



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
AS A RESULT OF THE
SMALL GROUP WORK ACTIVITY
SESSION #2

MARCH 14, 2016 • PALATINE HIGH SCHOOL
MARCH 15, 2016 • JAMES B. CONANT HIGH SCHOOL

TASK #1: COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER EXPLORATIONS – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

What if every student was able to identify and explore a college major or career pathway while in high school?

- *Discuss the positives if every student was able to identify and explore a college major or career pathway while in high school.*
- *Discuss any concerns if every student was able to identify and explore a college major or career pathway while in high school.*
- *Discuss suggestions for helping students identify and explore a college major or career pathway while in high school.*

TASK #2: LIFE SKILLS

Businesses and industry continually stress the importance of life skills, work place skills, soft skills, etc. that are critical for success in the work place and life in general. Brainstorm with your table a list of those skills.

- *Take 15 minutes to discuss the top life skills, workplace skills, soft skills, etc. students should be practicing while in high school. If you have time, star the top five most important skills.*

TASK #3: GRADING – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

Grading is an important form of communication between the teacher, student, parent, college and future employer. Though high schools issue more than a semester grade per course (mid-term, quarter, final exam, etc.), only the final semester grade is considered the official grade and marked on a transcript for colleges and future employers to see as the student grants permission.

- *Discuss the positive attributes about to grading.*
- *Discuss the concerns about grading.*
- *Discuss suggestions for communicating grades most effectively.*

TASK #4: ONE-TO-ONE DEVICES – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

Each District 211 student has an individual iPad device and has the ability to bring that device home for educational use. Both teachers and students report the capacity for enhanced learning opportunities associated with access to an individual device.

- *Discuss the benefits regarding every student having an individual electronic device. (consider both at home and at school use)*
- *Discuss the concerns regarding every student having an individual electronic device. (consider both at home and at school use)*
- *Discuss suggestions regarding every student having an individual electronic device. (consider both at home and at school use)*

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

What other suggestions would your group like to provide to the Facilitating Team as we move forward with this community engagement program? Please list your suggestions in the space provided.

More than 200 participants attended the second *211 of Tomorrow* community engagement sessions on March 14 & 15, 2016. However, Facilitating Team members, Board of Education members and some District administrators are not asked to sign-

Associate Superintendent Dr. Lisa Small presented information about Academic Programming in District 211. To view the presentation, visit the Community Engagement website at [http://adc.d211.org/community engagement](http://adc.d211.org/community%20engagement), or click [here](#). Then, participants worked in 31 small groups total between the two nights to complete the four tasks listed above. Following is a summary of the responses from the groups as well as a small number of individual responses.

TASK #1: COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER EXPLORATIONS – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

211 of Tomorrow participants listed a number of positives, concerns, and suggestions in regard to the possibility that every student be able to identify an explore a college major or career pathway while in high school.

POSITIVES

A majority of the small groups felt the opportunity to explore potential careers, coursework, and/or interests was a positive aspect of college major and career explorations. One group mentioned “exploring something they love & have an interest [in]” while another group felt a positive is the “chance to explore without peer pressure.” Equally important to the *211 of Tomorrow* participants was the opportunity to assist students in honing in on a major or career path sooner. Small Group comments included that the program provides “goals & vision of where student is going” as well as “could help clarify future career and classes meaningful.” Another frequent topic included by participants focused on financial implications. Several groups listed “save money” and comments related to reduced college tuition as a positive aspect of these opportunities.

CONCERNS

The most frequently mentioned concerns were related to the ideas of identifying paths too soon. Comments in this category related to selecting a path then “realizing it’s not really for you,” students might feel “stuck,” or freshman age students are too young to be able to accurately make selections for their future career paths. One group commented, “Impossible task to expect students to know what they want to do.” Another group listed the concern “narrowing interest too soon making career choices at 14 & many college students change majors.”

The second most mentioned category for concerns related to options. Small groups made comments related to the limited options as well as that the program “may impact ability to take elective courses-especially if college bound-will art and music courses suffer?” Another concern included in this category was that the pathway may limit students’ ability to explore courses outside of the path that “may still be beneficial to career.”

Other frequently mentioned concerns listed related to the idea of too much pressure, schedule implications and a need to address the whole child beyond academics.

TASK #3: GRADING – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

211 of Tomorrow participants listed a number of positives, concerns, and suggestions in regard to grading.

POSITIVES

Two main categories of positives were listed by the small groups. First, participants felt that grades serve as motivation for students. The “incentive to complete coursework/homework” as well as “helps motivate students to perform” were listed as positives for grading. Another positive aspect of grading listed by *211 of Tomorrow* participants was the feedback provided by grades. One group commented that grades offer “communication – let you know where you stand” while another said that a positive of grades is the “sense of pride/feedback.”

Other comments were varied. Infinite Campus was identified by a number of groups as a positive. Ideas such as “quick, easy & quantifiable way to compare students” and “preparation/or career where you are graded on your work performance” were also included.

CONCERNS

The most mentioned concerns related to consistency. Concerns related to the grading scales were most frequently listed as well as differences between teachers in terms of grading and course content were included.

The idea that learning is more important than grading also was mentioned as a concern by multiple groups. One group included, “learning to learn and not a grade” as a concern. Another concern listed by multiple groups was that not all teachers keep updated grades in a timely manner.

SUGGESTIONS

Several groups suggested that communication between teachers and parents, as well as between teachers and students, be a focus. Among the comments were, “If teacher comes across a challenge with student, notify parent” and “walk parents through grade book (don’t assume they know).” *211 of Tomorrow* participants also suggested that more detailed comments accompany grades on mid-terms and report cards, as well as timely grade reporting to students and online.

TASK #4: ONE-TO-ONE DEVICES – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS

211 of Tomorrow participants listed a number of positives, concerns, and suggestions in regard to One-to-One Devices.

POSITIVES

Without question, the largest positives listed by *211 of Tomorrow* participants related to the idea of access. Comments included in this category were access to: teacher materials, educational material, technology, useful sites & programs, Internet, quick access to information, and assignments. Also identified as a positive in terms of access was that one-to-one devices “equal [the] playing field for those without personal devices” and “everyone has the same opportunity.” Another frequently listed positive for one-to-one devices was the impact on learning. Participants felt that the devices assist in “learning technology” and “allows for online learning.” Participants also liked the idea that students have less to carry. Small groups commented that there are a lot less books.

TASK #4: ONE-TO-ONE DEVICES – POSITIVES, CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS (CONT.)

CONCERNS

By far, distraction was the most frequently mentioned concern for one-to-one devices. Participants expressed concerns that games, social media, and other non-academic items are being utilized by students and disrupting learning. Another commonly mentioned concern was that not all students have access to Wi-Fi. One group commented, “Homes do not all have Internet at home.” Various other items were listed as concerns such as “classroom management – new challenges” and “more training needed for teachers on how to use effectively, not just for the sake of using it.” Some groups questioned why some sites are blocked and not others.

SUGGESTIONS

A common suggestion from *211 of Tomorrow* participants related to restricting access. Several groups suggested that access be restricted to academic content. Another repeated suggestion related to consistency of devices for K-12. Other common suggestions related to parent education on device use and parents’ role in a one-to-one device.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Participants were asked about other suggestions to be considered for this community engagement program. Varied responses were included from the groups. Some suggestions listed were offering more summer school courses, more interaction with the Superintendent & Associate Superintendent, and “Figure out a way to motivate students who are so concerned about grades (get them to learn the material rather than just if it’s for a grade.)”

**For a complete listing of all responses,
see the CES-2 Verbatim Response Documents for March 14 and 15 found at
http://adc.d211.org/community_engagement**