

## Community Meeting -- February 20, 2002

Your input and opinions are an important part of the current conversations on providing programs and services to best meet the needs of our high school students. Please respond to the questions below. Your responses will be shared with the 85-member Design Down Committee and will be posted on the WDMCSD web site ([www.wdm.k12.ja.us](http://www.wdm.k12.ja.us)). Thank you!

***1. What is working in the programming and services provided to high school students in our school district?***

- Small student/teacher ratio
- Strong academic programs with many students taking advantage (ACT scores, merit scholarships)
- Provides, creates and inspires success
- Building (physical building) does not deter education
- Very diverse class offerings to meet all needs and wishes
- Breadth of course work really prepares student for college

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- Academic excellence of district
  - Ability to excel
  - Opportunities
  - Keep raising the bar
  - Large participation in every area
  - School pride/satisfaction
  - Students very well prepared
  - Strong community ties

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- Wide variety of course offerings
  - VHS does a good job making different options available/up to students to participate
  - Students are given opportunities to establish their own club if their interests are not being met
  - Walnut Creek seems to be working well for those who don't fit the Valley mold
  - Very low class sizes at Valley which positively impacts relationships with teachers
  - VSW—got to know class members well without being overwhelmed by upperclassmen

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- Academically prepared for college (all at the table agreed)
  - PAA Program
  - Diversity of course works creates well-rounded, responsible students

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- Something for everyone
  - Academically kids do well
  - Good in arts

- Good in sports
- Wide variety academically, 190 is significant number of courses
- Opportunities to get college credit during high school
- Walnut Creek is alternative method to achieve graduation
- Education individualized, teachers know you by names and classroom size is small
- Valley has excellent reputation among prestigious universities which allows a student to advance ahead of schedule in some colleges
- VSW lets you get to know your class before you get to Valley

<p><b>2. <i>What needs to change? What needs are not being met?</i></b></p>
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- Classroom availability—running out of space
- Some teachers don't have classrooms
- Does Valley prepare students for a future other than 4 year college
- People choose not to participate in activities; it is not that there are not activities available

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- Minimize adult education
  - Use our school for us and our community (gym)
  - More intramurals to involve students
  - Test outs (more information about what is on the test)
  - More math competitions
  - Wasted space—reduce traveling teachers

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- Pods/limited interaction with other students at VSW (negative on the pods)
  - Teachers do not coordinate finals and projects
  - New building needed
  - Stabilize counseling department, turnover/increase the number of counselors?
  - Transportation between the two campuses is a problem schedule-wise. Interrupts the day; getting to the next class late due to limited passing time
  - Parking a huge problem
  - “Relationship ratio” needs to be improved (mentioned in sit report)

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- Concern was expressed at table that course offerings were so extensive that choosing is difficult. Is there a way to help parents and students with selection of courses
  - Need more technology—all agreed
  - Physical area where students can “socialize”
  - Career development
  - Student social and student entrance should not be the same as the visitors entrance

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- Transportation between Valley and VSW is terrible – don't get there on time because the buses don't come
  - Tendency to overspend on buildings – can get by with less at LRC especially

- Need better job on personalized learning environment
- Kids need circle of common faces in classes and does not happen
- Switching teachers at semester in same subject is not good because of different teaching methods
- VSW—in and out too quickly. Bonds with teachers cannot be made because they don't see them the next few years
- Drills starts and sit at side at practice – have kids quit because not getting enough participation
- Band participation – too rigid in rules and no bonding with the kids

**3. *How should programs and services be restructured to better meet the needs of our students in grades 9-12?***

- More intramural sports
- If more activities are created, more students would participate, but there are many ways to be involved
- Non-participation is a choice, not because a student can't participate or there isn't the opportunity

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- Make PAA more effective
  - More staff support at activities
  - Maintain small class size
  - Teachers with less classes
  - Coaches availability to students
  - Transportation between VSW and Valley causes unavailability of teachers
  - More classes compacted

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- More locations for students to meet, hang out, etc.
  - Study Iowa city situation to determine how 2 high schools have succeeded with out diluting either one; also, Bloomington, Ill the opposite happened and they went back to one high school after two failed
  - Continue to encourage, not just tolerate cross-participation among arts, music, and athletics
  - Encourage meaningful participation in sports

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- Provide and improve help that is provided for course selection
  - Provide diagrams or sample schedules
  - More course and career counseling for students
  - Shadowing/Internship opportunities for students
  - Expand special interest clubs for students
  - Provide more “structured” intramural sports or sport clubs
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- Consider athletic club programs
- Band without marching band as commitment so students can do football or just concert or jazz band to keep kids in programs
- Keep doing #1 and implement #2

*Additional comments:*

- Is certified staff more than teaching staff? So ratio is not teacher/student ratio?
- Have an open forum of Valley High School graduates to discuss their transition to college or life
- Also, **really** listen to the students – they “live” what we are talking about