



Washoe County
School District

Incline Schools Focus Groups Notes

Group: HS students

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Summary Comments / Notes:

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

Consensus is on and off. One student was in Honors and Advanced Placement classes, but this year they couldn't fit AP into their schedule. They had to drop down to earth science and didn't enjoy being in the lower-level course. The gap between the expectations for AP courses and lower-level classes is too big. Student said teachers of lower-level courses expect too little of their students.

Student also said it's hard to get into the classes they want.

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

One student said AP classes are fun because they are more work. It's more advanced; therefore, they want to work to keep up with it and achieve good grades. Student said they want to work harder. One student is wanting to study art in college.

Students agreed it can be harder to focus on what they want with the classes currently being offered.

One student said they slept through class because it's hard to become engaged when classes are so dull.

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

Students said they would like to see more options in the classes offered. They want to see more college-preparatory classes in which they wouldn't have to take the AP exam but are still learning what they need to be ready for college.

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

They said it's usually important. They said they don't need to do a lot of homework but want to make the time they spend in class count. One student said that in their AP [REDACTED] class they used to get a lot of work, which this student enjoyed. Over time, however, the teacher started showing more movies in class and then students received more homework. Student said, "Why doesn't the teacher teach us something instead of learning something new at home?"

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

Students said it's important, but when they took their high school proficiency exam, they did not have chemistry or biology yet, so they didn't know basic information such as how many layers there are in the atmosphere. They said there's nothing challenging available in current science classes.

Students said during their first semester this year, they only had a total of 45 minutes of homework throughout the whole semester.

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

Both students said they have not learned very much about technology other than having heard about the dangers of using the Internet. One student took two math classes – algebra and advanced algebra 3 – and had a small technology section taught during one quarter.

In social studies, they said they would rather learn about what's going on in the world today rather than events of the past.

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

They said it was easy to move up along their grade levels. They said the transition from middle to high school was "a breeze."

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

If they could make one change in Incline schools, one student said they would like to take classes that better prepare them for college. They would like to see more rigor, especially in the junior and senior years, and have teachers grade them as a college professor would.

Members said students need to learn how to follow the curriculum and think like a college student. If they turn in a paper late, they should not get a second chance. Students said they would like to see more collegiate ideals instilled in high school classrooms. They said it's difficult to turn in assignments late, yet still get some leeway and credit for it anyway. They said that skews expectations for students.