

# **Liberty H.S. Student Focus Group Feedback**

## **Access**

1. Block schedule promotes access, although A and B days aren't always balanced.
2. Junior year is most demanding academically; consider balancing junior and less demanding senior years.
3. Students are experiencing access to a wide variety of sports, clubs, and other activities but would like increased options for learning about their interests.
4. Students can/must choose to access what is available, but it is difficult for students to change "tracks."
5. Students would like to know more about courses and clubs and their demands before committing to them.
6. Students want flexibility in their day.
7. Students believe teachers are available but a teacher "network" is needed to increase communication about students' needs.
8. We did not hear from students that they viewed core classes as opportunities for learning what students wanted.

## **Connectivity**

1. Students feel safe, accepted and supported by peers—but students must choose to connect.
2. Connectivity comes through involvement in activities (e.g. Link Crew), sports, and services (e.g. career center).
3. Students are better connected to staff when students have multiple years of contact with those staff (e.g. participating in music or sports).
4. Students have a strong sense of school spirit and pride.
5. There were few examples of teachers as supportive connections, but students appear to want those.

6. Students value Challenge Day.
7. Students do not see staff as having a professional or collegial network; students seem to perceive staff as working with little connection to one another.
8. The block schedule facilitates connectivity.
9. Students wish for more connection to the larger community and nearby schools.

## **Citizenship**

1. Belonging to a community
  - a. Starts in the classroom and other activities
  - b. Becoming aware of one's effect on others
2. Students practice citizenship in classroom, clubs and sports, also through community service.
3. Liberty H.S. is a non-judgmental community; there is accountability but no judging.
4. Citizenship is reaching out
  - a. Service learning
  - b. Relationships with adults
  - c. Connecting with the community beyond the school

## **Resiliency**

1. Students struggle with academic risk-taking and would like to know how teachers will support them before they take a risk. Fear that they won't be supported limits risk-taking.
2. Students serve a one another's safety net; programs such as Link Crew and an accepting culture help students feel much social resiliency.
3. The block schedule allows students to re-take classes.
4. Students need to be able to ask for help, try new things, step out of their comfort zones, and pursue opportunities that are offered.

5. For some students, there is a tension between making a statement about who you are and discovering who you are.
6. The junior year is tough; in the senior year it is easy to kick back.
7. Students feel support from some teachers and staff.
8. A perception that there's a cost to high school, socially, academically, with regard to family and one's future.

## **Expression**

1. The block schedule facilitates expression; expression is associated with electives.
2. Some students believe it is safe to express themselves given the diverse, multifaceted student body, which is not judgmental.
3. The variety of activities (e.g. Challenge Day), sports and clubs facilitate expression.
4. Students from all grades should be mixed in electives to increase self-expression, especially among the freshmen.
5. Expression comes from within and grows with age.
6. Some students think in categories about people even when they don't want to be categorized themselves.

# **Liberty H.S. Parent Focus Group Feedback**

## **Access**

1. Block schedule allows for more and varied classes to be offered.
2. Need to remove roadblocks to success: text books aren't always available to take home, Family Access isn't updated often enough, tracking students limits access, and many teachers are not available after school.
3. Parents believe LHS has good teachers.
4. Need better communication about how to access tutors and other access-related information.
5. Access begins earlier than high school; school should help students avoid being tracked; help students access more difficult or advanced curriculum.

## **Connectivity**

1. Counselors are key to connectivity; not enough of them.
2. Students need to connect or bond with the school in early 9<sup>th</sup> grade year; difficult to connect at later time.
3. Families need to work with teachers.
4. Many teachers are very approachable; some are not. A sense of a "lack of grace" from some 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. A strong belief that connecting with at least one teacher is vital to students' success.
5. Diversity is valued at LHS; LHS works hard at consciously accepting people.
6. How do we ensure connections for those students without parent support?
7. Some parents get the message they are expected to be hands-off.

## **Citizenship**

1. Need to do more to promote service to the community.
2. Participation in JROTC fosters citizenship.

## **Resiliency**

1. Ninth graders need help learning resiliency; they often learn it because of a lack of compassion by staff. Resiliency should be fostered by staff and the system to a degree appropriate to the age of students.
2. Unclear how and when students receive help; unclear how students receive support when they experience disappointments, such as being cut from co-curricular activities.
3. Students need to learn to adapt to different kinds of teachers.

## **Expression**

1. The block schedule facilitates expression.
2. A strong emphasis on academics may limit expression.
3. Students are accepted at LHS; uniqueness is valued.
4. Challenge Day supports expression.
5. Teachers' expression may not always have a positive impact.

# **Liberty H.S. Staff Focus Group Feedback**

## **Access**

6. Block schedule supports access to diverse course offerings, but state requirements limit access (e.g., WASL and Core 24).
7. Not enough bus access for students (e.g., no activity bus, no transportation to and from Tiger).
8. Large class sizes limit access.
9. Students need more access to counseling, not just academic guidance.
10. District needs to take away roadblocks to building teacher leadership.
11. Lack of funding and other resources limits access.
12. Block schedule may inhibit student-teacher contact.

## **Connectivity**

1. Large class sizes and case loads make connecting more difficult, but connecting is very important, necessary for students to learn.
2. Advisory may be a way to foster connection, provide a “mentoring” relationship to students. Consider keeping the same group of students over four years.
3. Students need more time to connect with each other.
4. Some classes help with connection (e.g., band).
5. Youth culture, technology culture may discourage connection.
6. LHS needs to address the drop-out rate.
7. Many students come to school for social reasons.
8. Teachers need to connect.

## **Citizenship**

1. Link Crew facilitates citizenship.
2. Advisory may help with citizenship.
3. How LHS community members respect one another at school is citizenship (e.g., making others feel welcome and comfortable).

## **Resiliency**

1. Students need many opportunities to succeed, but also must be held accountable.
2. Students need access to true counseling.
3. Students need more time to be social, which builds resiliency and expression.
4. Are students experiencing a “culture of laziness”?

## **Expression**

1. Vocational classes allow for expression.
2. Projects at LHS allow for expression (e.g. Challenge Day).