

Community Conversation

Ridge Junior High

Feb. 12, 2019

14 eighth-grade students

What is something you really like about school?

Teachers

Choice of classes

Seeing friends

Freedom within school – classes, move around building

Clubs and sports

Band program

Seeing friends

Welcoming environment

Music

Socialization – getting to know more people around you, not just your own small group

Access to technology

Extracurriculars

Seeing friends

What upsets/worries/concerns you about your education or school experience?

Focus is on wrong area

Pressure on homework/tests

Time taken away from education by digital in Pride times

School can be very demanding with all the work and social pressure

Some of the teachers, and standardized testing

Standardized testing

Taking tests, bullying, school projects and due dates

Tests I'm not prepared for, teachers, standards, believing all students are the same

Staff seems to not care about bullying, standardized testing
Some of the teachers doing same thing every day, and early start times
Using social media to bully or harass students without getting in trouble
The amount of testing
Lack of funding for band program
Early start times
Kids that don't listen and just do what they want
Not teaching about real-world stuff
Students who don't listen
Substitutes
How little things can matter....if you get a detention you're excluded from incentives

Discussion for small groups: What does all this mean to you? How do you feel about it?

We talked a lot (in our small group) about getting bored in class. Teachers doing same thing all day.

Pride Time – running out of things to do.

Lose track of what they're trying to teach us. In math do notes a lot (taking notes from teachers on board).

Take notes, discuss, repeat.

75 percent of class time is taking notes, being talked at.

I can sit at home and be bored. Am in school to learn.

Would like a self-taught class.....gives us what we have to have done by Friday. Helps us learn more.

Passion projects too open-ended. Alternative is to take online classes. Could be more specialized.

Even if the class is boring, it's still important stuff, but everyone gets out phones.

Not listening, don't get the notes you need, grades go down.

Teachers doing same thing over and over every day big part of why kids falling asleep.

Want more learning time.

Have half an hour of study hall, then Pride Time, no one does anything in it. No one likes Passion Projects or E=R+O. End up just sitting there.

Engaging vs. non-engaging teachers. If teachers really care about what they're teaching students will engage. Passionate teacher really helps the class stay focused.

Lets us do our work at our pace.

Passionate teachers care about us, ask us about our weekend, engage with us.

More real-world classes in junior high. Taxes, taking care of a family, money, budgets, how to start a business, cooking.

How to do a job interview,

In social studies we learn about old wars.....but not what's happening now

Real life problems that are going on now

Some teachers add the opinion (political) into things

Career options – took a career test, had a lot of careers that sounded really boring and none of us knew what they were

Internet and social media can bring up lot of good points, can give you different perspectives

Teachers don't trust us when using technology, to do what we're supposed to be doing

In choir had a group who was always talking, couldn't get anything done (although they were really entertaining sometimes)

Sometimes teachers just wait for students instead of yelling

Student leadership vis a vis disruptive kids

In one class, one or two students always talked, teacher just kept on teaching, kids knew they could get away with it

Teachers who have a "friend" connection with their students...so when say they listen, we actually listen

If a teacher is more interactive, students have more fun in class

No relationship with students = bored students

Teachers who coach or do activities have more time with students to build relationships

In elementary school did more projects hands-on, then they take that away when we get to junior high

Bullying has been drilled into us as an epidemic. But it's a lot about marginalized groups.

Five to six groups receive 80 to 90 percent of the bullying.

Would help if tolerance was taught. There's a lot of intolerance these days and people are always arguing. There must be a way to teach tolerance.

Describe a time at school when you felt, "This is how I want my education to be." What was most important about that?

For the teachers to have a connection with their students.

Teachers who care about learning process and not just AIR tests.

Not in school just for a grade. In school to learn and have fun.

Projects

Really important for teachers to be passionate on their jobs. One teacher talks about how she's underpaid and doesn't want to be here.

Teachers who positively reinforce positive behavior.

In groups, some kids want to work and others don't.

Like when teachers model $E=R+O$.

A lot of teachers think friends working together will just talk. But I did a project with two of my best friends and we did really good work.

To be a teacher you should have to like kids. We had a teacher last year who said some really mean things to kids. Makes a negative impact all the way around.

When teachers not only care but are understanding about things.

Some guys are sexualizing girls and teachers will say it's the girl's fault for how she dresses or acts.

Some guys who use "gay" a lot as an insult. And when you go to teacher with that they don't care.

It happens to guys too, not just girls. Guys who aren't masculine enough.