

Community Forum Notes
Albert Einstein High School
September 22, 2005

Topic A: Early Success and Class Size Reduction

- Communication regarding book lists from schools is needed
- All day K and reduced class size has made a difference
 - How does this (all day K) get rolled out to remainder of county schools given budget constraints?
- If successful, everyone is happy—if not successful, what are plans for these students?
- Class size at all levels and special education should be included (in reduced size)
- High Schools need to be reduced
- Prepare students better for moving into AP—difficult to support students with larger class sizes
- Split classes.....split 3rd/4th class—disaster, just wrong! However, there is support for splits done for special circumstances
- In moving kids into more rigorous prep—often with out prep., must look at class size and needed support!
- As we look at including special education students into more rigorous classes—it’s a parallel to support smaller class size
- Issue of highly qualified teachers, especially in correlation with class size needs to be examined
- Transition time at secondary level is too short
- Students as secondary level should get more homework
- Concern about MCPS programs being as rigorous as private school programs
- Concern about extra-curricular (beyond curriculum) activities that will extend students’ knowledge (ex. Field trips to local museums, D.C., etc.)—Need more of these!
- Expand ESOL from 1-3 to 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
- Have key person at middle and high school that will be a “contact” for concerns, etc.
- Need for translator at back-to-school nights, etc. – so parents can be more involved
- At middle school and high school not enough staff members to maintain and create “smaller learning communities” – increase staff to support this!
- All day K Good!
- Class size reduction
- Full day kindergarten
- Building from the ground up and it has been successful
- Reading intervention
- Secondary size inconsistent
- Staffing not supported or insufficient
- Small class size in elementary schools where kids are struggling
- Focus on those who missed initiatives
- Gap between primary and elementary
- More community involvement
- Paperwork is impacting recognition of early success is not following the children
- Not enough slots of preK, Head start

- Cut down on verbiage message condensed and clarified – different languages include the need as well as strengths
- Work with constituent groups more directly
- Information distributed widely and more creative

On target:

- small class size
- reading intervention projects
- gains from preK/HS and full day K
- reduced or elimination of combo classes due to extra staffing
- increased support from trained paraeducators (study skillful teachers)
- same training for early childhood special education
- community organizations partnerships

Falling short:

- need for general education and special education to be trained together
- publicly funded program for all pre K students to pick up any physical, emotional, or academic needs
- funding for mental health needs at all levels
- less time for music, art, PE because of the addition of staff to reduce class size (ripple effect) not enough classrooms, materials, resources
- More class reduction at the middle school and high school level
- More realistic projections
- Whole staff trained in positive behavior strategies
- Better and more recruitment of special services (speech, occupational therapist, physical therapist)
- Create FLES programs for all students, tuition waivers
- Don't restrict access to foreign language programs
- Small class size to promote to the least restrictive environment and a highly qualified teacher in every classroom
- Losing highly qualified teachers because of high cost of living in Montgomery County

Topic B: Students with Special Needs

- Need better communication from school regarding initiating conversations about moving students to higher levels—more rigorous curriculum
 - Schools need to take greater initiative to contact parents (who may not have language skills in standard English)
- Need greater communication regarding county services that are provided in native languages (especially at enrollment, transitions)
- Quality of ESOL teachers questioned—Korean students are usually very shy, will not raise hands or talk; sometimes material is too easy—but students will not let teachers know this
- Communication between school and community—both are heard
- Make sure when interpreter is needed, it comes from neutral interpreter so it is not swayed either way

- Needed special education services must be provided to all students—can't refuse because they "don't have these, etc..."
- Parents of ESOL students need services of translators to support even when students graduate from ESOL program
- New ESOL teacher—non-native speaker (has accent) need native-speaker ESOL teachers, so students can understand them
- Would like foreign language in addition to native language for ESOL students—have had difficulty finding program/services for ESOL students
- Homework good, but parents don't read English
- After school home work club would be better than translating into Vietnamese
- More than two hours for part time translator at elementary school
- Reading intervention and Head start good
- Parents need help in helping children at home. It would be useful to have more help for children (by the time parents learn English, it's too late to help their children)
- More help for children at school and to help parents help their children
- Good class size 15 at elementary level, math good but need more English help. The earlier the support, the better (elementary than high school easier)
- Curriculum/staffing for ESOL: need more English classes—very early grades
- Some programs are slower – children ask parents but parents can't help
- Need after school programs, then parents wouldn't be with out help for their children. After school must be someone at the school to help with homework, etc.
- Parents are told by MCPS staff to read to children in Vietnamese
- Special education—resource room from 1 per day to 3 hours per week at Glen Haven
- Translators needed for IEP meetings
- Need: civic ed class (in Vietnam – human relations, intell dev – trust – honesty- curtsey – loyalty)
- When Vietnamese children frightened, they are reticent to tell parents (some Vietnamese children are made fun of if they don't speak English well or take their own lunches)
- Need more bilingual help
- Must be community friendly
- Avoid acronyms
- Use community people to help distribute information, to put in format or writing what is available
- Be aware of process programs cut back on information
- Team taught with special and regular education
- AP classes have helped
- Offer AP classes to broader classes
- Co-teach for ESOL
- Clarify least restricted environment
- ESOL – pullout for GT?
- Elementary schools lack of parent information
- Some need more emphasis on moving some from grade level to above grade level
- Need multi-lingual parent outreach coordinator
- Schools with high non English speaker parents
- Have access for all students to arts, etc.
- Support for non diploma

- Identification of kids that are under represented
- More minorities in AP program
- Communicating programs to down county

On Target:

- Serving general education and special education preK together
- Making inclusion work
- Development of standards based ESL curriculum
- Access to accelerated and enriched instruction increased
- More appropriate settings for 18+ special education
- ATT translation service
- Connect Ed

Falling Short:

- Parent outreach, especially ESL special education
- More bi-lingual front office, counselor, parent/community outreach
- Information is not getting to all parents
- More training on ATT translation service
- Staffing formula for special education, ESL, etc.
- Reading intervention programs for special education do not continue in middle school

Other Feedback

- No systems for highly qualified staff to the needy schools
- All initiatives are on target. We would like to see an expansion of all initiatives through middle and high school
- Expand parent outreach using best practices from throughout the county
- Make communication with parents simpler and less text heavy in multiple languages, including educating parents about programs for kids as they move thru the system
- We have had some success in early years. How do we continue these successes K-21 and catch up students who enter mid system or haven't benefited thru far?