There is room for improvement and am looking forward to child being in G&T.

G&T curriculum should be offered to all students. It has a good science component.

There doesn't seem to be much student accountability expected from the teachers. No consequences if work is not turned in. As a result, my child's attitude toward school is changing. Doesn't take it seriously enough.

Consensus: G&T is great. General instruction not challenging enough. Expectations are too low.

Consensus: Six out of ten parents feel that level of education is satisfactory, but could improve.

2. Do you believe you/your children are actively engaged and enjoy the learning process at school?

My students are a bit bored.

There is too much testing. Have loved all my kids' teachers, but feel that their teaching is compromised by too much testing.

Teachers are frustrated, but don't feel that they can express themselves.

Individuals are not getting enough stimulation.

Why don't you do focus groups with the parents who have pulled their students out of public school?

Parents in this community are not united.

Consensus: The change in Incline Village's demographics has compromised class instruction.

Consensus: Middle schoolers are underserved.

3. If you could change one thing in Incline school to improve student learning, what would that be?

Segregate by ability. High-achievers are underserved.

End social promotion.

Teachers have to deal with disciplinary problems instead of teaching. The principal should be dealing with the discipline.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] administrator [REDACTED]

Comment [T1]: This zeros right in in Kathleen— suggest this sentence be blacked out too.

4. How important is it to have a challenging learning environment? What does this mean to you?

Consensus: Very important.

Students in between G&T and the ones with discipline problems and/ or remedial learners are underserved (the majority of students.)

Consensus: Teachers and kids are intimidated.

Consensus: End social promotion. Teach to the individual student's capability.

Consensus: Group by ability/level..."tracking." This may be politically incorrect, but social promotion isn't working especially in math and science.

Consensus: We need more science.

5. Respondents to the recent survey identified instruction in science as critically important. What are your thoughts on that?

Consensus: Absolutely!

Why can't science be a "special" instead of "library?" (They can't even check out books!)

Would like to have a curriculum review.

Failure should not be an option. This should include everyone from administrators on down and including students. Have high expectations of everyone!

Science is very important. Studies show that the more science and math younger students have, the more they achieve academically in subsequent years.

6. Respondents to the recent survey identified instruction in innovation/technology as critically important. What are your thoughts on that?

It's important. They need to learn keyboarding. Computer only comes up in the "rotation" of the four "specials" (P.E., Library, Computer, Science).

Inconsistency in instruction. Seems to be a lot of chaos in scheduling. Haphazard. Parents feel like they can't keep their kids organized.

Consensus: Yes, technology is important. We need to keep up with what is current.

7. How important is it to have a vertically aligned curriculum among the three Incline schools?

Most difficult transition was from middle to high school.

Scared of middle school. Heard it's an academic wasteland.

We took our son out of middle school. He's at Truckee. We felt middle school was teacher-centered, not student-centered.



8. As you know, the Incline Great Schools committee is focused on making Incline Schools great. Do you have any closing thoughts on this?

Make expectations high. Accountability for everyone. Test and teach to individual ability.

Community needs to do more to make us great. We need to agree on better programming. Science should be mandatory, along with math and P.E.

Numbers are deceiving. We need to pay for these things if we want them.

Parents want children to reach their potential. Education needs to serve this. Should be facilities for good education. We need the funding for good schools.

Need a "student-focused" approach.

Need a culture of respect. Students aren't respectful enough. There is no discipline.

The community needs to heal and come back together (after the IB conflict.)

Accountability of students is critically important. Hold back those that need it. Serve the high-achievers.

Teaching Spanish is important and seems to be going away next year. (IB Spanish?) Spanish education seems to be good in elementary school and a failure in middle school.

Priority needs to be to raise academic standards. Get more parents involved, not just the usual suspects.

Let's have parent training so that they know how to help their children in school.

There needs to be an integration of science and math and critical thinking skills. Make priorities at a school-level and make people stick to it.

We have to have alignment among schools. Don't know how to achieve this.

