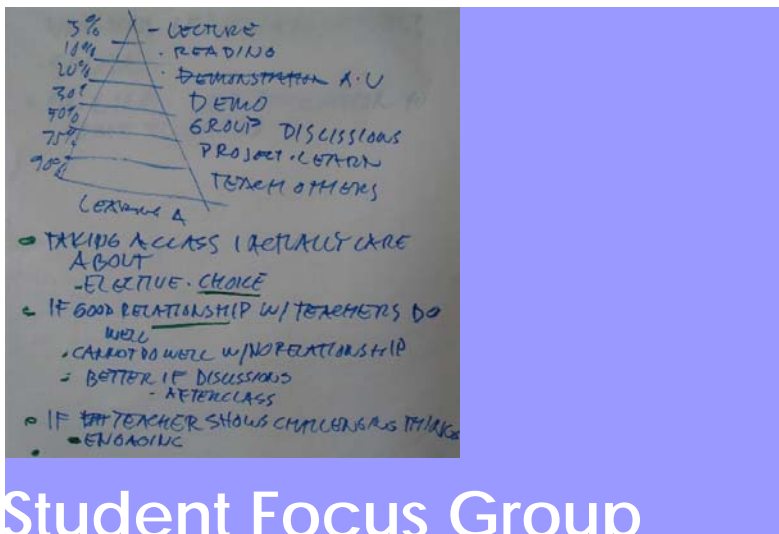




## INTRODUCTION

A group of 27 students from all grade levels met with Dr Locker for an animated two hour long workshop on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Virtual learning was this first issue discussed. It opened up the question: why come to school? This was followed by an outline of the Table3H concept developed by the Futures Team, plus “What Works/ What Doesn’t Work?” at WHS, and considerations of motivation to come to school.



## Student Focus Group

## TABLE 3/H CONCEPT

The concept developed in the Futures Team Workshop of a four year sequence from Freshman transition through Senior project was presented to the students. The idea was generally well received, with the following comments from the students:

- Interesting
- In MS they had events that brought whole grade together: these were good
- In an informal vote, 20 of the 27 students indicated they like the idea
- They liked especially the Senior project idea:
  - Now work in WHS is not related to the community
  - “In HS, we miss our responsibilities to give back to community”

## WHAT WORKS?

- Taking a class I actually care about
  - Electives offer choices
- If I have a good relationship with teachers, I can do well
  - Cannot do well with no relationship
  - Better if discussions after class
- If teacher shows challenging things
- If the course is engaging

## WHAT DOESN'T WORK?

- Lots of homework is just problem sets out of textbook



- Not interesting
- Why do it?
  - Get into college?
  - “Repetition reinforces learning” the teachers say
- Lot of kids don’t want to come to school
  - They come because society/parents say so
- Some kids . . . . .
- Would be bored at home
- Not many classes geared toward profession
  - 99% disconnected from outside world
  - Everything geared to next level
  - Should have tech-type classes
  - Should have cooking/sewing + life skills
  - Teach us how to learn in relevant context, not how to find missing side of triangle
- History can be boring
  - Just reading
  - Not dealing with problems
  - Not applying knowledge

## WHAT MAKES YOU WANT TO COME TO SCHOOL?

The “Works? Doesn’t Work?” exercise and the discussion about virtual schools evolved into a discussion of “why come to school?” Several students cited the social aspects of school. Others were concerned that virtual learning would reduce the motivation to attend school in a building. To gain clarity note cards were passed out and students were asked to provide two answers to the question “What make you want to come to school?”

By far the most common reason was related to friends and social interaction, with 23 of the 27 students so responding. Learning was second, but with far fewer citations, at 13. Future opportunities were cited in 9 responses, with sports, extra-curricular, expectations/approval, and “other” reasons mentioned by fewer than 4 students

The responses are below are organized in categories, and with an indication of whether the response was a first, second, or other choice.

### I WANT TO COME TO SCHOOL BECAUSE:

#### FRIENDS, SOCIAL

- 1 Friends
- 1 Interacting with people
- 1 My friends
- 1 Friends, interactions with people
- 1 To see my friends
- 1 To be with my friends
- 1 Friends – Ms X – teachers – chem
- 1 To see friends
- 1 To interact with people
- 1 To come to see my friends
- 1 Seeing my friends everyday
- 1 The social aspect
- 1 The prospect of learning and making new friends
- 1 Friends
- 2 To engage with my friends, classmates, teachers, and teammates for memories
- 2 Social reasons (friends, teachers, building social skills we can’t do on a computer)
- 2 To see my friends
- 2 Friends
- 2 Socializing, meeting new people
- 2 Socializing
- 2 The social aspects – athletics, seeing my friends (and making new ones,) etc
- 2 Social reasons
- 3 Social reasons

#### LEARNING

- 1 Hands-on learning (actually doing the things we learn about)
- 1 The environment of ppl learning together
- 1 Something to do during the day, so I don’t waste my time
- 1 Express myself and learning new info



- 1 The prospect of learning and making new friends
- 1 The opportunity to learn – I appreciate that I am fortunate enough to live hear a decent school system
- 1 Student-teacher relationships (communicating with teachers and learning in a classroom – need to prepare for tests, etc)
- 2 I know that I'll learn more in this structured environment
- 2 Learning something new is always exciting
- 2 The new experiences you get everyday with teachers, peers, etc
- 2 I actually like learning but it's hard work
- 2 Knowing knowledge is being shared and passed down to us from our elders
- 3 To learn new things that would be hard to do on my own

**FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

- 1 To have a successful future someday
- 1 To get an education to make a base for a good future
- 1 Desire to succeed (\$\$)
- 2 To have a future (education)
- 2 To get into college
- 2 So I can go to college
- 2 To educate myself for the future so I can have a job I love
- 2 Prepare for college, life, and the wide world
- 2 To get an education so I can go to a good college and I can get a good job

**OTHER**

- 1 Desire to better myself
- 1 To get out of my house
- 2 Make changes to the community, make an impact
- 2 A way to be special

**EXPECTATIONS/APPROVAL**

- 2 My parents
- 2 Parents want you to, so I want to approve
- 4 Responsibility

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR**

- 1 Extracurricular opportunities that are made available
- 2 So I can participate in extracurriculars
- 2 Extracurriculars

**SPORTS**

- 2 Sports teams
- 2 Being able to participate in sports

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Most of the student group agreed to participate in a longer questionnaire about attitudes toward school. The questions were developed for on-line responses, and were reviewed by the principal before deployment. The questions are below. The responses will be posted as they are received and analyzed.

**ESSAY QUESTION:**

What has been the most important learning experience of your life?

**MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS:**

Please answer these questions to the best of your ability, considering all classes you have had at WHS.

**Check off the box that best represents your opinion:**

**Strongly Agree**\_\_\_

**Agree**\_\_

**Don't Know**\_\_\_

**Disagree**\_\_\_

**Strongly Disagree**\_\_\_

**Teacher Effectiveness:** The extent to which teachers deliver their teaching in a planned and energetic manner

1. My teachers are easy to understand
2. My teachers put a lot of energy into teaching my classes
3. My teachers explain how we can get more information
4. This school is preparing students well for their future
5. My teachers are well prepared



**Teacher Empathy:** The extent to which teachers listen and understand student needs, and assist with student learning

6. My teachers listen to what I have to say
7. My teachers really want to help me learn
8. My teachers provide help and support when it is needed
9. My teachers are good at helping students with problems
10. My teachers help me to do my best
11. My teachers understand how I learn

**Stimulating Learning:** The extent to which teachers make learning interesting, enjoyable and inspiring

12. My teachers make the work we do in class interesting
13. My teachers are inspiring to listen to
14. My teachers make school work enjoyable
15. I understand the relevance of the work we do in class

**Student Engagement**

16. Making things as a way of learning is engaging
17. Working on teams with other students is engaging
18. For me, sports at WHS are really engaging
19. For me, extra-curricular activities (clubs, plays, robot competition, etc) are really engaging
20. For me, classroom activities are really engaging
21. Listening to lectures is engaging
22. Whole class discussions are engaging
23. Small group discussions are engaging

**Student Motivation:** The extent to which students are motivated to achieve and learn

24. Doing well in school is very important to me
25. I am motivated in class by the learning activities we do
26. I am motivated in class by expectations of others, such as my parents
27. I try very hard in school

**Learning Confidence:** The extent to which students have a positive perception of their ability as a student

28. I find it easy to learn new things
29. I am a very good student
30. I think I am generally successful at school