



BIBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE... FOR EVERY CHILD

THE MACON MIRACLE

*Strategic Planning for
Bibb County School District*

September 19, 2011

DISCOVERY

EXERCISE #1

Paired Interviews

Purpose: To discover our stories of peak learning, high expectations, trends and educational opportunities

INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose a partner. Look for someone you do not know or would like to get to know better.

Introduce yourselves. Take one minute to find out how long your partner has been connected with the Bibb County Schools and/or has been in education as well as something they love about our community.

Interview each other. Using the questions on the following pages, you have 60 minutes to interview each other (30 minutes each). Manage your time so that each of you can complete your interview. It is generally best to cover all questions with one partner; then switch roles. Please make yourselves comfortable to do your interviews. We find it helpful if the interviewer is the timekeeper.

Take notes in the spaces provided. You are responsible for recording your partner's answers. Please take careful notes, and use your skills as an interviewer as you listen and go deeper into your partner's experiences, visions, and stories, capturing any key themes and "quotable quotes" that emerge.

Listen and clarify. Offer your best listening skills so that you can hear subtle but important details. Listen with friendly curiosity. Ask clarifying questions to surface assumptions, subtle, important details, and feelings or thoughts. Help them supply more detail, if necessary, with these kinds of questions:

--Tell me more.

--Why was that important to you?

--How did that affect you?

--How did that come about?

Remember that this is an interview, not a conversation. Bring out the best in your partner and remember to thank your partner at the end.

Remember to Manage Your Time. There are four questions, which means about seven minutes per question. The interviewer should watch the time, making sure to leave enough time for each question.

BIBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLANNING SUMMIT 09/19/2011

APPRECIATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

We stand at a crossroad in education in Bibb County, Georgia, and the United States. We can either continue down the path we are on now that has led us to a 44% graduation rate or we can select a path that will ensure **every** child is receiving a high quality education that prepares them for the possibility of a 4-year college degree and leads to a successful life.

This is your chance to express how we can best meet the needs of our students and help them succeed and maximize their potential. Our children must be prepared not only for the world they live in now, but also the one they will enter in the future. It is up to every employee, every parent, and every member of this community to provide them with the education, tools, resources, and support to be lifelong learners and to be globally competitive.

Our education system is not currently designed to prepare them for a world that is changing on a daily basis. We need a different system, and we have the wonderful opportunity to work together –with the students—to design a system that meets their needs today, tomorrow, and in the future.

With a new system, we will bring the best of what we do to help students discover their intelligence and their gifts to improve our community, our state, our nation, and our world.

You are a part of something miraculous: creating a better future by improving the lives of children today.

Question #1: Exceptional Learning Experience

Recall a time when you were part of an exceptional learning experience--a time when learning was inspiring, challenging and exciting and even if it was hard, you and others seemed to be highly engaged and learning rapidly. Tell me that story. What made it exceptional?

Question #2: High Expectations

Research has shown that the expectations we hold about one another influence our beliefs about what we can do. When someone holds high expectations, they try harder and achieve more. Recall a time when either:

- (a) high expectations inspired you to be more than you thought possible; or
- (b) your high expectations for another encouraged them to do something they did not think they could do.

Tell me about that time and what happened. Why is this story important?

Question #3: Opportunities and Innovations

Look beyond our traditional classroom and school year traditions. What positive and novel things are happening in the world that could influence our thinking, so we can design an innovative and highly effective educational system to ensure the success of every student and to generate inspiration for everyone?

What opportunities do you see?

What innovations/possibilities might inspire us?

Question #4. Our Future

Imagine it is 2020 and Bibb County Schools have become internationally known for their innovations in learning and teaching. Our students have made remarkable strides in learning and achievement, and the 2020 graduating class boasts 90% going on to further their education and the other 10% finding meaningful work or serving in the military.

Our innovative strategies have resulted in students who love coming to school. Teachers are inspired by their students and vice versa. In fact, teachers report greater energy at the end of each term. Our drop-out rate has been eliminated; only those students moving out of the area generate the small numbers that show as non-completers.

You have met someone from another state who has heard about our progressive school district, and they want to know more. Describe our new system and what makes it exceptional and effective.

What role did you play in designing this innovative system and making it a reality?

DISCOVERY

Exercise #2

Small Group Synthesis of key strengths, core factors and opportunities

Each group will manage its own dialogue and time, using the guidelines below for self-managing this work – we recommend that each group rotate these roles throughout the day.

- **DISCUSSION LEADER** – Manages the table task. Assures that each person who wants to speak is heard within time available.
- **TIMEKEEPER** – Keeps group aware of time left. Monitors and signals time remaining to person talking.
- **RECORDER/REPORTER** - Writes group's output on notepad, using speaker's words. Delivers report to larger group in allotted time.

Purpose:

- *To share our stories and discover our positive core related to the education of the youth in our community.*
- *To discover what's already working and uncover the common themes from our collective experiences.*
- *To discover the best of "what is" in order to envision a future where Bibb County Schools support outstanding achievement for every student*

Goals:

1. **Highlights and insights Question #1:** Go around the circle - each person introduce your interview partner to the group and share highlights (not the entire story) from your partner's story (question #1).
 - As a group, listen for and note core strengths that were important for an exceptional learning experience
 - Capture these strengths on paper
[approximately 10 minutes for the group, 1 minute per person]
2. **Highlights and insights Question #2:** Go around the circle - each person share highlights from your partner's second story (question #2).
 - As a group, listen for and note key strengths or factors that were important for holding high expectations
 - Capture these factors on paper
[approximately 10 minutes for the group, 1 minute per person]

3. **Opportunities and Innovations:** Go around the circle again and share the highlights from your partner's responses to question #3. Capture all the opportunities and innovations/possibilities on paper [approximately 10 minutes for the group, 1 minute per person]

4. **Identify Core Strengths and Factors.** Review your notes. Group: Identify common threads, patterns and themes for questions #1 and #2 and #3. [approximately 5 minutes]
 - For question #1: Identify the most important strength or factor that contributes to exceptional learning. Write this in BOLD marker on a page from your notebook paper, **large enough to be seen from a distance.**

 - For question #2: Identify the top strength or factor that contributes to high expectations and achievement. Write this in BOLD marker on a page from your notepad, **large enough to be seen from a distance.**

 - For question #3: Identify the top opportunity or innovation/possibility that we need to consider as we design our new education system. Write this in BOLD marker on a page from your notepad, **large enough to be seen from a distance.**

~You have 35 minutes total~

DREAM

Exercise #3

The Visual Image

We move in the direction of the images that we hold and the questions that we ask. When we create bold, vibrant, exciting images of the future together, we are creating the framework around which our plans and future actions can be built.

Purpose: To develop a bold, detailed, and inspiring image of the future that is based upon our *Positive Core*, current best practices, opportunities, and innovations/possibilities.

Self-Manage: Select a Discussion Leader, Timekeeper, Recorder/Reporter

Goals:

1. **Reflect Together:** Recall your response to Question #4, your *Positive Core*, best practices, opportunities, and innovations/possibilities that have emerged. What bold and desired images come to mind when you begin to imagine the future of Bibb County Schools?
[approximately 5 minutes]
2. **Develop a Shared Image of the Future:** Keep your conversation in the present tense, as if it is 2020 and the future is now:
 - What is happening that is different?
 - What are the systems, structures, and processes that were put into place that allowed this Vision to become the reality? [approximately 5 minutes]
3. **Presentation:** Choose a creative way to present your envisioned future (e.g. skit, song, magazine, news story, role play, drawing). Prepare a **one-minute "portrayal"** as if it existed now – use as many members of your group as possible in the presentation. [approximately 5 minutes]

~You have 15 minutes total~

DREAM

Exercise #4

The Opportunity Map

Purpose: To brainstorm one idea we can act on that will help us achieve the images that are both appealing and powerful for your group.

Self Manage: Select a Discussion Leader, Timekeeper, Recorder/Reporter

Goals:

Identify Best Images: *Reflect together about the images you saw and heard that are both appealing and powerful for you.*

1. **Brainstorm Actions We Can Take:** Identify one action that will help achieve those future images. Create a 5-word news headline that captures the essence of the item.
2. **Prepare for Report Out:** Write the 5-word news headline on a sheet of notepad paper: one headline per piece of paper; make it big enough to be seen at a distance.

~You have 15 minutes total~

Return for Day Two of Our Summit:

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*Strategic Planning for
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October 10, 2011
