

WASHOUGAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 112-06

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Business and Community Linkage Meeting Notes Friday, January 18, 2008 11:30 – 1:00

1. What work skills or life skills should be emphasized in the high school curriculum?

- Computer skills: basic knowledge (keyboarding, ten-key, intermediate level Excel, intermediate level Word)
- Communication skills (written and verbal) in general: How do I resolve conflict?, ability to deal with customers or community
- Common work expectations, ethics and etiquette: arriving on time, ability to work in a team or group where everyone contributes and no one has to carry most or all of the responsibility/workload: need people who are actually team players as opposed to those who indicate that this is a value but then do not follow through
- Hands on experiences whether from CTE classes or hobbies
- Math skills: for trades at least one year of Algebra with a 'C' or better, TrigStar program, need at least basic math skills
- Reading, writing and math
- Ability to be creative, resourceful, problem solving skills
- More diverse opportunities for students bringing students up to par
- Financial or economic literacy: math for life classes (budgets, checkbooks, taking out a loan, filling out a tax form)

2. What value do vocational and technical classes add to the high school curriculum?

- Hands on opportunities
- Supports the service sector in the economy
- A place for students who do not go to college to develop their interests and aptitudes
- Provides opportunities that aren't "one size fits all"
- Even for college bound students, makes you a better rounded person in terms of your knowledge of cooking, repairs; gives you a better understanding of what others do as well
- Provides flexibility: not an either/or situation for going to college or into a trade
- Not everyone fits into the mold of attending college

Feedback for Academy of Trades:

- Would want to keep in mind that most trades already have their own training facilities are; perhaps District would want to transport students and have them trained in those facilities. Would give them the most up-to-date training
- Excited to hear that the district might be heading in this direction. What students are sometimes missing when they come into a job is practical application. When you do these programs, consider them from the real life practical application and the skills students need for the job
- Providing student the opportunity to experience, explore and see what a career is really like helps them to decide what path they are interested in

3. What is the value of elective courses such as art, music and drama in developing students who are well prepared for citizenship and careers beyond high school?

- Economic development is increased by these: translates into dollars
- High level thinking skills
- Employers/business attracted to areas that have strong arts programs in the community
- You never know where you are going to go with these skills

- Communication, not just public speaking, but also interpersonal communication
- Fun; great experience for kids and gets some of them to school and keeps them in school
- Fosters creativity
- Builds well rounded students and individuals that contribute
- Music helps students with math understanding
- Foreign language (start at earlier levels) contributes to math skills and also allows the brain to think more broadly on a lot of levels

4. What other suggestions or ideas do you have for improving our high school program?

- Parent engagement and involvement with acknowledgement of time and energy constraints
- Provide opportunities for families such as EdLine to check grades attendance, grades, assignments etc. and keep those updated in a timely manner to help encourage parent involvement
- Because we don't know what skills we will have in the future, the broader the skills we can give to the students, the better off we are going to be
- Teach 360-degree skills: lead efforts, programs, projects, human relationships, and collaborative efforts. People who have more of these things can go farther in their career
- Spend less time on indoctrination of certain knowledge and more time teaching people to think
- Class in critical thinking skills or trying to teach students to think and value based clarification/ethics classes: help them to define their values as the values affect the individual and the community (outcomes)
- Innovation piece
- Continue this dialog to increase partnership opportunities

Additional Feedback from the survey that the board sent to invitees with the invitation:

1. What essential knowledge and skills should students learn in high school?

- Respondent 1 (R1): Problem solving and critical thinking are two skills that seem to be lacking in many graduates today. Reading, writing and mathematics knowledge are essential for success in the workplace as well as for being able to be an active participant in today's society. Knowledge of history, great books, geography, art, etc. are nice to have.
- Respondent 2 (R2): Math skills, problem solving, team work, critical thinking, writing, oral communication ethics

2. Should students be required to take three credits of mathematics in high school, an increase of one credit over current requirements?

- R1: No (See response to #3)
- R2: Yes! New entrants are often lacking the basic math skills to do entry-level jobs.

3. Should state graduation requirements match college admission requirements?

- R1: No. We need a mix of skills in our community and the workplace. What is appropriate for one student may not be for another. A college degree certainly gives a person more options and possibly more income but it's not for everyone. A person with reasonable reading, writing and math knowledge and the ability to think clearly is well equipped for additional training in the trades or other vocations not requiring a college degree.
- R2: Yes! We are losing ground in our skill level in the global setting

4. What other insights do you have regarding the appropriate preparation of high school students for the workplace?

- R1: Successfully educating our youth is a difficult task. Students the same age are not all ready for the same learning experiences. We need to provide enough diverse approaches to keep as many interested as possible (all within a limited budget for staff, materials and buildings). The students and their families have to share the responsibility.
- R2: They need more interaction with the business community prior to graduation. They need to understand workplace expectations and standards

