

Public Policy Forum
Saturday, October 11, 2008
Kempsville High School

1. Curriculum & Workforce Development - What can city & school officials do to make sure youth are prepared for college and employment?

a. Ideas & Problems

- College prep groups - give an idea of what colleges are like & their requirements
- Have an earlier start with college choices (before 11th & 12th grade) discuss more opportunities and wide variety of universities
- Incorporate better understanding of what majors we want
- Emphasis on elective choices – music
- Guidance – tell options for your path – teachers doing better (extra mile)
- **Need to have a better idea of what prerequisites you may need for college**
- Better financial aid
- Have earlier guidance in Middle School about academics – spread word around
- More college prep classes
- Place more importance in MS – be more prepared for future
- Need better guidance from counselors, more information for future if you do well
- Don't have curriculum based on SOL testing
- **Teachers who don't teach, need re-evaluation**
- Access to classes
- SOLs too easy – just passing
- AP & core curriculum difference
- Change way classes teach – what they teach, offer more options
- More encouragement to do better, to go beyond requirements, need something more to go beyond
- Meeting with employers in trade, opportunity to know more about job

b. Questions & Recommendations

- 1) How can teachers be fairly and effectively evaluated?
 - More spontaneous assessments
 - Student evaluations

- 2) How can the school system better prepare students of prerequisites needed for college in a timely manner?
 - Publicize college prep programs
 - Distribute college information in middle school
 - Make discussions more individualized

- 3) How can we more clearly define the role of guidance counselors in the school system?
 - Guidance counselors should handle more specific areas (like one doing emotional problems, another for college, etc.)
 - Budget for more counselors in schools
 - Make counselors more accessible

2. **Safety in Our Schools & City – What can be done to make our schools & city safer?**

a. Ideas & Problems

- Shootings
- General safety of the public
- Gang related violence in the city (curfews & tougher laws)
- **Weapons in our schools**
- **Lack of enforced laws in community and schools**
- Violence in general
- Drug dealers
- **Fighting in schools**

b. Questions & Recommendations

- 1) What can be done to decrease number of fights in the schools?
 - More security
 - More punishment
 - Teacher witness to speak with parents
 - Outside mentors who have experience same thing
 - Check cameras

- 2) What types of programs should be created to increase safety in community & schools?
 - More cameras in the community
 - Create programs
 - Harsher punishment
 - More police on patrol
 - Community service
 - Hire police officers with higher pay

3) What can be done to limit the weapons that are entering schools?

- Take all threats seriously
- Metal detector for all doors
- Random security checks
- Dead bolt locked classroom doors
- In school therapist after ISS/OSS
- Review and revise safety plans
- Early warning system

3. Environment – How can the city and schools become more environmentally responsible?

a. Ideas & Problems

- **CO₂ – global warming**
- **Bay pollution**
- **Alternate energy sources**
- Littering
- Major trash uptake – trash from other sources
- Business/restaurant waste
- Car emissions

b. Questions & Recommendations

1) What is being done to encourage homeowners to be more energy efficient?

- a) Incentives for schools ex: grants
- b) Electric cars
- c) Hydrogen fuel cars
- d) Rain barrels
- e) Government rebates for hybrids
- f) Recycling papers in schools
- g) Donate leftover food
- h) Toilet regulations
- i) Greater funding for clean coal
- j) More windows, less artificial lights

2) What is being done in communities to be more eco-friendly?

- a) over harvesting
- b) tax on weight of trash
- c) being more cautious
- d) recycling bins at beaches
- e) raising awareness
- f) not wasting water with low flow toilets
- g) compost piles (big bin, community use)

- 3) What is being done to encourage alternate transportation?
- a) Car emissions
 - b) More efficient school buses
 - c) Better mass transport
 - d) Encourage car pooling – incentives
 - e) Taxing CO₂ factories
 - f) Local goods – less transportation
 - g) Incentives for less emissions
 - h) More opportunities to walk & bike (sidewalks & bike paths)
 - i) Increased use of bikes (electric bikes)
 - j) Gas prices up, inform people of all benefits of walking
 - k) Lawn mowers' regulations
 - l) Bikathon/walkathon
 - m) Lowering speed limits

4. Youth Voices – How can elected officials consider youth interests when making decisions?

a. Ideas & Problems

- Ability to vote (youth should be able to vote on decisions that impact us)
- Right to vote on local issues – popular vote like homecoming, cell phone policy, no zero policy, nutrition, lunch costs
- Schools should take time to inform students on the issues outside of govt class – assembly with information delivered by our peers
- Teach politics before senior year; Civics is an outline, not as in-depth – activity in study block
- Does the school board consider youth opinions? Youth need more opportunity to state opinions on laws, etc. need more interest, opportunities directed to youth before making decisions affecting us; School Board needs to get our opinions
- Forum to discuss ideas
- Youth should have opportunity to be involved in government activities.
- Youth not interested in issues, the issues are not geared toward youth
- Learning more about government to facilitate interest
- Our future is at stake
- Telling us about the issues

b. Questions & Recommendations

- 1) How does the school board consider the opinions of youth when making decisions? For example, the no zero policy, cell phones, nutrition.

- a) Forum to discuss ideas
 - b) Student representative on school board, committee or council of students (liaison to school board)
 - c) 1 member that only works with youth opinion, close focus → possibility of adult bias
 - d) Getting approval on issues from students
 - e) Voting/voicing opinion on issues
 - f) Raising awareness → voting on it
 - g) Some way to voice what's going well and what's not (evaluating school system)
 - h) 18-25 year olds don't vote – candidates don't focus on them, how can we improve this?
- 2) What can we do to communicate better with you? How will you reach out to the youth?
- a) Area in school where information is advertised (guidance, etc) morning announcements, newsletter
 - b) Most youth are ignorant about what is going on in government. How can we change this?
 - c) Ability to attend political events
 - d) Advertising organization that will inform students what's going on in city council meetings
 - e) Give prior notification so we can be present
 - f) Youth website (Youth Opportunities website) – not advertised
 - g) City council members come to school at an assembly or lunch break so students can talk to them
- 3) What are the codes for having a student represented on the school board and city council? What is the process for changing the code to include youth?
- a) Student rep. council to the city council or school board – rep. in city council – codes can be changed
 - b) Communication between city council and school board
 - c) Get a popular vote from every high school student for candidates or issues and add to states electoral vote, national or local