Community Conversation:
Summary District Climate Community Discussions

Presented by
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on behalf
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Overview of Community Discussion

Facilitators: Leila Richey Nuland, Tony Mastrorio and Stephan Knobloch from K12 Insight, a research and communications firm located in Herndon, Virginia

Purpose: Gather candid feedback from parents and community members about the state of the educational climate across Katy ISD and use feedback to develop a customized survey based on the discussions.

Format: Informal
- Asked questions designed to explore perspectives on educational climate
- Maintained an open and constructive dialogue
- Everyone had an opportunity to participate
- Facilitators moved the conversation forward so that all topics were covered within the 2-hour period
- All responses are confidential
- Information will be used to develop the Katy ISD District Climate Survey
Participant Information

K12 Insight facilitated eight two-hour conversations, with a total of 166 community members participating.

56,000 registered voters received a direct mailer invite. Emails and news releases were also disseminated to notify community members.

The participant population represented the diversity within Katy ISD.

Participants included:

- Parents of current Katy ISD students
- Parents of former Katy ISD students
- Retired community members who are taxpayers
- Current Katy ISD employees
- Former Katy ISD employees
Summary

**Strengths**
- District’s reputation for academic excellence
- Program quality

**Weaknesses**
- District communication efforts
- Inequities across schools
- Need for community engagement
- Need for a strategic plan
District’s Reputation for Academic Excellence and Program Quality

• A majority of participants are proud of Katy ISD and feel the district has a reputation for academic excellence.
  • Gifted and Talented programs
  • Language Immersion Programs

• Many participants feel Katy ISD employs high-quality instructional staff and are satisfied with the interactions they have had with campus instructional staff.
Inequities in School District

• How can Katy ISD ensure academic excellence for all in an increasingly diverse community?

• Concerns about variation in programs across campuses
  • Discrepancies between special education programs across Katy ISD schools
  • Lack of availability of Language Immersion programs at all campuses

• Need for district to communicate individual campus needs
  • If one school does not have an active PTA, non-parent community may be able to provide fundraising assistance and other resources

• If inequities are not addressed, parent participants feel attendance boundary modification is not fair.
District Communication

• Participants voiced their appreciation to the district and Board for convening the Community Conversations.

• Overall sense that parent community members are “not heard.”

• Community members appreciated the direct mailer and suggested a need for continued outreach through direct mail.

• Skepticism about purpose of Community Conversations.
District Communication (Continued)

- Timeliness
- Presenting balanced viewpoints
- Engaging community in strategic planning
Community and Parent Engagement

• Create opportunities to raise community awareness about district dilemmas

• Parents of former Katy ISD students feel they are forgotten after their child graduates.

• Improve alumni outreach efforts

• District leadership should be more visible in the community.
Need a Strategic Plan

- Participants did not feel the True North goals were measurable goals; they would like to see an explicit plan that includes key performance indicators.

- Many referred to the current goals as “too high level.”

- Community members need to understand the district strategic plan in order to make informed decisions about bond referendums.
Next Steps and Recommendations

• Disseminate a Community Survey to determine if the Community Conversations capture the current perspective of the larger Katy ISD population.

• Work with K12 *Insight* to develop a strategic plan for the 2015-2016 school year.

• Incorporate *Let’s Talk!* on Katy ISD website