



Washoe County
School District

Incline Schools Focus Groups Notes

Group: High School Parents

Date: 3.31.2011

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Summary Comments / Notes:

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

Worried about the future of education for Incline schools due to decreasing enrollment.

Students in middle school have not been prepared enough for the high school curriculum. They feel the middle school students lack the support they need.

Should be a much easier transition between middle school and high school.

There is a big gap between AP, Honors and regular classes. They would like more guidance from the counselors.

Consensus: Half the group feels satisfied the level of education their students are receiving; the other half does not.

Consensus: The majority of the focus group is very excited to have Stacey Cooper as their new principal and feels she will work closer with the teachers to build a better education system.

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

The school needs more counselors to be more actively engaged with the students. The middle school counselors are for more behavioral issues. The high school counselors are more for future guidance.

Some students appear not to be as motivated if they're not enrolled in AP or Honors classes.

The students who are not as engaged should have more choices offered such as vocational schools.

Consensus: The majority of the focus group agrees half of the students are engaged and enjoy the learning process and half are not.

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

To bring in more counselors and mentors.

They would like to see more community support. They feel the community has been divided and needs to come together.

Consensus: They feel the process already has started by bringing in a new principal. They would like to give Stacey Cooper more time to make these changes.

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

They're worried that more students will leave high school if they're not consistently challenged.

Would like to see more expanded interaction with teachers.

More hands-on teaching.

Have teachers teach classes in their area of expertise.

Consensus: They feel it's very important; the majority believes the teachers need to keep the students challenged and engaged so the students will stay more interested.

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

Would like to see more science at the elementary school level.

Would like to see a more challenging science curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels.

Very committed and highly-skilled science department at the high school.

Challenging grading criteria at the AP/Honors level.

Consensus: They would like see more hiring of science teachers at the high school.

Consensus: The entire focus group feels that science is very critical for a child's education.

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

With technology in today's world always changing, they would like to see the District stay more current with new computers and computer software.

Consensus: Would like to see more computer technicians available for the students.

Consensus: They would like to see more new computers purchased for their school.

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

They would like to have a new curriculum put in place from the high school down to the elementary level so teachers would have a new direction to teach students to prepare for the next grade level.

This shouldn't be very hard to accomplish with only three schools in the Incline area.

The middle school does not prepare the students for the amount of homework required by the high school.

Consensus: Having the leadership of a new principal and vice principal should make the process of new alignment possible.

Consensus: The students coming from middle school are not prepared enough for the high school math curriculum.

Consensus: The parents would like to see better communication skills between the middle and high school. They feel the elementary and middle school already have achieved this.

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

The parents would like to see more elective choices for the students.

They feel the enrichment classes each day are too long.

A lot of disparity between teachers.

Would like to see teachers teaching more classes they love to teach, not classes that are not in their field of expertise.

Consensus: Teachers need to be more excited about teaching. The parents would like to see them go to more professional development seminars to keep them motivated so the students will stay more engaged and involved in the classroom.