

Preliminary Report on Results of the Mission Survey

“We want the best education for our children in an environment that fosters character and community responsibility.”

To date there have been 31 respondents to the survey. Their responses have demonstrated tremendous passion for excellent education of our children in an environment that fosters their development as individuals of good character who are active in their communities.

The complete responses are available to the board members at this time. The survey will conclude next week. At that time, the results will be published for the entire community. Names of respondents will be omitted in that publication. Below is a summary of the results so far.

Character Education-“Character education provides my child a window on what it means to be a good person.”

This pillar is perceived as one of the most important reasons that parents choose to send their children to our school. Parents look to the school environment as one that is intolerant of bullying and violence. The environment should emphasize virtuous behavior as a formula for success in contrast to being “cool” or popular.

Parents wish their children to learn to be leaders in their community with a sound moral compass. It is hoped that the school will give the children a deeper understanding of what it means to value and live a virtuous life.

In teaching virtue the importance of parents, teachers and staff exemplifying virtue in their actions is frequently cited as important.

Programs that reward virtue and weave appreciation of it into the school curriculum are valued. Specific examples mentioned were: Leaf Ceremonies, Open Court stories, CK topics, journal reflections, role play, and discussions of virtue in readings of literature and biographies.

Parents as Primary Educators - “My responsibility as Primary Educator is to be an active participant in enriching and reinforcing the classroom experiences.”

Parents and teachers feel that educating children is a partnership between parents and the school. In practice, this means that parents keep abreast of their children’s home work, school projects and the scope and sequence. Parents work with their children at home to help with their homework and projects. In selecting home activities and trips, parents try to add to their children’s education and enhance what is what is being taught in the class room.

Parents expect that interactions with teachers should be encouraged and facilitated.

Community Service – “Every child should see the need and responsibility they have to their community and society as a whole.”

Parents and teachers feel that it is important for children to “give back” to their communities. The importance of action to help those less fortunate and demonstrate their connectedness to the community is perceived.

Community is seen on a school, town, national and global level. It is hoped that service to these communities is practiced not just at school, but also at home.

There is a desire to see more volunteering projects that take place outside of the school. Projects that are less about fund raising, but rather more about getting directly involved in the community. Helping those who are less fortunate is frequently cited as a “virtue” for community service projects.

Core Knowledge – “Enhancing the Massachusetts State Frameworks”

It is hoped that the combination of Core Knowledge with the Massachusetts State Frameworks will teach students to “look at topics in a deeper manner than they would have with a different type of educational lens.” Core Knowledge should provide a sound fundamental basis on which they can build their future education. “Our children should be learning everything that children at public schools are learning and more. “

The grader books sent home to families are valued and it hoped that they are well used. It is important in designing the curriculum to ensure that one year builds upon the preceding.

The emphasis on Fine Arts are valued as a supplement to Core Knowledge. It is also hoped that we will not “lose sight of the importance of math, science, writing and literature.”

One parent summarizes the educational program saying, “The approach taken at BFCCPS is not just about learning things or memorizing information- it is also about learning to think independently, to have good analytical skills and creativity and to be a good learner.”

Curriculum – “To have the opportunity to get above the cutting edge sets our children apart as valuable citizens that have much to contribute.”

Our curriculum should “establish a community of learners, students who enjoy learning for its own sake. The curriculum should generate enthusiasm and encourage students to achieve at their own personal best.”

Parents and teachers recognize the challenge of aligning the Massachusetts State Frameworks with the goals embodied in the four pillars.

There is a bit of dichotomy in thoughts about what is most vital for emphasis in the development of curriculum. Some point to a loss of focus on the underlying curriculum and need to improve the educational product. Need to improve the program in mathematics, science and technology as well as computer skills to prepare children for success in college and as adults is cited. In contrast others are more concerned with loss of emphasis on virtue based education and the pillars in efforts to develop curriculum and align with the MA state frameworks.

There is some interest in language choices that provide more opportunity for use outside of school or which are more likely to be important in the professional lives our children may have in future.