

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

FREMONT SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN
FUTURE OF EDUCATION at ELLIS SCHOOL COMMITTEE

September 15, 2015

Committee Members:

Larry Dobson, Citizen-at-Large

Leah Kennedy, Parent

Sharon Polleck, Parent

Shannon Bryant, School Board Member

Dr. Betsey Cox-Buteau, Superintendent

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Future of Education at Ellis School Committee has met monthly since January, 2015 to discuss education related issues and education philosophy. The committee first listed the questions that it wanted to research and discuss. Each question and the articles and research papers shared for the discussions are listed here:

1. How to level a school in the most effective way for learning? By age? By ability? Etc.ⁱ
2. How should learning be reported to parents?ⁱⁱ
3. What is the best, most effective type of parent involvement? What does it look like?ⁱⁱⁱ
4. How should the school calendar year be structured for students to learn and not lose?^{iv}
5. Does separating the genders make a difference in learning? If so, at what age is it most effective?^v
6. What kind of grouping works most effectively for students to learn most efficiently?^{vi}
7. Technology – Is it needed? Is it worth it?^{vii}

Prior to each discussion, the committee individuals researched the topic and shared that information with fellow committee members. Then the committee met, discussed the research, added their own thoughts, and developed the following belief statements. This work was done in an effort to provide direction to the work being done at Ellis School.

If the Fremont School Board supports these belief statements, or any number of them, the committee requests that these statements be shared with the administration at the Ellis School and at some later date, the administration report out on their status within the walls and practices of the school.

FUTURE OF EDUCATION at ELLIS SCHOOL COMMITTEE BELIEF STATEMENTS:

1. Students are best served when given the instruction and time to learn what they need to learn before moving on, in other words, students move at their own pace of learning and mastery.
2. There needs to be a well-defined mastery scale used to assess the readiness of students to advance along their learning continuum.
3. For number 1 to be successful there must be a learning culture established that support ageless learning and mixed age levels learning together at times.
4. Parents are expected to support the culture and be an active, integral part of such a system.
5. This system might be more effective with some kind of intrinsic student reward structure built into it.
6. A five level rubric should exist for each required instructional standard that clearly defines the expectations of performance against that standard.

7. Student achievement progress should be available to parents on an ongoing basis through secure electronic means and updated at a minimum of weekly or bi-weekly.
8. We believe that the evidence is clear that parent involvement and interest in their students' educational experience and progress directly impacts their students' achievement. Here are some collected suggestions:
 - a. Parent workshops for instruction in how to work with their children on their homework in various subjects
 - b. Parent school partnership groups
 - c. Home visits by educators
 - d. Parent conferences that allow for longer sessions
 - e. Parent questionnaires about their children's learning styles and habits
 - f. Online resources on the website for helping with certain lessons
 - g. Online postings of workshops held
 - h. Parent assistance with improving executive functioning for their child
 - i. Send home ideas for home-based instructional activities to reinforce learning
 - j. Parent peer pressure to "get involved"
9. The length of the current summer break allows some students to regress academically. This slows the pace of learning for all students.
10. A more balanced school-year calendar would improve academic achievement and reduce student and staff burnout.
11. Single-sex education is a practice still under exploration and inconclusive at this time. Therefore the committee makes no recommendation regarding its use at Ellis School.
12. Students can and should be grouped to learn in a way that best meets their individual needs, and regrouped at reasonable intervals during their progression along a curricular continuum. This grouping may transcend age, homeroom, and grade level if it allows the student to be more successful.
13. We strongly encourage the use of technology in whatever capacity it can be used to increase student learning.

ENDNOTES

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- <http://www.competencyworks.org/resources/making-mastery-work/>
- <http://www.competencyworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Making-Mastery-Work-NMEF-2012-Inline.pdf>
- <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED384695.pdf#page=28>
- <http://www.competencyworks.org/>
- <http://www.ed.gov/oii-news/competency-based-learning-or-personalized-learning>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/01/13/feds-move-ahead-experimental-sites-competency-based-education>
- <https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/standards-curriculum/competency-based-pathways>
- <http://edexcellence.net/>
- <http://www.educause.edu/library/competency-based-education-cbe>
- Ability Grouping in Elementary Schools, Davison Institute for Talent Development
- Moving from Good to Great in New Hampshire, NHDOE
- Ability Grouping in Elementary School, ED290542 ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education Urbana IL
- Is Ability Grouping the Way to Go – Or Should It Go Away?, Education World 2009/02/24.
- The Effects of Within-Class Ability Grouping on Academic Achievement in Early Elementary Years, Takako Nomi, pages 56-92 Journal of research on Educational Effectiveness
- The effects of within class grouping on reading achievement, a meta-analytic synthesis, Puzio & Colby, 2010 SREE Conference
- Research Spotlight on Academic Ability Grouping. NEA reviews 256
- Hot Topic: Does Ability Grouping Help or Hurt? A Talk with Anne Wheelock, New Press (1992)

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- “What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?” Chapter 1, The Art & Science of Teaching, Dr. Robert Marzano, pgs. 9-28.
- The Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition, Stuart E. Dreyfus (feb 1980), A Five-Stage Model of the Mental Activities Involved in Directed Skill Acquisition, Storming Media.
- “Three Levels of Listening”, Unknowable and Incommunicable, pg. 14-25

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- Tips and Strategies for Increasing Parent and Family Involvement in Virginia School, Virginia Department of Education
- Joyce Epstein’s Framework of Six Types of Involvement, Partnership – Center for the Social Organization of Schools
- National Standards, Goals, and Indicators for Family-School Partnerships, National PTA

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- What Research Says About parent Involvement in Childrens' Education, Michigan Department of Education
 - Select Parent Involvement Research Summary, The Parent Institute, Fairfax Station, VA
 - The Benefits of parents Involvement: What Research Has to Say, an excerpt from Home-School Relations: Working Successfully with Parents and Families, By g> Olson, 2008 edition, p. 129-130.

iv

- Year Round & Extended Year School Overview, <http://www.nayre.org/cal.htm>
- http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2006/10/learning_time.html
- "Year-round school in the United States", Wikipedia
- What is the Best School year Schedule?, Ann Morris, Apr 3, 2015
- What research Says About.../Year-Round Schooling, April 2010, Remiaging School Pages 83-84, v.67, No. 7

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- "More public schools splitting up boys, girls" ISA Today 2012/08/07.
- Single-sex education: the pros and cons, Kristin Stanberry, Greatschools.org
- The Pseudoscience of Single-Sex School, Halpern et al., 23 September 2011, VOL 333 Science

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- Ability Grouping in Elementary Schools, ERIC Identifier: ED290542, Publication Date: 1987-00-00, Author: Hollifield, John , Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education Urbana IL.

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- In Classroom of Future, Stagnant Scores, Technology/Grading the Digital Classroom, 2011/09/03
- Sorry, Ebooks. These 9 Studies Show Why Print is Better, Huffington Post