

## **Executive Summary of Board of Education Public Engagement Sessions**

From September through November of 2006, School Board members hosted six public engagement sessions in each of the high school feeder groups. The Board identified the process as part of its 2006-07 Goals. Principals of each feeder group identified parents and community members who were invited to participate. Representative individuals participated and provided input on questions about how CMCSS has impacted student achievement; what CMCSS needs to do to help students succeed; how the system can become more efficient and effective; what communication vehicles are most effective; what communication needs the community has; and how parents and the community can become more involved in supporting students.

While each feeder zone was unique and had individual issues specific to that community and its schools, all six zones shared commonalities. Here is a summary of those universal issues:

**System Strengths:** Benchmark Assessments; Innovative curricular programs (AVID, Bridges, 90-minute Reading Block, PreK); K12 Planet; ConnectEd

**System Weaknesses:** Too much focus on high stakes tests; Teacher morale/workload/stress; Need for rezoning; Purchasing for Technology/Textbooks; Funding; Transportation issues

**System Needs:** Quality teachers; Address growth; Dropout rate; Advanced/gifted opportunities K-12; More parent involvement/community support; More communication on a variety of topics (ie. special ed services, budget/funding, child nutrition)

### **How the results relate to the CMCSS Strategic Goals**

#### **Goal- Improve student achievement**

The stakeholders reported that the benchmarks had a positive impact on student achievement along with the innovative curricular programs such as AVID, Bridges, the 90-minute reading block, and pre-K program. Areas for concern included an extreme focus on testing, the need for quality teachers, the dropout rate, low teacher morale accompanied with an increased workload, and the need for more advanced programs.

#### **Goal- Improve efficiency and effectiveness**

Transportation services identified as being appropriate. Areas targeted for improvement included funding, especially for textbooks and technology and the reaction to growth with frequent rezoning.

#### **Goal- Engage the public in support of student achievement**

The stakeholders reported that the K-12 Planet communication of grades was very beneficial along with the ConnectEd message system. Increased involvement of parents was cited as an improvement areas, as well as, more communication on specific topics such as special education services, budget/funding, and child nutrition.

#### **Goal- Build leadership capacity**

This goal was not addressed by stakeholders.

## **Clarksville High Feeder Group**

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have positively impacted student achievement?*

Computer tests on reading/math  
Use of benchmarks keeps focus  
6+1 trait writing  
Increase of AP/Honors classes  
AVID  
Online grades/K12 Planet  
Credit Recovery  
Grade recovery

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have not positively impacted student achievement?*

Concern about post-benchmark  
Teacher stress  
Standards focus/pressure

*What more can we do that we are not currently doing to help students succeed?*

Need more advanced classes in elementary  
Don't know what's available  
Impact on high achievers a concern  
Kids are bored at all being on same level at same pace  
PASS – having one class is not enough, takes a long time for child to be identified and given opportunity to reach what they can reach  
Within system, some schools are moving faster (Ringgold to Sango)  
Middle schools don't have enough advanced classes – only the top 25 in at RMS  
Lot could be in advanced classes but there is not enough space to expand  
The more teachers can engage students and keep them excited, the better  
CHS guidance counselors guide to high school (powerpoint)  
More opportunities for advanced classes in elementary and middle schools  
Group high level children together (like at Smith)  
Do we integrate learning from other disciplines (ie. Arts)  
Get the I.B. program  
Better quality teachers  
Need more minority and male teachers  
Children not making the grade are getting the focus, brighter children are ignored  
Class sizes/growth – need to be able to hire teachers when school starts  
Communicate importance of graduation and what happens when students don't graduate  
High school teachers need to communicate with parents by phone

*In what areas have you heard that the school system has improved its efficiency and effectiveness?*

K12 Planet  
Planner/agendas  
Reduced paperwork for parents/pre-slugged information  
ConnectEd  
Homework Hotline  
PIN

*What are some areas that you would like to see the school system become even more efficient and effective?*

Higher graduation rate  
Better communications with the community that funds are being spent wisely  
More face time with superintendent to carry message  
Need more people saying CMCSS is the best  
Have students very prepared for college  
Need more pride in schools from teachers and parents  
Parent feedback would be valued and the loop would be closed  
Timeliness of communications could be improved – late notice is problem  
School Board/Open house scheduling conflicts  
Better ways to send communication from teachers to parents  
Have teachers invite parents in

*What is the main source of information for you about the school system's budget?*

TV news  
Newspaper

*How can we better communicate budget information and receive feedback about the budget?*

Parent comment: "it's the most convoluted budget I've ever seen."  
Like the budget guide  
What the WHY behind the budget request  
Update web with final budget  
People don't understand budget  
Conflict is a problem  
Every year, same argument: need more money/don't need more money  
Parents need to hear message more than the newspaper  
Always going to be underfunded because of growth  
Need to sell the county commission  
Budget impacts graduation  
Success story is a double edged sword  
Touch pad event at KHS in '02 was a good way to get feedback

*What is the main method by which you receive information about the school system?*

TV news  
Newspaper

*How can parents and community help schools in improving student achievement and graduation rates?*

Parents need to model excitement for schools  
Need more parent involvement, system needs to stress it and communicate it  
Need involvement beyond school hours and fundraisers  
A lot of parents don't know what's going on in schools  
Make info available to read about  
Make system accessible to parents  
Allow parents to shadow students to get experience in middle school  
Parents need to communicate with school  
Use K12 planet  
Attend parent/teacher conferences  
Support disciplinary actions  
Give parents more opportunities to meet Director and School Board members

### **Kenwood High Feeder Group**

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have positively impacted student achievement?*

After school programs – elementary, advanced math, tutoring  
5<sup>th</sup> grade peer tutoring programs  
Kindergarten reading to first grade  
90 minute reading block  
Accelerated Reader (incentives like Principal Kisses the Pig)  
Special Ed classes –student has improved moving into regular ed  
Communications through ConnectEd  
Email notification  
Atmosphere at KES – especially in reading – school feels like a reading magnet school  
Middle school tutoring and clubs – really helps kids in classes  
Course offering in high school – fine arts, especially music  
PreK  
After school enrichment (Geek Squad)  
Positive employees – administrators and others at schools  
STAR reading test, especially first grade  
AR points – Principal of the Day reward  
Being able to volunteer in class as a parent  
Interaction between teachers and parents

Fifth graders change classes prepares them for middle

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have not positively impacted student achievement?*

K12 Planet to check homework – and homework hotline not updated – must use guidance counselors

Need bridge from regular classes to honors classes

NCLB

Community support lacking

Supply list missing for specific schools, classrooms

PASS (@Byrns Darden – need something for high achievers)

Should have a meet and greet before first day of school for new children (@ BDES)

Too much information is given out on the first half day

Not all schools have science labs with teachers

Parents should have to sign tardy children in to school

...question about how district is funded

*What more can we do that we are not currently doing to help students succeed?*

Need more opportunities for advanced students (all levels)

Quicker access to services for high achievers

Are we setting high enough expectations?

Graduation rate – need to be proactive in elementary schools

Guidance counselors are not trained to get child into college

Need to set goals to increase college enrollment

Freshmen in college are not prepared

Do guidance counselors have too much on their plates due to the HOPE scholarship?

Parent workshops to prepare students for ACT, getting into college

Concern about elementary special education and going to middle school – not getting the same attention which needs to happen to maintain achievement growth

Keep class sizes smaller

Need quality teachers

Transition from elementary to middle school in special ed a concern

Don't let students slip through cracks

Next extra help for students with deployed or single parents

Return drivers education to schools

*In what areas have you heard that the school system has improved its efficiency and effectiveness?*

Web site for transportation/bus routes

ConnectEd, communications with email

Fee waivers for marching band

*What are some areas that you would like to see the school system become even more efficient and effective?*

Hardship cases – get late notice, schools not all open at the same time before the first day;  
no explanation of denial; could reply online

K12 Planet @ elementary level

Supply lists before school starts – put on school websites the week before school

Should be able to know who child's teacher is before the first week

Teachers should use website more often and keep site updated

Teachers and schools collaborating is a good idea!

*What is the main source of information for you about the school system's budget?*

TV news

Newspaper

*How can better communicate budget information and receive feedback about the budget?*

Want to understand WHERE the budget shortfall is and why

Should use layman's terms

Visual aid of where \$ are spent

Put budget info in the school calendar

Tell us what's NOT been funded

Use the website

Use the school calendar mailing list and do a direct mail

Use the school closings email listserve

Provide budget info in back to school packets

Compare CMCSS to other counties in PPE, size, demographic and military impact

*What is the main method by which you receive information about the school system?*

ConnectEd

Listserve

Child brings home from school

School's website

School marquee

Some news media

*How can parents and community help schools in improving student achievement and graduation rates?*

Show up, volunteer, listen

HOSTS program, volunteer mentoring

Donate books, materials, funds

Communicate with child

Check homework

Talk with administrators

Teach respect to children

Show support to teachers and bus drivers

Take time with your child

Teach child what's important: academics over athletics and extracurricular

Know teachers and principal

Stop shifting blame on others  
Get more business involved in rewarding children for grades  
School night should be scheduled at more than one restaurant  
Encourage child to be inquisitive and creative in a safe learning environment  
Community should offer parenting classes

## **Montgomery Central High Feeder Group**

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have positively impacted student achievement?*

PASS – elementary and middle  
AP for high schools  
Opportunities for high achievers  
Honors classes  
Virtual high school  
Tutoring programs before and after school  
AVID  
ConnectEd  
Benchmark tests  
Developmental delayed class at Cumberland Heights  
90 minute reading block  
AR  
Book It Program

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have not positively impacted student achievement?*

Not enough AP classes at MC (US History, public speaking, languages, music theory)  
Options not as great at MC as other schools  
ACT score results weak in some areas  
Need more tutoring available  
Need track, athletic facilities, better gym  
Need to transfer students 19+ years old  
Need better Communication on identification with special ed services – ie. Inform through daycares, preschools, pediatricians  
Need more physical activity  
Ensure teachers are following the curriculum, assess their teaching and keep them accountable (teacher quality)

*What more can we do that we are not currently doing to help students succeed?*

Ensure guidance counselors are connecting with 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders for a career path  
Offer workshops for students to get exposure to job interviewing skills  
Need early exposure to college orientation job training, tech and vocational

Not enough time or opportunity (due to credit structuring requirements) for students to take vocational classes

Scheduling conflicts – ie AP courses and jazz band

Cosmetology

Early childhood education

Intense agriculture area

More hands on

Communicating on website what is available – PASS, special ed

Higher tech computer classes

*In what areas have you heard that the school system has improved its efficiency and effectiveness?*

ConnectEd

Communication home with child – ie. Weekly feedback, folder

Progress reports every 3 weeks

K12 Planet

9 week grading period

Parent teacher conferences – more time and good information

At Cumberland Heights, every child sees every teacher/subject area

H.S. planners

IEP collaborative communication between schools

Technology is good at all four schools

*What are some areas that you would like to see the school system become even more efficient and effective?*

Promote job shadowing

Reward excellence in teaching

Give parents opportunity to give feedback on teaching without fear of retribution for child

360 degree feedback for teachers

Retain/recruit quality teachers

Give salary incentives, awards, recognitions for excellent teachers

*What is the main source of information for you about the school system's budget?*

Newspaper

Focus group

Word of mouth

Local radio

PIN

*How can better communicate budget information and receive feedback about the budget?*

Send more home with younger children

Mail

Survey  
Web  
Parent meetings  
Phone  
Online

*What is the main method by which you receive information about the school system?*

Child's folder  
Mail  
ConnectEd  
PIN  
Email listserves from schools  
School calendar  
School websites

*How can parents and community help schools in improving student achievement and graduation rates?*

Need higher attendance in parent meetings  
Go to schools and voice opinion  
Be more accountable for children  
Bring parents in to schools

*Miscellaneous concerns*

School lunches – middle school choices are limited to pizza, burritos and fries  
Vending machines – changes need to be communicated  
Put PE back in school

### **Northeast High Feeder Group**

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have positively impacted student achievement?*

Teachers listening to students, engaging in a positive way  
Daily feedback from teachers-more ways to communicate  
ConnectEd, attendance notifications, meeting reminders  
Extra help with IEP, counselor connection  
Organizational skills – GPA  
Technology for kindergarten  
Channel One  
Freshman Academy – better than before

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have not positively impacted student achievement?*

Continuous rezoning-traumatic for child  
Communication with county commission/need for proactive, not reactive with growth  
Concerns with cost of growth – pass on to builders, ask the public through referendum  
Impact on military child with rezoning  
Need to update software (school system should fund instead of PTO) stay current with software, equipment  
Impact of inclusive classrooms – concern that there's too many – impact on student and on teachers (3 to 5 lesson plans a day)  
Likes inclusion but concern on wide spread of abilities  
Not enough teachers to fill positions (math) what happens when we open more schools?  
It's unfair to kids  
Is funding adequate to attract teachers  
School fees, supplies that regular education students pays  
Increase individual teacher allocations  
Why are we not voting to give our schools more money  
Benchmark tests – not enough time to teach subject area for focus on benchmarks

*What more can we do that we are not currently doing to help students succeed?*

Need money – get businesses more involved – providing funds and supplies  
Textbooks - do all have current?  
Workbooks – need all to have  
Expand focus beyond TCAP – teaching to test and not going beyond high stakes testing  
Narrow focus on teaching instead of covering everything  
Reduce number of activities for teachers (including paperwork) so they can focus on students  
Have teachers communicate/call home more with feedback for parents

*In what areas have you heard that the school system has improved its efficiency and effectiveness?*

ConnectEd  
K12 Planet  
PIN  
Rezoning for good student/teacher ratio  
Portables are well prepared for learning environment

*What are some areas that you would like to see the school system become even more efficient and effective?*

Bus routes/delivery on time  
Overcrowded buses  
Dangerous for small students  
Better training for bus drivers – unfamiliarity with children  
Could the Clarksville Police Department escort buses? Watching for traffic dangers  
Recruitment/retention of drivers

Food – provision of snacks when lunches are late or too early  
Athletic fields are in bad condition  
Custodian cutback still being felt

*What is the main source of information for you about the school system's budget?*

Newspaper  
PIN  
System website  
Neighbors/bus top chat  
County clerk's office  
School newsletters

*How can better communicate budget information and receive feedback about the budget?*

Email  
When school starts – or in monthly newsletters, a less than one page brief on how \$ are spend/budgeted by individual schools  
Include specific student by student expenditures

*What is the main method by which you receive information about the school system?*

Newsletters  
K12 Planet  
ConnectEd  
Faculty members  
Email from some schools, teachers

*How can parents and community help schools in improving student achievement and graduation rates?*

Staying in touch with teachers  
Becoming a part of the PTO  
Helping where needed  
Being in the building  
Knowing you are invited to be in school  
Volunteer in schools  
Tutor children  
Communicate high expectations  
Businesses challenge students at early age – give exposure to jobs and what's needed  
Local businesses could create internships for high

## **Northwest High Feeder Group**

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have positively impacted student achievement?*

Improved TCAP scores – achievement above higher and below higher – group work  
Building Buddies @ MES a confidence booster, wish they'd implement in upper levels  
Title I – whole school now at MES has benefited student achievement and morale of staff  
ConnectEd – NW more likely to give a call; reminders on federal forms, school communications and absence notification  
AVID program really works  
Loves flex schedules  
Nurses  
Email newsletters  
Peer/older students tutoring

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have not positively impacted student achievement?*

Cell phone incident/accident prevented son from being on honor society  
Flex schedule – miss one class – get two absences  
School buses and budget constraints impact after school programs  
When field trips are cut, impacts morale and opportunities.

*What more can we do that we are not currently doing to help students succeed?*

Communicate effectively with parents – consider those without phones, or email; use direct mailing, posting on school marquee, send home with students  
Offer after school hours for computer/internet access  
Allow younger students to see graduate (level promotions) of those who have succeeded  
Offer a good balance of career tech ed with college prep  
Offer career day  
Provide interventions for failing students  
Recruit and retain quality teachers with adequate pay  
Offer a cost effective tutoring program on Saturday  
Involve community businesses in tutoring program  
Close schools on election day  
Have open, welcoming staff at schools to respond to parents

*In what areas have you heard that the school system has improved its efficiency and effectiveness?*

Community awareness of needs  
Parent pickup systems  
Textbooks at NPMS now on time  
PIN

Accessing bus schedule on internet  
Idea of K12 Planet is good IF teachers can have help with it  
ConnectEd (school closings, information on school events)

*What are some areas that you would like to see the school system become even more efficient and effective?*

The new PIN for breakfast/lunches is preventing children from eating  
Need a better way to verify balance of meals  
Sub bus drivers have trouble with control – need to have more regular permanent drivers  
Review pickup locations for safety reasons (older students)  
Need more custodians (for safety)  
There should not be classes in portables  
Have SROs at open houses so parents can meet them  
Bus route sheets in schools need to match website route info  
K12 for MES not updated, it's a great program IF teachers can keep up with it  
Grades aren't updated on K12 at NW  
Pin # for meals was provided with late notice  
Serving times are too tight, kids don't have time to eat, lines are too long  
Liberty has remove all snacks, MES has not  
Soda machines questioned. At NW, students can have them, but many are broken

*What is the main source of information for you about the school system's budget?*

School committees – being a member  
Newspaper  
Rumor  
Parent Awareness Committee  
PIN  
Principals  
Website

*How can better communicate budget information and receive feedback about the budget?*

Better way to locate information on the web: lunch menu, Title I, budget, school site newsletters online  
Should be published more than once in the newspaper  
Send the school calendar out to the community  
Put budget info and updates on the website, get that information out about availability  
Expose community to school calendar  
Give impact of cuts rather than # of people, dollar amount, student impact. It's hard to see outside of the school environment.

*What is the main method by which you receive information about the school system?*

Email

ConnectEd  
K12 when it works  
School Newsletter  
Mass mail (USPS)  
NOT from students

*How can parents and community help schools in improving student achievement and graduation rates?*

Read to child  
Being involved and caring what happens to students  
Reading newsletters  
Communicating with teachers, counselors, principals, etc.  
Be at school, observe students  
Tutor students  
Help with homework  
Keeping up with syllabus  
Set goals for child  
Principal/parent/student contracts are awesome  
Fundraisers, activities involvement  
Being there  
More conversations with child about civic responsibilities  
Get to know principal, staff  
Hold child responsible, but check homework, missed assignments  
Enforce teacher respect and give consequences if not  
Verify opinion vs. fact  
Hold student responsible, but follow up at school  
Pay fees

### **Rossview High Feeder Group**

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have positively impacted student achievement?*

Progress reports – consistency  
ConnectEd recorded messages  
K12 Planet – access to grades  
90 minute reading block (crucial to reading, math and science)  
Leadership and warmth from administration at St.B.  
Honors program at RHS  
Academic Awards Banquet  
Open houses brings community together  
Recognitions in class  
AR store incentives

*What are some changes you have heard about or experienced that have not positively impacted student achievement?*

St. B/Burt split disrupts continuity of elementary experience  
Burt doesn't have same amount of staff support  
When not a lot of administrative contact, there's a negative  
Burt as a transitional school leads to less parent involvement  
Honors program in elementary – student in honors in GA doesn't meet PASS criteria here and affects grades negatively  
Technology and textbooks are lacking  
Can't upgrade computers  
Having to share textbooks, can't bring them home  
Need more aides  
Need outdoor activities at Burt  
Need more PIE partners  
Portable classrooms  
Commercial location too close to St.B

*What more can we do that we are not currently doing to help students succeed?*

Focus on math/science in elementary schools equally in all schools  
5<sup>th</sup> graders at Burt used to change classes and helped them prepare for M.S.  
Substitute teachers not always following lesson plans  
Avoid having to have parents sub when teachers are in training  
Need more diverse faculty – would help minority students  
More male teachers  
Provide role models, mentors for students  
Avoid pizza parties and non-nutritional snacks  
Are Coke machines gone yet?

*In what areas have you heard that the school system has improved its efficiency and effectiveness?*

Lunch accountability  
ISO 9001 certification  
Grades online and progress reports  
Trash hauling  
Combining middle/high transportation routes

*What are some areas that you would like to see the school system become even more efficient and effective?*

Regular bus drivers – too many subs  
Communicate with transportation EARLY when buses are on road  
Overcrowded buses – especially in middle and high school – 3 to a seat

Bus stops near sex offenders homes a concern and want a system that will let the drivers know

Traffic control for walkers- flashing lights needed between Dunbar Cave and Cardinal Road

Traffic on Rossvie Road within complex

Painted walkway to show where children should cross the road/designate with flashing light

*What is the main source of information for you about the school system's budget?*

Newspaper

Cmcss.net

TV

Teachers

Other parents/network

PIN

*How can better communicate budget information and receive feedback about the budget?*

Sometimes *The Leaf-Chronicle* is confusing

Hear it from school board, letter, email, website

Through PIN

Cable access

*What is the main method by which you receive information about the school system?*

ConnectEd

Kids

Teachers/staff

Other parents

Newspaper

*How can parents and community help schools in improving student achievement and graduation rates?*

Parent volunteering, mentoring

Not wait till there's a problem, pay attention to your kids

Communication from parents to schools

Know your child's weaknesses, strengths

Bring businesses in and help with students - Understand expectations for world of work

Career days – bring in business professionals to speak with children

Behavior expectations should start with young children