

Executive Summary of Unity/Pride Survey

In November of 2016, RSU5 conducted a Unity and Pride Survey to explore several topics. The purpose was to assess areas where the RSU is strong as well as identify areas for growth. At the same time, we also took the opportunity to explore the possible renaming of Freeport High School.

The survey has been beneficial in many ways. The survey results were utilized in building the FY18 budget. As one example, the Board has adopted a budget that moves toward funding universal Pre-K in all schools. During Board meetings, we have recognized and celebrated student achievements in athletics and performing/ visual arts, and we look forward to continuous utilization of the results in strategic planning and creating Board and school goals for 2017/18.

We were pleased with the response rate of the Unity and Pride Survey. We received a total of 1229 surveys. Below is a summary of the findings.

On the question of whether the renaming of the high school would improve unity and pride within the District, 822 (67%) responders strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement; 180 (15%) responders strongly agreed or agreed that the renaming would improve unity and pride; and 221 (18%) were unsure.

On the question of whether we should rename the high school, 888 (72%) responders strongly disagreed or disagreed that we should rename the high school; 185 (15%) responders strongly agreed or agreed that we should rename the high school; and 155 (13%) were unsure. The Board voted 9-2 to have the name remain Freeport High School at the December Board meeting.

The majority of the people surveyed felt we recognized the achievements of RSU5 students. Seventy-four percent of the respondents felt that celebrating the achievements would create more pride and unity within the community. Most responders believed that athletic achievements were recognized the most (74%), followed by academic achievement (60%) and then visual and performing arts (58%).

On the question of how unique we are in comparison to other districts, the majority of respondents said they were unsure about all of the questions related to uniqueness. Only 29% responded that RSU5 distinguishes itself from other districts overall or in the area of academic programming. Twenty-six percent of respondents believe that we are unique in our athletic programming, and we had the highest positive response in the area of distinguishing ourselves in fine arts programming with 43% responding favorably. Most of the people surveyed fell in the neutral category of how unique we are, with comments that said we don't necessarily need to make ourselves unique, but need to do a good job of educating our students and have a high-performing district. It seemed that most did not want to concern themselves with comparing our district with others.

On the question of how we should invest future resources, the following response was given:

- a. 73% support dual enrollment courses.
- b. 72% feel that we should increase internship/mentoring opportunities.
- c. 71% support expanding STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics).
- d. 68% feel that we should move towards more experiential learning.
- e. 63% support offering more advanced placement courses.
- f. 61% favor expanding pre-kindergarten.
- g. 61% support expanding fine arts programming.
- h. 39% are interested in a language immersion program.

Most of the responders supported the expansion of Pre-Kindergarten. There was additional support for increasing experiential learning and broadening internship opportunities. There were no negative comments about either of those topics. Comments about increased advanced placement courses included allowing students to access them before their junior and senior years. Responders also mentioned the need for financial literacy, industrial arts, and home economics. Although these courses are offered, this highlights the need for better communication to parents and students.

Responders also wanted the District to be fiscally responsible with the taxpayers' money and appreciated the opportunity to give input. Other areas of concern that were mentioned in the comment section of the survey included extra-curricular scheduling conflicts, nutrition, guidance, and athletics. The input from those surveyed has provided valuable feedback for us to reflect on as we continuously strive to improve our District. We want to thank those who took the time to complete the survey. For complete results, please go to the RSU5 website.