

## January 9, 2018 – West Valley Middle School Notes

### Group 1 – Adults/Parents:

1. In what areas is Knox County Schools doing well?
  - Offer lots of PD for teachers
  - Newsletters from KCS departments
  - Teachers do a good job teaching all students
  - Variety of programs for students not found in other districts
  - Feel we are proactive instead of reactive
2. In what areas does Knox County Schools need to improve?
  - Would like to see more emphasis/opportunities for gifted/honors students and AP programs
  - Would like to see smaller classes
  - Larger classes change the approach to how you teach
  - Not enough plan time in (elementary) schools – how that time is structured (i.e. time away for PLC, IEP, meetings, etc.
  - More focus on whole child – developing empathy, social interactions, mental health
  - More time to teach a love of learning
  - Good communication from teachers
  - Communication, class size, school community are important
  - Student might fall through the cracks – needs more support
  - Don't want child to pass if doesn't know material
  - Tutoring opportunities such as ELP funding
  - Parents not as aware of where kids are – focus on fostering independence
  - Need for summer school or enrichment for all kids
  - Money for textbooks and novels
  - Not enough time for tutoring – more opportunities
  - Sometimes look at all parents in same category and look at kids in same category
  - Having 1:1 technology in classrooms is important
  - Real world classes/experiences

#### Group 1's determined themes:

- Class size
- Tutoring opportunities
- Focus on whole child

### Group 2 – Adults/Parents:

1. In what areas is Knox County Schools doing well?
  - Extracurricular activities are varied and abundant
  - Northshore – developing the whole student; instilling core values. And, West Valley and Bearden. Character Counts.
  - Addition of Ombudsman for parents of special needs. Helps parents navigate and advocate for their students. (Both Ombudsmen)

- Related arts is superior to private schools – Middle schools: Karns, Bearden, Farragut and West Valley. Bearden and Farragut High Schools
- High School level – wide variety of courses and varied disciplines
- Special Ed inclusion – great job
- Teachers are spectacular – give of their time, are always available – go the extra mile, willing to help
- Teachers do not let frustration affect the students. Providing e-mail newsletter gives sense of engagement
- Aspen and Canvas very helpful and easy to navigate
- Cameras and surveillance on buses. Important to have to keep people safe
- Security system outside buildings. Feels like students are safe
- Administrators – very good leaders, do their job well
- Byington Solway welding program is great!

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

- Students not prepared for middle school
- Go to other schools to observe programs that bring parents into the learning process
- Budget money to invest in parents. Teachers telling parents – kids need to be independent; parents “hearing” that they don’t need to be involved with their students at school
- Parents who care – more successful in school
- Offering of classes not equitable across the district
- Technology not accessible in all environments
- Struggle with equity of resources, classes, curriculum
- Greater initiative with early childhood education
- Curriculum – push down to lower grades to make it “harder”
- Would like to see ID’s checked once in building/office – greater security. Take extra step – electronically
- Teacher accountability – needs to be done fairly. Help them become better teachers
- Computer testing is outrageous
- Curriculum – so much required – not getting what they need. Not getting knowledge. RTI – not enough teachers in classroom to manage all groups
- Thought there would be more hands-on learning. Missing some of the trades – robotics, home ec, shop, etc. Less academics, more trades. Needs to be available to ALL! Limited numbers
- Performance based learning needs to be more intentional
- More equitable for access to trades at schools – so everyone can obtain the knowledge
- Stick with the initiative
- Technology – does it need to be in lower grades?
- Class sizes – too large
- Need textbooks
- Need more vocation – available to all schools
- Students work in community with stakeholders
- Do not like state assessments. Data not timely. Parents do not learn where kids are

- Get away from computer testing
- No standardized testing for K, 1, 2
- Go back to traditional math and English in elementary – back to basics!
- Required limit cell phone use please. My child spends more time on “searching” social media/texting, etc., at school than at home. Many adults don’t have self-discipline for such vast array of distractions (even paid employees). I know my 14-year-old and 16-year-old don’t have the discipline. Thank you.

Group 2’s determined themes:

- Parent Involvement. Stakeholder involvement.
- Vocation/Equity across the offerings
- Appropriate use of technology
- State testing – accountability

**Student Group:**

1. In what areas is Knox County Schools doing well?
  - Strong Special Education program
  - Great Related Arts – Band
  - School district as a whole has fantastic teachers
  - Schools have a student council and clubs. There’s a club for everyone
  - Most schools have great technology
2. In what areas does Knox County Schools need to improve?
  - Classes are overcrowded. Better distribution of students
  - New middle schools will help with distribution
  - Classroom behavior when teacher leaves the room (monitoring hallway)
3. What would you like to see initiated?
  - Small group settings/classes for students with special needs. Less distractions
4. Anything else we need to know?
  - More peer tutoring opportunities – classes. Will help students learn how to do things (read restaurant menu, peel a potato) and other life skills