

## **Shaping 4J's Future Themes from Staff and Parent Conversations – December 2007**

*Who participated:* Each school was invited to send staff and parent representatives.

December 17 – Middle and high school staff

December 18 – Elementary staff

December 20 – Parents

*Purpose:* To create an opportunity for system-wide conversation regarding results of the Shaping 4J's Future Survey and the future direction of 4J.

*Process:* Participants talked in small groups, discussing some of the following questions: *What is working well? What do you value most strongly? What are your hopes for 4J's future? What jumped out from the survey that needs to be considered? What are some of the challenges, opportunities and possible unintended consequences that we should consider? What could a healthy sustainable 4J look like? What questions haven't we asked ourselves about 4J's future?* Each meeting closed by asking groups to develop 1 or 2 proposals for the future. These were presented for the larger group to react to using a "clicker" response system. The parent meeting was shorter, but generally followed the same agenda as the staff meeting.

The following are some general themes that emerged consistently across all three conversations. Groups recorded their thoughts on flipcharts. Individual participants were also invited to write comments on index cards. (See the chart notes, index cards, and clicker question results from each conversation.)

### **Highly valued and should be maintained:**

- Strong educational programs
- Valuing every child
- Quality teachers and staff
- Equity
- Creativity and innovation
- Autonomy and flexibility
- Parent and community support
- Professionalism, respect, positive relationships
- Safe and respectful schools, positive behavior programs
- Volunteers, community connections, and parent and community involvement in schools

### **Hopes**

- Schools offer comprehensive, well-rounded programs including music, PE, arts, counseling
- Schools are able to address the diverse needs of students
- Choice affords opportunities for students and is available to all students
- Strong programs at both neighborhood and alternative schools
- Collaboration rather than competition
- Improved K-12 articulation

### **Concerns**

- Survey response may not be representative, had low participation among low-income families
- Survey did not force choices among options
- Competition among schools
- Change for any school(s) will have consequences and impacts on other schools, could create winners and losers
- Resources
- Difference between staff and parent opinions
- Middle school enrollment patterns will impact high schools





















































































