

Student Achievement Forum Notes

Notes from Small Group 1:

What are expectations for student achievement in Bridgeport?

- Desire for students to be at the same level as their counterparts in other school districts (Westport was mentioned).
 - There is a need to investigate why our students are on different levels than students in different districts and find out who needs to change (parents, teachers, administration, central office, students or all of the above?).
- **All schools within the district should have common features.**
 - Similar technology and curriculum should be emphasized.
 - Our schools are too different and the disparities are too great. It is unfair for those zoned for certain schools.
- One parent said that a teacher asked her to bring in paper because teachers are only allowed two reams a month and that it is not enough.
 - Are there not enough resources to provide paper for teachers? How are they to achieve without physical resources?
- Classrooms are overcrowded which reduces student achievement.
 - Smaller class size will increase student achievement.
 - A small group of “problem” students can be distracting to the whole class and also hard for the teacher to deal with.
 - **The Columbus School problem needs to be solved** to reduce the stress on other schools and the teachers forced to take in the extra students.
- Why is there a push (especially in early development programs) to put children on medication such as Ritalin?
- Unless students are placed into advanced and special programs they will NOT be prepared at all to go to college even though full college readiness is part of the district’s mission statement.
 - There should be college readiness amongst more students than just those in these advanced programs.
 - College ready are not just two words!
- We need to educate and not just pass students on to the next grade if they are not prepared to move on.
- There should be early development programs and pre-kindergartens that are accessible, which promote rigorous and high expectations at an early level to set the pace for students.

*What are the expectations for school leaders? Teachers? Parents/caregivers?
Community partners for closing the achievement gap?*

- We need to start school readiness at home with parent involvement.
 - As parents we need to sacrifice a little for our children.
- Schools need to connect with, and build relationships with parents
 - Invite parents to school.
- Communication between the school and parents will help parents know how to promote education at home.
- There should be weekly agendas sent home for parents to sign off on.
 - This would allow parents to know what work is required of their students, since many older students will often lie to their parents about homework
- Schools need to create a system of consistency.
- How do we get people not at these meetings not involved?
- As parents, we should keep open conversations with our children. Let them know we are interested and are going to stay in contact with teachers.
- Parents need to pass information on to other parents.
- Push for school leaders to hold teachers and parents accountable.
- There is a need for highly qualified teachers.
- Should discuss how poverty affects student development. High poverty equals low levels of performance.
- Parents may not have luxury to attend these meetings. We must figure out a way to spread the information provided.
- There is a need for volunteers and people to step in (especially in classrooms that are overcrowded).
- There is too much bureaucracy that impedes the actual education process.
- It is not just poverty that affects Bridgeport's levels of performance. These other factors need to be investigated.

One word to describe the evening

- Collaboration
- Frustrating
- Hopeful
- Discussion
- Insightful
- Underprivileged
- Communication
- Comforting
- Beginning
- Pushy
- Angry
- Poverty

Additional Comments

“This is the beginning, but is it also the end?”

“Need for more open forums.”

Notes Small Group 2:

Concerns across the Grade levels –

Historical treatment of population in our city – we're buying into what other perceive of us – we need to change this cycle. Maybe we need to understand more about areas the speaker covered tonight – maybe we are not active because we do not feel empowered. Education on these issues should be addressed so we can understand cycles and history to change ongoing belief systems. City needs more resources because children and families have more needs.

Forum Thoughts – Words that come to mind about the Forum: *collective, informative, accountability, achievement, resources, development, honesty, and hopeful.*

K-2

- Every child should be reading on grade level, but we need to find ways that teach while not pushing beyond their abilities. We should not be pushing children ahead before they are ready but should be getting them early intervention in ways that match their individual needs.
- Maximum of 20 children in a classroom
- Reading needs to be supported at home.
- Special needs children must have access to teachers with special needs training.
- Parent engagement is essential to help children. Frustrating when no one will respond. To increase parent involvement, parent hours need to be mandated and part of policies.
- Early education and intervention is essential and more resources need to be available for early head start through Grade 2 – seems that there is more support in the higher level grades.
- Our children deserve more than the minimum of state and federal requirements – character development.
- What are they learning in day cares, preschool and early childhood programs? Is there a connection and partnership with Birth to Three programs?
- Parents need access to early childhood learning and educators – education systems need to make sure parents are being educated, too, if they are so critical to improving outcomes for their children.
- In our city, children need access to education and resources at earlier ages – other cities and towns have kids in programs earlier than we do and that might be part of the gap.

Grades 3-8

- More parent involvement the older children get in the system. Require hours.

- Mentoring needs to start in middle school – more active presence of Big Brothers/Sisters or college mentors should be available. High school teens can be reaching out and mentoring kids in lower grades.
- Problems lie in school culture and communities.
- Parents need to be more aware of school goals and how they can support their children toward these goals at home.
- Appropriate conflict resolution needs to be taught, including conflicts between students and teachers.
- Teachers need to have higher expectations – many seem complacent.
- Work with the whole child and all needs – resources need to be identified and secured at younger ages.
- Access to the curriculum – open door policies need to include bringing people in to know more about the curriculum.
- Crime affects children and needs to be addressed.
- Longer school hours – parents would welcome.
- After-school programs that support the regular school days needs must be in place at all schools and not just a few. It's not just childcare. This is an opportunity to give more support and education in a safe environment.

High School/Adult Education

- Same expectations for all involved across schools and learning activities – students, parents, teachers, school leaders, etc. Same page and carrying out expectations the same way. We want high expectations from all involved.
- Communication and collaboration across all groups involved with educating children needs to be present and consistent in high school, too. We want communication with everyone involved in educating our children and youth.
- More social and emotional support for this part of youth development.
- Teacher development necessary to meet all the needs and expectations.
- Early intervention is needed here, too. Need administrators and school leaders to be on the same page with identifying and providing early intervention.

Questions:

**A. What are expectations for student achievement in Bridgeport -PK-2?
Grades 3-8? High School? Adult Education?**

*Kids in kindergarten should be able to write their name, I still see kids that don't know how to even spell their name and I'm not sure if it's because of the school or home, but that is one of my personal expectations

*As far as the state tests I find the teacher is not preparing the students to answer the questions and so I don't know how we can expect the children to answer questions they haven't already seen, they can't do well on these tests if they don't have enough practice

*I don't see a lot of science in the schools, they should be able to do experiments and apply what they are learning, instead of just reading they should have more hands on experiences

*I find that in the classrooms they have to repeat and go over

*One of our expectations should be that all of our students be at grade level in reading, I don't think it's fair to have students in Bridgeport constantly score lower than students in surrounding communities, our goal as educators is to make sure that our students are learning and if the scores are low then maybe teachers aren't doing their job

*Today teaching is being done in different ways than when we (as parents) were growing up, I try to help my child with math and explain how I learned it and it's different, I think that we should be able to get some kind of training to help our kids, a lot of the time it isn't that we don't want to help but that we don't know how to help

*In high school classrooms I find that the negative is accentuated most, the positives are often overlooked and it creates a negative atmosphere

*One of my pet peeves is when a teacher punishes the whole class for the misbehavior of a select few, the teachers need to recognize they are and take into account the whole child and not assume that all their students are the same or have the same issues, they shouldn't label the students or whole school just because a few students are out of line

*Teachers have to show respect to their students

**B. What are the expectations for school leaders? Teacher? Parents/caregivers?
Community partners for closing the achievement gap?**

*One of the presenters talked about how much money gets spent on security guards in Bridgeport but I think if we spend more money on the school and education then security won't be such an issue, you have to put more money into education itself and then there would not be such a need to spend it on security

*I think that the teachers and community have a mindset that these students in Bridgeport are hopeless and don't care, in general Bridgeport schools are viewed as

failing and so it affects how students are viewed and treated too, current generations should not have to suffer or be prejudiced against because of previous generations and how they did academically, even though scores are important to see from year to year it's important to not assume that all students are the same and expectations should never be lower...overall we need to correct the image of Bridgeport

*I think that parents, students and teachers should all be involved together to close the achievement gap by having certain committees or groups to discuss issues

*I don't understand why they just can't give us the money, why don't teachers have the supports and services they need, where is money for education spent, someone needs to follow the money to make sure that it is going where it needs to go so that our kids can learn

*At the last meeting they talked about the talented and gifted and I think that these classes are really important because say you have a class with 25 students and there are 5 that continually do better than the rest and are above average, instead of having these students bored with nothing to do they should be placed somewhere else and be challenged appropriately so that they can learn

*I think that every child is talented/gifted so they should not be separated like that because then kids in regular classrooms might feel inferior and wonder why they can't be in a special class, they might start to think they aren't smart

*I think that classroom size is a big problem and affects how well teachers can do their job, but with all the kids in our city it is hard to keep small class sizes and we constantly are getting more students meaning our class sizes are too large

*Our high school is overcrowded, and there is also a problem with staff we haven't had any science classes this year because we don't have a science teacher, I feel like math and science should be core classes that students should have to take especially if they want to go on to college and I feel like we aren't being challenged or prepared enough

*In high school I am not learning anything new, I am basically just reviewing everything from last year, it's like teachers are just coming in for a paycheck and not to teach us anything, or they think that no one cares about learning or going to college when really some of us do

*Even in elementary school I find that my kids are going over the same material from last year, and so when I ask them what they learned new today they tell me nothing and it's the truth

C. Is the district assessment program explained well to the community? How? What could we be doing better to assure wide and clear explanations? What does or can the district do to help parents and community understand achievement data? Support the needs of students?

*At the end of the day parents want their kids to get educated, whether they understand the program not we want our kids to go on to the next level and make it to college

*Data is good to keep track of but at the end of the day what does it mean, how many kids are actually learning and improving? If the class is overcrowded then how can a teacher be expected to teach effectively?

*I was a substitute teacher and the teacher told me she had to fail almost her whole class, this is a big problem to me, if teachers are failing their whole class then it can't be the students that are wrong it has to be the teacher, teachers need to be passionate enough to want to teach and help their students, why can't they reach out, if they need help in the classroom they should be able to say that and be heard

*Teachers tend to use the same material over and over again but kids learn in a different ways, with technology now there are so many different ways to help students learn, I think teachers should have to go to conferences/workshops to learn better ways to teach all different kinds of students (visual, auditory learners etc.)

*The question is who is responsible for student achievement? I think it is the community as a whole, teachers can't do it alone and neither can parents, I believe that parents should be involved in their children's education and helping them, a lot of parents claim to not have enough time to be involved but I think we should dedicate time and always support our kids and their teachers, the benefit is for all of us we need to be united for our kids to achieve and do well, we need to support each other, we must all get involved because it is our responsibility to prepare them for the future, there should be open communication between everyone involved

*Bottom line whatever community you go to there are going to be parents who aren't involved for one reason or another and someone has to advocate the needs of that child, they may be falling behind but they shouldn't have to suffer because their parents can't be involved, we should not let anyone fall behind, as a community we should advocate for all children not just our own

*I think it is important to see how many parents even know what the district assessment program is, here as a group of 12 we aren't able to clearly describe what tests are used in our district or what the program really is

*To better explain the district should hold separate meetings for parents to have time to digest the numbers being thrown at them, tonight it was shown briefly and so it was hard to keep up with what scores meant what

*We should make a plan and work with every individual child and see how they learn best, figure out individualized ways that the student can work, figure out who is an auditory learner or visual and tailor to the needs of the child, the whole community should be involved

*If you have a child that is advanced than the rest of the class, the children need to be challenged and not bored in the class

*More teachers to a classroom, especially in a high school setting maybe bring in the college professors or students so that at least our teachers can have someone working with them side by side

Other

*A question brought up by one of the parents involves the current the current expectations set for PK-2, Grades 3-8, High School, Adult Education...what are they? Does the board of education already have certain expectations?

*Another question brought up by one of the parents was if Bridgeport should have year round school because children forget a lot of what is learned in the school year

over the summer? Is this something that parents feel would help students? Would it increase achievement because students have more time to learn the information?

--One parent responded: I think that kids need a break, the students need that time to just relax as do the teachers, I think it is quality not quantity and because we don't have a good quality of education for our students we think that we need more time

*As far as the turnout for the meeting, the board should expect more from us parents and open the whole gym instead of being surprised about how many parents are present and squishing us into that small part of the gym they should be more welcoming, there is a bias that Bridgeport parents are not involved or care about their children's education when really we've shown that we do

*We had 3 parents with children new to the Bridgeport public school system that expressed a sincere interest in their children's education

******Our facilitator was unable to translate to our Spanish speaking parents because of time constraints, in the future it would be beneficial to have additional translators in the group discussions to best meet the needs of the parents and promote active participation from all parents******

November 10, 2011 – Group 4

Thoughts and concerns of achievement gaps in Bridgeport CT:

- Expectations for student achievement in Bridgeport (PK-2)
 - Making sure every child is reading at or above grade level
 - If child is not ready to move on to the next grade level why should they
 - **Classroom size** should be smaller (max 20 students K-2)****
 - Special needs for kids
 - Teachers for special needs were taken out of school (ex. Roosevelt)
 - Time and effort of parental engagement needed for kids with special needs
 - Teachers need help and no one is responding
 - There needs to be more resources available for ALL children
 - It NEEDS to start at the early age
 - EARLY INTERVENTION*****
 - Strong **resources** for younger grades!!!!**
 - Reading above federal level** (common expectation)
 - Instill boy scouts of America for behavior issues (one option)
 - Programming for social and emotional development for the age group of PK-2
 - Teacher development so the children should do better in school
 - Early childhood development not in pre-K but in day care centers
 - Birth-3 age → early childhood education
 - Parents should have access to early childhood education
 - Day cares should be challenged but making sure the educators are appropriately trained to do the job that they should be doing
 - Get more kids in early childhood education and development with proper resources
 - EARLY INTERVENTION*****
 - Make sure administrators and everyone in the building working on the same goals (achievement)
 - Organization/Structure amongst the schools
 - Open door policy → parents want to be involved but are being restricted
 - Parents feel that teachers are hiding information from them and there is a disconnect

- Lack of communication!
- Crime plays a huge part in the environment
 - Longer school hours
 - After school programs/not just recreational but also educational
- Expectations for student achievement in Bridgeport (3-8)
 - Expectations should be same as above
 - MORE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT → should be mandated!
 - Volunteer a certain amount of hours per school year
 - More high-school students helping with the elementary students
 - Big brothers/big sisters (MENTORING)
 - Role modeling
 - Support systems
 - College students NEED to go back to high-school students to be role models
 - Grade level parental involvement
 - Partnership between parents and schools in order to get them from where they are to where they should be
 - Appropriate conflict resolution
 - Dark/dirty uninviting schools NEED to change
 - Poor classroom management by teachers → why are students NOT wanting to come to class or
 - Rigger → increasing rigger in high schools
 - Discipline should be community service not suspension! (if kid does not show up make parents go with them)
- Are the expectations for teachers/administrators/parents/agencies the same?
 - Provide transparency
 - Community center?
 - ALL mentioned should be expected for parents/teachers/administrators/agencies
 - We want collaboration between EVERYONE (schools/children/parents/teachers/
 - End goal is ACHIEVEMENT!
 - We want **higher** expectations
 - We are not going to settle
- WORDS of experience:

- Hopeful
- Accountability
- Beginnings
- RESOURCES
- Achievements
- Development
- Honesty
- Collective
- Informative
- Peaceful

Student Achievement Small Group – Group 5

Expectations for Student Achievement

- Bridgeport has a culture of low expectations (within the school district and even the community). These low expectations are also external as neighboring communities view Bridgeport and the abilities of our children negatively.
- Our community needs to demand more from our students. Students will rise to the standards that adults set for them. In other communities and countries children are expected to achieve at high levels and are held accountable for success/failure. The same needs to happen in Bridgeport.
- There should be continuous assessment of student learning so that teachers and administrators can use that data to inform their instructional practice.
- Students should be placed in different classes and schools based on academic ability levels. Kids needed to earn promotion to the next grade not just get it automatically.
- All educators in the building need to be on the same page in terms of respect for each other, alignment in instructional practice and holding high expectations for our students.
- Students need to feel “challenged” by schoolwork, but many are not. They are not prepared for college.
- Some schools have high expectations and rigorous coursework for students (magnets) and others don’t (neighborhood schools).
- School need to teach skills that go beyond the classroom. “Real world” life skills are important too.

1. Educators

- Teachers have an enormous impact on whether our children learn. If teachers are telling the children they expect greatness, the children will rise to meet that standard.
- Teachers need to be given the instructional resources and support to do their job well.
- Class sizes of 27 or more do not allow teachers to perform to the best of their abilities. However, class size cannot be an excuse why kids don’t learn. In other countries, there are often 50 or more kids to a class and they all perform well academically.
- Teachers are often not supported by families when they make a decision to discipline a child or to demand more from a child academically.
- Parents often feel they have to supplement the education of their child because the schools are not teaching their children everything they’re supposed to know.

- Some teachers who are tenured just “coast” and don’t really try to teach kids anything. There needs to be a way to quickly exit out bad teachers. Teachers need to have a “hunger” to teach well and not get comfortable with just getting by. Other industries evaluate their employees more rigorously. Same needs to happen in teaching.
- Principals are critical to making sure a school runs well. Everyone looks to the building leader. Principals need to be given more power/autonomy.

2. District↔Community Communication

- Districts needs to do a better job of highlighting the good things that are happening in the schools and celebrating the educators who work hard and go the extra mile for our kids.
- The district should engage more community volunteers to help in the schools (college and high school students, civic leaders, religious service groups)
- District should use better technology and communication tools like e-mail/text blast and phone blasts to get news/updates out to parents.
- District needs to update their website and post information and materials on the website that parents can access and download.
- The district and individual schools need to provide more opportunities for the community to come together and discuss important issues and participate in community-building activities.

3. Concerns:

- There is an external achievement gap between Bridgeport and its nearby towns and there is an internal achievement gap *within* Bridgeport. The zip code you live in (both in Connecticut and in Bridgeport) determines the quality of school your child will attend.
- High expectations and the value of respecting educator’s starts at home and many parents are not setting high expectations for their children or holding them accountable for success in school.
- The culture in many schools is toxic. There is no respect among students, teachers and/or administrators. There is a lack of discipline and an absence of a friendly and welcoming environment.
- Lack of access to information for parents who do not know English is a serious problem.
- Students are unhappy with the condition of school facilities and the quality of school lunches.
- Students need additional supports at school because many families cannot help their children with schoolwork (e.g. language barrier and lack of education)
- The low quality of education in Bridgeport is currently not preparing kids to enter the economy and find a good job.

- The large variation in the quality of teaching within schools and across the district is a big problem. Not all kids are getting the best instruction.
- Communication among teachers, parents and students needs to improve. A strong home-school connection is critical and there needs to be more opportunities for students, educators and families to gather together and strengthen their relationships.

Group 6 Student Achievement Small Group

Forum One Word Share Out – Choose a Word About Tonight’s Forum:

- Hopeful
- Brief
- Positive
- Motivating
- Democracy
- Transparent
- More money
- Resources
- Professional Development for Teachers

PK-2

- All children should be prepared to take the CMT at proficiency levels by the time they reach Grade 3. Everything starts in Kindergarten.
- K preparation is key to long term success – in school and in the home.
- If more than 20 children are in a K classroom, they likely won’t do well.
- Are our early childhood programs setting us up for failure?

Grades 3-8

- CMT needs to be the whole year (preparation) and not just February – it’s a message that needs to be sent that this is all related to each other and is not just a once a year requirement. All year CMT preparation will reduce the anxiety and “jitters” that come with testing month.
- Why do we only see scores once a year? Scores from March don’t come out for awhile and that’s a problem. What can we do about this?
- This age group must be prepared in all the skills to be successful in high school.
- We need to look at what the criteria is for advancing from grade to grade and make sure that everyone is following the same set of expectations, grading, and skills to make those decisions – eventually everyone should be ready to advance but we should not make that advancement until they can demonstrate the ability to do the skills needed.
- Take time out with children and help with homework.
- Homework needs to be looked at – not just busy work – has to be meaningful and parents need to know how they can help with homework...parents often don’t know what to do to help if they don’t understand the assignment or don’t have the resources at home to help.

- Don't rely on teachers and after-school programs.
- "If parents don't care, why should I?"
- Educating this age group is much more about the core academics and scores on standardized tests....

High School/Adult Education

- Major problems continue with fights, discipline, and violence that interfere with learning and promote a negative climate – students don't want to be in an environment like this.
- This age group must be prepared in all the skills to be successful in college, even if they are not going to college or university. If they are prepared for it, they can make an informed choice about what their career path is.
- How do we develop lifelong learners?
- What partnerships between teachers and families exist as children advance in the system?
- No resources to fight
- Have to have ongoing communication between parents and teachers and support staff. It's still 50/50 parent and school so why not working better together? What happens?

Other Themes:

Teachers

- Teacher retention needs to be looked at
- Need incentives and support system that values and keeps good teachers
- Clear and consistent communication needed
- Show lesson plans, units, and outlines to parents – involve in the process of what is being taught
- It's more than an 8-3:30 job – some act this way and others don't
- Are teachers getting the support they need from the community? Their administrators? No.

School Leaders/Admin

Dr. Joyner's point on how school leaders need to be in classrooms more is important – how often does this happen and does the administrator know how to support the teacher?

School leaders need to communicate what they are doing to build up teaching and what type of resources they need to make it happen better.

Reach out to community, businesses, PTO, etc. to find information, grants, and resources to address needs to teaching and learning in the building.

Make better use of PTO, PAC, and other parent organizations in finding solutions to school-level teaching and learning issues.

Principals need to send message it is everyone's responsibility for educating a child and needs to hold everyone accountable by raising expectations and spelling out the roles and responsibilities for all involved.

Principals need to take chances and have more autonomy to make decisions for their schools – decisions they will be held accountable for.

School leaders must justify decisions like class sizes and schedules based on student learning and achievement data.

Expectations are too low – district/parents/community expectations – all expectations – including outside of our district and how “they” view our children.

We're “Bridgeport “and that's all you can expect and nothing else. Are leaders standing up to the negative message?

Need to focus on building relationships with the parents and caregivers

Public Officials

Told by everyone/state “you are from Bridgeport “ – not to have same expectations for the schools or how Bridgeport children perform compared to those in other districts. What are councilmen and school officials doing to advocate on our behalf and either change this image or advocate aggressively against all the negativity?

Councilmen need to get involved and step up.

Collaboration on these issues requires involvement across community, businesses, and policymakers.

Parents

Very concerned about child's education

Want more involvement with teachers

Other towns require parent involvement – some up to 50 hours – to engage our parents, we may need policies in place to require it.

Not feeling welcomed or like partners when they come to school – show they care and have flexibility (meeting times, ways to get involved, alternative ways to communicate, multi-lingual access, etc.)

Concerns with social and economic crisis impact on an already struggling school system...decreases in staffing and resources...cannot let go during the most challenging times.

More accountability and transparency for all efforts in governance and delivery of education.

Group 7 Small Group Notes:

Words about the Forum – Attendees each gave one word about the Student

Achievement Forum:

- Courage
- Expectations
- Empowerment
- Involvement
- Hopeful
- Energized
- Power
- Unity
- Awesome
- Good place to start
- More

Expectations – Across All Grade Levels and Adult Education

All Bridgeport children deserve the same chance as children from suburban areas. Resources are essential – without resources, we cannot compete with everyone in the state.

Extra-curricular activities should be increasing

Curriculum should be enriched with both academic rigor and a fun learning environment.

Motivating, inspiring teachers

Consistent behavior standards that address appropriate behavior to learning and building character; good behavior needs to be recognized and modeled; consistent ways to address behavior in school and all classrooms.

Schools must prepare all students with the right tools for college – academic, behavior, commitment to service, etc.

Common shared vision between parents, teachers, and school leaders to move children forward.

More emphasis on building father engagement and getting them interested in their children's education

Equality – we expect equity and equal opportunity – give them a shot!

What are magnet, charter, and neighborhood public schools unequal? Fairness needs to be examined. We expect an equitable education regardless of what school we are zoned to or “get in to” through a choice program. Our community needs to demand more.

More volunteers – college and other organizations that require volunteer and community service could be involved in these efforts. Accountability for volunteers and community partners, too. Are they helping us based on our needs or is there another agenda?

Specific Parent Raised Expectations/Concerns –

- Assumptions should not be made about our children and community – avoid assumption that come from biases on income bracket, race, religion, single parent, etc. All children can learn regardless of background and deserve both respect and equity in this system.
- We expect all educating our children to be educated – this includes parents and caregivers. Resources are needed for ongoing training and development for all those responsible for educating and supporting children and youth in this district. Training must include curriculum, student data, school/district goals – more informed parents and community will lead to better outcomes for all.
- Provide more information, education, and accountability for all stakeholder roles.
- Communication, parent-teacher-student = need to come together and talk = important – home, school connection is important.
- Materials and teaching - teaching not the same from school to school.
- Teachers need resources to teach the children and administration need to take care of teachers’ needs. Take care of the teachers who are taking care of our children.
- Improvement scores need to have more validation. We need to understand more about achievement data and some of the areas covered during the forum.
- A lot more voices are needed – more than one or just a few voices will make a difference on how we collaborate and share responsibilities.

How can we educate parents and families? What are ways to reach out and pull others into the system?

- Information in ways people understand and can act on
- Meetings
- Workshops on CMTs or district testing systems
- More interactive guidance on how parents can help their children succeed
- Glossaries of terms – handouts and literature where lingo and terms are made clear with parent education on what these things mean.
- Find out different ways to reach out to parents who are shy, quiet, or don’t think what they do can make a difference. How we invite all parents to the table should be examined to ensure we’re effective and not coming across as hostile, intimidating or uninviting.
- Technology blasts – email and texting is getting to parents more often than handouts and websites.

Small Group #8:

Forum – One word to describe the SA Forum Night:

- More
- Necessary
- Too short
- First step
- Learning
- Observational
- Awareness
- Eye-opening
- Can't sum up in one word

Overall Expectations for School District

- Administrators need to examine their expectations for all students and how these expectations are conveyed to the rest of the district: 100% college ready, expect more equality, more consistency, mixed messages to faculty, staff, students
- Uniforms were a good move
- Teachers not always conveying high expectations in their tone/talking with students, homework, teaching skills necessary for college
- School environments are not equal – basics should be consistent – not so across magnet, charter, regular schools.
- We expect inappropriate behavior to be eliminated as it is a distracter from learning.
- We're losing specialized programs to teach with the depletion of resources – we expect to have what is available in other districts to be available here. We expect to have even more offerings since schools are necessary to prepare students for life long learning and the only exposure to some areas happen through specialized courses, programs, and activities.
- We expect are children to be challenged! Rigor needs to be increased overall across all grade levels and in Adult Education.
- Transparency and democracy across all groups.
- Build up resources to share with parents and families – teach and share what's available across the city/state for caregivers to meet their needs and then they can be more involved in supporting the schools.

PK-2

- Focus must be on reading – solid reading foundation is critical.
- No, few, or inconsistent resources available to teach in areas with the most need.

Grades 3-8

- Must be demonstrating solid foundation across content areas – the same needs to be said that our teachers and their support staff also have solid content understanding.
- Classrooms are overcrowded.
- College foundation starts here.
- Better balance in schools with science, the arts, and social studies...push for more in this area.
- Recess – kids need it.

High School/Adult Education

- Graduation rate is disturbing – get the numbers up!
- Security is of concern – students are letting students (or could be others who are not students) in through back doors...what's the point of a security alarm and system when students themselves are endangering each other by letting people in by side doors? When you don't feel safe, the learning is affected.
- What is being done to strengthen college foundations at this level?
- Focus more on students who are "behind"
- Learning needs to be fun! We want our students to want to learn and want to continue their education. Engage the students so that school is a place they want to attend.
- Stop cutting programs like shop/tech where you are reaching youth with talent in non-academic areas.
- Tutors need to be more available – extra hour for more practice after school. Either teacher needs to be working with tutors or teachers take on tutoring role to help kids succeed.

Other – School Leaders

- Advocate and secure more resources for the school system
- Focus efforts
- More open and creative with outside resources and partnership opportunities
- Create a culture where teachers will do whatever it takes – build in extra time during the school day for teachers to work more individually with children and families
- Encourage families to come in and see what's happening in the classroom
- Find flexible opportunities for families to become more involved, especially for those working during times when activities are offered.
- Make use of community partners more strategically and in line with school-level needs. There are so many initiatives and people involved – hard to keep focused and everyone on same page toward the same goal.
- More creativity in using human resources – higher ed, service agencies, mentoring programs – to coordinate more volunteers in the classroom that are supporting the work.

Other – Teachers

- More consistent
- Have a “whatever it takes” attitude
- Not leaving at 3:00
- Spend more time with kids and families – more 1:1 assistance
- Kids are afraid to be wrong and ask questions/seek help
- Intervention for children who are not getting the material – catch them early
- More teachers to support programs
- More respect and appreciation for teachers needed so they will stay

Other – Community & Partners

- If we build up the community, we are building up a better Bridgeport.
- Community partners need to step up and contribute – time, people, money – be involved and not just advocating about what doesn’t work...be part of the solution.
- Partners not used appropriately – strategic use of partnerships will lead to more effective work toward addressing our problems.
- Who are the partners and what do they do? Their role and work needs to be more known. Are we selecting partnerships that work or just working with partners we like?
- Advocate with us for more money – more political action needed – help us mobilize. Demand from the city and state what we need. Tell parents and families how to get this done.