

Report on Walnut Creek Campus Student Interviews/Discussion March 12, 2002

The discussion started with an introduction of the team by Phil Hodgin. Bruce Jilk then asked each student to give their name and plans following high school. At the end of the session the students reviewed a set of pictures and wrote down what pictures they liked or disliked. Eight students participated in the interviews at Walnut Creek Campus.

Teacher David Edelstein (a member of the Design Down Steering Committee) gave an introduction to the participants regarding what the Design Down process is all about. He asked that students be open and honest.

Experience in the different high school settings – what works and doesn't

Southwoods – put back in elementary school – didn't like pods

No time to go to different areas

Valley – crowded hallways – need to be bigger

Walnut Creek – likes it because it's smaller – no walls

Walnut Creek – wouldn't be so distracted if things weren't so open

Teaching is a lot better at Walnut Creek – more of a one-on-one experience

Would need more teachers if you had Valley like Walnut Creek

Compared to Valley & Southwoods – is there more opportunity here?

Yes – not as many restrictions – a lot more freedom – it's about what you decide to do

You take control – it's your responsibility

Gives you times to think about assignments – things aren't due “tomorrow” – work at your own pace

Given outline of what is expected initially to work on as you can

Everything is individual

Only a few teachers actually stand up and “teach”

If you don't feel like working – you don't have to – more flexible

At Southwoods – no exceptions – had to do PE after surgery.

Got to know teachers and students here

Do not address teachers as Mr. & Mrs.

Don't make you feel stupid here

So many kids – no individual help at Southwoods

Can't find teachers if need help at Southwoods

Here they pay more attention to each individual – not everyone learns at the same pace – you get help if you need it

Not necessarily the size here – more how they teach

Everyone is equal here – not divided like at Valley

Going to be cliques everywhere – but not as bad here

Does Valley have cliques?

Would stand in front of bathrooms – Jrs.

Srs. in sr. hallway – everyone just stands there – blocks the walkways

How do you visit here?

In the school store/lobby

Lenient with your times – classrooms are close

Someone will send you to class if you visit too long

This school doesn't look as institutional

Allowed to express your feelings here

Can make this space yours – everyone's work is put up – not just the good students

More abstract

Ideas you would like to see in a new school

Big area to meet with friends during passing area or study hall – instead of hallways
More classrooms – a lot of classes not offered because not enough space (art, choir, technology)

Is technology adequate?

10 computers – some computers in rooms don't even work
Like tables instead of desks
No assigned seats

Discussion regarding 2 (9-12) schools

Can't get college prep classes here
You can move back and forth between the two schools

David talked about the possibilities of taking other courses outside of Walnut Creek

Can take DMACC courses also
Transportation is a problem to another school
Can wear what ever you want to do
Teachers make it a problem at the other schools if they don't like the way you look
Valley is like a prison
Don't have to ask to go to the restroom
You can only leave the building here if you have a pass – except lunch
Parents signature at Valley to leave
Parking is a problem at Valley
Most of these kids drive
Don't get the maturity at Southwoods – you're with more people at Valley – more opportunities to socialize
Walnut Creek doesn't need lockers – very few books

Is there opportunity for “special events” at Walnut Creek?

Southwoods – divided teams by good/bad
Sometimes all about how much money your parents give to booster club
Does WDM “rep” matter? – Part of a winning team or play?
Valley competes against everyone else
Bribed to win – parties if you win – should be for fun – not strictly for winning
You DON'T mess up in Valley sports – starts in jr. high
Quite football 2nd year at Valley – way too competitive
Parents want kids to play – not just to win
Has to be some competition in a game
If you lose – you run – it's always the team's fault – not the coach's fault
Parking at Southwoods – no one drives – have to have superintendent to give you any type of driving pass
Southwoods – nurses judgmental