

Taos School Zone

Post-secondary/Career Cohort 2021 Meetings

SUMMARY

Areas of greatest interest to be addressed for youth after high school

- **Inspiration to feel and retain the joy of learning**

Receiving and maintaining the excitement of learning, for both students and educators is exquisitely important.

Ideally, students can:

- See themselves as learners, always hungry for learning more;
- Know their choices are limitless and they get to determine them, even if they have never seen others do it.

Ideally, educators are able to:

- Use the inventive teaching style inspired by student curiosity within the public school system so that teaching standards are met while focusing on what children want to know about;
- Be supported in doing the “fun stuff” in the classroom as a recognized means of teaching and learning, being provided the necessary tools and creative space;
- Explain concepts with real life examples, including how a subject that didn’t seem important in the past came to be very important later.

- **Addressing educator burnout and discouragement**

Burnout has been witnessed to create times when teachers made negative statements to students, indicating their lack of hope for that student’s success.

Preferably, the school system support teachers to:

- Receive positive, nurturing mentoring as a means of becoming able to excite their students about learning;
- Understand the impact of their words and actions on their students;
- Avoid passing negativity or pessimism along to the students, stating “Let’s not pass down the trauma.”
- Be allowed more flexibility in teaching styles and methods;
- Create a new intentional culture to communicate with youth.

- **Student preparation for the work world**

Students would benefit from being shown and understanding:

- From very young ages what happens in the work world;
- That it is possible to choose a career that they love so much it feels like they’re not working;
- How academic subjects are applied and useful in careers and jobs;
- A deeper level of language skills so that concepts are fully, not just partially, understood from listening and reading;

- That they can develop incremental skill sets on a job, leading to a professional career at the same company;
- How to line up where they want to be with the necessary steps and decision points to get there;
- That all professions are needed and are equally important;
- That they can live and work in Taos in a field of their choice.

Overall, students will benefit if:

- Educators, parents and the community recognize the importance of all professions, so that youth will not feel defeated if they choose not to attend college;
- Employers view mentoring a youth as a teaching and supporting experience, not just “free labor,” realizing the value of the time and money spent with a worker who can grow into higher levels of work;
- Students are trained in social emotional learning and antiracism/diversity/inclusion skills of communication, time management, collaboration, flexibility, tolerance, patience, and a sense of lifelong learning as a value.

- **Strengthen educational leadership via collaboration between districts**

A positive shift could take place by the community engaging in creating a vision of education that focuses on outcomes. The vision could emphasize graduates being well-prepared for their next educational and career steps and reduce emphasis on outputs such as test scores and grades.

All students would benefit from districts working collaboratively to create dynamic, new initiatives that benefit educators, students, families and the community.

- **Project Ideas**

- Professionals visit classrooms to answer questions the children are curious about
- A pod of adults from various professions could teach in elementary schools, using a prepared curriculum, for example, education, government, culinary arts, construction, or health care.
- Positive, imaginative children's books could be made widely available at schools, libraries, “free little libraries,” and the Imagination Library.
- Students of all ages could take a virtual job site visit via a video created locally and then shown in class.
- A trade class could make a job site visit as a field trip to see what a certain profession does.
- Dual credit students 18 years or older would be eligible to do job site visits in person.