

NH CITIZENS VOICE PROJECT

CLAREMONT FORUM

MAY 29, 2003

A NH Citizens Voice forum was held in Claremont, NH, on May 29, 2003. Over 125 citizens attended, including parents, students, senior citizens, young adults, and elected officials. They engaged in a lively discussion of what they want and expect from their schools and how they believe those results can be achieved. They were divided into five small groups to answer the following questions:

- 1. What are the results that we expect from our schools?**
- 2. What are the building blocks or components necessary to achieve the results you have identified?**

Much of the discussion of results related to a desire for students to graduate from Claremont's schools with a variety of skills that include an appreciation of knowledge and learning, respect for others, good communication and self-confidence. They were also expecting cooperation, collaboration and communication between the schools, parents, and community members. Many participants felt that in order to achieve these results, additional funds are needed. They also said that a better curriculum that offers more diverse courses is needed along with better training for teachers.

Results

The following are the results from each group:

Group One

Question 1 – Results

Top Ten Priorities

1. Create and fund programs for gifted and talented students.
2. Create life-long learners by instilling an appreciation of knowledge and fostering curiosity.
3. All students graduate with skills to attend college and/or enter the work force.
4. Raise the bar/standards.
5. Critical thinkers/problem solvers
6. Respect for ourselves, each other, and the community.
7. Increase role of family and community in our schools.
8. Teach students how to work with each other.
9. Foster tolerance for diversity.
10. Create/foster well-rounded young people (art, drama, music, healthy bodies).

Question 2 - Building Blocks

Mandatory Preschool
Professional Development for educators
Fund and expand Parents as Teachers program
Fund what is mandated
Build small, community schools
Recruit best and brightest to teach (\$)
\$\$ Recruit and properly train (mentor)
Recruit and work with prep. programs to train Recruit teachers effectively

Group Two

Question 1 – Results

Top Ten Priorities

1. Communication: Schools < -> Families < -> Community
2. All children should reach their potential
3. Students should have good communication skills (organized thoughts)
4. Children should be prepared to be good citizens
5. Schools need to assist students to live in community
6. Love of learning
7. Develop respect for self and others
8. Needs of gifted students
9. Basics - reading, math, writing, computer skills
10. a. Standards - based curriculum
b. Other tools for school readiness
c. Every child should complete high school with all they need to attend college

Question #2 Building Blocks

1. Front load potential.
2. Incentives for teachers
3. Teacher preparation
4. \$\$\$\$
5. Look at models that are successful
6. More communication between business/schools
7. Assist families to meet goals
8. Responsive classrooms
9. Protective time

Group Three

Question #1 – Results

Top Ten Priorities

1. More programs - appropriate challenges for students at all levers

2. Cooperation among stake holders (admin., teachers, parents, students and community)
3. Students who can compete after graduation in any field.
4. Students who are interested in their communities and beyond.
5. Confident, clear thinking kids
6. Environment where students want to learn
7. Life-long learners
8.
 - a. Well-rounded students
 - b. Interest in the arts
 - c. Students who can compete after graduation in any field
 - d. Contributing community members
9.
 - a. High number of graduates - fewer dropouts
 - b. Safe environment
10.
 - a. Basic skills
 - b. Students who can support

Question 2 - Building Blocks

1. \$\$\$\$\$\$
2. Challenging and diverse curriculum (including arts, extra curriculum activities)
3. Enlightened and enthusiastic teachers
4. Good physical and mental health - children who are ready to learn
5. Standard policy and procedures in all buildings
6. Community services working together with school integrated programs
7. Communication among/between stake holders
8. High standards for teachers and students, etc.
9. Enlightened and enthusiastic parents
10. Informed and involved parents

Group Four

Question #1 – Results

Top Ten Priorities

1. Students graduate/lower dropout rate. Well-prepared for college and work force with good work ethic.
2. Higher standards and expectations for all students. CAP is not the answer.
3. Students should read and comprehend.
4. Eliminate the Stigma of going to school in Claremont.
5. Teachers with high expectations / not expect Average
6. Reevaluate black scheduling and school hours and vacations
7. UNH, Keene State, Plymouth need good teacher training programs.
8. Young people have sense of belonging/be asset to community.
9. Shouldn't pass a child to next grade if fails.
- 10 Students get basic in elementary school and have love for the arts and healthy lifestyle.

Question 2 - Building Blocks

1. Money
2. Get up-to-date textbooks
3. Properly fund teachers and education
4. Teachers and parents should learn to work together/mutual trust and collaboration
5. Support families with child care and pay teachers of day care a reasonable wage
6. Get good teachers who want to be here and help students be successful
7. Look at space and manpower for all day kindergarten
8. Accountability: Parents and teachers should be equally accountable for the child's education
9. focus on healthy lifestyle not just traditional P.E.; Taichi, yoga, stress reduction/holistic
10. All round community

Group Five

Question #1 – Results

Top Ten Priorities

1. Balanced curriculum that meets all levels
2. How to process information
3. Light a fire that burns for a lifetime
4. Have basic skills
5. Good organizational skills
6. Create student that is best of self
7. School challenges student to be what they want
8. Basic math skills
9. Drive to be informed voter/citizen
10. Students who are motivated to learn

Question 2 - Building Blocks

1. More individualized teaching and learning.
2. 12-month school year (with breaks)
3. Competency-based learning
4. Teachers able to recognize kids levels/skills and be able to teach all levels
5. Good parenting
6. Students evaluating teachers
7. Define what a balanced curriculum means – various levels of courses available
8. Highly qualified, exciting teachers
9. Eliminate tenure for teachers – get rid of the union
10. Schools and parents more involved with each other

Conclusion

The information obtained at this forum will be utilized by ??? for ???

