

2020-21 Virtual Town Hall Series

Evaluation Summary

February 2021

This presentation reviews the goals of the virtual town hall event series and progress toward meeting those goals. Evidence of goal attainment was collected from dialogue during the town halls and from participant feedback in a post-event survey. This information is used for planning for next steps and informs the program evaluation of the student voice initiative within the WCSD. For questions about this presentation, please contact Jennifer Harris, program evaluator at jharris@washoeschools.net.



Student Voice Goals & Strategies

Goal 1. Develop educator capacity to promote & utilize student voice within school improvement efforts.

Goal 2. Increase educator capacity to incorporate student voice strategies into instruction.

Goal 3. Foster student SEL competencies, which will lead students to be more engaged in school, attend school more consistently, & be better prepared to partner with adults to improve their schools.

2020-21 Strategies

1. Provide professional learning to educators on student voice foundations & student-adult partnerships for school improvement.
2. Convene 3 district-level **student-led town hall events** to elicit student viewpoints on pressing issues & to model student voice practice.



Student Voice 2020-21 Virtual Town Hall Objectives

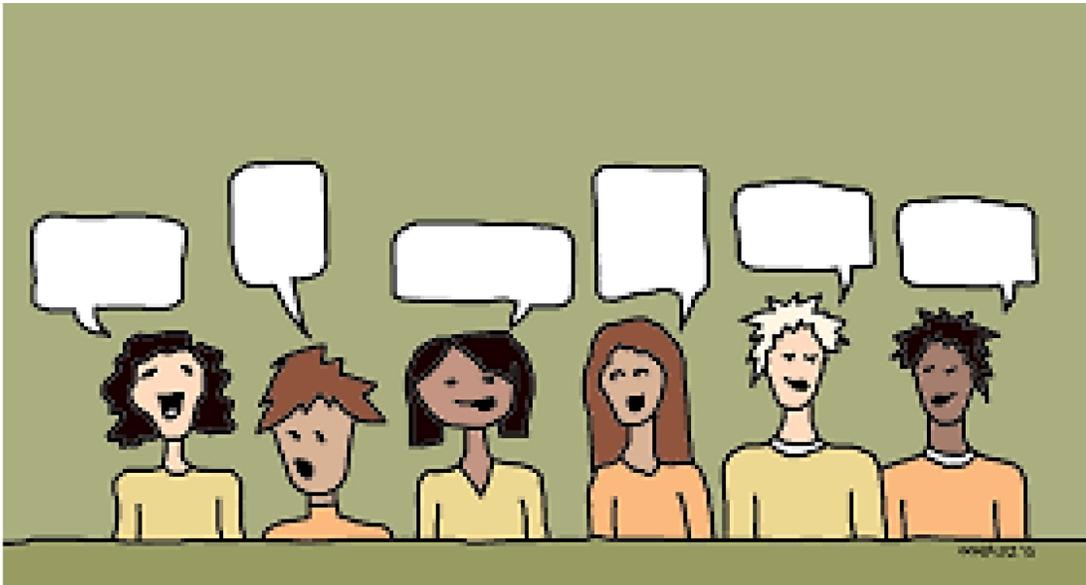
1. Provide forum for students to share insights & expand perspectives
2. Elicit student interests, concerns, & solutions to challenges
3. Cultivate critical thinking to engage in problem-solving
4. Prompt ongoing improvement efforts to address challenges
5. Raise awareness about & appreciation for student voice
 - Demonstrate value to adults
 - Generate student & adult interest
6. Create step-by-step toolkit for planning & implementing student-led discussion forums (*artifact*)



Objective 1. Forum for students to share ideas & be heard

Finding 1: Students benefit from listening to other students

- Connection to & solidarity with others: “I am not alone”
- Exposure to different viewpoints



Students want:

- ✓ More opportunities to connect with each other
- ✓ Include more diverse perspectives
- ✓ Ensure all can contribute to discussions
- ✓ Higher student to adult ratio

Objective 2. Elicit student interests, concerns, & solutions

Finding 2: Students have many ideas & they appreciate the opportunity to share their insights

- ✓ Ideas collected via chat box, video recording, & survey
- ✓ 3 summary briefs posted online
- ✓ 2 letters to the Superintendent
- ✓ Presentations to various district groups

Student Voice

Student Insights about Distance Learning

Five key insights were shared by students at the virtual town hall in partnership with the Student Council & the Office of Accountability held November 17, 2020.

1. Many students struggle to feel stressed, bored, unmotivated.
2. Communication with teachers virtually, such as through Zoom, is challenging.
3. Students ask for more time to complete assignments, especially when instruction is asynchronous.
4. Students acknowledge that teachers don't have time to be patient with their peers.
5. Attendance is inaccurate. Students call for more support.

Do you want more student voice opportunities by visiting [www.wcsd.k12.wa.us/studentvoice](#)?

Student Voice

Student Insights about Equity & Inclusion

Five key insights were shared by students at the virtual town hall in partnership with the Student Advisory Council & the Office of Accountability held December 15, 2020.

1. It has been a while since students have been heard.
2. Cultural expression should be included in the curriculum with BIPOC & LGBTQ+ representation.
3. Students want their classroom teachers & administrators to address their needs.
4. Students need more just & equitable opportunities to break the patterns of inequity.
5. Communication is super important. Connecting with other students & teachers is key.

Do you want to have more student voice opportunities by visiting [www.wcsd.k12.wa.us/studentvoice](#)?

Student Voice

Student Insights about Emotional Well-Being

Five key insights were shared by students at the virtual town hall in partnership with the Student Advisory Council & the Office of Accountability held January 12, 2021.

1. Students are not alone! Everyone has changes in moods & it is normal for feelings to fluctuate.
2. When students feel low, it is important to reach out for support. Talking to others about our feelings can be hard, but it is the best thing to do.
3. Healthy emotional well-being is maintained through intentional focus & work. Like the rest of our bodies, mental health requires exercise!
4. Students can advocate for their own well-being. Adults, such as teachers & counselors, want to hear about our successes, challenges, & ideas for supporting student needs. Let's invite them to listen.
5. Students want safe spaces at school & mental health resources. They ask for opportunities to connect to one another.

Do you want to be involved in future student voice events? Stay informed about future opportunities by visiting [WCSD's student voice webpage](#).



Objective 3. Cultivate student ability to develop solutions

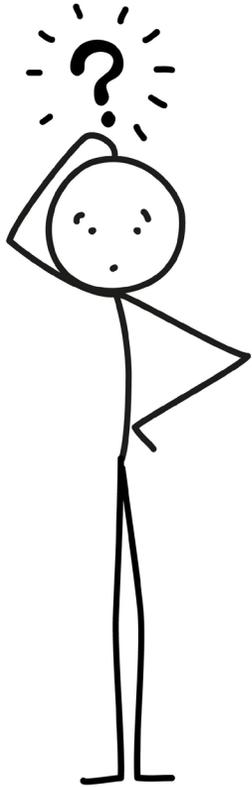
Finding 3. Discussions increased awareness & understanding of the topics, but minimally addressed solutions



- ✓ Town Hall was 1st step toward solutions
- ✓ Develop action plans to meet identified challenges
- ✓ Partnership between SAC, Blended & Distance Learning, Equity & Diversity, Counseling, & SEL Departments



Objective 4. Prompt ongoing improvement efforts



“It is good to acknowledge what was discussed, but what is the District going to do about it?”

Student participant, VTH Equity

- ✓ Multiple outlets for what was learned
- ✓ Post end of year summary on student voice webpage of what was learned, who it was shared with, & what was accomplished



Objective 5. Raise awareness of & interest in student voice



“Our WCSD students possess intelligent & insightful voices. Their diverse experiences must be explored, heard, & acted upon”

Adult participant, VTH Distance Learning

93% of students say they are “likely” or “very likely” to attend future town hall events

Strong interest in joining or learning more about the Student Advisory Committee (n = 68)



Objective 6. Create a toolkit for student-led town halls

Not Yet Created

Modifiable, step-by-step toolkit to support replication of student-led discussion forums

- Virtual, in-person, or hybrid formats
- scale-up, scale-to-school, & on-the-spot tools



- In development by Student Voice Coordinator
- Stand-alone document
- Similar format as [Student Voice Toolkit](#)
- Pilot school(s) for initial use



Recommendations for student voice forums



- 1. Revise outreach strategy** to increase participation & representation across gender, racial, ethnic, economic, interest, & academic characteristics
- 2. Modify discussion format** to ensure:
 - All students have opportunities to share their ideas
 - Specific, actionable suggestions are identified
 - Number of students exceeds the number of adults
- 3. Create a written, visible action plan** to enact changes
 - Include monitoring strategy to confirm progress

