

## **2015 Community Conversations- VISION 2020**

***Raising the Bar: The Hudson City School is committed to improving the academic success of every child, Pre-K through graduation. There are changes that must be made to meet these goals.***

**Question 1: What changes do you envision could create a more rigorous and challenging environment for all of our students?**

### **Community Conversation #1, August 20, 2015**

- Revise NCLB\*\*
- World Café with students\*\*
- Positive & meaningful communication with students before the fact
- Different timeframes (not always evening) for meet the teacher – not overlapping – special parent meetings
- More & ongoing collaboration between parents/caregivers & teachers about expectations
- More constant teacher/parent communication\*\*\*
- Early intervention for when child starts falling behind – by teachers/counselors
- Intense, ongoing professional development for staff/teachers\*\*\*\*
- Non-gendering professions
- Low expectations need to change – teachers identify expectations early in year\*\*
- STEM – off the mark – need to invest in this\*\*\*\*\*
- Peer mentoring – tutoring – student leadership
- JLE & JHS needs the same programs MCSIS has – enrichment!!\*\*\*\*\*
- Take a serious look at testing – teach to the test?
- Career & guidance – maybe a course – career exploration\*\*\*
- Research more online programs for possibly advanced students

### **Community Conversation #2, October 1, 2015**

- Make Universal Pre-K an option in our district full day\*\*
- Find ways of making communication easier across grade levels\*\*\*
- Improve continuity and communication by all teachers
- Increase emphasis on writing and find ways to inspire student to write
- Bring more importance to creativity in academics\*
- Include cursive in the curriculum
- Begin teaching how to do smart research
- Trigger a desire to learn in reluctant learners\*\*
- Find ways of teaching students to take healthy risks\*
- Teach perseverance\*\*

- Teach bravery, intestinal fortitude – so students can do what they want to do
- Increase number of Advanced Placement and Honors courses available
- Inspire students to want to do math and love it
- Start math Olympics or competition
- Reduce math intimidation
- Improve parent education on Common Core math
- Common Core instruction for parents – Web-based to watch again and again\*
- Get all JLE teachers on board for teaching math modules
- More kinesthetic and hands-on learning as opposed to paper and pencil\*\*\*\*

***Closing the Gap: Our district is locally unique; we serve a wide range of rural and urban families who are religiously, racially, socially, economically, and internationally diverse. Often, our achievement gaps fall along these lines.***

**Question 2: What can we do to support each other and what can we do to support each child, regardless of differences, in a more challenging and rigorous academic climate?**

**Community Conversation #1, August 20, 2015**

- Less politics/More learning \*\*\*\*\*
- Add Hudson Reads program at JLE
- More classes that recognize the diversity/partner diverse students
- More differentiation for students and peer to peer instruction
- More appropriate resources for overactive and high achieving students\*
- More physical activity\*
- Community school grant provides help with family, students, food and computers\*\*
- How to diversify staff/faculty to reflect the student body? How to think creatively about this issue? \*\*
- Diversity as strength rather than a negative\*\*\*\*\*
- Closing the gaps – how to raise the bar for all students, not just specific groups of students?
- Create a college-going culture – Sing the expectations from Pre-K forward – not telling one student to forget about an assignment and holding another student to it\*\*\*
- Build relationships among parents, faculty and community
- What can we do outside the school system to encourage parental participation? Reading?\*
- Communication between parents/teachers so that the parents know what the kids are learning
- Spanish fliers/Bengali fliers, etc. – Reaching out to all communities via their native language\*
- Use the parent portal more (teachers too) – community access – do all families have access to computer?
- Addressing those kids who need to be challenged more\*
- Don't use ISS as a catchall – how to better inform parents & discuss the issue
- Find commonality among diverse groups (art?) extra-curricular? \*\*
- More “common theme” for students; peer run writing center; games seem to be a diverse/common area
- Reach out to non-profit organizations (i.e. Cornell Cooperative Extension, Opera House, etc.)\*
- 44% graduation rate for certain demographics
- Let the community-based organizations “in”; more partnerships w/ Kite's Nest, Hawthorne Valley, etc. \*\*
- Greater school board presence
- Community action forums that present agenda to the board
- Resource map and more familiarity with these resources – where/how to communicate with the community
- Children of incarcerated parents training
- Disability awareness training
- Transition planning assistance

- Less focus on failure
- Become a First school which encourages science in young students

### **Community Conversation #2, October 1, 2015**

- Find how different children learn – find their strengths and weaknesses
- Stay off Facebook – keep negative comments to self, venting is personal, follow the proper channels\*
- Provide liaison between community and school
- Create opportunities for staff to learn about our students – demographics
- Curriculum that teaches about our diverse students & families
- Promote what we have – multi-cultural, Black cultural arts, & Bangladeshi festivals – ask for help to make these bigger\*\*
- Promote diversity and culture on Website (video personal stories) as well as many other ways – interviews
- Power of Peace follow-up\*

***Aligning curriculum: The district curriculum is our map to what students learn and how they learn it. The maps must be aligned to state and national requirements, and they must be effective (note: we test students to determine whether they understand what is being taught and then we use that data to revise what and how we teach). We also intend for our district curriculum to be relevant to our student body and to help set them on the path to career and college.***

**Question 3: How can we improve communication between the schools, caregivers, and students so that expectations and the students' education are consistent and more easily understood?**

**Community Conversation #1, August 20, 2015**

- Teacher communications w/ parents when assignments are not completed\*\*
- Parent Portal...email, links, reminders, upcoming assignments – include after school providers in communications\*\*\*\*\*
- Set higher expectations for all students\*\*
- Internet bulletin board per class
- Community Schools (program) more funding...not necessarily\*\*\*\*\*
- More Internet access
- More information about school board's direction...including rules and regulations
- Accountability\*\*
- More resources for parents and coordinators
- Important for parents to know reading level. Now tracking beyond Fountas & Pinnell...Lexile scale translates to grade level\*\*\*
- How much info is too much? What level/depth of info/communication is preferred?\*
- Gather updated contact info @ events/moving up ceremonies
- Give parents the option to text contact details – auto upload to data base - Robocall system
- Tabling @ community events\*\*
- Surveys sent to parents from teachers at beginning of year to determine what they need\*
- Empower parents to be advocates – provide a welcoming orientation process – parent coordinator in each school working on this – focus on how to navigate Common Core Learning Standards\*\*\*\*\*
- Monthly parent resource event that discusses what students are learning & how parents can provide additional support (i.e. homework help, etc.)\*\*\*\*\*
- Community events – have teachers show up (not just administrators)\*
- Community Schools is going to be key in parental engagement – outreach to every family in each building – can provide parents transportation through MHA\*\*\*\*
- A lot of students & families don't know what's needed to graduate (credits, attendance, Regents, other exams, etc.)\*
- Provide materials to parents in their own language – provide translators at meetings (use HS students as translators, etc.)\*\*\*\*\*
- More forums similar to this one
- Addressing academic issues/struggles early on – attendance, etc. \*
- Invite students to public forums\*
- Set expectations with parents – we need you to attend events to ensure each child's success\*\*\*\*

### Community Conversation #2, October 1, 2015

- For Primary levels there should be a handout providing basics as well as login to Parent Portal at every event\*\*\*
- Parents aren't necessarily showing up to report card conferences because the information is available in the portal
- Parent and teacher surveys currently being conducted at HHS to see what format works best for report card conferences – tends to be opposite opinions
- Community Schools included in School Improvement Plans
  - need 100% accurate contact info for all families (using parent coordinator)
  - outreach doing home visits to inform families about what's happening in the district
- At elementary levels it would be good to know where students should be at various points during the year. Have expectations framework on the teacher's district websites for parents to refer to\*\*
- Have something online that describes the mission, etc. of each school
- Leadership in the school is key – the principal sets the tone as the building leader\*\*
- Workshops for parents so they understand the material being taught and how best to help students at home\*\*\*
- Have Parent Portal push messages sent via email with regular updates to parents
- Text push messages – this would by-pass the need to login to Parent Portal for urgent messages
- Parents need to take ownership – students need encouragement from everyone to know they are interested in their education\*\*\*
- Relevancy piece – students need to be taught things that are relevant to their lives\*
- Asking parents what their expectations are for their child – trusting relationship – make parents feel comfortable\*\*
- Two-way communication (within Robocall) – bi-directional\*\*
- Parent Portal difficult to get into
- Expectations by term (quarterly) from teachers should include testing
- Reflection of student diversity in the curriculum

***Social Emotional Development: The social and emotional well-being of our students is fundamental to their success.***

**Question 4: From your perspective, what can the district provide for students to feel safe, fulfilled, and empowered?**

**Community Conversation #1, August 20, 2015**

- A new family “student” to the district welcoming packet\*\*\*\*\*
- More guidance counselors, male counselors\*\*\*
- More mentors
- Diversity of staff to mirror the student population\*\*\*\*\*
- Provide more opportunities to connect the community and the school with children in the district\*\*\*\*
- School based initiatives that extends/includes the community\*\*\*
- Tap into the artistic & agricultural community of Hudson\*\*\*
- Exit interview of all students
- Examining male leadership programs/roles
- Create & maintain a community of respect for differences that appreciates that all students are attending and get the best education they can and be supported by the community
- Consider adopting uniforms as a vehicle to diminish physical differences and enhance focus on the common goal of education\*\*\*\*\*
- Expand the Power of Peace throughout the district regardless of grant money – train staff member/community member to continue this program\*\*\*\*\*
- Establish strength-based programs
- PBIS – making this program more transparent throughout the district and community\*
- Exit interview of dropouts as to why they leave\*\*
- Professional development on parent involvement\*
- Creating a different culture for all students to take leadership roles in school
- Evidence based programs that allow youth organization
- Suicide attention program\*
- Mentoring programs – peer to peer mentoring\*\*
- Teacher mentoring – college prep
- Afterschool programming w/ mentoring – community professionals
- Comprehensive anti-bullying campaign – involving educational system & community\*
- Training around trauma for teachers – mental/behavioral issues\*
- Children have more playtime during inclement weather – open gym\*\*\*
- Collective ownership of a project that has deep roots in the community – students active in the community\*\*\*\*
- Increase funding for more space\*\*
- Students engaging with each other \*
- Ongoing counseling\*\*

- Understanding our student body – professional development - training to think outside the box – understanding families\*
- Parent classes – support – discuss/share – Common Core issues\*\*\*
- Increase educational supports around Common Core
- Create more room within the district
- Develop programs around mediation, yoga, relaxation\*
- Mentoring inside the school
- Empower children to speak about their problems\*\*
- Program consistency – people from the community
- Meditation program part of school requirement
- Trauma informed district – heal children\*\*\*\*
- Power of Peach\*\*\*\*
- Successful peer to peer mentoring
- Increase supports with available resources for students with mental/behavioral health issues\*\*\*
- Open communication within community service providers
- Create a group to focus on shared language – understanding emotional well-being of students
- Involve community groups already doing work around social emotional issues for students
- Internships and mentoring for interested adults\*
- Teaching life skills – college readiness & local government
- Include students in decision making\*
- Recognize student strengths
- Training around job readiness – mentoring programs
- Cornell Cooperative Extension – 4H to do safety training around traffic
- Increase traffic aides
- Restorative justice\*\*\*\*
- Uniforms\*\*\*\*\*
- Community cohesiveness
- School district involved in community
- Mediation – bullying \*
- More diversity in staff – diverse recruitment\*\*
- Community volunteers
- End nepotism\*
- Issues surrounding bus/school communication & safety on bus
- Address bullying on bus
- Increase safety on playground/halls
- Training for diverse student body – teacher – assistant - aides



## Community Conversation #2, October 1, 2015

- Provide opportunities to be responsible\*\*
- Opportunities to be held accountable
- Crisis intervention training for teachers & students\*
- Encourage teachers to learn about mental health first aid – offer multiple sessions of first aid for mental health
- Anonymous peer to peer hotline\*\*\*\*
- Students against destructive decisions involved in supporting peers
- Look for alumni to help students in crisis
- Look for alumni to help counsel students on possible next steps
- Invest in parents of alumni for help
- Parent coordinators involved in trouble shooting parent problems & student issues\*\*
- Increase circumstances where students have a voice and say in education\*\*
- Banana splits and beyond\*\*
- Afterschool groups – small Power of Peace\*\*\*\*
- Additional mental health help & guidance counselor\*\*\*\*\*
- Support group
- Teachers taking on self-understanding of their social emotional selves to help students – support teachers in this regard\*
- Teachers willing to be real and relate on an honest level when a student is going through a bad time – he/she needs to speak out
- Parents provide sufficient support for their kids to reach goals
- Teachers should know where students want to go – college – vocational school\*
- Develop relationships at the beginning of the year
- In JHS/HHS, students have different teachers for each class – parents need to be the support network – difficult for teachers to develop relationships with students when they are managing a wide range of behavioral issues
- Conversations between parents and teachers are critical
- Safety – retreat to hallways or classrooms for quiet/peaceful space\*\*
- Community resource room w/ parent coordinator
- Create intentional social spaces in school – maybe have students help design their environment – a space where they feel comfortable & safe\*  
- Example: Julia Richmond School in NYC
- Allow students to provide input into curriculum – include community members in the process\*