

## **Community Conversation: Personalized Learning**

May 8, 2019

Lakota West HS Students

Discussion Leaders: Lakota West students Amitoj Kaur & Shannon Pullyblank

This Community Conversation was conducted in a unique format, as the program's two student interns from Lakota West stepped in as the facilitators. The pair explained that they'd conducted a significant number of student interviews to land on the conversation topic and questions.

*Small Group Discussion: What is the most personalized version of learning you've experienced or witnessed?*

Flexible seating

- Allows you to feel more focused and comfortable.
- Fishbowl configuration seems to be most common form of flexible seating, but still lots of rows of desks remain.
- Feels like your voice matters and not like learning is happening at all.
- Less daunting; puts everyone on more of an equal playing field.

Choice - This is less common at the secondary level; more choice allows you to accomplish a lot more and feel more invested.

The higher you go in education, the less personalized education you experience. There's so much curriculum to cover that there's less flexibility to wander and do your own thing.

Mentorship - Gives opportunity to explore your thoughts & interests with someone in real world.

Student-teacher engagement is most important for personalized learning, not technology or the room structure.

*Small Group Discussion: When it comes to personalized learning, where is there room for improvement?*

Teachers need to be more open to feedback on what's working or not working in their classrooms. If the relationship is there first, they seem more receptive to feedback.

After-school activities could be more engaging; not always enough support and guidance from group advisors.

Mentorships - This doesn't have to mean giving up valuable classroom time, but introducing someone from the "outside" where it naturally fits into the curriculum.

See alternative options for career options; how one subject can intertwine with something you wouldn't ever think of.

One student: I had no idea about Katie Bauer (strategic business partnerships coordinator for internships & other real-world learning opportunities), nor the hospital speaker series offered earlier this year.

One participant suggested a "house system" to build stronger community and make school feel smaller. This might involve cutting the student body into quarters to form smaller learning communities where students can connect on a more personal basis. The suggestion was also made to identify classes, like choir, where grade levels can be mixed to better familiarize upperclassmen more with underclassmen.

Need more teachers "invested" in their students and their futures - "That's what makes the experience."