

2013-14 BIENNIAL FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Analysis: Focus groups were held in January and May of 2013-2014 School year. The attendees were teachers in the hard to staff critical areas at various sites within the district. The focus groups were divided into three categories: Elementary/ K-8, Middle school, and High school. Seven questions were polled to the attending teachers in an open discussion format:

1. *List in three words what you like about being a teacher in this district?* The response capture into four categories (Students, School Administration, District, and Other). With a total of 43 responds, 19% felt positive about the students, 14% liked their school administration, 23% liked the district, and 44% like other which included diversity, personnel growth, near home, teacher stipend.
2. *Do the working conditions at your school help, hinder, or have no effect on your teaching?* With a total of 56 responds, 2 responds or 3% felt conditions at their school were positive. 54 responds or 97% felt working conditions are unsatisfactory.
3. *Do you feel support by your principal, mentor, district staff, Superintendent, and school board?* With a total of 34 responds, 7 or 21% felt supported and 27 or 79% felt they were not supported.
4. Within your classroom environment, what are some of the things you would like the district to know? A sample of responses are as follows: principals and above need a reality check, They don't know how we work or what we do, not all learning is measured by standardized testing, It's all about the bottom dollar.
5. Concerning the year-to-year student placement process (balanced classrooms), how satisfied are you? A sample of responses are as follows: Did not meet the 27 kid cut off "we are bleeding our kids", keeping masters schedule in the school, it shouldn't be a secret, teachers get moved and shifted they need time to become competent, can't put a behavior issued child and drop them in a self-contained class- it's a liability
6. What single element do you feel "most" gets in your way of achieving your classroom and professional goals? A sample of responses are as follows: Lack of resources, lack of collaboration, "we are to our learners as what Administrators are to us", if a child is not learning it's not the child it's the teacher", PD is too broad it doesn't address the level of skills and expertise, lack of basic skills.

7. How do you feel about the teachers' union [or association] and its effectiveness in representing your interests and in championing the teaching profession? A sample of responses are as follows: Dues are expensive, can do a better job of communicating with members, representation has been good, teachers are treated poorly so they just leave, Administration uses the union as leverage for students, impressed by what gets done, no longer apart of TEA- there have been no raises for seven years.

Corrective action: In order to improve the data collection and need to quantify the data into categories, a survey will be generated into a format where inputs can be captured in a range for example from “needs improvement to outstanding” or “do not agree to highly agree.” In addition, a survey will be sent to the teachers to complete before the meeting and we can obtain the results of the survey and go over the results at the meeting to have a more in depth discussions of these results. By collecting a set of quantifiable data from the survey, we can evaluate area improvements and needs improvement.