

Community Forum  
Big Park Community School  
11-15-17  
5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

A. Strengths

- a. Examples:
  - i. Teachers
  - ii. Young families coming to the Sedona-Oak Creek area
  - iii. Parents able to work from home
- b. Themes:
  - i. Teachers/personnel
    - 1. Expertise
    - 2. Loyalty
    - 3. Compassion
  - ii. Environment
    - 1. Facilities
    - 2. Safety of community in general
  - iii. Community support
    - 1. Tax credit
    - 2. Retired community members helping in school
  - iv. Strength, innovation, enrichment
    - 1. STEM
    - 2. IB
  - v. Parent Organizations
    - 1. School pride/spirit

B. Weaknesses

- a. Examples:
  - i. Declining enrollment
- b. Themes:
  - i. Divisiveness within the school district
  - ii. Low teacher pay/morale/respect/communication with district
    - 1. Things negatively impact teachers
  - iii. AZ government funding
  - iv. Lack of responsiveness/effectiveness of administration at district and site level
  - v. SPED/Gifted/Non-core academic services
  - vi. Continuation of programs and cohesiveness of programs throughout the district
    - 1. Curriculum that doesn't apply everywhere.
    - 2. Whether or not students are prepared for the next level.

### C. Opportunities

- a. Examples:
  - i. Marketing
  - ii. Parental frustration with fully booked schools in other districts
- b. Themes:
  - i. Marketing
    - 1. Surrounding areas
    - 2. Community
  - ii. IB/STEM program
    - 1. Marketing it
    - 2. Continuing to Junior High/High School
  - iii. New superintendent
  - iv. Community outreach

### D. Threats

- a. Examples:
  - i. Dreamers would have to leave
  - ii. Charter/homeschool/private/alternative schooling
- b. Themes
  - i. No common models between schools
    - 1. IB vs. STEM in elementary VS. middle/high none
  - ii. Government funding
  - iii. Large class sizes
  - iv. Mixed classes (e.g. 4/5)
  - v. Concerns about override
  - vi. Declining enrollment
  - vii. Resistance to change
  - viii. Affordable housing
  - ix. Staff burnout
    - 1. Small number of staff being asked to do a lot

## General Impressions:

1. Next steps lead somewhere
2. Track data of representation at community forum meetings
  - a. Add a teacher/district employee category
3. Engage retirees' talents
4. Know your competition
  - a. Familiarize ourselves with charter and other districts' offerings
5. Connect resources to achieve cohesion
  - a. Facilities
  - b. Personnel
  - c. Ideas
6. Open forum with general public for consensus after board decision
  - a. Board meetings are public
    - i. 6:00 p.m. tomorrow night
    - ii. Monthly
    - iii. Open commentary
  - b. Have a community forum with more community open discussion/dialogue?
7. Board is 100% behind this project and open to community input
  - a. Changed in January
  - b. Committed to best interest of students
8. Small districts can't be all things to all people
  - a. Danger of spreading ourselves too thin
  - b. Willingness to partner throughout the Verde Valley with other school districts
9. What about the outliers? Save our school district with a sticky note! 😊
10. First strategic plan ever
  - a. Advanced Ed Accreditation Work Plans and other plans have been built in the past to improve our district
  - b. This isn't the first "plan" ever
11. Focus on WHY, not what's and how's, to achieve community buy-in
  - a. Simple statement of WHY: This is all about students and preparing students to live and thrive successfully in a world that we can't even predict.
    - i. Continue developing that "why statement"
  - b. Strength in families; make our school communities work for families to maintain family support. Keep teachers in communities, so their families can be involved.
12. Do we advertise the community forum to voices outside the district? (e.g. families considering moving into our district)
  - a. Current:
    - i. Local newspaper
    - ii. Facebook
    - iii. Website
    - iv. Next door
  - b. Thoughts on this topic:

- i. Radio
  - ii. Get community input from the entire Verde Valley and maybe north up to Flagstaff
  - iii. Develop a plan and then let outside district people know what we have to offer
  - iv. Focus on our stakeholders to move forward; track outside voices
- 13. Classified staff/parent voices
  - a. How to engage if they're not able to attend?
    - i. At the site level
      - 1. SWOT forms sent home
      - 2. Surveys
- 14. Identify real problems, not just identify topics
  - a. Who are the experts?
    - i. Focus on expert opinions to get the problems solved
    - ii. Provide focus, deep thoughts, and truly "free speech" from within
  - b. "Meet and Confers", surveys with the right questions through a separate, professional organization (e.g. Advanced Ed)
  - c. Annual student, parent, and teacher exit school climate survey
- 15. Increased enrollment should not necessarily come from other parts of the Verde Valley
  - a. Problem: We continue to trade students back-and-forth within the Valley
  - b. Solution: Recruit families from outside of the Verde Valley
- 16. Arizona, as a state, is trying to eliminate public education since the 1980s, because it's socialism and there's no money in it.
  - a. Financial stakes in charter schools from within government
  - b. 75% of all parents still chose public education for their kids (statistic from memory)
    - i. Raise the bar
    - ii. Create a whole new type of school
      - 1. Zero Waste
      - 2. New Energy
    - iii. People will move here for the lifestyle and study a model for a new society.
    - iv. International Examples of Democratic Renewal of Public Education
      - 1. Shanghai Providence in China
      - 2. Netherlands
      - 3. Finland
      - 4. British Columbia in Canada
- 17. Get our schools visible
  - a. Visitors pass by all the time with no knowledge of schools
  - b. Billboards, signs
- 18. Stay strong from within

- a. Keep our families
- b. Word of mouth marketing

19. Two step process

- a. Develop new product to draw people in
- b. New product has excellence to keep the new people
  - i. Be a destination district
    - 1. There's a lot to get through first.
    - 2. Reality: fix what's broken right now.
    - 3. One step at a time.

20. THE END!!!!!! ☺

- a. 7:06 p.m.