



New Albany for Kids

New Albany for Kids
Envisioning Academic Excellence
A Community Forum

Presentation to

New Albany – Plain Local School Board

June 22, 2009



STRONG SCHOOLS.
STRONG COMMUNITY.

www.newalbanyforkids.org
Proprietary & Confidential



A brief history of NAFK

- *Residents for Strong Schools*
 - Created as a “Ballot Issue PAC”
 - Lengthy history of leading support for school ballot issues
- *New Albany for Kids*
 - Updated name in 2007
 - Remain a Ballot Issue PAC providing support to NA-PL School District
 - The sole registered PAC/campaign committee
 - Lead initiatives to support ballot issues
 - May 2007
 - November 2007
 - November 2008
- Updated our mission
 - Broadened our scope in support of our mission to become an on-going advocate for academic excellence, not just active during ballot initiatives





Mission

- Previous
 - *New Albany for Kids* is a registered nonpartisan political action committee seeking to be an advocate for strong New Albany - Plain Local Schools by informing the electorate about issues at the local, state and federal levels that impact the education of our students.
- Revised
 - *New Albany for Kids* is an independent, grass roots volunteer organization. Our mission is to promote academic excellence in the New Albany – Plain Local School District through on-going advocacy, communication, and community involvement.



Community Engagement

- Development
 - NAFK leadership has advocated for community dialogue
 - We could not see any progress being made
 - Decided to act alone to initiate an engagement process
 - Developed and executed the program within approximately 3 weeks
- Constructive community dialogue is essential
 - Address concerns, challenges, & opportunities that we face together
 - Gain input, acceptance, and support from the broader community of stakeholders
 - Prepare properly for a strategic planning process
 - Create a culture of candor and process transparency



Envisioning Academic Excellence Forum

- Concept
 - Community forum to share knowledge, perspectives, & experiences
 - Provide a structured avenue for any interested stakeholder to help articulate the future direction of our school district
- Program (May 19, 2000)
 - Approx. 60 area residents, teachers, & business leaders attended
 - Initial program introduction and overview
 - Break out into four random sub-groups
 - Each sub-group was lead by an NAFK facilitator
 - Series of three questions
 - First two questions intended to stimulate thinking
 - Final question elicited envisioning future outcomes
 - The process was designed for brainstorming ideas, not evaluating



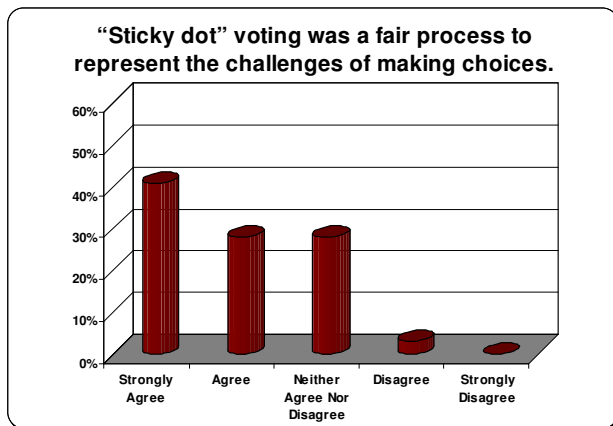
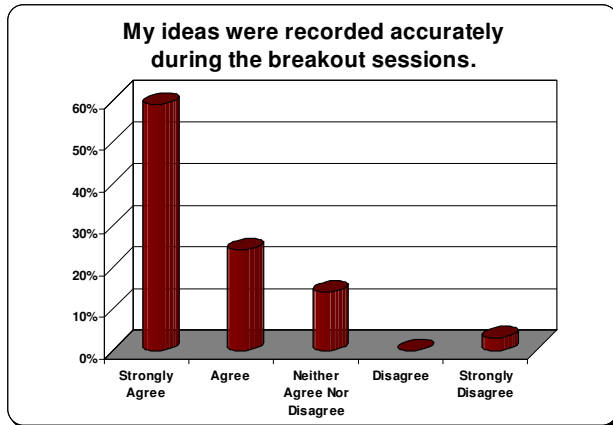


Envisioning Academic Excellence Forum

- Process
 - First spent considerable time addressing challenges and opportunities and then generated ideas for future goals
 - Identify and clarify ideas
 - Each group member given five votes to select “ideas that you believe are most important.”
 - Participants were allowed to spend all votes on one idea, across multiple ideas, or any other combination



Envisioning Academic Excellence Forum



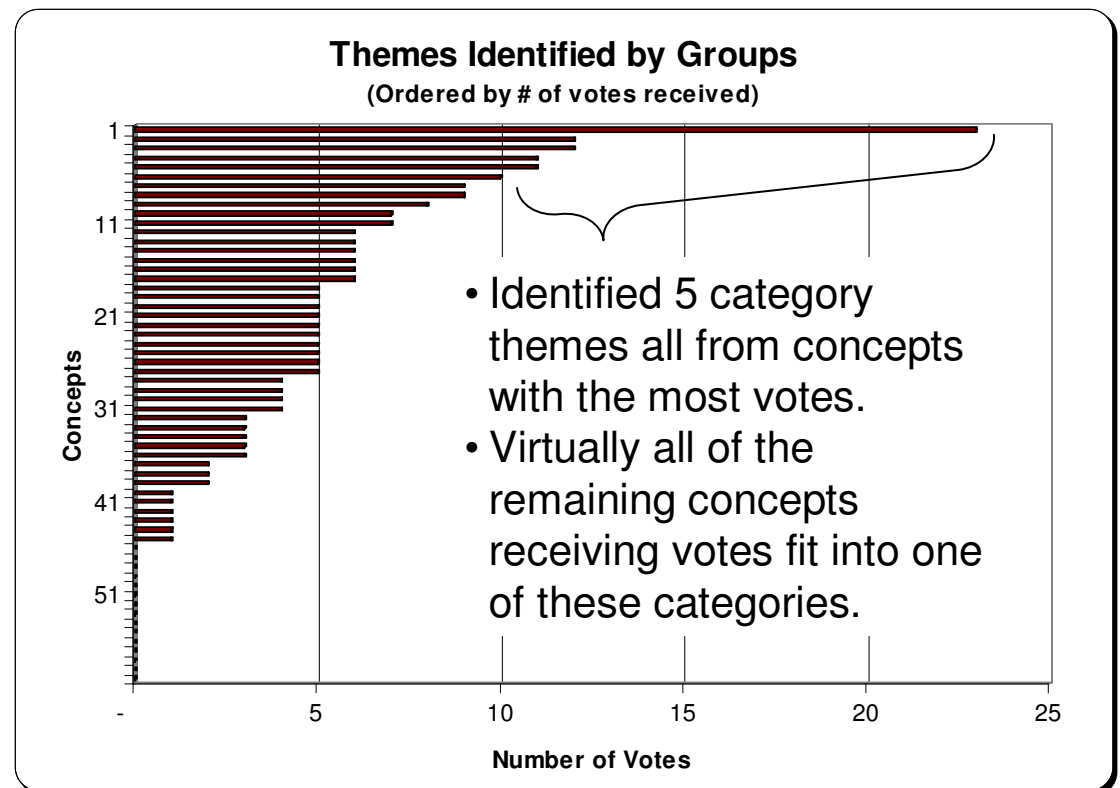
- Elicited participant feedback via a web-based survey
- Feedback and ideas are helpful for future NAFK programs
- Validated process and integrity of the information from forum
 - Ideas accurately recorded
 - Fair “forced choice” selection process





Analysis of Top Themes Identified

- “Given what we’ve discussed about the district’s strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, what should be the district’s top priorities as we move from good to great?”
 - Identified & clarified concepts
 - Each person had 5 votes for “ideas that you believe are most important.”
 - All themes identified from highest voted concepts





Analysis of Top Themes Identified

- Educational excellence
 - Questions about ways to define academic excellence, what to include within it, and how to attain it.
 - Desire to identify/compare with top districts across the country, not just locally.
 - Examples of high ranking concepts within this theme:
 - Create and utilize benchmarks to compare and contrast the “top” districts across the country to New Albany (23 votes)
 - True academic excellence (comparing college acceptances/destination to specific programs) (7 votes)
 - What is a “great” school district? Define it (6 votes)
 - Academic excellence (as evidenced by test scores) within a manageable operating budget (5 votes)
 - NAPLS should be the best at everything (5 votes)



Analysis of Top Themes Identified

- Innovative curriculum
 - Depth/breadth of curriculum and consistency of delivery
 - Identifying the necessary offerings for success in a global economy
 - Ideas for developing individualized curriculums
 - Examples of high ranking concepts within this theme:
 - Individualize teaching and learning to assure all students learn to their maximum potential (12 votes)
 - Ensuring well rounded students (11 votes)
 - Emphasize language arts and foreign language (9 votes)
 - Develop a group of diverse minds into tomorrow's leaders (6 votes)
 - Use virtual textbooks with assignments done by email and all students have their own laptop (6 votes)
 - More challenging programs in all areas of study (5 votes)
 - Early age foreign language and emphasis on the arts (5 votes)
 - Student specific curriculum (5 votes)





Analysis of Top Themes Identified

- Leadership and vision
 - A need for leadership and vision to define academic excellence
 - Desire for both visionary leadership and trust
 - Establishing civil dialogue impacted by trusted leadership
 - Examples of high ranking concepts within this theme:
 - Re-establish culture of civility (10 votes)
 - Passionate responsive leadership (6 votes)
 - Answer state funding issue – analyze other states that have acceptable funding model to understand and replicate it (6 votes)
 - Set realistic target for the cost of a quality education and stick to it (compared to other national school districts) (5 votes)
 - Re-establish trust between district leadership and constituents (5 votes)
 - Recapture single vision for the district (5 votes)
 - Stop complaining – volunteer, give (5 votes)



Analysis of Top Themes Identified

- Facilities and space planning
 - A desire to ensure appropriate facilities to meet our needs, yet not overly sacrifice student-to-teacher ratios.
 - Examples of high ranking concepts within this theme:
 - Build another school building and maintain small class sizes (12 votes)
 - Provide adequate facilities without increasing class size (8 votes)
 - Maintain low student/teacher ratio K-2 (7 votes)
 - Maintain single campus with necessary expansion to continue excellent tradition (5 votes)

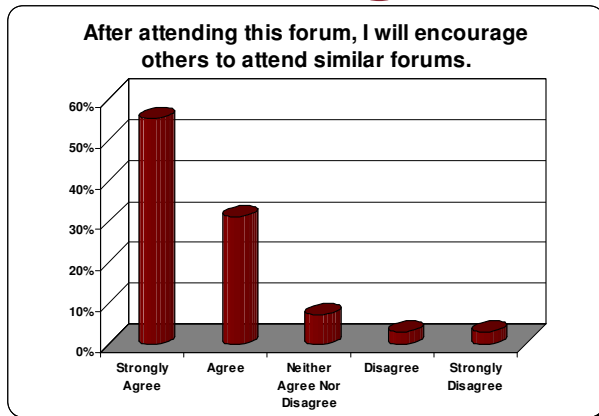


Analysis of Top Themes Identified

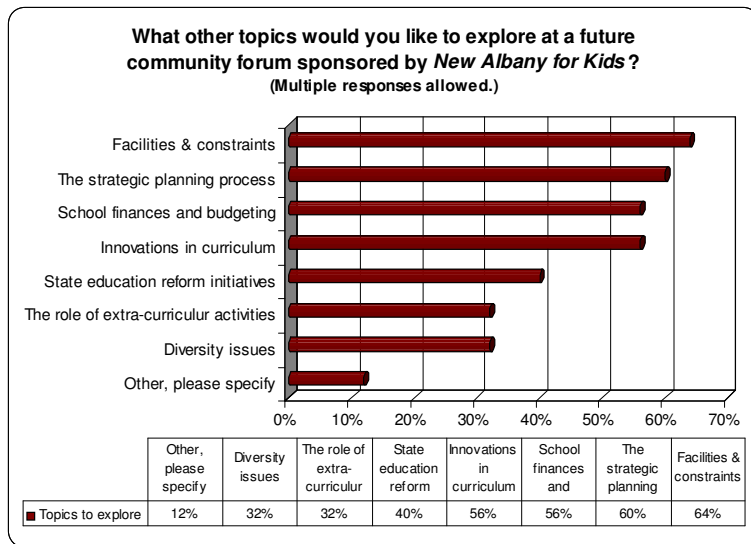
- Broaden views of collaboration and accomplishment
 - A dual concept encompassing both internal and external issues.
 - Internally, there is a desire to consider ways to use the available resources in order to build a stronger school system.
 - Externally, there was a desire to identify opportunities to engage community stakeholders in order to be more efficient and use a wide range of available resources, as well as increase a sense of unity.
 - Possibly a component of leadership vision or curriculum, but worthy of meriting its own category.
 - Examples of high ranking concepts within this theme:
 - More consistency in curriculum and progression from one grade level/building to another (11 votes)
 - Increase student pride and unity in their education and personal accomplishments (school pride and community pride) (9 votes)
 - More collaboration with broader community (6 votes)



Planning for the future



- Participants strongly agreed that they would encourage others to attend similar forums in the future
- Several relevant topics emerge as the areas of greatest interest



- Facilities
- Strategic planning process
- School finances and budgeting
- Innovations in curriculum

