

# Issaquah H.S. Student Focus Group Feedback

## Access

1. Need more class periods to access courses needed or wanted or for added flexibility.
2. Need more transportation opportunities (e.g., activity bus, NEVAC transport, to BCC).
3. Need more counselors or counseling time or structures to support personal and academic progress. Sometimes the counselors “scare us away” from hard classes. The career center is very helpful.
4. Access is a student’s choice.
5. Running Start and NEVAC increase access. More classes improve access.
6. Access to some advanced and support classes often requires selection or prerequisites (e.g., Homework Club).
7. Access to teachers and services is limited by after school activities and need for transportation. Students need time during the day to access teacher help or a home room period for support.
8. When students know teachers well it improves their access. The relationship helps with access.
9. Students need access to technology during the school day (e.g. computers made available during lunch break).
10. Access to relevant learning for non-college bound students is limited—fewer courses and transportation challenges to other programs.
11. There are not enough opportunities to practice or explore for the “real world” (e.g., job prep, clubs).
12. Students feel pressured to not only get into college but get into the “right” college.

## Connectivity

1. Enjoy social interaction with peers; school is the center of students’ community.
2. The structure of high school limits connection to real life and passions.

3. Students feel connected to teachers and counselors; hard to connect with counselors when so few serve so many students.
4. A.P. classes and sports foster connectivity; when students aren't involved in sports or clubs it is harder to be connected.
5. A home room period would aid connectivity.
6. Students find transition between schools difficult (i.e. middle to PCFC, then to H.S.)

## **Citizenship**

1. Citizenship happens everyday and is expressed as manners, courtesy, appropriate behavior in classes and with peers.
2. Can school require citizenship? Is school the right place to teach it?
3. Students aren't sure how to be involved citizens.
4. Students are interested in community service and explored the pros and cons of requiring it for graduation or tying it to courses versus having it be voluntary. Students want community service to be more than picking up trash along the highway; they want a variety of opportunities that are easily accessed and related to their interests. Students want community service to "mean something."

## **Resiliency**

1. Some teachers encourage students to take risks in academic classes without a great risk to their grades (e.g., dropping a test/paper, do-overs, assignments graded differently).
2. Many students are unwilling to or find it too difficult to take risks with their core classes; they are told some classes are "too hard" or they don't want to risk their GPAs.
3. Students are interested in understanding how to take "informed risks" in classes.
4. A home room period may help students deal with demands.
5. "If you are trying to change, others won't let you."

## **Expression**

1. Students want choices and want decision-making ability.
2. Some self-expression can be risky.

Need for a more relevant, hands-on curriculum for non-college bound students

# Issaquah H.S. Parent Focus Group Feedback

## Access

1. Students need choices for their particular path, including academic choices and school-to-work choices.
2. Students pursuing college path have most access at IHS.
3. Structures, schedules and class size affect access; students need a blend of structured and unstructured time to provide opportunity to meet with teachers and manage load. A later start time might be desirable.
4. Students need more access to counselors to improve both access and connectivity.
5. Some students—those “under the radar”—have limited access; some students, such as special education students, need access to classes, groups and activities “smoothed.”
6. Some parents would like a more developed curriculum night.
7. There is interest in P.E. waivers.
8. Middle school students would benefit from talking to high school students.

## Connectivity

1. Students feel connected to IHS; teachers and other adults are approachable and respected.
2. Parents would like a way to be connected to IHS appropriate to their role as parents of high schoolers; parents feel like an unused resource. Parents would like to know each other better to know more about who their children socialize with.
3. Some means to facilitate connection might be desirable (e.g., mentor program, home room/advisory). Link Crew is a good example of this.
4. Sports and other activities help students connect, but are not for everyone. Students need an “invitation” to connect, to join groups and find their places.

5. Connection to adults is vital; counseling load is too big. A parent “walk-about” service similar to that at the middle schools may be helpful. No student should feel invisible.
6. Many parents volunteer, such as those who lead Robotics Club.
7. Smaller class sizes facilitate connectivity.

## **Citizenship**

1. Opportunities to practice/learn citizenship are lacking right now.
2. More volunteer opportunities are needed; consider a community service requirement, such as at other schools.
3. Chiefly, citizenship is about giving back to the community.
4. IHS students can be mentors and serve at elementary schools, for example.

## **Resiliency**

1. VOICE mentors help promote resiliency.
2. When students at IHS struggle, they are supported.
3. Students experience too much stress about their GPAs.
4. School policies can be punitive.

## **Expression**

1. Expression is easier for students who are involved at IHS.
2. Students need more unstructured time for expression.
3. Problem-solving type projects would provide an intersection of all five of the OHSE belief statements.
4. PCFC has a community giving program that involves students; IHS could benefit from this model.
5. High school students have a hard time talking about their feelings.

# Issaquah H.S. Staff Focus Group Feedback

## **Access**

9. Teachers are available to students, but access could be improved (i.e., provide office hours).
10. Need to improve access to more and better information.
11. HIS has a culture of openness.
12. Students need options in their learning: if they are ready, students should be able to take classes they wish; broaden the options for non-college students.
13. Most students may have high levels of access to what they need, but “most doesn’t mean all.”
14. Schedule can be restrictive.
15. We should be teaching students advocacy skills.

## **Connectivity**

1. IHS provides a wide array of clubs, activities and sports that facilitate connectivity.
2. Smaller class size would facilitate connectivity.
3. School is a community—should be welcoming and supportive to facilitate connectivity.
4. Need to connect school learning to real life (e.g., project-based learning, technical writing)
5. Need to connect with students who are struggling, not college-bound

## **Citizenship**

1. Citizenship is connecting with the community, providing service, and treating others with dignity.
2. IHS values diversity.
3. Citizenship is taught both in school and at home;
4. ROTC and clubs are settings for learning citizenship.
5. We allow students not to participate in citizenship; consider building service into the curriculum.

## **Resiliency**

1. Staff must be role models in learning how to fail; teachers can help facilitate flexibility to build resiliency.
2. Students fear failure; they need to know how to recover. Peer tutoring is a support.
3. Important to have a culture of hopefulness versus discouragement.
4. Students need to understand that struggling is a part of learning.

## **Expression**

1. Settings for expression include electives, clubs, and co-curricular activities.
2. Core classes also allow for expression; multiple ways to answer even in math classes; multiple intelligences are recognized.
3. IHS is a safe place for students to express themselves (e.g. clothes, appearance).
4. “Culture is the doing of values.”