

NOTES
Vision for Public Education in Alamance County
Stakeholder Group Meeting
ABSS Professional Library
February 27, 2013
8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

A Few of My Favorite Things – The Stakeholders Group and Vision Process

Highlights, notable aspects want to reflect in the Vision Document...

- It is a rather simple process that helps us come up with a product for a complex issue.
- I hope that our work will reflect issues the community cares about and help the community address these issues.
- Learning about the model of “4 values” in evaluating optional approaches to setting a vision for the public school system
- The thoroughness of ideas
- The diversity of the committee and the inclusiveness of others in the community
- The diverse group of people who contributed
- Learning about (public) values that go into public education
- The involvement of students has been great. They have insightful comments and different points of view. One student that was at my table came up to me at a YMCA basketball game and re-introduced himself. That is an interaction that would never have taken place and speaks to the community building process that is part of this project
- It strikes me that the schools have become one of, if not the largest, social services providers to children. Health care, nutrition, basic needs, school supplies and education as well.
- One of my favorite things has been meeting other stakeholders. Specifically, I have enjoyed hearing others points of view and ideas for ABSS
- Invariably it seems that when you come together with such a wide variety of backgrounds and life experience the work group as a whole benefits.
- I believe the work being done here will help the police department achieve our mission for the community
- Personal Wonder: Concern of how far to go to accommodate individual passions; Are we giving the whole community valid consideration? Is buy-in likely, accepting the squeaky-wheels?
- Pro: Wide section of community; Enthusiasm – concern/care for what’s best; Building from “ground-up”
- Witnessing and benefitting from the commitment of dozens of volunteers to help make our public education system better
- Hearing the input of our high school students who dedicated time to improving our schools

- Having school board members and ABSS staff present and listening
- Opportunity to meet other stakeholders, including our students and interacting with each one
- The diversity of the stakeholders group
- Getting to know how people from different backgrounds think
- Meeting new people and learning their point of view has been memorable
- The diversity of people and occupations in this group
- The insight the students brought to the group
- Something I have really enjoyed through this project is the group activities held. Mainly the joining of the community to share their ideas
- Something else I like is how we get to speak out while Dr. Cox is here to listen to our ideas
- Enjoyed the session where questions were asked of the whole group and we were asked to join the “yes, no, I don’t know” groups depending on how we would answer the question. This was a great visual exercise to help everyone see just how different our beliefs and how we need to accept other beliefs but come together as a group – great team builder.
- Enjoyed getting the different answers/responses from within our community; liked this and hearing different collective responses which gave an expanded coverage within Alamance County.
- Conversations which illustrate sincere desire to improve education
- A willingness to work in partnership
- Discussion about passionate areas of education and in some cases particular schools or youth groups
- Information gained that will be helpful to other agencies
- Partnership development
- Cross section of stakeholders represented
- Requirement to get input from 10 people; allowed for more community voice from differing backgrounds and perspectives, allowed for good discussions, made stakeholders somewhat like “ambassadors”
- Meeting new people
- Hearing others perceptions of ABSS
- Asking the questions passed to the public, has as many answers as people asked, making “our” answers wrong to many of the people asked. I did enjoy the “process” used and will try to put some of it into my dealings with the city.
- Enjoyed historical lesson on public education
- Meeting all of the stakeholders and learning about the different viewpoints/perspectives that are represented
- The committed student participation is impressive
- I found the book and the session with Phil (Boyle) to be very thought-provoking
- The session on the history of public education in Alamance County was informative
- I feel like this all has been a learning process for me and I feel that we can make a change

- With all the work that we have done, I feel that it should be used to change a couple things in ABSS
- The ideas that we have are very good and should be used.
- The exercise that dealt with specific issues – where we moved around the room – made me realize the great challenges we face in bringing people to some commonality.
- When we asked the community for input, how eager they were to have their voices heard
- History of the Alamance Burlington School System presented by Dr. Cox, Mr. Van Pelt and Mr. Evans
- When we moved around as groups to answer questions and see how the dynamics of the groups changed
- Table interactions
- The fact that some children would not have a meal that day if school were closed
- I have been impressed by the commitment on the part of ABSS and school board to attend and listen
- I have been impressed by how many community members (who have very busy schedules) have continued to participate in the process. It shows a real commitment to education in this county
- I've been impressed with the diversity and length of time everyone has dedicated to this plan. I'm excited that the school system will be implementing the community's thoughts and ideas. I'm not aware of a process like this before (this in depth).
- I feel privileged to have been a part of this process along with a very varied group of people. I appreciate how well thought out the selection of stakeholders was.
- In my work with community non-profits, I have been able to share the work we have been doing and look forward to using this information for my work, particularly the next community needs assessment (which we will begin working on in the spring of 2014).

Comments re: February 27, 2013 Draft Vision Document:

- △ Put the process piece of the document in a supplemental section after the vision and executive summary pieces with the Timeline in an appendix.
- △ Page 3: Left out most important group → “students” See the last paragraph
- △ Page 9: the order of this list is really important; need to give some thought to this; prioritizing the bullets?
- △ Page 9: Under “We envision...” need to change some of the bulleted points given our discussion; don't we want more than “possible?” Glad we are taking out “given limits of time and resources”
- △ Narrowing too much to Alamance County; much discussion on the word “society” which is broad; maybe need to use both for example we are developing students not just for Alamance County, but for also for participation in “society”
- △ Page 3: Change the wording of “We believe... that life-long learning is the foundation for individual success...” to “We believe that education is the foundation...” Our focus is on “education” so needs to be stated before “life-long learning.”

- △ Nothing as stated is truly bold. Why doesn't the document say "We want to the best..." or "Recognized as the best..." or "One of the best in the state..." etc.
- △ Page 8: Beliefs Section: Do we really want to change "society" to "Alamance County?" It is appropriate to believe in Alamance County, so don't change every place that we used the word "society" to "Alamance County."
- △ How will we know if we have achieved any of these?
- △ Page 11: Fulfilling the Vision; what should go here? School Board will take the vision and develop its goals, achievable outcomes and then do it, right?
- △ Odd wording/style for pagination
- △ Four Areas of Curriculum → History needs to move up as priority given changes in number of history classes high school students will now be required to complete
- △ Move up on the list the bullet point which states "Seeks to hire and retain (highly) qualified, motivated...."
- △ Bullet point: "Maintain safe, state of the art facilities." Need to work on this statement which is a core function of the school system/vision. Funding for facilities is responsibility of the county; need to give this some real weight/priority.
- △ Add: "We will provide many paths to success, particularly for students who are dropping out or need alternative paths than college; we need to engage other groups; homeless students and their families, alternative student/program groups.
- △ Bullets are not particularly visionary; achieving this list doesn't/won't set us apart. Example of a visionary point: "every student will graduate speaking a foreign language."

All on the Wall: Question 5: "What role should public schools play in our Children's lives and in our communities?"

Prepare Students for Careers and College

- Prepare them to be competitive in the open job market
- Prepare "strong candidates for the college entrance requirements"
- Help get them headed into the right direction for the future
- Provide children with the opportunity to learn life skills which they can apply to be successful in achieving their life goals
- Public schools should prepare our children for life after high school, whether that is the challenge of higher education or preparation to enter the workforce
- Real world education; schools should prepare children to face the "real" world when they finish. Part of this may include volunteerism and helping others which helps build stronger community.
- Public schools should be a place where children can learn academically, socially and athletically to create solid foundation for further personal growth.
- A place where students expect to be educated and equipped with the right information to compete nationally
- Train them for work or higher education

- Public education should provide a safe place to educate our children in preparing them for the future, advocating for our children, provide them with a vision and teach them to give back to our community.
- The school system should provide each student with the knowledge to be successful in whatever area the individual has chosen as his/her path in life
- Education; Teaching a sense of community; providing avenues to develop creative skills; identify areas that will help focus on future jobs for study in college
- To educate at the highest level all students to create a well-rounded, productive citizen. One who understands education is the path to success.
- Public schools should provide an education for our students to be able to prosper in life. Provide them with the skills they need for the future
- For children: Prepare for future success, independence, educate, teach critical thinking v. simple memory/retention
- For Community: Prepare for employment
- Educate Children to prepare them to be self-sufficient adults
- Provide a quality education

Students: Community Involvement/Citizenship

- Help the students and the community by teaching and preparing the students to be good citizens and to have financial literacy. Some parents are unable to teach these skills to their children and exposure to these traits on a daily basis at school may give them the opportunity they need to improve the world.
- Community involvement
- Responsible Citizens
- Teach the responsibilities of being a citizen from K-12; include history of the founding of the US, where and how our laws came about; how government works: fed, state, county, city; election process: parties, local, state, and national election board (local and state); Offices held: local, state, fed and appointed offices
- Teach them to support their community
- Introduce them to giving back to their community
- Public schools are a big part of what shapes young minds to be leaders of tomorrow. This is where children not only learn reading, writing and arithmetic, but where they also learn about friendship, problem solving, and most importantly community.
- The public schools should play a vital role in children's lives and in our communities. The schools are in a position to educate our children and teach them how to be responsible citizens and good role models.
- To give them true confidence to participate in community life to make community life better
- Enable and equip our students to take the initiative to work in the community to improve the community
- To think through a problem and find the right answer; all problems – social, financial, structural.

In Our Community: Role Models of Excellence and Leadership

- Schools should take on, and be viewed as, leadership institutions in our community.
- Provide role models for our children: teachers, coaches, and administrators all set examples as all students watch them and learn from what they see
- Working with citizens to enhance community learning
- Advocate – they need a voice and someone to talk to whom they trust
- Utilizing intake from community to improve education
- Public schools should be a resource that strengthens the health of the community
- Schools should be a resource to recruit economic development
- Education resource center for community
- Heart of Community as a Resource
- Focal Point for learning
- Public schools should strive to be community partners, so that the community is more likely to be a supporter of the public schools.
- Socially appropriate setting
- Provide mentors/teachers that are great role models
- In the community → ABSS needs to work on its attractiveness system-wide to help the county grow. This will in turn help ABSS. Just a quick glance at the system can show people where ABSS puts its focus and where they don't. Schools are what help growth. Where is this county growing and where is it not?

Greater Community Involvement in Schools

- Places for citizen involvement and family improvement
- Our community would be well served in the schools. Let the community feel that they have a vested interest in the schools; there should be one.
- Public schools should be a resource for the community and encourage community involvement
- Education
- A place where every citizen values education and engages for everyone's success
- Preparing all children equally for a career and community involvement
- They should let the communities know what is going on and ask questions to see what the public thinks.
- Education resource for community; community involvement imperative; more
- Open to community and open to families → be more of the center of the community instead of M-F 8-3
- Should be a vital priority for all stakeholders (citizens) should value as it is what made our community great and is our future. If everyone saw the value of education and engagement in public education, everyone will succeed!

Creatively Engaging Students and Parents

- Encourage/Require Creativity to engage students and parents
- Idea: Have high school students who need community service credits to be able to mentor, but more importantly tutor elementary (maybe) middle school children who are struggling academically to help with homework – they get what is being taught. This

helps the student, helps the parent and helps the high school student; win, win, win situation.

- They play a huge role. Our success is based off of our upbringing. Our upbringing usually tells the type of person we are. If parents dedicate time to their children's education at a young age the child will be more dedicated and willing to succeed in school. Public schools come in play after the parents have done their job. Schools should go past the limits of educating students. Education is the basis of life nowadays. Teachers need to become more sociable with students in order to give them better understanding. They play the role of a parent while the child is in school so they should do whatever it takes to make each student successful!
- They should play a vital and essential role in children's lives and the community. They should be a place where a child can receive a quality education, a good meal (since for some kids that's their only meal) and a healthy social life; quality education; healthy social life.
- Schools should be supportive in children's lives including education, role models, development of character. Schools should be involved in community to know what needs children may have. How they live. What they are up against, positive and negative.
- In our children's lives, public schools should supplement* the social and academic skills necessary to be successful and contribute to our community. (*The challenge is that many children have little other support.)
- Theme of parental, community involvement consistently
- How much should the school become the parent and less the educator?
- Children that want to learn should be provided that opportunity instead of trying to force kids to learn that will not and are promoted anyway.
- Don't be the parents
- Partner with parents to be primary educators
- They should welcome parent involvement
- Don't expect that schools can be all things to all children.
- While current responsibilities tend to assign traditional family value rearing to the schools, I believe that is inappropriate.
- Schools should be able to provide a structure that all kids can click into and be successful. Each child has an area of interest if it can be identified and the child can be connected to these opportunities.

Holistic Approach: Schools as a Referral Agency

- Basic nutrition
- To be a nurturing environment for children to get away from everyday life
- The public schools should serve as the hub for student engagement in learning activities; safe place that nurtures, supports and encourages students to achieve their highest potential
- Community hub for nurturing, supporting, encouraging
- In our communities, public schools should work in partnership to identify gaps/deficiencies in education and develops ways to address/remedy those issues.

- Holistic approach; provide and refer to all resources needed
- The public schools should provide comprehensive services/referrals to ensure that all students have the academic, social, emotional, physical, and financial resources necessary to reach their fullest potential, academic achievement requires a comprehensive, holistic approach.
- Provide basic nutrition, health education and basic health review, teach students to be involved in their community (adopt-a-street, civic clubs, etc.)
- Heart of community as a resource
- Education resource center for community
- It is vital that the schools support family values and competent strong moral and educational values lacking in certain homes.
- I think if educators were more familiar with the home life of a child, they could be a better voice to the child when teaching basic learning skills as well as life lessons.
- Public schools need not only to educate but to nurture and encourage growth, both academically and emotionally. The role of public schools has changed over the years, in great part to the breakdown of the family nucleus. Public schools are now dealing with issues that haven't been seen in the past. Our community truly benefits only when public schools invest in the growth of our children, there by producing successful, productive adults.
- To prepare these children to be self-sufficient adults, including life skills

Academic Excellence

- Schools primary purpose and mission should be academic excellence. We know schools play a larger social role with our students and communities, but core academics should be the top priority.
- I believe that the role that public schools should play in the lives of our children is to provide children with the best educational opportunities available. Currently in my opinion schools are trying to fill too many roles. Schools are similar to police in that they tend to be a place/entity that is often asked to do more than they are equipped to do.
- Provide kids with a vision
- Education should be the top priority of the community. As such, it should be taken seriously, rigorously executed, and shown the respect that it deserves.
- Schools should provide the structure for children to be successful, explore their interests and connect to opportunities.
- The role our schools should play in our children's lives is one of challenging/engaging/supportive education. It should be a place where they build a solid base for future success.

Teach the Basics

- I think if educators were more familiar with the home life of a child, they could be a better voice to the child when teaching basic learning skills as well as life lessons.

- Public education should play the role of educator. The school should teach our kids the basics reading, writing, and arithmetic. They should also expose our kids to fitness, history, and culture.
- Centers for knowledge-building, critical thinking skills and social interaction
- Basic education
- Provide students with training in the basic skills such as math, reading, and writing.
- Our schools are more concerned about extra activities than they are providing basic educational training

Discipline

- Teachers should not be expected to raise children for the parent and should not have to be subjected to uncontrolled abuse by children. If school administration can't provide discipline, the administration needs to change.
- The school should reflect a place to acquire knowledge and discipline first. But also a place where pride and unity is developed.

Provide a Safe Environment

- Safe environment
- Protect our kids → serve as a safe place
- Our schools are central in providing a safe learning environment and a place for positive social interaction during and after school hours
- Serve as a safe environment; public schools should provide our children with a safe learning environment
- Provide a safe environment for students and teachers
- Schools should provide quality education in a healthy and safe environment. Schools are often a very important piece in building local communities as educational facilities are often deciding factors for parents deciding where to live. Schools are an absolutely essential piece of building successful communities and productive humans

Safe Place to Express Ideas/Cultural Competency

- Convey and promote common values
- Promote democracy and teach principles that include freedom and justice
- Teach cultural competency (race, religion, ethnicity, political, and social)
- Provide an environment that supports a safe, challenging experience
- Challenge students
- Free to learn/education
- Foster a learning environment while providing child with the extra-curricular/elective options to expand his/her understanding of the world.
- Provide an environment that supports a safe, challenging experience

Discussion with regards to next steps in the review of the draft vision:

- ✓ March 6th -- Steering Committee Meeting

- ✓ March 11th -- BOE SWOT Analysis:
Consensus of Stakeholders Group is to provide a copy of the draft vision document from today, February 27, 2013, and the notes from today for the BOE's use in their SWOT analysis of the draft. We will provide both documents ahead of time for the BOE's review to maximize their time doing the SWOT analysis.
- ✓ March 20th -- Stakeholders Group Meeting: SWOT Analysis of Draft Vision and BOE SWOT
- ✓ March 28th -- Meeting of Steering Committee with Editorial Subgroup: Paul Koonts, Marcus Mintz, Brian Boylston, Carissa Graves, Bob Byrd – March 28th, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. (change meeting time from to 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.?)
- ✓ April 10th—Stakeholders Group Meeting -- Review and Consensus Building
- ✓ April 17th -- Steering Committee Meeting
- ✓ April 24th – Stakeholders Group Meeting – “Roll Out” Planning
- ✓ May 20th – BOE Meeting -- Vision Presented to Board of Education – TBD
- ✓ Presentation to Chamber of Commerce Board -- TBD

What worked well/What could we improve

- + Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel
- Δ Stakeholders Show Up
- Δ Note: Comment made during the session with regard to writing the vision in a way that challenges us rather than promotes the status quo.