

Okemos Public Schools
Strategic Planning 2020 – 2024
Student Forum, October 7, 2019

As Okemos Public Schools (OPS) initiates its Strategic Planning 2020 – 2024 commitment, it held two Student Forums on October 7. Carmelita Murphy, OP, of LEAD, Inc., facilitated the dialogues. The outcome of the Student Forums that engaged a total of 45 students is as follows:

1. What is outstanding about an OPS education?

- Postive relationships and involvement of students, teachers, administration, and staff
- Opportunities: Diversity of,clubs, extracurricular actiivities; able to get ahead
- Community values for quality education
- Culture of excellence, high expectations
- Diversity / Inclusion value and support (i.e. fees waived)
- Strong curriculum; rigorous courses; advanced courses (i.e. math); courses at one's learning level; support to meet each student where they are
- College readiness

2. What must OPS address to improve or better the OPS experience?

- Mental health education: Prioritize and set policies; address stress and pressure; define role of counselors
- School culture: Defined less by testing; too test-centered; homework demands
- School start times
- Discipline policy: Inconsistent application
- Campus: Make HS an open campus; school parking lot
- Teaching: More Life Skills (i.e. personal finance) and scheduled time for such; less test-centered; offer access to AP courses; student engagement in classes
- College: SAT test preparation; early college; too focused on college
- Career center options: Change the culture of only a 4 year college option; increase communication and access to such options; after graduation options
- Technology: Internet access inside and outside of school; online sports communication
- Lunch: Time rules regarding space and location; cook real food; vegetarian options; more microwaves; increase lunch time
- Sports: Boys' powder puff / volleyball

- Decrease student fees
- Student representation on Board of Education
- Address teacher shortage
- Teacher retention

3. What two challenges must OPS address in next four years?

- Stress and mental health; well-being of students
- Test-focused teaching; final exams prior to holiday break
- Acceptance of diversity and inclusion
- Communications regarding course options
- Security and safety
- Technology
- Student freedom; more student voice; student voice on Board of Education
- Discipline consistent throughout the district
- Less homework
- School start times; later start times
- Year-round school calendar
- Athletic staffing
- More local control by OHS administration regarding decision-making