

Learning Relationships: Improving Achievement in Public High School

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And



July 14, 2003

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The Urban Affairs Center is a partner in the Ohio Urban University Program. The Urban University Program is a unique network linking the resources of Ohio's urban universities with the communities and students they serve. The UUP partners work in a cooperative effort to improve Ohio's urban regions.

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Learning Relationships: Improving Achievement in Public High School

Executive Summary

Toledo Public Schools, along with sixteen other Ohio urban school districts, chose to participate in the Ohio High School Transformation Initiative to investigate whether small school design could have a significant impact on the district's high schools. Five of Toledo's high schools received planning grants of approximately \$100,000 each from KnowledgeWorks and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to redesign their schools examining everything from scheduling to curriculum and, in particular, their connection to the outside community.

In order to best measure the community's feelings toward the schools, a two phase approach was taken – direct community engagement through focus groups and a community engagement survey. The survey was created based on the initial input from the first five focus groups and made available on the Internet as well as distributed in a hard-copy format.

Early patterns that developed in the meetings with members of the community were supported in later meetings and by the survey data. Consistent responses by participants lead to some key observations:

- People are willing to investigate alternatives in the hope of improving student success
- There is a strong desire within the schools to improve and do a better job educating students
- Students and teachers need more choices and more autonomy in order to stimulate the learning process
- Communication between the schools and the community must be consistent and honest if the schools are to succeed
- The community needs further education and more information about small schools – preferably from small school experts and people who have been involved implementing small schools
- In general, the community supports the concept of smaller schools and smaller learning environments
- Members of the community must take an active role in the school reform process
- There must be continual and ongoing interaction between the schools and the community

It was clear that the community wants the schools to be successful and is willing to assist in the process. However, citizens must have defined responsibilities that go beyond attending meetings and briefings. They must be part of the

decision-making process and their input must be welcomed and considered at every step.

Small schools were clearly identified as one potential solution to the problems facing Toledo's high schools. While members of the community expressed a desire to know more about how the smaller design would work in their particular school district, they indicated support for the idea and a willingness to investigate further. As noted earlier, the community wants the schools to be successful and appear willing to examine programs that have worked in other urban school districts.

The participants in the sessions also stressed the need for ongoing community engagement designed to increase the knowledge sharing and information base throughout the community. It is not enough to have a small handful of citizens involved in the process – the community, as a whole, must feel they are welcome and wanted. The quality of the community schools reflects on the quality of the community and everyone must have an opportunity to be heard and to know their comments and concerns are being taken seriously and given proper consideration.

Introduction

Urban public schools face extremely difficult challenges – challenges not faced by smaller suburban school districts.

According to research from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, students in Ohio’s urban high schools are falling further and further behind in their academic performance. Though the rate of high school graduations in Ohio is slightly higher than the national average, the rate of college completion for Ohio high school graduates lags significantly behind national averages.

High School Graduation Rates	
US	80.4%
Ohio	83%
Lucas Co.	82.9%
Toledo*	66.9%
BA Degree or Higher Completion Rates	
US	24.4%
Ohio	21.1%
Lucas Co.	21.3%
Toledo	16.8%

US 2000 Census of the Population
*2001 emis

It is crucial that the challenges of our urban high schools be addressed. KnowledgeWorks believes that schools must be redesigned based upon the findings in volumes of research and best practices; and that energy and resources must be directed toward ensuring that all Ohio youth are able to meet state standards, graduate, and have the option of pursuing a college education.

Toledo Public Schools have the same problems with operating effectiveness and limited educational attainment, as do other urban public schools in Ohio*. Toledo high school graduation rates and BA degree completion rates are significantly below both the state average and the national average. Despite some signs of improvement, Toledo schools continue to receive an Academic Emergency rating – the lowest of the state’s rankings. The rating requires TPS to continuously redevelop improvement plans as well as take other measures in an effort to improve the district’s standing.

* http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/100_largest/

The Ohio High School Transformation Initiative

The Ohio High School Transformation Initiative is a statewide effort at high school reform largely funded by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation of Cincinnati, Ohio. The project is grounded in the concept that it is possible to improve student achievement in urban school districts through the creation of learning environments where all stakeholders are connected. KnowledgeWorks, working in conjunction with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Ohio Department of Education and other non-profit organizations, proposes reconfiguring large high schools into smaller, autonomous learning environments.

In Ohio, KnowledgeWorks began working with 42 schools in 17 primarily urban school districts. In the Toledo Public School (TPS) district, Bowsher, Libbey, Rogers, Scott and Woodward High Schools participated in the grant-funded program. The first phase of the initiative, Research and Design, involved the development of school-based leadership teams with the mission of studying models of small schools and developing a detailed plan for reinventing their own school.

A key portion of the Research and Design Phase involved the collection of data from the community surrounding the schools in the hope of being able to understand how the school and community are connected and how each could help the other develop stronger relationships. The local school districts selected nonprofit organizations in each community to serve as a "Center of Strength" and to involve parents and the community in the planning and design process. TPS contracted with the Center for Innovative and Transformative Education (CITE) and Partnerships for Community Action (PCA) at Bowling Green State University.

The role of the Center of Strength (COS) is to establish community engagement in the planning, implementation and operation of the small high schools. CITE/PCA established a collaborative relationship with the Urban Affairs Center (UAC) at The University of Toledo to accomplish the goals of the community engagement component of the KnowledgeWorks grants. The UAC has a strong reputation for inclusion throughout the community, having partnered with over 80 different community groups during each of the last three years. The UAC and CITE have partnered on other grants and have established a strong working relationship. The goal of community engagement is to mobilize, facilitate, and assure the effective engagement of formal and informal community groups in the ongoing development of the Toledo Public Schools. By assuring an active and effective community voice in public education, COS created the processes and mechanisms to assure that school officials interact and work more effectively with their communities.

The Community Engagement Process

The initial plan for community engagement in Toledo required participation from Community Development Corporations (CDC) located throughout the city. By leveraging their community contacts, it was believed that the CDC could effectively help the COS contact a diverse cross-section of residents. Starting with a list of nearly 100 community organizations, roughly a quarter of them were targeted and contacted to participate in the project. While support for the project was strong, participation by the organizations was severely limited.

Unfortunately, the CDCs were faced with changing grant application procedures of their own at the time the community engagement process began and many were reluctant to commit the time and resources they believed necessary to assist in coordinating engagement sessions. Some, more willing to help

A number of sessions were held with school reform organizations such as Parents for Public Schools and the Smart School Partnership and community service groups like Adelante and The Aurora Gonzales Community & Family Resource Center.

provided contact information for area residents and arranged for meeting spaces but could do little to assure attendance. A large number of the CDCs contacted did not respond to requests for assistance while others promised assistance but never carried out their commitments.

Nevertheless, a number of sessions were held with school reform organizations such as Parents for Public Schools and the Smart School Partnership and community service groups like Adelante and The Aurora Gonzales Community & Family Resource Center. The CDC Organized Neighbors Yielding eXcellence (ONYX) attempted three times to schedule meetings and ultimately resorted to handing out paper surveys to community residents during their annual meeting. Other sessions included groups of parents from several of the schools as well as a number of faculty and occasionally students.

Attendance at the sessions was unpredictable at best. At the start of the project in the late winter months, weather impacted attendance. As the school year wound down, people appeared to be ready to move into their summers and forget about school and school issues. Complicating the process are the ongoing information sessions dealing with the Rebuilding Ohio Schools Initiative, a program to rebuild or renovate schools across the state. Many people thought the sessions on school reform were simply additional sessions dealing with rebuilding.

An interesting side note is that many of the people attending the focus groups were amazed that the schools were asking for their opinions and input. Many people expressed the opinion that the schools historically work in a vacuum and place little value on the opinions of the community. Most school information sessions tend to be lectures about what will be happening rather than fact finding missions designed to uncover what the public would like to have happen.

Frequently, people were pleased that we wanted to hear their thoughts and opinions.

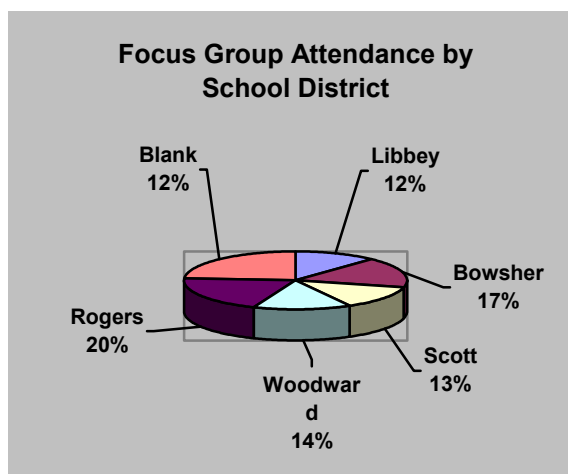
Realizing that the plan to use the CDC contacts to reach into the communities was not working as planned, the focus shifted to targeting other community-based organizations such as business groups and churches. This strategy also met with mixed results as church groups offered to help but business organizations were non-responsive.

Inner-city churches, firmly engaged in their community were supportive of the process and immediately offered whatever assistance necessary. Several arranged meetings and invited members of their church communities to attend. Attendance was light at these sessions, yet the information gathered was extremely valuable.

In addition to focus groups, COS consultants created a survey based on responses from the earliest sessions and distributed them to the membership of a variety of cooperating organizations including Coalition to Access Technology and Networking (CATNet) Aspiring Minds of Toledo, the Black Data Processing Association,¹ and others. An Internet link to the survey was also posted on the UAC website and information about the project was sent out on the University of Toledo's campus network.

Demographics

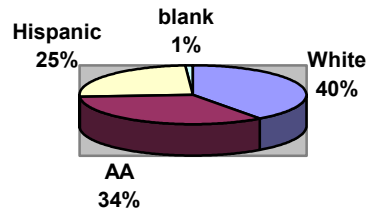
Twenty-four focus group sessions were held with various organizations around the school district. Included in these sessions were Parents for Public Schools, the Toledo Smart Growth Partnership, Indiana Avenue Missionary Baptist Church, the Grace Community Center, Aurora Gonzales Community & Family Resource Center, Adelante, New Covenant Evangelical Ministries, and the J. Frank Troy Senior Center among others. More than one hundred people attended the sessions. An exact count could not be kept due to the fact that some people chose not to sign-in upon arrival and did not fill out demographic forms.



¹ Each of these are coalition or umbrella groups. CATNet for example has over 40 Community Technology Centers in NW Ohio, serving senior citizens, differently-abled housing, community groups, faith-based neighborhood groups, section 8 housing complexes, etc.

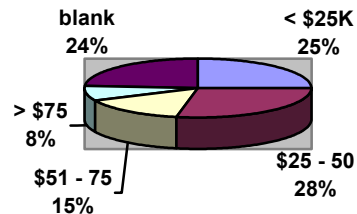
Since the project included five different high school districts, sessions were held at a number of locations around the Toledo area. Because of this, few sessions were made up of representatives of a single high school district and some attendees did not live in participating school districts at all. (Several parts of the City of Toledo are served by school districts other than TPS.) Their responses were included, however, because the focus of the sessions was to gather information from the community as a whole and not just residents from particular districts.

Race/Ethnicity of Attendees



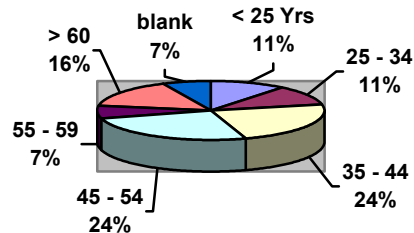
Attendance was close to evenly distributed among each of the five high school districts. Rogers (20%) and Bowsher (17%) were most represented, followed by Woodward (14%), Scott (13%) and Libbey (12%).

Income of Attendees



Racial/ethnic breakdown of attendees was also close to evenly distributed, with 40% white, 34% African American, and 25% Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Age of Focus Group Attendees



Twenty-four percent of attendees do not respond to income category on the demographic survey. The largest cohort (28%) fell into the \$25 to 50,000 a year income bracket, followed closely by below \$25,000 (25%) a year; while 23% of attendees make over \$50,000 a year.

Close to 50% of attendees fell into the 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age groups. The less than 25 and 25 to 43 age groups were even at 11% each; while the over 60 cohort was 16% and the 55 to 59 age group was 7%.

Results From the Focus Group Discussions

The Ideal Community

Early in the focus group sessions, certain trends began to emerge regardless of the group or high school district represented. Concerns about safety, quality of education and effective curriculum were universal. The conversations, however, were not just about the schools and the quality of education but also dealt with issues of community input and participation in the public education process.

The conversations began with a short discussion of ideals and objectives for the community as a whole – the ideal community. While the responses varied from group to group, it quickly became evident there were common concerns regarding safety, cleanliness and the development of a strong sense of community with walkable neighborhoods and locally owned and controlled business districts. In addition, most people indicated that an awareness and knowledge of cultural and language differences was an important method for promoting diversity. Strong communication links within the community also emerged as a common theme.

The Ideal School

When discussing schools in this ideal community, respondents expressed a variety of desires. Principal among these desires was a system that allows student self-expression. Schools would be places that teach critical thinking skills and a desire for lifelong learning in an environment with strong parental involvement and a challenging curriculum. By providing students a clean and safe learning environment, the schools would become the center of the community and an engine for economic development. In addition, they would become open and inviting places that are full-service facilities and accessible to all members of the community providing an opportunity for improved communication and cultural understanding. When pressed to explain how the schools could be “full-service,” respondents indicated they would like to see school facilities open for after school activities, available to non-school organizations, or perhaps offer educational programs for adults on nights and weekends. The schools should also be friendly and inviting places where students can learn what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Schools would be places that teach critical thinking skills and a desire for lifelong learning in an environment with strong parental involvement and a challenging curriculum.

Roadblocks To The Ideal

The stated roadblocks keeping the schools from reaching these goals were as diverse as the groups participating in the sessions. Most often, a lack of money was listed as a primary obstacle. Unfunded mandates from state and federal governments added to the fiscal difficulties. Almost universally, respondents suggested there was very little collaboration between the numerous stakeholders and a disconnect existed between the school and parents. Apathy was also mentioned but in reference to the lack of involvement. Significantly, this lack was frequently cited as arising due to undefined roles for interaction among parents, students and teachers. People wanted more interaction, and for that action to be well defined and to render meaningful results for the students and the participants.

Discipline issues arose quite frequently as a potential source of impediment. Participants often expressed a concern that current discipline guidelines were ineffectual. Students were often identified as being out of control or

They want students to be able to read at their grade level, write clearly, handle basic mathematics challenges, have basic technology skills and be able to speak effectively.

“unmanageable.” The rapid pace of life and the numerous distractions available to students was argued to cause a lack of focus and to generate a negative impact on student performance.

The quality of staff also emerged as an issue. Frequently the teaching staff was described as being inexperienced, poorly trained – particularly to identify children with special needs, and relative to the life conditions, culture, and experiences of urban, especially minority, children – and stuck in old and outdated processes. It was asserted that many teachers do not live in the districts where they teach and are both unfamiliar with and unable to relate to the school community.

In addition, teachers were depicted and being apathetic and/or resigned to being unable to “fight the politics within the school bureaucracy and/or collectively bargained practices” when it came to being innovative or creative.

Participants had some very basic desires for what they want from students when they complete their educations and were very specific in their suggestions. Most frequently topping the list was a desire that all students receive a well-rounded, quality education that met the needs of all students. They want students to be able to read at their grade level, write clearly, handle basic mathematics challenges, have basic technology skills and be able to speak effectively. Students should also have a desire to continue learning beyond their formal public school (k-12) education.

Students should also be happy, healthy and successful citizens of the community with self-confidence and the ability to form their own opinions. They should have a firm sense of community and responsibility with strong values, an acceptance

of diversity, and a positively focused integration into their community. Participants also stressed a need for students to have a sense of service and responsibility toward their community, an awareness of the community, a connection to the future, and a sense of others within the community.

They should also be prepared to succeed following their graduation from high school with knowledge of how to dress properly in situations such as job interviews, in the workplace, or social situations. A need for basic life skills including how to handle parenting and inter-personal relationships was also suggested. In addition, students should have a positive feeling toward their school and their high school experience.

Aspirations for our schools

While the discussion of the aspirations for our schools echoed the ideals of the community, participants were fairly specific when discussing what they wanted in their high schools. They wanted a challenging curriculum with innovation and creativity to capture and hold the student's attention.

Dedicated and qualified teachers who expose students to diverse topics that appeal to the interests of the students are essential. Also, it is important to do more than simple "teach to the test" in the hope students will pass mandated proficiency tests. Most respondents voiced dissatisfaction with the Ohio tests and it was suggested that students not be measured on a standard scale but to move the schools to more of a "narrative" grading system.

High schools should be safe and secure places that interact more closely with the community, opening their doors for programs for all students such as enlisting high school students to tutor younger students, creating mentoring programs with local businesses, and sports and other activities.

High schools should be safe and secure places that interact more closely with the community, opening their doors for programs for all students such as enlisting high school students to tutor younger students, creating mentoring programs with local businesses, and sports and other activities for all students. Participants also suggested there should be less focus on sports and more on preparing students for life after high school.

Cultural programs in the schools should promote diversity by helping people understand the socio-economic challenges faced by many residents in the district. Language programs for non-English speaking parents and children, as well as multi-lingual support for teachers and staff, would bring the community and schools closer together in areas where language differences make communication difficult. Participants also noted that other non-academic programs for students and their families such as health and fitness programs or picnics or other social activities could also help bridge the gap between schools and the community.

Teachers should become part of the student's life and serve as a role model by dressing appropriately and showing an enthusiasm for their profession as a method for gaining the respect of their students. The respondents argued that the overall quality of the teaching staff should increase. While teachers should be given flexibility and autonomy, they should also be held accountable and be provided with strong leadership that many said they felt was lacking. In addition, teachers should work on improving their communication and culturally appropriate, social interaction with the community, as well as serve as a representative of the school. At the worst, some people described teacher's interactions as intimidating and/or arrogant toward parents.

...preparing students for life by providing them with a quality education in a safe environment with good communication between school and community was the absolute minimum the schools should strive to achieve.

Nearly all the respondents thought all these aspirations for the schools were possible. However, they indicated a belief that preparing students for life by providing them with a quality education in a safe environment with good communication between school and community was the absolute minimum the schools should strive to achieve.

What Is Going Right?

Overall, people tend to believe that the schools are doing well for those students who exhibit the ability to excel in the current environment and that each school has had its share of successful students. They also see the beginnings of innovation and a general desire to do a better job. To some extent, the schools are viewed as being open to parents and community organizations and that sports programs provide somewhat of a connection between the schools and the community. Perhaps significantly, few programs other than sports were indicated as providing a welcome venue for parents & community members to interact with students and faculty.

Where Can We Improve?

Many participants criticized administrators and teachers as being uncaring and deaf to the concerns of the community. They view the school system – teachers, administrators, union officials, board, and staff – as an entrenched and unresponsive bureaucracy that is resistant to change. They believe that the schools focus on controlling students rather than motivating them. Interestingly, despite this focus on control, discipline is seen as being ineffective and inconsistent. Thus even in the area where most structural and procedural focus is believed to be oriented; there is a belief that the school is not “successful” in this endeavor. There is poor communication between stakeholders and the positive achievements and accomplishments that exist often go unheralded. They are viewed as exceptions to the rule and as victories despite the institutional pressures, rather than because of the institutional operations.

Respondents believe that little attention is paid to the language and cultural barriers that exist between and among the various stakeholders.

Students are left feeling powerless according to participants. It is widely believed that students often receive poor academic and career advice from the faculty and staff – leaving students with poor preparation and unrealistic expectations relative to their preparation. Forced to work in facilities that are overcrowded and poorly maintained, teachers and school administrators are faced with the challenge of doing more with a shrinking pool of resources. Significantly, parents and community members do see themselves as a roadblock by desiring that the schools be “the schools of the past” which can hinder change and innovation. They do not simply blame others.

Discussion On Small Schools – One Possible Step Toward Improvement

Positive Factors

As the topic of discussion moved toward the subject of small schools, people indicated a variety of impressions – most positive and optimistic. A majority said they suspected smaller schools would be proud, safe and self-sufficient. Students would be a close-knit community and exhibit better behavior so the schools would be under better control.

On the positive side, communication among students, parents, teachers and administrators would improve and the schools would be more personalized and focused. Better communication would lead to more community interaction and accountability. Parental involvement would increase and teachers and staff would cease to intimidate parents.

In more than one instance, respondents said when they thought of small schools, they were reminded of Hogwart’s School from the popular *Harry Potter* book series.

Still others suggested that small amenities, such as the quality of the food served to students, would improve and in so doing, create a better learning environment for students. In more than one instance, respondents said when they thought of small schools, they were reminded of Hogwart’s School from the popular *Harry Potter* book series. Smaller schools are thought to provide more personal attention resulting in better performance from the students and a better-coordinated use of services.

Negative Factors

Not everyone was totally supportive of a possible move to smaller learning environments. A few people were concerned the smaller schools would be a sheltered environment and would not adequately prepare students for the “real world.” Roughly twenty-five percent indicated they were reminded of rural schools and feared they might be too small to function effectively in an urban

environment. A smaller number thought they might be overcrowded, expensive with larger operating budgets, have limited offerings and choices, be ‘snotty,’ and boring.

Others feared that TPS would continue to work in a vacuum in creating smaller schools. Without proper feedback, on-going evaluation and complete implementation, the experiment would fail. The schools, they suggested, are

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likely to remain proficiency test focused and not concentrate on providing a quality, well-rounded education. Some suggested that teachers and administrators would not be properly prepared to teach and operate smaller schools and that parents, students and other stakeholders would not be adequately briefed on the new schools prior to attending them.

Financing smaller schools was also a concern with some people worrying that there would be insufficient resources to properly fund the schools; that property taxes would increase and that “economies of scale” within the current system would be lost. Staffing issues were also seen as a potential problem and several people voiced apprehension regarding the options and variety of the courses that would be available. Others worried that smaller schools might lead to less diversity among students and faculty.

Many expressed questions regarding potential losses of large school extra-curricular activities such as band, drama and sports. They also feared that the school-within-a-school concept could divide the students and create stronger cliques than currently exist. It was also suggested that having some of the overall district’s schools utilizing a small school design while others did not could possibly divide the community as well.

Overall Support

Most people seemed to favor the concept although nearly all participants expressed a desire to learn more about small schools from people who have been more directly involved in setting up and running similar programs. *At nearly every session, it was suggested that TPS bring in small school experts to explain how the program works, what is required from the community, what it means to students, parents and teachers, how quickly the programs can be implemented and how it can have a positive impact in a systems where the rules remain the same.*

The Ongoing Community-Engagement Process

Focus group attendees thought a wide range of stakeholders should be involved in the process including, but not limited to, teachers, parents, students, senior

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citizens, members of the business community, law enforcement and the clergy. Of course, our various meetings collectively brought together people from all these backgrounds, but there was no single meeting with all the various types of stakeholders that one could identify, in a single room. It is important to note however, that suspicion was raised when asked who should keep the various stakeholders informed about the process. Most people voiced distrust regarding any information coming from the TPS upper administration. Information from elected officials and the media was also suspect.

On the other hand, neutral observers from the local universities (such as those involved in this study) were thought to be trusted sources of information. Other suggestions included a team of stakeholders involved in the process, parent groups, teachers or students could be believed; an insight consistent with the efforts of the Center of Strength concept and supported by both of the university institutions involved in this effort.

The Public Engagement & Small Learning Environments Survey

The Public Engagement & Small Learning Environments Survey was developed by the Center of Strength consultants, and based on questions suggested in the *Public Engagement and Small High Schools* conversation workbook published by the Harwood Institute. Selection of word themes for use in the range of responses used in this survey for ranking purposes was determined by evaluation of key words from the first five focus sessions held by the CITE-UAC team.

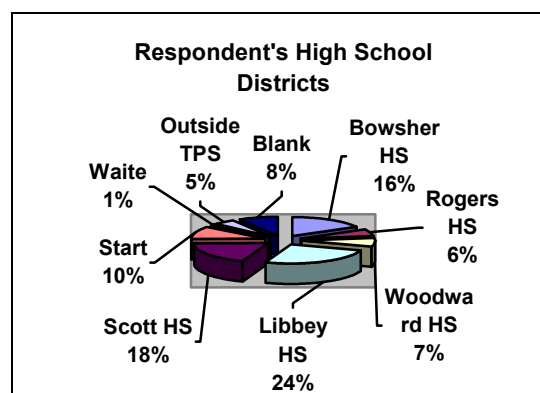
The survey was conducted in an effort to reach a larger audience than was possible through the focus group sessions. Often residents have opinions but not the time to attend a 2 to 3 hour focus session, or lack effective transportation to locations of focus group meetings.

The survey was made available “on-line” through the Urban Affairs Center website and by hard copy upon request. Responses were fairly even in their choice of media. Respondents were first approached by email and then by a reminder email. The original and the reminder email explaining the survey purpose was sent to over 800 mailboxes through the Regional Network, CATNeT

and the University of Toledo listservs. Other listservs, such as Black Data Processors Association, picked up and forward the notice to their membership. Paper copies with UAC addressed and stamped envelopes were distributed at monthly CATNeT meetings, focus group meetings, and Libbey High School. Eighty-eight surveys were returned.

Respondent Demographics

Of the 88 respondents 70 percent live within one of the five high school districts in the focus area. Libbey's district contained the most at 24% of total respondents. Respondents from districts outside the focus area formed the second highest response rate (22%); these consisted of Start HS (10.2%), Sylvania (3.4%), Waite (1.1%) and Oregon (1.1%). The least percentage of responses is from Rogers (5.7%), with Woodward close at 6.8%. Bowsher accounts for almost 16% of the responses and Scott 10%.



Thirty-one percent of respondents have lived in their current home for 1 to 5 years, while 17% have lived in their current home for 6 to 10 years. Approximately 3 percent have lived in their home for less than one year.

Close to 48 percent of respondents are white, while 32 percent are African Americans and 8 percent are Hispanic or Latino. Twelve percent did not respond to the question concerning ethnic background. Close to 16 percent also did not respond to the question concerning age. The age most represented is the 35 to 54 at close to 41 percent, with the 55 to 64 cohort close behind at 33 percent.

Survey Responses

In ranking the importance of several key themes that emerged from the first focus sessions on the kind of community one would like to live in, Safe scored far above the others with a rating of 409. Communication was second (355), followed by welcoming (334), and locally controlled (317). Citizenship scored lowest with 311. Key words identified by respondents in the other choice were "clean environment" and "culturally diverse".

Safety (397) was also the first choice of respondents when ranking what they think is most important in a public school system; followed by critical thinking (377), lifelong learning (370), student self expression (321) and, lastly, community center (311). Other drew interesting comments whose key words

include accessibility, quality administration and teachers, accountability, cultural diversity.

When asked to rank challenges to getting the kind of public schools the respondents identified in the above question, choices were fairly evenly distributed. Ranking the responses is difficult, because there is no real statistical difference. Respondents felt the quality of staff/teachers (352), discipline (351), money (350), apathy (348) and communication (337) could all be challenges in moving toward the kind of schools they would like to see. In responses where they chose other; parental involvement, fiscal accountability and trust were key themes that emerged.

Providing a quality education and preparing students for life were ranked the highest as the qualities the respondents would like to see in high schools.

Respondents were also asked to rank skills of graduating high school seniors that are most important to young people. Communication (372) and critical thinking (371) scored the highest followed by strong values (358), lifelong learning (356), math (348) and technology (335). Other skills identified include creativity, teamwork, tolerance of others, economic and social skills.

Providing a quality education (395) and preparing students for life (389) were ranked the highest as the qualities the respondents would like to see in high schools. Safe (381) was a close third, followed by low student/teacher ratio (332), diversity (329) and, finally, interactive with community (319), which scored almost 90 points below the highest ranked quality. Other qualities identified include accessibility, welcoming, caring teachers and college bound opportunities.

Questions 5 and 6 in the survey are open-ended questions, intended to gather key ideas from the respondents. Answers are not ranked in any specific order, the feeling being that the themes that emerge deserve equal consideration.

Question 5 was in two parts: the first, what is going well in Toledo public high schools; the second, what challenges do Toledo public high schools face. Key themes that emerged in response to the first question, what is going well, include:

- not much or nothing
- diversity
- honors programs/advance placement classes
- good teachers and students
- Option 4 program for students with disabilities
- extra curricular activities, sports and so on
- students learning

Key themes that emerged in response to the second question, what challenges do they face, include:

- political/financial problems
- apathy among administration, teachers, students and community
- discipline
- drop out rate, teen pregnancy
- lack of quality teachers
- poor communication between parents and school
- lack of parental involvement
- peer pressure
- lack of applying current research on students and learning
- lack of quality education materials
- over crowding
- truancy
- academic performance

In questions 6, respondents were asked to assume that instead of our current large high schools of 1200 to 2000 students that we have high schools with only 400 students. Then, first, list some of the positive possibilities; and, second, list some of the trade-offs.

Key words from responses to the first question, list some of the positive possibilities, include:

- better education
- increased individual attention
- more intimate setting for parents, teachers, and students
- greater flexibility in curriculum
- safer, friendlier atmosphere; students feeling connected
- less gang activity; controlled behavior
- easier to develop community and interaction
- accelerated learning
- personalized instruction
- higher test scores
- opportunity for creativity and expression
- less apathy
- cohesion among students
- less peer pressure
- more focus on learning/teaching, less on discipline

Key words from responses on the second question, list some of the trades-offs, include:

- jobs
- cost, time, money, resources
- limited curriculum
- lack of diversity
- may cut extra curricular activities

- longer bus rides
- requires more qualified staff
- duplication of services

By far, the two highest rated responses to the question: “Who should be involved in the planning and decision-making about smaller high schools in Toledo?” were parents (80), and teachers and students (75). Third choice was administration (56), then taxpayers (55), local colleges (41), students (40), community organizations (35), recent alumni (34), businesses (26), religious leaders (21) and senior citizens (20).

Parents (44), teachers and students (44) and neutral observers, i.e. UT, BGSU (43) were all first choices for the question: “Who else should be included in the discussion concerning small high school learning environments?” Taxpayers (36) and administration (36) were second, then students (31), community organizations (28), local colleges (25), businesses (23), recent alumni (21), and senior citizens (20). Other comments included neutral observers outside the region, anyone living and working in the district, and “anyone interested”.

Finally, the question, “Are there any other comments you would like to make about small high school learning environments?” brought many responses. Some are negative, but most are very positive. As in question 5 and 6 responses are listed here with no regard to ranking. One is considered to be just as important as the next response.

There is concern over: higher taxes; size being not as important as the quality of personnel or as important as a student’s respect for parents and teachers; small high schools not having room for specialized teachers; lose of diversity; a bussing nightmare; support services for special education students.

But, a majority of respondents feel that: collaboration among various stakeholders will help; it is a good idea; a plus in the education process; the benefits of this are extremely positive; smaller classes make sense; it will foster a friendlier, safer learning environment; it may be the only way to move TPS forward; it might be better for students in special education by allowing them to be a visible part of their school.

Conclusions

The primary concentration of this portion of the project was the community engagement component and interaction with respondents. The survey data confirm the findings from the focus sessions. The answers to the survey echo issues that emerged in the focus groups with various members of the community. Issues and concerns can be seen as universal, validating the overall findings.

By and large, people indicated a strong desire to investigate alternative solutions for their troubled schools. Some went as far as suggesting that “anything” is

better than what is currently being done. Few people placed blame entirely on the schools, the teachers or the administrators and indicated they thought the community's lack of involvement deserved at least part of the blame for declining quality. Still, most expressed concern that they were unwelcome in the schools and, while interested in helping, they were discouraged from genuine participation.

A significant majority expressed belief in the schools' desire to improve; but also understood that a number of outside influences hinder improvement. They did

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acknowledge the gradual progress being made in proficiency scores and the innovative new programs at a few schools. Nevertheless, they also expressed a belief that more could be done.

Both teachers and students should be given more choices and autonomy. Students become bored with classes that have no relevance to them and teachers grow to be complacent in their approach to teaching. Methods for keeping both teachers and students engaged were a common concern. Greater variety in the curriculum was seen as one possible solution.

The lack of communication between the schools and the community was a frequent theme as well. Small learning environments were identified as a possible way of bridging the gap between students, teachers and parents. Smaller classes and more intimate surroundings were considered a way to bring the children and their families into better contact with teachers and school staff. More interaction and increased participation in the schools should build tighter bonds and stronger relationships.

In addition to the expressed need for increased communication between the schools and the community is the need for further knowledge regarding small schools and small learning environments. More information is needed so the community can fully understand the changes that will take place and what it means to students and their families. Small schools experts and school personnel who have been through the implementation of new schools should be invited to meet with concerned members of the community to talk about the process.

It can safely be concluded from the data that the community will support a move toward smaller schools and learning environments. While attendance at the engagement sessions could have been higher, the responses from attendees show strong commitment to change and a desire to be an active participant in the process. This sentiment is confirmed in the survey data.

Residents in the community indicated a strong desire to take an active and participatory role in improving the quality of Toledo's schools. They seem to realize that the schools are an important part of their community and have a powerful impact on the community as a whole. The quality of the schools is reflected in the quality of life in the neighborhoods surrounding the schools therefore, schools and community cannot survive in isolation from one another.

While attendance at the engagement sessions could have been higher, the responses from attendees show strong commitment to change and a desire to be an active participant in the process.

Ongoing interaction between the schools and the community is essential for the success of any school reform. Outreach programs conducted by the schools themselves are seen by the community as token efforts to involve parents and others interested in school issues. The focus groups clearly showed that the community distrusts information distributed through the school and the administration. Outside sources such as representatives of the region's universities or independent citizen panels should be given the responsibility of reconnecting the schools and the community.

Ultimately, school reform, particularly a transition to smaller learning environments, could work in Toledo. The schools involved in the Ohio High School Transformation Initiative have shown they are dedicated to the process and have worked diligently in an effort to build a quality plan for implementation. The public is also in support of the concept but continued interaction between the schools and the community is essential for people to understand the changes that will take place and their role in those changes. Building the bridge between the community and the schools will be a difficult task however, with both sides working together; strong bonds can still be built.

Appendix A

Participating Centers and Organizations

- Adelante
- Aurora Gonzales Community & Family Resource Center
- Collingwood Arts Center
- Grace Community Center
- Indiana Missionary Baptist Church
- J. Frank Troy Senior Center
- New Covenant Evangelical Ministries
- North River Development
- Organized Neighbors Yielding eXcellence (ONYX)
- Parents for Public Schools
- Smart Growth Partnership

Participating Parent Organizations

- Bowsher High School Parents
- Rogers High School Parents
- Woodward High School Parents

Appendix B

Public Engagement & Small Learning Environments Survey

1. Rank the following according to what is least/most important in the kind of community you would like to live in.

- Keeping our teachers
- Multi-racial
- Neat, clean, homes well kept
- Accessible to people with disabilities
- Accessible to people with disabilities
- Accessible with equal opportunity for all
- Appearance
- Attractive appearance and clean
- Availability of stores, libraries, etc. to pedestrians, mass transit
- Clean
- Clean environment
- Clean with a pleasant atmosphere conducive to learning
- Diverse
- Diversity, acceptance and tolerance
- Integrated multi-cultural environment
- Quality of schools and community natural resources (parks, etc.)
- Technologically superior

Choice	Score	Average
Safe	409	4.7
Locally controlled	317	3.7
Citizenship	311	3.6
Communication	355	4.1
Welcoming	334	3.9
Other:	92	4.0

2. Rank the following according to what you think is least/most important in a public school system.

- Excellent educational standards
- Quality teachers
- Teachers
- Accessible to students/people with disabilities
- Accountability by students/parents and teachers
- All schools accessible to students with disabilities
- Be creative in problem solving, less fear of trying new ideas
- Clean
- Control of education not be removed from public
- Cultural diversity
- Curriculum that provides better understanding of business and economics
- Diverse
- Interdependence (on one another/tolerance/social skills)

Choice	Score	Average
Safety	397	4.7
Student self-expression	321	3.7
Critical thinking	377	4.3
Lifelong learning	370	4.3
Community center	311	3.6
Other	97	4.4

- Physical and program access for all, equal opportunity for all to participate in ALL aspects of the school community
- Qualified, competent, innovative administration and teachers
- Quality education-developing skills to compete academically & socially
- Teach student for life!
- Treat others as you would want them to treat you!
- Well behaved, respectful students

3. Rank the following according to what you consider to be the least/greatest challenges to getting the kind of public schools you want.

- Enforcement of procedures/rules
- Wrong values
- Allowing Christian morals and ethics back into school!
- Community involvement
- Creative vision, community cooperation
- Fiscal accountability
- Identifying and dismissing the non-productive and ineffective staff and teachers
- Ignorance/lack of education about what it takes to achieve these criteria and the criteria mentioned in “other” in the previous question
- Many schools are not accessible to people with disabilities
- Materials used in classrooms are not current enough
- Money management
- Nobody wants to be accountable
- Parent involvement and accountability
- Parental involvement
- Parental involvement
- PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IS KEY
- Quality curricula
- QUALITY parental involvement and engagement
- The Toledo education industry gaining the trust of the community

Choice	Score	Average
Discipline	351	4.1
Communication	337	4.0
Money	350	4.1
Apathy	348	4.0
Quality of staff/teachers	352	4.2
Other	105	4.6

4. Rank the following according to what skills are least/most important to young people when they leave school

- Confidence in education Received
- A sense of a “greater good”; volunteerism, philanthropy, compassion
- Being able to read and science knowledge/process skills
- Being understanding of people with disabilities
- Creative skills
- Decision making skills
- Diversity
- Greater understanding of the economic system they live under
- History

Choice	Score	Average
Math skills	348	4.1
Technology skills	335	4.0
Lifelong learning skills	356	4.4
Communication skills	372	4.5
Strong values	358	4.2
Critical thinking skills	371	4.4
Other	86	4.3

- Pride in their school and community
- Science, if not considered technology, above
- Social skills, ability to inner act in a healthy way
- Team work skills
- Understanding, acceptance and willingness to include others regardless of race, religion or disability—it starts with educators and the example they set in the school (as well as with parents at home!)

5. Rank the following according to what are least/most important qualities you'd like to see in high schools in particular.

- Comfort and friendliness
- Need less students in class, so teacher student can work 1-1
- Accessible to students with disabilities in all areas
- Parent involvement and accountability
- Promote a sense of belonging
- Promote going on to college at every opportunity
- Teacher/student low ratio in ALL classes, not just mean
- Teachers that care about students
- The Arts
- Welcoming to students, valuing diversity, instead of “dismissing” students with behavior issues greater emphasis will be put on identifying the real root of the problem!

Choice	Score	Average
Interactive with community	319	3.8
Safe	381	4.5
Diversity	329	3.9
Provide quality education	395	4.7
Prepare students for life	389	4.5
Low student/teacher ratio	332	4.0
Other	63	4.2

6. When you think of public high schools in Toledo:

a. What is going well?

- not much
- skills level & professionalism of teaching staff
- Nothing, they are failing our children.
- Quality specialized Courses
- They try to make students ready for the world
- a small core of active parents
- Administration seeking interaction with public
- Communication with the City of Toledo and TPS
- Community & Church Participation
- disciplined
- Diverse opportunities for all levels of students
- diversity
- Diversity
- diversity of most schools
- Don't have any information to judge
- extra curricular, advance placement classes

- Focus on what the entire community can do.
- Honestly, very little - nothing in particular stands out
- honors programs for hard working students
- I believe there are a lot of good teachers and students
- improving test scores, decreasing pregnancy in teens
- Increasing emphasis on what is right with high school students and their educational experiences
- Learning
- Less Crime
- my experience with libbey staff was not positive, apathetic personnel
- No idea
- Not much
- Not Much
- Not much comes to mind
- not much need for improvement
- nothing
- Nothing
- nothing
- nothing
- Option 4 Program for students with disabilities does a fine job preparing them for employment
- Parent involvement is better
- Quality education is being provided
- scholarships sports
- showing improvement, it isn't going to happen overnight and they are showing some progress
- some excellent teachers, language programs
- Some students are able to achieve in spite of the system
- some students succeed, many people are trying to improve it
- sports
- sports! Too much emphasis on sports and not enough on academics.
- Start HS
- Student participation in extra-curricular activities
- students Learning
- Success stories do not receive the press like the failures
- Teachers do care and are concerned with overall improvements.
- The effort to strengthen the community -TPS relationship
- the passage of a levy for future building
- the test scores
- They are located in a great city, with many community resources & learning centers, and they are still (barely) managing to convince the city to pass their levies.
- they are maintaining, i wouldn't say well
- TPS is seeking teachers certified in important areas
- truancy no tolerance

- Very little
- Violence has not been too bad.
- wide range of opportunities for interested students, many dedicated teachers
- You're doing a fine job of hiking my property taxes beyond my financial abilities.

b. What challenges do they face?

- not enough money.
- Improving Quality of Education
- money, salaries, benefits, facilities
- Peer Pressure
- Political/ Financial Problems
- \$\$ apathy, not enough parent involvement
- Apathy among administration and teachers
- Apathy, lack of parental participation, critical and life long thinking/skill deficits.
- Apathy. People will complain but seldom get involved for positive change.
- Attracting teachers that can make a difference, Getting parents to get involved in their children's education
- being competitive
- better educated students to face a changing world
- certainly the economic support from the State is critical
- Control of school system by the teachers - should be the community
- discipline
- Discipline and large number of students in schools. Being able to work closely with students who need help so they don't fall through the cracks.
- discipline problems prohibit the education of all students
- discipline problems, apathy of students and parents, lack of knowledge that should be obtained in lower level
- Discipline, apathy for parents
- discipline/good teachers/ parental involvement
- drop out, teen pregnancy
- Education
- Educators that are driven by a union instead of best practices, poor communication between parents and school (applies in both directions!)
- everyday life, what they want from themselves and what they want out of life
- financial cut-backs will make every aspect of education harder
- gang attitudes, lack of respect for each other and teachers, anti social behavior
- Getting the public to be supportive
- growing number of students, low funding, teacher and parent apathy!
- inadequate facilities, poverty, apathetic administrators
- just about everything
- keeping the budget control
- Lack of discipline throughout school and family has led to some chaos
- Lack of parental involvement
- Lack of parental involvement; overly bureaucratic service-delivery system; tenuous

relationship with the Union; and clearly our “emergency” standing with the State, amongst many other challenges - many environmental in nature, some not.

- lack of parental involvement; poor buy-in from community; private schools; \$; unions
- lack to teachers and classroom space & safety
- life long learned/ job readiness
- Meeting the educational needs of a student population with such a diverse economic/social background.
- Money and misunderstanding between various factions
- money problems
- money problems
- money, apathy, students with many impediments and personal burdens, disinterested parents
- Money, Quality of Education
- Most teachers still are lecturing; schools are not applying current research --especially on brain research-the way students learn (just one example)
- not enough challenges academically
- not enough money
- not enough money, not enough discipline
- Parent/Student involvement
- peer pressure
- peer pressure (fitting in)
- Poor staff and volunteer leadership, community apathy
- preparing students for life
- proficiency tests, math and reading skills, technology for workforce
- Providing a excellent education with the resources they have
- Providing a quality and meaningful education
- Putting the need for education before the perceived need to entertain.
- qualified teachers who can help African American children learn to read and classroom management
- Quality education materials, Better teachers
- Quality instruction and quality results
- quality of teachers, integrity of students
- quality teachers, union road blocks
- safety, over crowded, updated books and equipment
- Student apathy, home environments not supportive of learning
- Student Attention
- support from the community
- teaching youth
- The teacher's union and an acceptance of mediocrity
- Toledo High Schools need some sort of qualitative replacement for proficiency tests, perhaps portfolios
- too little discipline
- Too little time to actually teach students
- truancy issues, academic performance

7. Now assume that instead of our current large high schools of 1200 to 2000 students that we have high schools with only 400 students.
 - a. List some of the positive possibilities:
 - 1. more personalized instruction
 - 2. get to know the background of students.
 - Better Education
 - Better teachers/student ratio, safer, cleaner, less disciplinary problems and much more.
 - Longer Teaching one on one
 - more one on one teachers/ students learning
 - Teachers will be able to do more one on one with students.
 - increased individual attention to individual needs.
a better learning environment.
increased sense of community.
 - well if you have a lot of teachers, then the students can learn well.
 - "Shakey" students might not be as able to "hide", and teachers might not be as able to overlook or dismiss them.
 - A more intimate setting for parents, teachers, and students to get involved in the school. Less chance of getting lost in the shuffle. More personal attention is possible. Maintaining a safe environment would be easier.
 - ability to work with students at different levels
 - attention to student needs; greater flexibility in curriculum; hopefully this would mean smaller class size also?
 - Better ability to manage and empower student accountability, academic progress, activities and encourage parental involvement.
 - Better community, more opportunities to contribute in extra-curricular activities, safer, friendlier atmosphere for students and families.
 - Better interaction with teachers Less gang activity
 - better learning littler classrooms
 - better student teacher ratios, smaller classes allowing more inquiry-based pedagogy, more personal attention
 - Better teacher-student interaction More time for teachers to interact with parents
Students feeling safe and connected
 - better trained students with more individualized attention
 - Closer and better relationships between students and teachers. More accountability for everyone (from custodians to students) at a particular location.
 - Coming from a large school and interacting with people from small schools, I do not see much of a difference. The quality of the education and teachers are more important than size.
 - Community oriented, young adults will have a better chance of being notice and not getting lost in a large group.
 - Curriculum could be established that better fits the economic/social background of the population. It is much easier to establish curriculum to fit 400 students as opposed to 1200-2000 students. There is a big difference between the needs of a kid who lives in poverty versus the kids who live in a \$200,000.00 home next to Heatherdowns Country Club. Smaller more centrally located schools would be able to address their different needs while providing both with the quality education they both need.
 - Easier to develop community and inner action. Safer, less people to deal with.
Smaller classes, more one on one with the teacher. Would be able to have more local

schools so children won't have to go so far to get to a central high school.

- Economies of scale with facilities (pools, football fields, equipment, etc.)
- education, jobs and training
- effective block scheduling that prepares student for the collegiate environment. Personal attention for students. Better utilization of limited resources.
- great idea, how would this help students improve academically
- hopefully smaller class size, which might result in accelerated learning & more personalized instruction; socialization would definitely be affected, but could be both a good & bad thing.
- I don't think the size of the school makes any difference. It is the quality that is important
- individual attention, identification /addressing of social problems that students have. They can't always learn D/T some of the conditions they live with
- Low student teacher ratio, higher test scores
- lower student/teacher ratio,
- Lower student/teacher ratio, better learning opportunity
- more attention/help from teacher. fewer gangs/bullies
- more attention; ability to channel in on individual gifts; more opportunity for creativity and expression; better preparation
- more direct instruction, controlled behavior
- more educated and less stress and less violent
- More identification of and attention to individual needs and identification of and emphasis on strengths, opportunity for personal involvement with students which might address some of the "family" issues which coincide with school-related problems.
- More individual attention, better time spent on reading, math, etc. rather than babysitting and discipline.
- More interaction between students and teachers

- More interaction between students and teachers.
- More one on one for children who need more opportunities for personal growth and personal/ individual gifts to show.
- More personalized attention
Teachers being able to get to know students better
- More spending on intramural activities instead of focusing on individual students and their needs. I hate to sound so negative, but I grew up in the Toledo Public School system and it has MAJORLY declined since the 70s.
- More student-teacher interaction
- More uniquely structured curricula in each school; School could focus on one type - arts school, math and science school
- None
- not necessary need more parent involvement
- One-on-one interaction which is critical. Less apathy among children and teachers. Higher concentration on purpose of being in school vs. surviving school.
- Personal attention improved
- personalized instruction, better access to facilities and equipment
- possibly more individualized attention for students
- Principal and teachers would be able to interact with the students more. Students would know each other better.

- relationships with students stronger
- Smaller Class Size, Increased personal attention, Decreased emphasis on sports.
- smaller class sizes, more involved staff, better quality of education, more cohesion amongst students
- Smaller class sizes, not as much peer pressure in the classroom allow students to interact with the teacher and not think that whatever they say is dumb and that they will look like a fool if they answer questions. It will give students a feeling of a safe environment.
- smaller classes for better students/teacher communication, easier to fit in
- smaller classroom, ideal opportunity for leaning, more money for equipment and books, more time spent on classroom teaching than disciplining students, closer teacher/student relationships, better variety of classes, higher pay for teachers
- smaller student to teacher ratios! more individual attention
- student teacher ratio, one-on-one attention
- student/teacher ratio, easier to control students
- students know each other. teachers know the students. More concern and focus on student learning, less needed on discipline. Better chance for students to successfully participate in extra-curricular activities. A much better learning environment since there would be fewer distractions.
- students learn better with less distractions
- students not as apt to get lost in the crowd
- Teachers will get to know students one on one, know students diverse needs and how to meet these needs; students, teachers and staff will have greater psychological sense of community/belonging; educational materials will be more available.
- There will be more student and teacher involvement and interaction. I think that diversity can be looked at.
- We are losing kids "through the cracks". We live in a "good" neighborhood, our children our good citizens, no one has taken an interest in them. A very large percentage are dropping out, taking their GED and missing out on their high school years
- While smaller classes and schools may not lead to more attention from the teacher, it may encourage students to become more involved with each other. Smaller groups tend bond more cohesively.

b. List some of the trade-offs (56 responded):

- Jobs
- less extra-curricular and sport programs. less money
- cost effectiveness
- - Cost
- -Time
- -Money
- more teachers - more salaries to pay. More buildings - more bills to pay.
- you'd have to build more schools & we don't have enough money tax wise.
- \$\$
- Additional buildings would be required which entails more money for building and maintaining property. More staffing required for maintenance and tracking problems (snow removal, etc.)
- can't think of any
- Can't think of any as of now....

- cost of buildings and staff to operate
- Cost of more administration and personnel.
- Cost of the small schools, ability to field athletic teams
- Cost prohibitive
- Cost; Teachers having less work - doesn't necessarily mean they will all work that much harder to make a positive impact on students
- Curriculum may be more limiting, flexibility is lost
- diversity may lack; financial responsibility may be too great;
- Expense of duplication of services; transportation would be a nightmare; what would this do to sports programs?
- funding would be high
- higher cost, potentially a more narrow offering of courses
- Higher costs

- Hopefully more individualized attention and less feeling like "a number" for the students.
- I want "someone" to keep track of our children when they are in school; make sure that they understand their lessons and are willing to be there for our kids. Help them when they need help.
- It may cost more but would be well worth it. I see no other trade-offs.
- lack of interested and qualified students may eliminate some activities, including some athletics, less monies from fund-raising events
- Lack of resources - i.e. enough students to participate in certain events, etc.
- Larger staff, more costs involved
- lay offs from teachers, counselors
- logistically much more complex; costs; may need to limit or cut extracurricular activities that require a large student population, or combine with other schools
- Loss of some of things that require economies of scale such as science and language labs and music and arts programs
- low social development
- Money money money
- Money.
- More buildings need to be constructed, it can be harder to offer a wide variety of classes
- more one on one? more creative activities, more interactive programs to improve test scores
- need more card
- not enough students to justify some classes (drama, music?)
- not realistic with the job market. Students need to be ready to go into college.
- not the same ability to meet very different types of people
- One of the trade-offs will probably be longer bus rides for students. If the population is divided into smaller groups, some students are going to need to travel farther to find a school to accept them.
- Perhaps more costly. Will you have enough teachers for this? May affect sports but maybe that is not a bad thing.
- possibly lessening of an environment for learning i.e. all students maybe will not have access
- Requires more qualified staff and monies.

- Schools could not offer the large list of classes that they do now. This includes vocational training unless a high school would be set up for just that - example, Toledo Technology Academy.
- Small schools duplication of services
- Smaller classes might mean that few classes can be offered and some of the less popular like Russian could not be offered to all students or at all schools
- Smaller schools = more schools = more \$. Let's stop thinking that more \$ = quality. It does not.
- Smaller schools will probably be less diverse and cost the school system more money to run, taking money out of the classroom for computers and books.
- Space/logistics - costs - duplication of services. None insurmountable.
- Sports smaller pool to get top players.
- Teams not as good
- The students would be limited in the number of people with which to interact with.
- TOO COSTLY TO RUN; Students need the diversity of curricula and community; No need for small schools. Libbey is small and has very few students graduating. Limits the teacher expertise in each building

- Transportation, maintenance cost, loss of diversity
- wouldn't have as many different class opportunities; wouldn't have as many special interest clubs or groups; with proper direction students could be part of small, more specialized study clubs and groups

8. There is a planning process going on in Toledo to think about how smaller high school learning environments could be helpful in improving education.

a. Who should be involved in the decision-making about smaller high schools? (You may check more than one.)

- agencies working with people with disabilities
- basically no one should be eliminated because everyone is affected and most adults who would want to be involved in the decision are taxpayers
- City and County Government
- Janitorial services
- Outside leaders who have first-hand experience of "best practices" to share with this concept
- Residents

Choice	Responses
Students	40
Teachers & students	75
Parents	80
Administration	56
Senior citizens	20
Taxpayers	55
Businesses	26
Recent alumni	34
Local colleges	41
Religious leaders	21
Community organizations	35
Other	6

b. Who else should be included in the discussion concerning small high school learning environments? (You may check more than one)

- All people/organizations
- Any one living/working in a community where there's a high school
- Neutral observers outside the regional area and non-educational system participants
- NON-Local Colleges or other who have implemented this successfully in their communities
- Anyone interested should be included in the DISCUSSION part
- Owens Community College
- See comments above
- State administrators for funding opportunities
- UT and BGSU are not neutral-they have teaching colleges

Choice	Responses
Neutral observers, i.e. UT, BGSU	43
Students	31
Teachers & students	44
Parents	44
Administration	36
Senior citizens	20
Taxpayers	36
Businesses	23
Recent Alumni	22
Local colleges	25
Religious leaders	21
Community organizations	28
Other	8

9. Finally, are there any other comments about small high school learning environments you would like to make?

- as long as they put classes in them, to help our kids learn a trade.
- Keep up the good work!
- I feel that smaller schools will raise taxes.
- Collaboration among various stakeholders will help. How to get parents involved in their children's education is very important!
- Every child is different and must be taught at their level and not made to feel different if they are having trouble. Our teachers need to be able to teach "ALL" children.
- I am not in favor of them. The discipline problems, poor teaching, poor curricula will still exist in schools whether large or small. The size of the school is not as important as the quality of personnel and the size of the classrooms. Large schools with small size classrooms can provide an excellent learning environment. Teachers who are out-dated in their teaching methods, or are handicapped by having 30+ in a math class or English class, are unable to meet the needs of the students. Therefore, students fall through the cracks and get lost in the system. Smaller buildings do not prevent this, but rather school personal with smaller groups to monitor, can change this problem. Lastly, GET RID OF THE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS - especially those REPEAT offenders!!!!!!
- I believe discussions should be available to anyone that has an idea, but the ones making the decisions should be the people who are affected the most. There needs to be a balance between all involved.
Also, get the politics out of teaching. I personally know at least 10 teachers. It seems there are a lot of political games that are played within the school system. This interferes with a teacher's main job - to teach.
Contrary to popular opinion, I also believe teachers are paid well. It may start out on the low end, but where else can you work 75% of the year and make \$50K after 10 years or so.

Teachers should know the pay range when they decide to choose it as a profession. Just my \$.02.

- I honestly don't feel that smaller is better. I think learning hinges on the respect that the student has for the teacher. If the student is not taught respect from his parents, he will not have any for his teachers. If the teachers are not respectful of the students and their needs, or if they do not understand that in order to be respected, they must earn it---that it is not a "given"--- then regardless of the "size" of the school, there will not be success.
- I think it is a good idea.
- I think it will be a plus in the educating process
- I think it's an excellent idea.
- I think the benefits of this are extremely positive.
- I work at OCC and see some of the poor quality students that are graduating from TPS
- I would like to see any program implemented that will work. Smaller classes make sense!
- In hosting international students, smaller high schools provided a friendlier environment.
- It is easier to handle smaller groups than larger ones. The students might feel safer. But those who are left in the inner city must not be penalized by their location, economic status, etc. They already have enough problems.
- It may be the only way to move TPS forward, and to improve the quality of students and workers in our community.
- more computers means higher learning
- need better prepared teachers
- no
- no
- not in favor of the concept in cities
- Size matters, but not as much as quality of the product delivered
- small high school might not have room for specialized teachers (e.g., physics certified)
- Smaller environments shouldn't imply exclusion of certain students! Groups should still create a valuing of diversity, whether in thought, background or diversity!!!!!!
- The schools need to be more efficient before I am going to spend more money as a tax payer to support smaller class sizes.
Also, families who do not pay real estate taxes but are sending their children to public schools should have to pay something for the school systems!!!!
- While I can see the potential benefit of fewer kids per building, I also foresee a bureaucratic mess in trying to establish where new boundaries would be for each high school, funding would have to be stretched even farther, children in special education classes would still have to be bussed somewhere other than home school district in order to make a full unit just to get state funding, there is great benefit to special education students being able to remain in one building rather than having to adapt to a new environment every time regular education needs to use a classroom assigned to special ed - within a smaller community we would not have enough students to make a full unit under any of the various disability categories - that would work for me because then they could be included in regular classrooms & given accommodations as the law provides.
Smaller communities might also be better for students in special education by allowing them to actually be a visible part of their school, get to make friends, and participate in all school activities.
I attended school in Maryland, where I was part of a graduating class of over 700; the upcoming sophomore class had over 1200 students - they attended in 2 shifts. That experience wasn't bad in my opinion, but it did leave something to be desired in terms of feeling part of something. There were so many of us, the school was so big, transportation was an issue because we were spread out over a large area. While the areas in your scenario would be smaller than currently exist, we don't know yet what kind of provisions we

will make regarding who attends which school - what if the next school over offers something your home school does not? How will you get there? TARTA does not go everywhere. Another thing that concerns me is the support services provided to special education students - OT, PT, speech therapy, etc. Currently, therapists can be housed at most of the high schools. In this new scenario, therapists will have to travel, which means less instructional time per student who qualifies for those therapies. If we could get teachers & other staff to incorporate those therapies into the student's daily program, thus ensuring daily therapy, then loss of instructional time or direct service due to travel time might be offset by increased frequency of service.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

TPS High School District:

- City of Toledo resident, Sylvania School district
- Community advocate
- None
- Oregon schools
- Outside TPS

School District	Responses
Bowsher HS	15.9%
Rogers HS	5.7%
Woodward HS	6.8%
Libbey HS	23.9%
Scott HS	18.2%
Start	0.2%
Waite	1.1%
Sylvania	3.4%
Oregon	1.1%
(blank)	5.7%

Time at current address:

Time	Responses
Less than 1 year	3
1 to 5 years	27
6 to 10 years	15
10 to 20 yrs	10
20 + years	12
(blank)	21

Number of children in high school:

Children	Responses
0	41
1	9
2	4
(blank)	34

Do not attend public school.

	Responses
Check	11
(blank)	77

Check all that apply:

Grade Level	
Freshman	7
Sophomore	4
Junior	2
Senior	2
Graduated	9
(blank)	66

Number of children entering school in the next five years: 45

Age of respondent:

	Responses
Under 25 years	2
25 to 34 yrs	4
35 to 44 yrs	19
45 to 54 yrs	17
55 to 59 yrs	22
60 to 64 yrs	7
65 to 74 yrs	3
75 to 85 yrs	0
More than 85	0
No answer	13

Race/Ethnicity

	Responses
White	42
African American	28
AmerIndian	0
Asian	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	7
(blank)	6

Occupation:

Homemaker / school volunteer	1
Homemaker	4
Professional	3
retired	2
skilled labor	1
administrative assistant	3

Banking	2
Business	1
city of Toledo	1
Community Partner TPS.	1
Disability Rights Advocate	1
disabled	1
Education Consultant - previous TPS teacher	1
Information & referral, and parent-to-parent support (parents with children who have disabilities)	1
Management	5
Medical Insurance Specialist	1
Non-profit Executive	3
Process Expert	1
Professional Staff, the University of Toledo	4
professor	8
school administrator	2
Social worker	2
student	1
Technology Professional	5
(blank)	33
Total	55

Family Income:

	Responses
Less than \$25,000	14
\$25 to \$50,000	7
\$51 to \$75,000	28
More than \$75,000	17
(blank)	22

Organizations (Please list no more than five current organizational affiliations):

- Church & professional.
- The University of Toledo - Membership and Marketing Committee, Alumni Association board of Trustees, Member of SS Peter and Paul Catholic Church - Toledo, Ohio, Lady Rocket Fan Club
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., National Association for Campus Activities, National Association for Student Personnel Administrators, Coach, West Toledo Little Football League
- American Geophysical Union, Geological Society of America, American Association of University Professors
- Arc of Lucas County (developmental disabilities); Help Me Grow (birth to age 3 services; Cerebral Palsy Network; Family Information Network (parent-to-parent support & info); Lucas County Board of MRDD Self-Determination Project/Training
- Catholic church, neighborhood development group

- church
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Leadership Toledo
The Friendly Center
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics
Jennings Scholar
Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Greater Toledo Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- NSTA (National Science Teacher Association)
SECO (Science Education Council of Ohio)

- Numerous professional and board affiliations
- Ohio Academy of Science
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.
K.E.V.I.N.
St. Francis de Sales fundraising committee
Aspiring Minds of Toledo

- Ottawa Community Development Corporation, Ottawa Coalition, CDC Alliance, TASC,
Second Chance Prostitution Remediation Program
- PTO
- PTO
- Question not clear...
University of Toledo AAUP; UT's Association of Black Faculty & Staff; PTO--Bowsher; PTO--
Bryndale; Glendale Fielback Families

- St. Joe's Church Maumee, OARnet
- The Ability Center of Greater Toledo
- The Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo
- Various University groups; various professional groups (medical and pharmaceutical); St.
Pat's Heatherdowns Parish
Not sure I understood this question???
- Western Ave. Baptist Church. Dawn Projects. Northwest Ohio Baptist Association.
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc, All Saints Episcopal Church,

Appendix C

Center for Innovative and Transformative Education (CITE) Vision

The Center for Innovative and Transformative Education is a primary agent in constructing and facilitating collaborative efforts designed to address critical educational, social, and economic needs.

The Center for Innovative and Transformative Education (CITE) fosters fully reciprocal and mutually beneficial collaborations in public education and in broadly conceived interdisciplinary university study. CITE serves as a vehicle for bringing multiple constituencies together around issues of education and democratic participation in community life.

The Urban Affairs Center (UAC) Vision

Established in 1980, the UAC is an applied research unit of The University of Toledo and a member of the Ohio Urban University Program (UUP). Their mission is to enhance the vitality of and improve the quality of life in Northwest Ohio's urban region. To accomplish this, they apply the resources of The University of Toledo, network with other UUP members and collaborate with local, state, and national partners to help identify urban problems and propose solutions. Their methods include professional research, technical assistance, education, training, community service, outreach, database development, and the publication and distribution of research findings.