

GEMS Strategic Planning Forum

Small Group Outcomes

Belief Statements

(Beliefs listed with highest priority “Thumbs Up” data listed at the top of the list and identified by the total number of votes; votes differentiated by school or community stakeholders)

- Successful schools concentrate on a few things and do them very well. Most importantly students should focus on reading, clear written expression of ideas, and mathematics. (6)
- Students should learn to recognize the difference between a well-supported, logical position and clichéd rhetoric.
- Teachers should have the support of administration & parents in creating a classroom environment conducive to learning (including adequate disciplinary policies).
- K-8 math should prepare students:
 - For the numerical demands of adult life (balancing a checkbook, making and sticking to a budget, using credit wisely), and
 - For higher math and science in high school (& beyond if they so wish)
- All children have the right to learn
- Mutual communication (3)
- Mutual respect
- Welcoming/happy place
- Support for educators and educators support families (5)
- Promotes growth & opportunity
- Striving for academic achievement activities to be fun and challenging (6)
- Innovative/access to up to date technology (5)
- All children learn differently (4)
- Importance of relations in learning (5)
- Importance of trust between all layers involved in educating children
- Children should feel safe at school physically and emotionally (32)
- Part of education should be helping of students understand self knowledge (5)
- Children should be challenged and supported to take intellectual risks and to work through real problems (18)
- Importance of having a safe place to fail (5)
- Foreign language K-8 and taught life skills e.g. self protection (5)
- Physical activity important in curriculum (7)
- Elder members of community with school (5)
- Parental involvement important (5)
- Education responds to all needs (3)
- Open to new ways of learning (5)
- Maintain or increase already good high school prep (5)
- Continue to increase technology (10)
- All students work to full potential (6)
- Friendly/involvement (5)
- Students learning and environment (3)
- Support system (2)
- Consequences for behavior, positively consistent and enforced
- No bullying

- Respect
- Unholistic approach
- Family involvement
- Communication
- After school programs, sports enrichment
- Not teach to mediocrity
- Differentiated education/set curriculum
- Technology to prepare for future
- Health connection
- Teach basic skills
- Teach how to filter information
- Preparation for high school
- Connection to others
- Continue early education (5)
- Success for all students (opportunities)
- Continue enrichment for all student s(5)
- Support service for learning differences
- Technology availability for all students
- Continue “Specials”
- Healthy environment for all
- Literary program for students
- Advanced placement classes
- Physical, emotionally safe environment (6)
- Opportunity for growth at their level (4)
- Affordable for taxpayers in Georgia (2)
- Meet all children’s educational needs in our community (2)
- School partner with children’s parents (4)
- Make school resources available for both children in school and home school (4)
- Provide opportunities that provide interactive learning (6)
- Alternative opportunities
- Provide different styles of learning (project based learning/hands on)
- Accountability of student outcomes held with administrators and teachers (4)
- Meet state/federal standards (NECAP) (1)
- School should nurture (7)
- School should build solid foundations for citizenship/community/give back/social responsibility (6.5)
- Day care should be available, not necessarily free (3)
- Provide language other than English (4.5)
- High technology (6)

Shift Happens DVD and GEMS Statistics

What had real meaning for you from what you heard or saw in the video clip and the PowerPoint presentation?

Real Meaning

- Limited relationship building skills

- Importance of social skills
- Vocab lease to success in every subject
- Reading a book still better than reading a computer
- Families and schools need to work together; can't do it alone
- Better integration of technology and basic skills
- Other countries are ahead
- Technology is inevitable, how we use optional
- Technology changed how we need to approach education
- Parents must learn too/involvement
- Rate of information transfer
- Reading for pleasure
- English fluency in other countries
- Attitude toward our own importance/significance
- Basics first in order to succeed with technology
- Hands-on learning
- Scanning of technology reading could be a disadvantage
- The need for instruction and the need to teach safety
- # of hours spent on technology, yet by age 18 only 52% can use a website for information (including parents)
- Difficult to search and know what is important
- Can kids judge objectivity
- Speed at which information changes astronomical
- This makes me thing who's having dinner with kids and playing
- Majority of life is shaped outside of school – yet we are pushing schools to teach more
- The snapshot approach to web learning has had a negative impact on learning
- Needs to be a balance – basic skills vs technology
- Discipline and responsible use of technology
- Book smarts still the foundation
- Turn off TV and read a book
- Computers here to stay, need to deal with
- Communication is and will be different (less personal, more technological, less formal)
- Basic education is the key
- Technology a distraction?
- Technology creates opportunities/challenges
- Technology is a tool
- Book reading is essential
- Speed of change
- Outside academics – technology
- Forgetting history?
- Online information is not trustworthy
- Searchers go to #1 item on list
- Parents have power
- Students have access to technology
- Speed of change
- High focus on technology = lower basic skills
- Children should be able to answer 2+2 before they are given a calculator
- Technology eliminates or reduces interpersonal relationships

- Technology is a tool not the priority
- Analytical thinking needs to be emphasized
- Students need to learn to think & solve problems & support that with technology

Surprises

- India highest number of college graduates
- Kids using so much tech
- Balance of technology with traditional education
- Amount of on screen time
- All India college grads are fluent in English
- Learners will have 10 to 14 lifetime jobs
- Importance of reading on all academic areas
- Negative towards teenager/benefits overlooked
- Just increasing reading time, huge impact
- Time with technology
- How far behind we are
- More college graduates? Is it just more people?
- 10 to 13 jobs by age 38
- India stats
- The computer computing better than human brain
- All of it!
- 1 out of 8 meeting and marrying!
- Our children's careers have not been created
- Number of projected job changes
- 100% of college grads in India speak English
- College grad rates in foreign countries
- Speed of change
- Who's going to fix the appliances
- USA falling behind
- How quickly technology changes
- Misuse of technology
- Ineffective laptop results
- How many teens connected
- Internet is not a perfect learning tool
- The amount of information is huge & growing
- Students have to have background in technology
- India & china must be understood by us
- India & china schools & schooling
- Economic & population shifts
- When countries loose land based agriculture, they loose dominance
- Music created an atmosphere
- Irrelevance of shift happens other than question about how to solve problems we don't know about yet
- Technology contradicts social behaviors
- Presentations haven't changed
- No local information included

Challenges

- So much to learn on top of academics (“I didn’t have all this”)
- Responsibility on teachers
- \$ to support technology
- Getting kids back to basic, used to “quick find”
- Other data from ’06 probably different now
- Resources for schools into technology less \$ on other resources
- Lack of holding kids attention
- How do we teach students to use technology & excel in reading
- More time for reading
- Staying up to date with technology to be on the same page as kids
- How do we foster critical thinking
- Balance school, home, & socially
- Teaching of appropriate sites when they are ever-changing
- Anybody can put anything they want
- Investment in family time
- Evaluate what the successful countries are & aren’t doing in school
- Society needs to take more responsibility for children citizenship
- Kids are tech savvy but can’t collaborate effectively with teams
- Communication skills
- How do we use current technology to facilitate book “smarts”
- How do we justify that book “smarts” are still important
- Keeping kids safe on the internet
- How our kids are using technology & how to keep up
- View of how technology has helped
- More time with kids
- Communication with kids
- Balance between hands on learning & technology
- Internet safety
- Take advantage of all technology has to offer but somehow limit non-educational programs
- Being able to keep up with technology while maintaining basics of learning
- Need to think internationally
- Books vs. technology
- How much is enough/too much
- Balancing basics with technology
- Increase non-technology outside the classroom
- Preparing students for jobs that don’t exist
- Math skills are critical
- When technologies become obsolete, then what?
- What will happen to trades in 5 years?
- Schools need to work to undo what is done at home
- Schools are challenged financially due to unfunded mandates
- To get a real education there are major hurdles & obstacles to work through (6 hours of video games can’t happen)

- More math & higher literacies
- Acknowledge technology & find its place
- Make classical education more enticing so they get more satisfaction from learning to get children to embrace it. We are competing with short attention span & immediate gratification
- Educate students in constructive uses of technology
- Lack of skills to prepare for essays, papers
- Unsure how to challenges

Dinner and Conversation

When students leave our school system, what should they know and be able to do?

(Theme areas were created by facilitators based on forum participant Post-it notes placed on wall paper)

Theme # 1 – Life Skills

- Cooperation and teamwork
- Learn to respect your elders early in life
- Manners
- Apply for a summer/after school/weekend job with confidence
- Ability to read and write at the 8th grade level or later
- Students should know that homework is either done or not, no excuses
- Engaged in daily life and applying learning to more than just books
- Being rewarded for who you are and not judged
- To be respectable, tolerant and have compassion for others
- Strong ethics
- Have the understanding of acceptable behavior amongst peers/teachers and a mutual respect
- Speak comfortably with adults
- Know how to deal with stress in a healthy way
- They should know how to solve problems
- When students leave our school system they should know and be able to understand that every person/community job in this world is important to parents as well as the student
- Drive
- They should know that its okay to fail and that it's a natural and necessary part of personal growth
- Community service
- Manners matter, you are not the only person in the world
- Be a lifelong learner
- Be well rounded, have experienced sports, music, language, and other specialty classes
- Be informed of choices for their high school education
- Some understanding of what they would like to do as a profession
- Make common sense decisions
- Have some idea of how “what they’ve learned” applies to the outside world
- Have the skills to advocate for themselves
- Critical thinking
- To have life skills and understand where to go, get answers in our future world, understand communication
- Should be independent thinkers

- Push children to work to full potential – encourage abilities
- Respect themselves and everyone else
- Understand social etiquette and be respectful
- Understand their strengths better so that they can go on to strengthen and use them
- Values; show respect, humility and integrity; having fun while being their best; learn from challenge and change; unleash their power to achieve
- Be able to work with other cooperatively
- Learn to accept making mistakes
- The ability to communicate with others in a positive way
- Involved, responsible community member
- Establish and maintain positive relationships
- Have the social skills needed to interact with other people
- They should be caring and compassionate
- Have good analytical and communication skills
- Be accountable for time management and expectations
- Be able to contribute to a group with dignity and respect
- Know how to balance a checkbook
- How to cook basic, nutritional meals from scratch
- Children should be positive contributors to society
- How to plant and raise a garden
- Our students should develop proficiency in ball room dancing
- They matter and are accountable on many levels
- They should know how to communicate appropriately in a variety of ways
- Independent thought
- To hold a verbal conversation with their peers and elders
- Our students need to learn that they quickest and best road to self esteem is to learn how to do important difficult things well
- Interpersonal skills
- Strategies for being lifelong learner
- Make their ideas a reality
- Be able to meet challenges with a positive outlook
- Learn basic life skills
- Accountability
- How to access/use internet safely and appropriately
- Understand how to spend and budget (not using credit) ie. get away from a cafeteria card. Let kids use cash
- Be able to fill out forms to apply for a job
- Knowledge of how to eat healthy and exercise to keep fit
- How to cook at least 2 healthy meals
- How to throw and catch, dribble a basketball and shoot, how to kick a soccer ball; the importance of exercise.

Theme # 2 – Curriculum and Instruction

- Know how to write a report using all tools available (books, internet, community)
- To balance a checkbook
- Be able to make change without a cash register
- Our student should have years of experience in three step mathematical problems

- Add, subtract, math
- Our students should learn to enjoy reading old books
- Be ready to read classics, text books, etc.
- Read, read, read
- Read and spell at an appropriate level
- To be able to read a book at their grade level or above
- Hands on activities – not just visual or lecturing
- Know how to study for tests, take good notes, how to be organized
- Present an oral report
- Hands on
- Students should know the amount of support it takes from the community to support education
- Environmental awareness
- Distinguish a good argument from a bad one
- Writing
- Be prepared for high school
- Social skills
- Name all 50 states & capitals
- The 50 states & their capitals
- Be able to write (long hand) and legible
- Students should be able to identify all the continents & oceans in the world
- Geography
- Know where the U.S. is on the map
- Think
- Know how to write a paper
- Write clearly & express ideas accurately
- Write a resume, cover letter & follow-up letter (high school)
- Writing skills is very important, should be able to write a strong essay
- Know how to study hard
- Write
- Study skills
- Write well
- To look up information in a book
- Locate & use resources by themselves
- Do not teach allow or encourage mediocrity
- Good problem solver
- Be able to give a speech/presentation in front of a group of peers
- Know grammar (down cold) parts of speech, sentence structure, etc.
- Read & speak English fluently
- Know & effectively be able to use all parts of speech
- Reading is necessary – books not internet
- They should read for pleasure & for information
- Read
- Read at or above grade level
- Read
- Academic skills @ grade level (if not special needs)

- Basic skills read & write
- Read & write on grade level
- Read, tell time, make change, some basic life skills
- Maintain basic skills (ie. reading, math) while building technological ones
- Who our Government leaders are (state & federal)
- Government
- Trades
- Learn to be held accountable
- Communicate formally & internationally
- Children should have skills to be accepted at colleges
- English
- Reading
- Think without technology
- Students need to know how to read at or above their age level
- Reading at 8th grade level & beyond
- Vision for the future
- Write an effective research report
- Know our presidents
- History
- Our students should read discuss & evaluate our founding documents (eg. Federalist papers)
- When students leave our school system, they should know & be able to use: all the resources, from past & present old technology & new technology to improve their lives ex. Stories, books, dictionary, thesaurus, encyclo, pc, & etc.

Theme # 3 – Confidence

- That they have to work to be #1
- They should be able to compete with other students in their age group
- Separate students in classroom based on ability
- Children should be confident
- Present and defend a position on a topic of reference in front of a group of their peers
- Not afraid to fail and learn from it
- Have confidence in themselves as learners and thinkers
- They should have confidence that they can compete and succeed in the world
- Confident in branching out in bigger high school setting
- Build relationships w/peers, teachers and other adults
- Ability to set goals for high school and plan for how to meet them, pushed to excel
- Comfortable with feeling uncomfortable
- To always challenge conventional thinking
- Be able to challenge yourself, don't cop out
- Students should feel ready to leave, miss it and want to visit again and have good memories
- Defend an idea or opinion in an organized and educated manner
- Be able to take a walk and not be bored
- How large the world is and their impact on it
- Children should feel proud of their accomplishments
- Deal with animosity and bullying

- Developed ability to be reflective about their own strengths and weaknesses
- They should know that they have to work for what they earn
- Teach children to their ability and speed
- Don't feel the need to be perfect

Theme # 4 – Foreign Language

- Be ready for foreign language
- Early speaking skills of another language
- At least have begun a foreign language
- Start languages
- Wider array of languages
- Foreign language
- Speak a foreign language
- Have a basic foreign language understanding
- Speak a foreign language (high school)
- Speak/write another language
- Access to foreign language before high school
- Foreign language available at younger ages
- Everything
- Foreign language, French & Spanish
- Speak a foreign language

Theme # 5 – Advanced Skills

- Beyond basic math skills
- Become life long learners – know themselves as a part of the human race
- Ballroom dance classes for gym credit
- How to read music
- Advanced literature classes
- One of the most important & neglected goals for our students is this, they ought to aim at the higher literacy such as the ability to read with pleasure the central texts of the west
- Be a lifelong learner
- Mandatory instruments
- Accurately research subjects
- Research
- Superb math skills
- Read music
- Learn how to listen to all points of view
- How to ask & answer why?
- Have advanced literacy skills (essay writing etc.)

Theme # 6 – Technology

- Typing & computer skills are very important
- Know how to create documents in Microsoft word & publisher
- Know how to set up & work an excel spreadsheet
- Internet is inevitable – teach safety
- Understand how information is exchanged globally
- Be a proficient keyboarder

- They should have had access to the same level of academics as students from other schools
- Create a webpage
- Ability to navigate the web in a useful way
- Understand how to use technology as tools for learning
- Useful technology knowledge
- Use technology in a safe way to further their education
- Know how to make technology work for you
- Adapt to fit technology-not a set of curriculum
- Be computer literate

Theme # 7 – Communications

- Participate in and influence community
- Better communicate data of how our kids fair in high school
- Know that they matter in this world
- Be able to function outside of his or her comfort zone
- To handwrite a project
- Oral communication and vocab is very important
- Identify quality of information they consume
- Understand real life events re government, jobs, country
- How to support their own community towards the future
- Strong communication
- Feel comfortable presenting an idea to a group of their peers
- Proper introductions, ability to hold a conversation, etc.
- Able to communicate original thoughts and ideas
- Know how to apply basic skill to real world problems

Student Panel Stop-Start-Continue

What should the School “Stop, Start or Continue” doing to prepare students to become contributing members of society, skillful workers, and life-long learners?

(Student responses are not prioritized and are randomly listed below from panel discussion.)

- **Contributing Members of Society**
 - **Stop**
 - **Start**
 - **Community service by 8th graders**
 - **Serving more vegetarian foods**
 - **Offer programs to prepare for choices in high school; good and bad**
 - **Foreign language program before high school – extend current program; more variety of languages**
 - **More physical education**
 - **Advisory programs**
 - **Research a job you are interested in, job shadowing to prepare for class selection in high school**
 - **Tutors available to students**
 - **Continue**
 - **Enrichment programs, real life programs,**

- **Skillful Workers**
 - **Stop**
 - **Start**
 - **Career exploration class to help you decide your future**
 - **Continue**
 - **Choice classes**

- **Lifelong Learners**
 - **Stop**
 - **Start**
 - **Continue**
 - **Teachers respect the children and it encourages them to learn and want to succeed**
 - **Step into the future program**
 - **Enrichment program**

- **High school students feel that they are well prepared when they reach high school.**
- **High school students feel that they teachers are really great here regarding making each student feel important and valued.**
- **High school students feel that the Georgia students are very respectful to the teachers.**
- **High school teachers enforce the deadlines and follow through with the consequences.**

Forum Participant Stop-Start-Continue Visioning Activity

What should the School “Stop, Start or Continue” doing to prepare students to become contributing members of society, skillful workers, and life-long learners?

(Forum participant responses are listed below in theme categories and are prioritized based on number of Post-it notes and differentiated by school or community colored dots)

Curriculum & Instruction

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

Administration Structure

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

School and Community Communications

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

Facilities/Transportation

- Start

- Stop
- Continue

Finance & Budget

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

Technology Integration

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

Testing/Assessment

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

Life Skills Preparation

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

Sports & Co-Curricular Activities

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

Use of School Facilities

- Start
- Stop
- Continue

SWOT Analysis

(Data is listed with highest priority “Thumbs Up” total votes listed at the top of each category; votes differentiated by school or community stakeholders)

Strengths

-

Weaknesses

-

Opportunities

-

Threats

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