



Washoe County
School District

Incline Schools Focus Groups Notes

Group: High School Teachers

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Summary Comments / Notes:

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

Would like to see more alternative options for the lower performing students.

Consensus: The majority feels their spending a lot of wasted effort on students that perform at the lower end of the spectrum due to their lack of motivation.

Consensus: The higher performing students are more involved in extra-curricular activities at the school (ie. Sports, drama, ROTC) The middle performing students are doing fine; it's the lower performing students that are having the hardest time.

Consensus: The majority of the focus group agrees they have a very strong AP curriculum for the advanced students, an average level of education for the middle performing students, but not as strong for the lower performing students.

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

In the classroom they feel the lower performing students are more divided and not engaged because of all of the extra-curricular activities that surround the Lake Tahoe area (ie, skiing, boating, hiking, etc...)

Consensus: Half of the students are engaged and half are not.

Consensus: The majority of the focus group agrees the upper level students are engaged and enjoy the learning process at Incline H.S. more then other high schools in our district, due to the fact they have a very active student body.

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

There's been a loss of respect for the teachers by the students. They feel the students should be held more accountable for their actions.

Would like to see more immediate disciplinary actions for the students.

They're open for outside help to educate students, but are worried about outsourcing due to the possibility of losing jobs.

Student population has not changed greatly in the last five years. Incline HS has lost allocations in Math, English, Science, Special Education, Music, PE, ROTC, Counselor, Library, and Attendance Dean.

Their administration is overloaded with all of the same requirements as larger schools, but with a smaller student base.

Consensus: They would like to see more allocations for teachers.

Consensus: They would like one main administrator that has lived in the Tahoe area that understands the dynamics of the community. The position of an Area Superintendent is to align the Incline schools. They're very happy with Nancy Sanger, but they would like to see a full-time administrator on campus.

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

They hear from the parents that the high school challenges their students at a much higher level than the middle school.

Consensus: They feel it's more challenging for the lower level performing students to blend in with the higher performing students.

Consensus: They feel it's very important; the majority believes they teach a very rigorous and challenging curriculum.

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

Elementary school parents would like to hire another science teacher.

They have a very skilled science department at the high school.

The science teachers are overwhelmed.

Consensus: They would like more science teachers for their school.

Consensus: The majority feels that the allocation for the science department is not enough to meet the requirements.

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?

Incline High School has one computer cart, but they have to reserve it in advance to use it.

The portable computer cart is hard to access because it is located in another teacher's classroom.

The school has one computer cart and nineteen computers.

Consensus: The computers they have are outdated.

Consensus: They need more new computers.

Consensus: The majority of the group feels they have low allocations for computer teachers.

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

Very big difference in studying skills and homework skills from middle school to high school.

The teachers feel they have to teach basic math skills for the first couple weeks of school to get caught up to start algebra, then they have to play catch up the rest of the year.

They only get to meet with the staff of the middle school and elementary school once a year.

Would like to meet more often, once a month.

Need more economic support.

Classroom observation between the middle school and the high school were teachers would trade job positions for a day.

Consensus: Would like more leadership to provide the guidance for alignment, a new position. "Facilitator"

Consensus: They feel the students coming from middle school are not ready for algebra at the high school level.

Consensus: The majority feels it's very important from 8th grade to 9th grade, but has been very difficult.

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 teachers feel there's a big concern from the parents why teachers are on the Incline Great Schools committee.

Concerned about the District using the data as a scorecard for the rest of the District.

Consensus: They get the feeling this is stage 2 of the IB program (ie, makeover of IB).

Consensus: They would like to deal with the core issues of education; IB is breaking the community apart, which they feel breaks the schools apart.