

3.1 WORKSHOP ISSUES

The Futures Team worked together for five full days in a sequence of facilitated challenges. Members' responses to these challenges collectively defined the Educational Vision, and developed and reviewed the Facilities Options.

These meetings were organized to first open and explore local and national educational and community issues, and then, through the dialogue of the group, to define the best concepts for the future of high school education in Pittsfield.

Facilitated activities were organized in small group and whole group challenges, visible and individual voting, and reflective discussions in a circle around a "campfire" of flipcharts.

The days were organized in three themes:

- Pittsfield High School Self Portrait: Workshop 1
- Effective Teaching and Learning: Workshop 2
- Defining School: Workshops 3 and 4
- Facilities Implications: Workshop 5

Details are outlined below. Full transcriptions of the Futures Team's thinking are contained in the Appendices.



HIGH SCHOOLS SELF PORTRAIT

21st Century Schools Presentation

National and international best practices in educational delivery and facility planning were presented. Areas of concentration included:

- Research
 - Learning modalities.
 - Multiple intelligences
 - Learning Pyramid

- Effective teaching strategies
 - Project-based learning
 - Interdisciplinary teaching
 - Personalized learning plans
- Role Model Examples
 - Organizational strategies
 - Educational facility planning principles

What Works & What Doesn't Work

Small Groups of participants identified existing educational and facilities' conditions, characterizing them as "working" or "not working."

What Is Success?

Small Groups of participants described the characteristics of successful:

- Students
- Graduates
- Schools

These considerations formed a basis for creating school organizational concepts to support success.

Programs & Services

Small Groups of participants documented existing and potential programs and services to be offered by the District, evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of each, and identified facilities implications for each.

Progression of School Development

Whole Group

The Progression of School Development (©2006 Frank Locker Inc) characterizes the entire range of school transformation possibilities, from highly traditional to

completely transformed, by positioning educational delivery and facilities attributes in a numeric continuum. The Progression is intended to serve as a numeric snapshot of the District's educational vision. After several reviews of the Progression, participants voted in a secret ballot, identifying:

- Educational delivery today
- Educational delivery in the future
- Facilities today
- Facilities in the future

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learning Theory: Is It True?

Whole & Small Group formats

A short presentation was given outlining research of two learning theories:

- Learning Pyramid – National Training Laboratory
- Rigor & Relevance Framework – Center for Leadership in Education, Dr. Willard Daggett

Participants were asked to answer a series of questions intended to identify the relevance of this research to the District.

Project Based & Interdisciplinary Learning

Whole & Small Group formats

As a whole group, participants first developed a list of potential long-term, complex, group projects and picked several to focus on in small groups. Each small group described its chosen projects in more detail and identified:

- Student attributes, characteristics, and/or skill sets required to complete projects successfully.
- Content areas associated with projects.

- Facility implications of implementing each project.

School Organizational Concepts

Whole & Small Group formats

As a whole group, participants were presented with several role model schools and the organizational and educational delivery models they employ. In small groups, participants identified the pros and cons of each model. Participants were invited to conduct individual research on one or more of the role model schools and to report back to the Futures Team.

Educational Delivery in 2030

Small Group format

Participants characterized education in the year 2030 via a series of questions about student & teacher activities, the impact of technology, and facilities. Insight developed from this challenge is critical because facilities constructed now are expected to last 40 -50 years, and to anticipate and facilitate future educational changes.

DEFINING SCHOOL

Key Words

Whole Group format

All of the exercise results from Workshops #1 & #2 were processed and distilled to a short list of key words intended to form the foundation of the Educational Vision. The list of key words was presented to the participants to critique.

Organizational Concepts for Pittsfield Schools

Small & Whole Group formats

The Futures Team identified five organizational concepts for the city's schools, covering possibilities of single to multiple schools, and single to multiple sites. Following discussion and a consensus vote, three were selected for detailed development:

- One School/One Site
- Two/schools/One Site
- Two Schools/Two Sites

Detailed development of each concept included consideration of critical functional needs, impact of school size, small learning communities, community uses, and implications for student involvement in athletics, leadership, and extra-curricular activities.

Progression of School Development Vote

Individual Vote

Based on all the exercises and their own personal values, participants identified numbers representing the location on the Progression of the following:

- Educational delivery today
- Educational delivery in the future
- Facilities today
- Facilities in the future

Votes were collected, tallied, and averaged. The resulting numbers served as a numeric representation of the collective Futures Team Educational Vision.

Where Does Learning Happen?

Small Group format & Visible Vote

Participants examined several examples of schools with facilities characteristics aligning with different points along

the Progression. In small groups, participants discussed each example and identified pros and cons. As individuals, participants voted on the models that best aligned with the District's evolving Educational Vision.

Learning Places in the Community

Individual Homework

Current best practices recognize that student learning in the community is one of the most effective ways of creating meaningful learning experiences for high school students, and for fostering better relations between schools and community. The Futures Team identified places in the city and wider community as possible learning experiences.

FACILITIES IMPLICATIONS

Application of the Vision

Small Group & Whole Group

Dore and Whittier Architects developed planning schemes for the three school organizational concepts applied to both the Taconic HS and the Pittsfield HS sites. The Futures Team reviewed these, created a new series of Options, and rated and ranked the Options.