

Dialogue Session Notes

February 20, 2010

Community Engagement Session Feb. 20, 2010 – Boulder Senior Center

Miscellaneous Comments Made During Introductions

- District too often addresses itself primarily (solely) to parents.
- Parent (who notes she is Jewish) often watches how the school calendar is put together.
- What leads to successful employment? How do we prepare kids for the world THEY are going to step out into? ****The world is changing!****
- Work ethic ... what do we see as success?
- Is it academic excellence?
- Are there BVSD programs to develop OTHER employee skills? (asks owner of machine shop)
- Interested in training students for all sorts of careers, encouraging some to be teachers
- MEAC works to ensure kids of color, GLBTQ kids get equitable education and opportunities.
- Bilingual education is VERY important. The world of 2010 is VERY different from the world of the 1970s – GLOBAL.
- For employer hiring interns, criteria are work ethic and teamwork, being helpful to others.
- Often kids who have done well in BVSD have a sense of entitlement. Community member wishes her BVSD grad kids had more of that immigrant, scrappy attitude and drive.

What Defines Student Success?

- Responds successfully when challenged. (Don't give up. Don't whine. Etc.)
- Flexible, self-managing, initiative, independent
- Good to put them in groups – they learn to work with one another AND they learn more.
- LONG view – realistically challenged (for each specific student's abilities)
- Community member worries about sense of entitlement in BVSD.
- Students sometimes seem to be satisfied by an "A" rather than for making an accomplishment.
- BVSD grad says students DO feel sense of accomplishment for getting good grades – that IS an accomplishment. Says, "We need measurements."
- Successful student HAS that desire to succeed, to be better. Student says, "Education, being in sports, prepared me for my job success."
- What contributed to her success?
 - 1) Drive to succeed from within
 - 2) My parents pushed me
 - 3) Peers/other students (competition)
- Kids who didn't have these influences sometimes got left behind. They didn't stand out; teachers might have thought they didn't care.
- This successful student said maybe 70 percent of the other kids in her school COULD have been more successful than they were.
- Grades are losing some meaning due to grade inflation. Teachers are losing the ability to give Ds and Fs.
- We've sort of lost sight of what a grade means. It's ok to get a B.
- The occasional "wake up" that comes from getting a bad grade can be valuable.
- "We heard a rumor that the superintendent said BVSD is trying to eliminate ALL Ds and Fs."
- Teacher says in his school they are not allowed to give a zero.
- Social/emotional stability of student is important, too.
- Success is looking at the Whole Child (a comprehensive look at a student).
- Parent pushed for two years to have son tested for learning disabilities, finally got the testing for her son and they worked out an ILP (Individualized Learning Plan) – they learned he is NOT an auditory learner, more of a hands on learner. Platt Choice has been a great fit. "He LIKES school now," she says. Experiential education has turned him around.
- NOT everyone is a traditional learner.

- Back to topic of being forced to give 50% just for showing up... “Gentleman’s A at Harvard” means the student didn’t do the work.
- Regarding the culture of BVSD parents – note that the parent whose story is reported above is white, highly educated...and it took her TWO years to get her child tested. What about a less educated parent? A parent who doesn’t really know how to work with the system?
- What makes an **unsuccessful** student? One who loses that drive to excel?
- How accepted does a student FEEL in school?
- What are we offering for that student who is NOT going to college?
- These students need a STRONG skills set:
 - * social skills
 - * well-roundedness
 (Can they apply for services they might need? Work with bureaucratic systems? Do they know how to write a resume and cover letter, to arrive at an interview clean, interact w/ people, etc.?)
- BVSD graduate who knew kids who COULD have succeeded but didn’t says one of them just didn’t have parents who were THERE.
- Community member who is father of a few BVSD graduates says they are all successful in their own ways:
 - * work well with others
 - * engaged, confident
 - * have a lot of EMPATHY for others (didn’t get that from BVSD)
 - * like to help OTHERS be successful
 - * value others and different ideas/views
 - * want to contribute something to society

How Do We MEASURE Student Success?

In a perfect world, how would YOU like to measure the rate of success?

- Success is relative, so measurement needs to be relative – Body of Evidence
- ****Graduate Rate**** (completion rate) is a good measure.
- CDE’s new Colorado Growth Measure is a “body of evidence” measure.
- You have to look at the GROWTH.
- Learning IS our primary goal.
- Kids need to learn how to fail and learn how to resolve conflict.
- Let’s measure level of volunteerism (parent engagement) in the school and amount of involvement students have with activities (extra-curricular).
- ****Disaggregate Graduation Rates****
There should NOT be differences between the groups if you are successful.
- Biggest single factor in student success is the individual teacher.
- BVSD’s biggest failure is that we rate so low in the percentage of \$ that goes to the teachers, says community member, who quotes a statistic he read recently saying that 42 percent of our tax dollars goes to the teachers.
- Cherry Creek puts more money into teachers than BVSD does.

Two Measures of Success:

1. The best way to get student success is to make the operation more efficient, have less programs and fewer people to run them (in central administration. Keep classes as small as possible. Hire and KEEP the best teachers possible.
 2. Parent engagement and youth engagement: Increase that in the various school and district teams (Rtl, etc.). These teams are usually populated entirely or mostly by BVSD staff. The expectation needs to be that these teams have representation of parents and students, also that this representation reflects the demographics of that school or the district.
- Setting goals (and knowing how to reach them) is another “success” quality. Ask students, “How well do you think you achieved your goals?” (Parent says Platt Choice does this, has students set two academic goals and one personal goal.)

- Goals – short term, mid and long term
- New Vista’s culminating project cited as a good measure of success – it is the achievement of a long-term goal.
- Climate survey that each school does is an important measure, too. (Parent, Student & Staff)
- Machine shop owner notes she is not seeing much offered like shop, mechanics, electrical work, etc. in the curriculum.

How Can We SUPPORT Student Success?

If we presume 75 percent of students COULD be more successful but are somehow disengaged, how can the community GIVE those students the support of teacher attention, mentors, etc.? (What they are sometimes NOT getting at home from parents, family.)

1. Early Childhood Education (Prevent achievement gap from happening in the first place.)
2. Organizations like Impact on Education
3. Volunteers (parents AND community)
4. Financial donations
5. “Fringe” kids are retained by programs that give them opportunities to do things they ARE good in. Identify those programs. Arts and athletics are important.
6. Support institutional equity work, training teachers and staff on how to ensure equity. Don’t cut THAT program (equity).
7. Students are affected enormously by their peers. MIX students – integrate. (Community member gives positive rating to Casey in this regard.)
8. Reach out to mental health, public health resources to help support schools.
9. District consideration of communities in calendar development (i.e., Jewish holidays, like Passover in relation to spring break)
10. Look at who IS succeeding and identify why – define Best Practices.
11. Need to put ALL schools in a positive light, even if their scores aren’t good. Stop saying “deficient, not making AYP,” etc.
12. Start working with kids AND parents very early on (read to your child, turn off the TV, etc.) Every parent wants THEIR child to succeed. Identify ways they can help – educate the parents. Says, “Daily Camera is desperate for stories.”

Summarization Statements

- Student success piece was very rich, well-organized (define, measure and support)
- Likes the “immigrant, scrappy mentality” idea
- “Project Success” – Google it – a nice measure
- More money for teachers
- More resources for students
- Questions – How to value teachers more?
- Surviving companies are more efficient, becoming flatter, fewer management staff.
- Higher percentage to teachers (more than 42 percent)
- Lower percentage to administration
- Less administration, fewer programs (and people to manage them), fewer layers (Look at Google business structure.)
- Suggestion re: Budget Forums – People need to talk about EQUITABLE distribution of resources, ensure resources also go to support students who are NOT successful.
- Wants a forum scheduled at a place where Dr. King can meet with members of the low-income community.

Community Engagement Session Feb. 20, 2010 – Broomfield

What IS a Successful Student?

Socially Engaged
Emotionally Mature
Cognitively Aware
Capable in Language Arts – Reading/Writing
Ability to function in a group
Active participant
Focus on the “Whole Child”
As children grow: Increase academic proficiency without forgetting the “whole child”

How do adults intervene?

Important to address home life issues, parental support
Address missing programs for highly talented kids
Provide a broad spectrum of support
Let students know where to go to be safe or kids “check out”

- Kids need “one to one” time with adults
- Need to teach students problem solving skills
- Need to teach multiple negotiating/conflict resolution skills
- Parental support crucial
- School picks up if family unable to support beyond academics
- Whole Child critical – not sure how teachers are trained for this
- How do we differentiate to meet each student’s need?
- Materials need to be updated
- Sometimes feel “toes are stepped on” of parents who are engaged
- Student’s desire to learn is crucial
- Diversity important
- Only one path to success applied to every student a problem
- Parent engagement varies widely due to financial circumstance
- Success must be taught/modeled
- Cultural expectations of success and opportunity vary widely
- Connection to society and feeling “valued” in the community vital
- Personal academic growth most important

Counter Arguments:

- There has been a breakdown of the orderly learning environment
- Schools are for academics – family teaches values
- Lowest common denominator teaching needs to change
- Special needs student mainstreaming negatively impacts gifted student learning – not getting adequate tax dollar return
- Student growth focus reduces achievement
- Stick to basics
- Never give grades
- Counter arguments heard every day in every Broomfield school
- “Fair” does not equal “Equal”

Re: “Fair” does not equal “Equal”(Follow Up)

Schools must:

- Differentiate instruction and resources
- Allocate resources toward needs
- Differentiate expectations both academically and socially
- Meeting needs means addressing each child’s needs.

Fair IS Equal

- Still heard in schools

- Disagreement over policy NOT a reason for not meeting student needs
- Broomfield parent challenged by SIX school districts

Summary

- “Whole Child” approach
- What defines a “successful family”?
- How do we differentiate?
- State funding/control

How Do We MEASURE Student Success?

What evidence needed?

- Long-term perspectives must be assessed
- Reading a key component
- Three things:
 - * Scrap CSAP
 - * Measure skills/knowledge/ability
 - * Continuous assessment
- Shake up tests/Schools teaching to CSAP
- Society wants accountability
- Challenge is there to measure success
- Must have data
- Better metrics crucial
- Early childhood data collected through multiple observations
- “Creative Curriculum”
- Better differentiation
- Must have a metric with a differentiated instruction
- Growth rates must differentiate as well
- Equity must not come at expense of excellence
- Evaluations for TAG need fixing
- Standards based grading not a good indicator of academic achievement
- Open up TAG programs
- Being able to attend college of their choice
- Elimination of class rank BAD
- Use auditory processing model
 - * immersion in computer based approach
 - * daily measures
 - * regular parent meetings
 - * differentiation

Summary

- Long term approach needed
- Reading must be emphasized
- No more CSAP!
- Variety of assessments
- Accountability needed
- Measuring “Whole Child” is critical
- Closing achievement gap important
- Fix BVSD TAG model
- Going to college important but not always the four-year model
- New methodologies/metrics for assessment needed
- E.C.E. important – can be at many locations as long as it is “rich”
- Student Peer program – peer to peer approach – “untapped resource” – improves internalization and ability of students to articulate
- Arts and athletics a valuable approach

Counter Arguments

- What do the measurements get interpreted as?
- Learning is learning – why the emphasis on gap closing?
- Must accept “Achievement Outliers”

- Questions “Achievement Gap” existence
- Too focused on it – Growth is the reality
- Early investment important
- Success due to key program availability – extracurricular vital
- Good, caring teachers are key – education is the great equalizer
- Just want the best for my kids
- Education also the great divider not leveler
- Look at German System: High School tracking provides supports – life skills matter
- Upping High School standards to meet higher education entrance requirements

Community Support

What can be done?

- Pay taxes
- Model values – integrity, work ethic, personal responsibility, “Give Back” – Community must respect these values.
- Broomfield united in school offerings – Joint OE across district lines
- Broomfield Advisory Group to superintendent needs to be reinstated
- Reconnect BVSD and Broomfield
- One church held two-week early math summer tutoring
- Focus on continuous learning
- Support school grants
- Creatively recognize diversity of achievement – arts/athletics, etc.
- Recognize peer-to-peer senior, parent assistance
- Go with year round school – current model outmoded
- Colorado education tax structure needs overhaul
- Adopt more technology in schools
- Understand TABOR/Gallagher etc. negative impacts
- Start a multi-district Broomfield Learning Fair – including private schools
- Advertising citywide for “Broomfield identification”
- Engage business communities:
 - 1) Internships
 - 2) Life skills
 - 3) Career transitions

Summarization Statements

Common ground is still needed

- Unify Broomfield community effort
- Focus on “Whole Child”
- Funding challenges / How should they be addressed?
- Diversity of assessment
- Support district with state
- Differentiate instruction

Latino Community Engagement Session

Intercambio de Comunidades
4735 Walnut St., east Boulder
February 20th, 2010

Set up at 8:30 AM, Session 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM, Debrief and Clean Up 11:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Facilitator: Jaqueline Muller

Translator: Rosemary McCoy

Recorder: BVSD Parent Liaison for Student Success Eugenia Brady

School Board Observers: Ken Roberge and Lesley Smith

Participants:

Non-Profit Community Leader: Norma Fuentes

Parent: Milton Rodríguez

Parent: Mónica Dorado

Parent: Roberto Colín

Parent: Vicente Martínez

Parent: Elvira Escalante

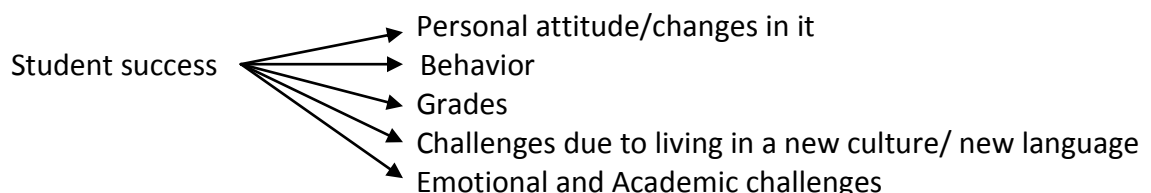
Parent: Iván Montes

1- What is student success? What does student success mean in BVSD?

- The student is able to achieve his/her goals and is satisfied with his/her achievements.
- Student feels safe and is encouraged to go to College.
- Students enjoy going to school and receive encouragement to do so.
- Students achieve goals and dreams
- Student leadership- awareness to do his/her best.
- Family support- enthusiasm- (many times enthusiasm depends on money- you need money to go to school- that can be a barrier)
- Need of legal documents- another barrier

2- How can the success be measured?

- Student express his/her success in her/his general personal attitude
- Parent support to keep on going to school
- Lack of motivation and frustration is the result of lack of resources and lack of legal documents
- How can we **see** student success?

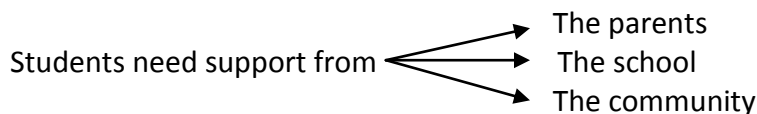


Students Success Barriers:

- Lack of motivation and frustration as a result of lack of resources and lack of legal documents
- Students awareness of no possibility of post-secondary education options
- Students' frustration can result in aggression
- Academic area: information cannot be retained in student's mind under stress (home).
- Students forced to leave – go back to Mexico- lack of opportunities in the U.S.

3- How do we define Student Success?

- Student needs self-esteem to achieve goals
- Teacher's or adults' attitude can cut off students dreams: as a result students get depress and not everybody can fight that condition
- Need of parents to support children psychologically and emotionally
- Parents need to be informed



4.- Parents expectations:

- Value respect and confidentiality from children: their contributions for family at home
- Parents working together with school and community
- BVSD/parents to be able to strengthen discipline and character through sports, arts, etc.
- Parents need to be aware of physical, emotional and psychological changes that adolescents are experiencing
- Support for all students with different languages, race, ethnicities
- Parents need to be involved/engaged in schools/education- low income families challenged to attend meetings
- Need of a better understanding of Latino/Hispanic culture in BVSD schools
- District needs to work *directly* with parents and motivate them *first*, so they can motivate their children
- Awareness of Cultural crashes that students experience when they first come to U.S.
- District awareness of how budget cuts will affect students
- District awareness of media misrepresentation of Latino/Hispanic culture/community
- More programs for parents in BVSD
- Latino parents as volunteers
- More support for students in sports, arts, music, etc.
- More workshops for parents: so we know “Where are we going” – “How to get there”
- More support for parents at school level
- Need to organize Latino parents at district level
- Please keep providing more meetings like this one!