

Middle School Student Focus Group

June 15, 2021

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

5th Grade Discussion

- What makes your school either safe or unsafe?
 - Unsafe
 - Need cameras in classrooms
 - Teachers on stairwells (unsafe)
 - Fights
 - Rules and dismissal
- How do you define the word orderly as it pertains to being at school?
 - Fights outside
 - Rules okay
 - Kids don't listen and don't care if they get in trouble
 - Rules and dismissal
 - Instigators
 - Do the same thing over and over
 - Threatening
- What would you like to see celebrated at school? How could this best be done?
 - Teachers celebrate
 - Moving Up day 8th grade
 - Set goals and work towards them
 - Incentives
 - Fun Friday
 - Breaks
- Learning
 - Lots of review/slow
 - Make learning into a game
 - No homework
 - Choice board
 - Projects
- Social Media
 - Kids take pictures and videos all the time
 - Posting when other don't want them to

6th Grade Discussion

- What makes your school either safe or unsafe?
 - Unsafe
 - Hallways and stairwells (mini fights that last only a few seconds so teachers don't know)
 - Waiting outside in AM to come in
 - 5th graders get into arguments "It's scary"
 - Safe in classroom and lunch (but pressed for time)
- How do you define the word orderly as it pertains to being at school?
 - Straight line
 - Following all the teachers' rules
 - Quiet and productive
 - Having an expected schedule
 - No fights
 - No individuality
- Should there be a way that kids can regularly communicate with school leaders about the workings of school (schedules, course content, procedures)?
 - No, too many kids, would be things that are not important
 - Think it should go to counselor first, then they tell administrators
- What would you like to see celebrated at school? How could this best be done?
 - LGBTQ and pride not acknowledge but other are
 - Like "learn a new language week"
 - Recognize birthdays
 - Celebrate different holidays or at least acknowledge they are happening
- What is the benefit of knowing about the professional learning of your teachers?
 - Not sure
- Student surveys suggest that students struggle with academic vocabulary. Do you feel this is the case? How might the school, as a body, best support students with learning academic vocabulary?
 - Vocabulary is difficult, sometimes teachers introduce it then don't bring it up for a few days but still expect you to remember
- How strong is the connection between what is taught and what is tested in your classes?
 - Strong connection, sometimes if you miss a class you miss that content entirely but most of the time questions have clearly been discussed specifically in classes
 - Not everything taught is tested, but that's ok
- If you are having trouble learning, do you seek out assistance? If not, why not? If yes, where do you go and how do you get the help you need?

- Depends on the class
- Some don't like peer help
- Some would rather look it up or ask parents
- Some ask right in the moment, in class
- What should schools know about student social media use? How does social media impact the schooling experience?
 - Social media on school property is school business
 - Student social media should be private, for parents to worry about, too much for schools to worry about
- Students should be able to talk to counselors about school's non-school issues (some kids don't have anyone else)
 - If a kid reports an off school grounds issue that isn't a big deal they (the school) shouldn't get involved
- Students should feel comfortable, like their teachers **could counsel** them (check highlight with scribe)
- Allow people to work at different paces (too slow, too repetitive)
- Classes should be formed based on how fast/easily they learn
- Need a break after NYS testing (rest of the day should be more carefree)
 - Some teams did, some had normal PM schedule

7th Grade Discussion

- What makes your school either safe or unsafe?
 - Fighting to be cool
 - Delays transitions
 - 5th grade teachers traveling with students is better
 - Stairwells - grade transitions
 - Special
 - Lunch
 - Too crowded
 - Bringing fights in from outside of school
 - Instagram - Batavia Fight Club 71+ accounts
 - Batavia Shade Room
 - Snapchat World Posts
 - Students in hallways distracting in different classrooms
 - Safe
 - School security
 - SRO
 - Fear of administration helped curb behaviors
 - Bathroom passes
 - Hallsweeps
- Should there be ways that kids can regularly communicate with school leaders about the workings of school (schedules, course content, procedures)?
 - Communication
 - Teachers in classroom
 - Loudspeaker announcements
 - Paper schedules
- What would you like to see celebrated at school? How could this best be done?
 - Spirit weeks
 - Spotlights - student and teacher
 - Birthday on Ts
 - Pictures of field trips
- Student surveys suggest that students struggle with academic vocabulary. Do you feel this is the case? How might the school, as a body, best support students with learning academic vocabulary?
 - Vocabulary challenges
 - math/science
 - Vocabulary with examples, not just definitions
- How strong is the connection between what is taught and what is tested in your classes?

- Progression of lessons is important, need to connect to one another
 - iReady 4 out of 5 didn't line up with course lessons
 - Point system not fair for higher levels
- If you are having trouble learning, do you seek out assistance? If not, why not? If yes, where do you go and how do you get the help you need?
 - Yes
 - Students
 - Teacher
- Grades at most two weeks after due
- If you were in charge...
 - Hats and hoods allowed (2 votes)
 - Dress code more equal
 - PD teachers - social/emotional
 - Answering students questions
 - Discipline - sent out after two strikes irrelevant
 - More pencils in classrooms
 - Food in vending machines
 - salad/snack bar
 - Cafeteria food needs improvement

8th Grade Discussion

- What makes your school either safe or unsafe?
 - SRO
 - Security officer
 - Teacher
 - Do not feel safe
- How do you define the word orderly as it pertains to being at school?
 - Walking right down hall
 - Following rules
- Should there be ways that kids can regularly communicate with school leaders about the workings of school (schedules, course content, procedures)?
 - Use suggestion box so they can say whatever
- What would you like to see celebrated at school? How could this best be done?
 - Diversity, like how we did it this year but kids were not really engaged or paying attention.
 - Grade - highlight them on screens
 - Recognize merit roll and honor roll with letters in the mail
- What is the benefit of knowing about the professional learning of your teachers?
 - Can have deeper conversations with teachers and ask more questions.
 - Helps us be more aware and not always wondering
- Student surveys suggest that students struggle with academic vocabulary. Do you feel this is the case? How might the school, as a body, best support students with learning academic vocabulary?
 - The words themselves are not tricky, but the way that certain questions are worded can make the overall question hard.
 - Possibly review difficult words more with kids who are struggling
 - Teachers ask clarifying questions when reading text that may have difficult words.
- How strong is the connection between what is taught and what is tested in your classes?
 - Most of the time what is taught is what we are tested on. There are some times when we have questions for things we have not learned.
- If you are having trouble learning, do you seek out assistance? If not, why not? If yes, where do you go and how do you get the help you need?
 - Sometimes but not usually in front of other kids - embarrassing to ask in front of others.
 - Will go to the teacher at the end of class to ask 1:1.
 - Will stay after for help or go on Google meet with the teacher.
 - Sometimes teachers will re-teach in class.

- What should school know about student social media use? How does social media impact the schooling experience?
 - Feel we should check in like one time every quarter to get a pulse on social media use.
 - A box to use to make anonymous reports of inappropriate social media use
 - Social media causes some drama and can carry over to school and interfere with learning.
 - Too much cell phone use in school and during class.
- Improve learning
 - incentives (candy)
 - Competitions
 - Move forward with teaching but go back to review
- Advice to teachers
 - Kids don't want to star at Chromebook
 - Let us pick our groups (to an extent)
 - Don't put them with kids they don't get along with
 - Not giving overwhelming homework
 - No homework on weekends
 - should have eased us back into work load
 - Not so much homework
 - Give kids option to check phones in case parents text.
- What can we do to support you?
 - Praise kids who do well
 - Try to get kids who need help to get them to stay without calling them out in front of others.
 - Create pods of kids to get help after school so they don't feel singled out
- Dress code
 - Needs to be updated
 - Feel kids are not distracted with shoulders
 - Who not hats? Never understood why not allowed, never taught reason.