

**Washougal School District Board of Directors
Middle and High School Transition Linkage Meeting
October 6, 2008, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Washougal School District Board Room**

Board Members Present: Blaine Peterson, Director; Tom Huffman, Director; Orlan Gessford, Director; Teresa Baldwin, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board. The prearranged absences of Elaine Pfeifer and Ron Dinius were excused.

Blaine Peterson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The input below was gathered from Washougal School District students and parents.

High School:

Tell us about your experiences transitioning to WHS.

- I feel like I've been prepared. Passing all classes. Hasn't taken any of the cumulative tests yet (midterms) so she's nervous about that. Feels pretty prepared.
- Coming into high school wasn't as big as the middle school made it seem for many of them. Midterm and finals were like a test in middle school. One thing they could have prepared them better for in mathematics. Canyon Creek kids were about a year more advanced than those at JMS and that created some problems. For college they are recommended to get up to the college level but half of them can't because they are behind a year.
- When son went in as a freshman, he was in classes with few freshmen. Came from Canyon Creek. Putting more freshman lumped together in classes would have helped.
- Son took integrated one his 8th grade year and did well first trimester. By last trimester he was failing. Told by teacher that was when many students hit a wall and she found out when it was almost too late to do anything. By the time they found out, they couldn't turn it around and he still failed even though she got him tutoring. Felt that her son gave up because he couldn't understand and it wasn't explained well. Was really tough and to have him go to high school and expect him to repeat the same class and have him advanced to the next level. He's working hard, including doing tutoring, to stay there. The bad grade followed him to high school and there was a four-week wait for him to participate in sports. There was nothing he could do over the summer to get summer help to make up a grade. In the sports, there was nothing there and he had to wait it out. Would like to see something he could do over the summer.
- If we're dealing with one district, the standardization of curriculum would be really advisable. Don't understand why we have two diverse curriculums. Why the differences? Same district, same people, should have the same type of horses. What about the simple standardization of getting information out to the parents. When it does arrive in written form, it would be nice if a legend came along to tell us what things are. Why are we seeing things

- reflected now that we should have seen on the previous ones (progress reports). Progress reports not turned in get an F. One teacher will allow something with email and another won't.
- For the people who want to get 4.0 all through high school, a progress report can mean that you are done.
 - Being strong rivals between CCMS and JMS in middle school and then loving them in high school. Once they get to high school a lot of them still hold a grudge. Maybe tossing up the classes a little bit or do something to open up their minds. Maybe not to the extent of team building.
 - If a majority of the kids are behind in math classes, it puts the JMS and CCMS kids segregated in classes. If both schools had the same curriculum would mix things up. If you had integrated in 7th and 8th then they could easily take Calculus before they are done.

Middle School:

What are your concerns about going to/having your student go to high school next year?

- I feel prepared but some things he doesn't feel prepared on. What happens in the halls. Some people feel like you might get beat up by some senior or get hazed. Wants to know what really goes on. Are the teachers as mean as they say?
- Her son voiced the concern but said he was prepared. He knows other kids who are upper grades. Felt much more comfortable going in for that reason. There are those students who aren't prepared for those things. There is a definite feeling out there going on.
- Can remember the apprehension of going into this high school. Knows that the high school kids make it across the field to visit JMS. Can middle school students go visit the high school? No one knows about anybody. How come we all can't get together with JMS and CCMS on neutral ground and discuss and alleviate some of the fears. You get to know the people off the field and not on the field.
- Very good mentor committee. A group of upper classmen take a group of freshman and meet with them monthly. Help them with homework. A buddy system. We answer questions. They are your personal friend for the rest of the year. You can be assured that you are going to have a person to look up to for the rest of the year. If anything happens, the mentor would get upset with the person doing that to you.
- One thing that she has notices with JMS is that the kids get categorized very early on in their career. They get put into a class with students who have the same mentality early in 6th grade. Have the students who don't care or those who work hard but don't get it in the same class. Sometimes students get it midway through the year and there is no chance for reevaluation so you get bored and giving up. I have a lot of frustrations and trying to voice them methodically and without anger. Boys at JMS have a more difficult time than the girls do. Thinks there needs to be some kind of an advocate for boys at JMS.

- Going into high school, she was terrified too. The mentor thing is awesome. Would be so fun if, during the summer, you passed out a flyer and got everyone together for a barbeque or something to bond together. That would be an awesome social idea and would get some of the anxiety out.
- This year in 8th grade, they are having all boy and all girl and all boy and a mixed class at JMS. Lower levels and higher levels. She is in integrated I. The students in the lower level classes can move up.
- Doing better in an all boy's class than last year in a mixed class. Doesn't know the reason.
- Maybe doing better because there aren't people there to distract you. Do better because there aren't girls there to distract them from their work.
- Doesn't think that all the classes should be like that because they have to have some fun.
- Coach at WHS and CCMS and wanted to address the concern. Have seen the rivalry starting to get out of hand. Administrators are working on this. An example is that the wrestling teams will be going to all meets on the same bus and they will be knowing that they have a cross town rivalry but that they will all be the same panthers. Would like to see a way for students to make up those F grades in the summer so that they can get into sports from the start of the year.
- Schools are so worried about losing their financial status, they've lost sight of the true purpose of the schools which is the kids. No child left behind, since that, everything is declining because kids are being pushed through.
- When we had CISPIS, outdoor school, brought all the kids together. Want them to start mingling and getting to know each other at that level. Was the best thing. Was talking it up to a student from Vancouver because they still have it there. Students got to know their teachers and their friends and communications go broken down. Would be nice to have something like that again.
- On CISPIS, if you make friends at camp, even if you have a rivalry, you remember those people and would stop some of the "Oh, you're so bad" because you still have those friendships even though you aren't going to school every day.

High School:

What did you/your student get from your middle school experience that has proven to be helpful at the high school?

- Liked being able to move around more at high school. More fun.
- ASB creates more broadmindedness. You feel like it is your job to be a leader at your school.
- Very close to the kids from Canyon Creek. Could say hi to anyone at the middle school. High school has a cool environment where you can meet new people

- 8th grade graduation is a very very good idea. Have speakers with what they are going to do in the future (balloon arch). Was a positive a good adventure for him. It was the hardest level.
- In PE class, when they played games like PE and Volleyball they split them up by CCMS and JMS and that isn't right. Some JMS kids have to play on the CCMS teams.
- Foreign language should start in the middle schools. If students want to move out of the country, they need more foreign language. Just go back from a study abroad in Germany. Was an amazing experience. If kids were to experience foreign language on a lower level, they could go abroad and stop other countries from not liking us. It proves that you will have better grades if you take foreign language.
- Since she does music, can't do foreign language freshman year. Camas kids can do foreign language in middle school and finish it or go further with it. Not only would it help you academically, it can free things up later on. Would be happy to free some spots up to do something like drama.

Middle School:

What are you hoping that you/your student will get from your middle school this year that you think would be useful next year?

- I know that toward the end of the year, they do groups going to the high school to get tours. If a single student could go with a high school student for one day (shadow) that would be great. Or if the mentors could meet with them with a smaller group. Let the students ask questions.
- Why don't you take the inservice days and offset them and line up one student with one high schooler and let them go through the whole day with them. On the other days when they have inservice days for the high school, why can't the high schoolers come over the middle school and give a transition period.
- Maybe we could have a day when all of the 8th graders go to the high school and go to a pep rally and find out what it is like.
- In 5th grade, they took a day and spent the day in groups with 7th graders. That helped him get familiar with where all the classes were.
- When they went in the groups with the 7th graders, they showed them the boundaries, where the classes are, who the teachers were, where to eat etc. and it helped a lot.
- Nothing is going to prepare you for your first day. Great idea to prepare them more because it will show them how fun it will be. People go into it with a negative attitude. Nothing is going to prepare you for it but to a certain extent you can get prepared.

High School:

What do you wish you/your student had learned differently or better while in middle school?

- I would have loved the ability to go up there and tag along for a day. Went for a half a day but didn't really go to classes. That would be a great idea. To

- witness some of the fun stuff would be good. Experience a pep assembly. Those are fun. If you show how fun it can be, they won't be as nervous.
- They'll come in with fresh pride.
 - This year they changed it so that they have a blue day and a gold day. Totally different schedule every day. Kind of confusing. They have a poster in the commons that says what day it is. They might have the one from the previous day up because she gets to school kind of early.
 - The only positive thing (with the blue/gold day) is that you have an extra day to do your homework. Was really confusing 6th and 7th grade.
 - For CC, they alternate electives. One day you have art and the next day you have PE. Kind of excited because it go so monotone last year. For 8th graders, it wasn't confusing.
 - Our 3rd period class, they split it in half. Kind of nice but still not very fun having to go to the same class every day. Don't have much time to do anything in those classes.
 - Las year when they didn't have that, she just had band and PE and it wasn't much elective. PE and band can get pretty boring. Only go to TA for a teacher once. A good idea to switch things up a little bit. Thinks it is a good idea for electives.
 - Glad that they have the split electives. Can do more electives now. Got boring doing PE over and over. Now they can switch off and have different things each day.
 - There was an information night that went over everything at the end of the 8th grade year that went over AP, PE etc.

Middle School:

What do you need to know about WHS before you start school next year as a 9th grader?

- It feels good to be doing stuff that a lot of kids are doing in high school. Helps you feel like you aren't behind and you understand things better.
- When they were forecasting, they didn't really tell them what the classes were. Was told that CT Algebra goes over what they learned in 8th grade but that hasn't been the case. Should give sample problems on the sheet so you can see what you are going to learn in a class.

High School:

How effective was the high school forecasting process last spring?

- Forecasting could have been more effective by being more specific.
- Get a pre-syllabus. Would have helped a lot if they had that. If they could know what classes are required and which ones aren't. A lot of people are under the assumption that world geography is required. Everyone is stuck in it now and they want to do other stuff. They should let you know what are the hard-core required classes.
- Why don't they bring back zero period. With PE, people want to get it out of the way really quick. Puts you ahead of the game. Why did they cut that?

- One thing about forecasting is not the prerequisites is the fact that something is only for 11th or 12th grade students. Do something like psychology your freshman year at first and then do you fun art as a senior. They can't always take sociology or psychology their junior or senior year but they can't because they can't because they don't have room. Will have to pay to take it in college when she could have taken it in high school for free.
- Do you get to choose whether or not you take an advanced class? Are there advanced social studies or regular social studies? They categorize classes into social studies (psychology, history etc). There's AP US history.
- For the middle school students, if you are going to take a foreign language, you should have good memorization skills and be up on your homework. Need to put lots of time toward that.
- Not about forecasting: Doesn't know what clubs are there. She'd get into debate team. Should make the clubs and teams more advertised. Only knows of three clubs. Doesn't know if some of them exist or where you go or anything.
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Other citizen comments:

- Is there a study hall period in high school? Reason they split the exploratories is so that they could have Husky Studies.
- Parent believes that they should do homework at home and have a full class instead. Not doing homework or texting. Cut every other day on two classes. Why not divide it up and cut from every class. That way when they go home, they'd know what they are doing. At the end of the period, if your whole time is trying to learn it and not work on it, you might not know your stuff.
- She would like to see someone there to help them work on forecasting, answering questions, and it is confusing. The student have so many questions, the teachers do not have the time it takes with the kids but that is there role to answer questions from getting beat up to forecasting.
- In high school, sports are taking up more time in their life. The grade point average for sports is a great thing to have but also think that coaches when they get the grade thing, they encourage them to work at home. Sometimes they should open the coach's mind to having a practice where they go to someone's house and can do their work. Once or twice it would be great for the coaches to open their minds to that.
- Only having three minutes to get from class to class, the students have to scramble to get their things put away and go to the next class. On the ramp they are going against the flow to get off the ramp. Should have more time to get from class to class. Have to go from yearbook to math.
- Coaches and homework: also goes for the teachers. Does four to seven hours of homework a night. Works. Goes to bed at 11 or 12. Unfair to students who want to succeed. Wants to get into medical school. With stress, grade point has gone down. Teachers need to communicate with every other teacher to see when the loads are and when students can turn the work in.

- Have heard that the football team will make you sit up and out or an hour until your grades come up if you have a failing grade.
- Grades and sports have always been...even in the old days if you couldn't maintain your grades, you didn't pay. Sports are secondary. You go to school to learn. Sports are paid for by submitting your grades.
- One of the things that they had this year at the beginning of the year, the coach made a big point of saying that they were student athletes. What he started to do was have study hall at the beginning of practice. They were unable to continue it. Would love to see that supported. Knows that periodically, younger son say that they all stayed and got their homework done and then go ready. If you can incorporate sports and academics, great, go for it.
- Played volleyball and... last year. Coach said you are a student athlete. Had to get a paper signed by the teacher and couldn't pay until they had their grades back up. Not getting as much homework this year as last year. Feels like that if there isn't so much homework, there is more freetime to do what she enjoys doing. Not as much home work this year but she still get some. History teacher gives them two history classes or over the weekend to get things done. Understands that they have lives out of school and it is nice not having a whole bunch of homework.
- It is nice to have time to sit down and get your home work done and then you can relax and go to bed at a reasonable hour. They have a thing in wrestling where they bring out snacks and they get all their homework done and then the roll out the mats. Coaches and assistant coaches are there and you can ask them if you have any questions.
- Especially on Fridays, might be good to have a homework day.
- One teacher allows them (physics) to retake a chapter and then he takes the upper grade. You can only do that until the next chapter starts. The teacher says that the more they do it the more they learn. Maybe something that the teachers could set up and maybe they could do this during their free time.
- One tool that the high school has is the daily bulletin. The high school updates everything everyday and it is a good tool. Could be advertised to the 8th graders. Go to Washougal High School Website. It is a good tool.
- Also tells you about spirit days etc.
- A lot of the teachers are really entertaining. Mrs. Llewalen's class is great. She's a character. Other classes aren't as fun but you are still learning. Still need to keep learning but need to factor in that the teachers could loosen up. Need to be nice and be funny. If you are wacky and crazy the students won't make fun of you.
- Question for high schoolers : Do most of the teachers give you a chance to retake stuff or fix things.
 - Mr. Stanton is cool about letting you redo stuff as is Mrs. Miller. They are pushing you to do your work.
 - Allow a lot of retakes.

- How are students going to be prepared for how much homework they will have in high school with how little they have now? Getting good grades but no homework. Still passing but how?
- Like to make a comment having had three students in the system. Washougal has improved in leaps and bounds in the nine years she has had students in the district. Given the current situation, would like to have the district reiterate to the teachers that they need to tone down their opinions regarding politics. Given the political situation you need to be very careful and need reminders about this. Need to make sure that those conversations are structured and that every view is expressed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Dated this 14th day of October, 2008

President

Secretary to the Board