

Tuesday, January 30, 2018 – Northwest Middle School

Group 1 – Adults/Parents:

1. What is Knox County Schools doing well?
 - Great Schools Partnership!
 - Listening to parents
 - Ombudsman!
 - Trying different innovative things in schools – Magnet, STEM
 - Funding a lobbyist (to increase BEP, fight vouchers)
 - Allows schools autonomy to solve school-related issues (“walk to school,” etc.)
 - Parent communication (e-mails, texts, calls). Early notifications for snow days
 - Community schools!
 - Programs for kids/Professional Development for staff
 - Diversification for learning

2. In what areas does Knox County Schools need to improve?
 - Communication method – some parents have no cell, twitter, etc.
 - Need written communication (i.e. flyers 1.5 weeks ahead) – multiple languages
 - Make data more understandable
 - Improve ability to get things translated
 - More translators needed
 - Pre-record certain messages (i.e. school closed due to snow) in other languages
 - Consider “push-in” ELL model in schools
 - More money for teachers, especially think of hard to fill areas
 - More grant writers to help with monetary deficits
 - Increase alternative paths for students before they are a discipline problem. Consider students who have life issues/emotional issues, etc., that need an alternative setting.
 - “Paper shortage!” If loose, won’t replace
 - How we choose gifted students and communicate with parents. How you serve, or not, gifted minority students

3. What would you like to see initiated?
 - Anti-drug initiative
 - Long-term plan to deal with space issues
 - Work with Avid. The “middle” kids need “extra” too

4. What else does KCS need to know?
 - Increase diversity of staff/teachers
 - G/T students of color are often not identified by teachers – it takes teachers of color to find them
 - Kids in certain areas (Maynard, Lonsdale, Beaumont, Western Heights, etc.) need their own middle school
 - Some teachers lack passion for students

Group determined themes:

- Innovative programs like Magnet and STEM
- Allows school autonomy to solve school-related issues
- Community schools
- Improve ability to get things translated
- More money for teachers
- Increase alternative paths for students before they are a discipline problem

Group 2 – Adults/Parents:

1. In what areas is Knox County Schools doing well?

- Lobbyist in Nashville
- Partnering with community and nonprofits in elementary schools
- Good building level communication
- Providing transportation
- Providing breakfast and lunch
- English instruction
- Good instructors, considering funding/staff
- Reaching out to immigrant families by providing translators and support and translating documents
- Services outside of instruction (healthcare)
- School choice within Knox County Public Schools

2. In what areas does Knox County Schools need to improve?

- Further grow partnerships
- Diversity training for teachers, administrators, all staff
- Bullying
- Suspension among minorities, EDA students and overall
- Better parking
- Improving literacy rates
- Increasing outside time
- Improve nutritious food options and education about nutrients
- More time for lunch
- Understanding why kids misbehave
- Address disparities between schools
- Feeder patterns researched and addressed for consistency

3. What would you like to see initiated in the future?

- Implement more restorative practices across all schools
- Provide funding to level the playing field for all schools
- Expansion of community schools
- Teacher raises
- More TA's
- Dedicated social worker for every school
- Yoga room

- Reducing testing in K and 1st grade
- Remodeling/renovating old schools
- More support for immigrant families

Group determined themes:

- Funding
- Bullying, diversity training, restorative practices – overall discipline
- Immigrant population is being support but some improvements needed
- Increased partnerships
- Disparities in academic levels

Student Group:

1. What is Knox County Schools doing well?

- Amazing teachers
- Foreign language in middle schools
- Offering high school classes in middle school
- Use different learning styles
- Technology use is good – necessary for students today
- Schools work hard to create safe environment
- Using reminders to communicate with teachers
- Lots of magnet schools
- Teachers work to build student interactions
- Being able to transfer in high school
- Staff are open to let students be who they are and are open to talk about it
- After-school Boys & Girls Club for homework help, friends, dinner
- Teachers form bonds with students
- AVID program
- Programs and clubs are great for students
- Education/way they use to teach
- IB program
- National Jr. Honor Society
- Teachers push you to be your best
- Tutoring and help offered with homework
- Being able to look up grades
- Teachers have high expectations

2. In what areas does Knox County need to improve?

- Money for instruments and repair – music and choral items
- Bathrooms aren't the best
- More diversity in club choices
- Fundraising needed for smaller clubs – don't get as much funding as cheerleading, etc.
- School start time at 9:30 am
- More opportunities for non-honors students
- More technology to use – more Chromebooks, learn better using technology

- More honors classes
- Access to tutorials for all students (i.e. like AVID)
- Bring back 5th grade middle school visits – and visits to high schools before transition
- Meet and Greets prior to first day of school
- Teachers more strict
- More breaks in the day
- Teachers to understand more about grades (i.e. expectations for A's & B's)
- Teachers and principals should be paid more
- Honors students expected to act like adults – remember that we are all 14
- More respect for teachers – opinions heard
- Teachers should be talked to better – more appreciation for what they do
- Violence everywhere but feel safe at school
- Every school should be AVID school
- More trade schools and classes
- Wider hallways
- Real world experiences and classes (i.e. doing taxes)
- More presentations
- Teachers should give applications to real life
- Fair treatment for all students

3. What would you like to see in the future?

- No violence
- Students allowed to make own clubs
- More teachers in hallways and cafeteria
- Students to treat each other fairly with more inclusion
- Teach other teachers AVID strategies
- Increased funding across the board
- Students treated same even if parent works in school
- Enforce dress code
- Small class sizes
- More inclusive food options at lunch (i.e. with veg, lactose-free, etc.)
- Better and more variety of food
- Students to help each other to learn
- Be able to be ourselves more