



Schools & Job Readiness Issues

November 1, 2008

School Systems

Issues

- Overage of children per classroom
- Teen Pregnancy
- Gangs
- Lack of exposure to testing state and local requirements not standard?
- Cultural Challenges
- Relationship Challenges – make every student feel equally as important
- TAKS testing – test on math, all different level of student take one standard test and are expecting to do equally as well – skill is not equally set.
- Different learning styles – need flexible teaching curriculums

Resources

- Pre college ready classes – identify where the students are
- Workforce resources – put it where the kids are
- Develop building for adult literacy and computers. Expand because it is not big enough for adults – expand overall. Night program is needed
- Workforce programs currently give \$30 in gas gift cards to help get students and adults to training classes (enrolled in their program)

Higher Education

Issues

- Students don't see relevance
- Don't understand what is needed for college
- They have not learned how to set goals
- Don't know what they are good at
- We don't look at their strengths
- Not making the real world connect to the teaching – makes it harder for the ones not making the grades.

Resources

- How can we connect to secondary education?
- Have mentoring outreach
- Increase the AVID program
- Dual credit courses (HS & College)
- Freshman connection course
- Research shows if a student goes to a college campus to visit at least one time they are 80% more likely to attend a college after graduating.

- BBBS < Creative Solutions and Workforce Solutions are all connected, but they do not reach enough students.
- Missing teacher student relationship – too many invisible students

Job Readiness

Issues

- Not all children want to go to college
- 8th & 9th graders find their passion and send the student in that direction
- Reinvent high school to the days before high stake testing
- Legitimize vocational training in High School

Solutions/Resources

- Look at two tracks in high school – one for college bound students and one for technical careers
- Change states expectations of graduation – currently GED is considered a dropout not a completion.

School Resource Officers

Issues

- Drugs, gangs, fighting, rape, high truancy, leaving school during the day
- Things happen on campus are not reported to the police
- MISD Police department onsite and report things back to the MPD, better then security officers
- Not connecting the dots for the issues the teachers see, the issues the SRO's see and the issues the parents face – no one is communicating and coordinating all of these efforts/issues

Resources

- MISD has their own police department that write tickets, and handle on site issues – but they also work with the City police department.
- Assists in identifying youth at risk.
- Police department in schools help improve and make kids feel safe.

Bullying

Students struggling with relationships or academically typically are the bullies

Balance is discipline and action

Look at redirection of bully not just the victim

Early intervention to reduce the issue is key

Fear

- Not being accepted
- School too large
- Not enough options, they are invisible and are lured to other things – drugs & alcohol
- Gangs
- Can't connect with teachers – classes too large
- If they have a passion they have no chance to explore it
- When they drop out and return the issues that caused them to drop out are still the same – no improvements to the system or their personal lives have occurred – so they are in the same situation.

Key Discussion Items

Strategies

Issue #1

Quality Relationships

Strategies

- School within a school
- Mentors at school
- Relationships/connectivity
- Realignment of counselor student ratio
- Referral for services
- Parental development

Issue #2

Transition

Strategies

- Advisory class – teach study skills, life skills, time management
- Vertical alignment
- 6th – 7th grade and 8th – 9th grade
- Parental involvement and education
- Focus on the Future

Issue #3

Career Curriculum and College Prep

Strategies

- Career day
- Tie curriculum to career paths
- Vocational education
- Career based class curriculum – major & minor courses

Other issues

- TAKS testing – preparation is the key. Too much state pressure have test more to schools will, look at students level instead
- Start local and work to state level – be flexible in standard of testing (ability to adjust timing of test, curriculum alignment with test)
- Not enough teachers – student /teacher ratio is too high. Teachers and kids are not connecting
- Discuss teachers as professionals – over looked on their role.
- Close gap of teachers training and teachers needs to connect?
- Large high schools - too distracting, safety is hard to manage. Make more homey and smaller
- Bring back homeroom classes in schedule so students get 20 minutes quality time with a teacher/advisory class
- Make all education relevant
- Transition parents – develop parenting skills
- Discuss career options - relate studies to careers
- Have pods of high schools that focus on individual curriculums – offer core and then study majors – ex. Science, law, and marketing
- Provide true counseling to work with students with what their needs are
- Make faculty members responsible with certain number of freshman students – so they don't get lost
- Smaller schools