



Session 1 Report – Student Vision

NAME OF SCHOOL: MONROE HIGH SCHOOL

DATE OF SESSION 1: 9/27/12

NAME OF ORGANIZATION: Families In Schools

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL REPORTING IN BEHALF OF THE ORGANIZATION: NADIA M. HERNANDEZ

DATE THIS REPORT IS COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED: 10/1/12

Parents and community members at Monroe High School provided feedback on their student vision through a series of group activities, discussion, and written comments. Annotated narrative was also gathered to supplement the responses and vision of the participants.

Participants were asked to reflect on what they want their children to know and be prepared for when they leave school to ensure success in higher education and the workforce. For habits of the heart, the participants wrote that they would like their children to be responsible, hardworking, disciplined, and organized individuals. Other habits they would like their children to possess include honesty, confidence, have a good self-esteem, and respectful towards others.

Several written comments reaffirmed this vision for students:

1. Be responsible with homework and school projects and turn them in on time.
2. I would for him to be sociable and help others to be respectful with other people.
3. Have a good self-esteem, be organized, be studious, and be responsible. Parents can be the motivators for their children to reach their goals.
4. Be creative and manage their time to be successful.
5. Have the values that were instilled at home like love, friendship, and respect.
6. I want my child to dream big and work towards it. Parents and schools should come together to help each child make their dreams come true.
7. Be people of character, be responsible and respectful. Be compassionate towards others and the environment.
8. Have a purpose to get ahead. Be able to overcome the challenges. Having enough ability to be able to assist others and be a good example. Parents play an important role.

In addition, parents commented that they would like their children to possess certain habits of the mind like thinking before acting, have an open mind, and be independent thinkers. Many of the participants expressed that they would like their children to love the process of learning and be successful academically.

The following are comments shared by the participants:

1. Think of how their education is going to impact their life now and in the future.
2. Think with great enthusiasm of graduating and not continue the same situation in which their parents live in.
3. Have confidence in him, good communication, and motivation to do everything he wants, and have the support from his parents.
4. To have clear in mind what he wants to do with his life. Define his goals and develop his persistence.
5. A student is a sponge they will always learn. Keep your student well supplied and listen to your child.



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In addition, the participants also named a number of abilities and preparation that they would like their children to have before they graduate. These include going well academically, being college reading, and giving back to the community.

The following are the comments shared by the participants in their vision for their students:

1. Commit themselves in the learning process and service to the public.
2. To think ahead to have a good job and salary.
3. Be responsible for their actions and feel proud to serve his community and be an example to follow.
4. Be at the appropriate grade level to accomplish her goal of being a doctor.
5. Be able to work together as a group.
6. Get good grades to go to college. Have good scores in exams, ACT and SAT (pre-university).
7. Learn how to write good essay. Would like to students to become good readers. Reading is a must in all avenues of life. Have the appropriate math, reading and writing comprehension. Learn other languages like Spanish to be able to express himself.
8. Learn how to administer and manage their time.

In all, the participants expressed that they would like for their children to have a number of habits, skills, and preparations to be able to graduate high school, be prepared to attend a university, and be successful people that contribute back to their communities.



Session 1 Report – School Vision

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The School Vision was created by a combination of feedback provided by parents through their participation in small group activities, discussion, and annotated narrative data. During the small group activities, parents were asked to discuss and comment on what type of school they envision for their children.

The participants envision a school at Monroe where the students can obtain a quality education and would like to address some academic issues. A common theme that came up was the need for better qualified teachers at Monroe who will motivate students to succeed in their classes. For instance, a participant commented during the activities, *“I would like to see teachers focus more teaching the students and more dedication from the teachers. I would like for teachers to stay after school to help students. Also, I would like the counselors to be more caring and that do not demoralize students.”* The participants would like to see teachers provide more focused attention, provide extra help to the students who need it, and make the classes a fun learning environment. In addition, the notion of racism came up in the written comments provided by the participants. They expressed that they would like for teachers not to be racist so that the students can feel comfortable to communicate with their teachers.

In addition to better qualified teachers, the participants noted that they would like to see better qualified counselors who will assist the students to a pathway of graduation and college preparation. The qualified counselors were described as individuals who build a comfortable and trusting environment with the students so that students can approach the counselors with their concerns. In terms of academics, the participants are concerned over the issue of overcrowding and would like to see smaller class sizes (15-20 students per class).

This discussion was highlighted during the group discussion. The comments below reaffirm the vision of the participants:

1. We need teachers that have objectives and stimulate learning so that the students can succeed.
2. To have teachers that are better trained to teach students and not be racist so that the students can focus and for the school staff to listen to us parents.
3. There needs to be more motivation on the part of teachers to students and on the part of parents to children on academic preparation.
4. My vision for the school is to support the school so that all students can graduate. Help teachers with assistance to make them more professional.
5. I want students to have teachers and staff who are open and interested in what kids want and need.
6. The student needs to feel comfortable with the teacher first and be sure of himself and have confidence.
7. For the counselors to listen to the students so that they help them to be successful in the studies.
8. For the counselors to assist the academic needs of the students. My child's counselor tells him that he does not have time to help him.
9. Would like school to have mentoring program for kids, especially those from single parent households.
10. Have available classes/workshops on college preparation for students.
11. Less bureaucracy and more opportunities on campus.
12. Give more priority to math, English, science, calculus, social science classes and technology.
13. Have less vacation days.
14. I would like kids to be exposed to the arts, sciences, etc. by way of field trips, outings to the museums, plays, musicals, etc. These things make for better overall academic achievement.



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Another important theme that was discussed by the participants was the issue of security. The participants described envisioning a school that is a clean and safe environment for students to learn. Participants highlighted racism and bullying to be issues present at Monroe High School. The participants would like to see an increase in the security at the school and more vigilance from the administrators on campus and at school events. In addition, the participants pointed out the issue of gang activity and drugs at Monroe High School.

Below are comments provided by the participants on the issue of security and how they would like for these issues to be addressed:

1. For the directors interfere more in the school so that they put solutions to the problems of racism and bullying.
2. I would like to see more security so that all students come to school and for teachers to focus more on the needs of the students.
3. I would like for the school call, leave a message, or send a letter on my child's school attendance or absence.
4. Communicate if there are any discipline issues with my child.
5. For more security so that there is no more involvement of drugs in the school.
6. For the school to be more secure so fights don't break out and students not to have problems. Often this also creates fear in students to come to school and study. I want the security to do their job well.
7. Have more security cameras inside the school. Also have security at sport practices and in the courtyard at recess.
8. To stop and control the use of marijuana that students are consuming.

A final theme that was present during the feedback provided by the participants was the lack of parent engagement. The participants would like to see more parent involvement at school events. There was a consensus that parents need to get informed about their children's education. The participants also acknowledged that the teachers need help from the parents to assist them in the discipline process. As one parent commented, *"Teachers also need support from the parents to discipline the students. Often times, the students do not listen to the teachers."*

The following are feedback and suggestions on improving parent involvement.

1. Better communication between parents and teachers. For parents and teachers to work together to help out the students do better.
2. Have more support from the parents and community and be present in all the meetings to get informed about the student's needs and know how to assist them.
3. The parents need to participate but I think that there such be a better leadership from the teachers and school.
4. Teach kids to be involved in the community and be concerned about their community. Have volunteer opportunities for students in the community.

The topics highlighted by participants for the school vision at Monroe High School include improving the quality of education in terms of better qualified teachers, better prepared counselors, and smaller classrooms; improve security to control the gang activity, drug use, and bullying; and lastly, improve the parent involvement. A parent expressed, *"I want to my child to finish school with the security that he is well prepared and that he had the best group of teachers worthy of being imitated"*.



Session 1 Report – Dialogues with Planning Teams

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There was only one planning team for Monroe High School. The planning team envisions students who are recognized by their academic excellence and their individuality; students who are college and workforce ready; students who have technical proficiency in areas such as math, science and technology; students who communicate and work effectively; students who are dedicated to the betterment of their communities; and students who can advocate for their own needs.

The planning team engaged the participants in a dialogue on what type of improvements they would like to see to make their experience a better one at school. This generated feedback from participants around issues of reducing class sizes, developing better communication between parents/students and teachers, more preparedness for college workshops and better counseling for the students.

The following are some of the feedback provided by the participants during the dialogue:

1. Better communication and organization between parents and the school to encourage the students. The school needs to take into account the parents in the decision making process.
2. The school meetings need to be flexible and held at hours that work for the parents. Have translation available for parents who need it.
3. Make available more opportunities for workshops geared toward parents such as English classes.
4. Provide step by step guidance on college application. It would be beneficial if the school guided students as early as 8th grade on the application process and necessary requirements for college.
5. Provide more counseling for students and improving the communication not only between counselor and student but also with counselor and parents to keep up with the progress of the student.
6. Improve communication between teachers and parents. The participants would like to see more feedback provided by the teachers on the student's academic progress.
7. The participants would like to see class sized reduced. Smaller class room sizes can help teachers provide more personalized and focused attention to the students.
8. Improve parent engagement and involvement in their student's education. If the parents take an interest and a more active role in their children's education, students will perform better in school.