Student Input for End-of-School Year Events, Summer Learning Programs, and 2021-22 School Year

Superintendent’s Student Advisory - April 26, 2021

What is needed to have the most successful closure of the school year possible, i.e., promotion ceremonies, graduation ceremonies, awards ceremonies, etc.?

1. Senior Recognition

“The most helpful thing would be to have an in-person graduation for seniors.”

“We should encourage more senior recognition as many seniors feel overlooked currently.”

“...something that could be done for all of the seniors this year before we graduate like a final senior goodbye event.”

2. Communication and Guidance

“As a student, it is stressful wondering how the year will end, so I would like to know what the rest of the school year holds.”

“Probably to know the for sure plans that would be happening next school year and the remaining of the school year like if we are coming back and what our school life would look like.”

“I think it would be helpful to have some guidance towards the end of the year for the incoming seniors as that time has been known to be a little intimidating because not everyone knows how to handle going into senior year, starting college apps, and making sure everything is all good to graduate.”

3. Preparation and Support

“As a senior, something that would be most helpful to me as I wrap up the remainder of the 2020-21 school year would be some sort of guided support or workshops from counselors or career centers on how to submit college decisions, what steps I need to take to claim financial aid and grants, or anything else relating to what to do for college acceptances.”

“To wrap up the remainder of the 2020-21 school year, as an AP student, I would like to see AP teachers place a greater emphasis on the AP exams. I feel that the learning throughout the year has been very different, and students may benefit from having more time to study to adjust to the AP exams. This is especially true because for many AP classes, as a result of the pandemic, the difficulty and structure have been modified so greatly that they no longer prepare students as effectively as before.”

“Being a senior, I feel it would be helpful for teachers to focus on the more important or more realistic things for our future.”
4. **Social Interaction and Support**

“Being able to be actually go to school and have that social interaction is what I personally miss the most, and my mental health has suffered from it tremendously.”

“I believe that the most helpful things currently include mental health check-ins that are more personal and one-on-one as many students refrain from speaking up unless directly asked. We need to set up some sort of buddy system for newer members of the school (like freshmen who haven’t been connected to the schools yet) to ensure that they are keeping up with school and if they feel that their transition to high school or the school in general was ok.”

What is needed to have the most successful summer learning program possible i.e., academic support, social-emotional support, enrichment, credit recovery, etc.?

1. **Preparation and Support**

“Maybe offer student check-ins with counselors. Especially for seniors who are planning to attend colleges. Making sure they have all resources needed for success.”

“The district could have one day in summer where students can go back to school and they can get a tour to see the changes up front so they can get a little more comfortable with their new surroundings.”

“It would be nice to see more mental health resources on-campus being made available for students especially since it has been really hard for a lot of kids this year and they will need help when we come back.”

2. **Student Involvement**

“Link crew for all lowerclassmen and offering support to ensure that they can get familiar with the school campus.”

“Perhaps provide lots of different activities to keep students involved, connected, and engaged. They just missed out on a whole school year behind a screen, and chances are, they lack that social interaction and miss normal life.”

“I think we could try a pen-pal system for freshmen to get advice for a better transition to high school. Include more club activities earlier to help rebuild the school communities. Try having extra optional classes for students to catch up on subjects they fell behind in the past year.”
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3. Communication and Guidance

“Giving constant updates throughout the summer as to what next school year could look like because it seems like it is all up in the air right now.”

“Over summer, I think it would be beneficial to all students in the district if we were continuously updated on the plans to return to school in the fall or if plans change due to the virus possibly getting worse. It would be good to know where the school district stands in regards to that.”

“Do a lot of planning and be extremely transparent.”

What is needed to have the most successful 2021-2022 school year possible, i.e., academic support, social-emotional support, extracurricular activities, college & career guidance, etc.?

1. Improved Student Experience and Supports

“If we are to continue the distance learning model, I would like to see more standardization and training for teachers. Some teachers like to use the mandatory guided practice time embedded into the schedule to teach while others do not. Some teachers require cameras to be turned on at all times while others do not. Some teachers use a Zoom link that requires students to sign in while others do not. While I have certain preferences for what should and should not be done/required, what matters most to me is making it uniform. I think that making it more uniform makes the school environment more suitable for learning, and it reduces student animosity towards stricter student teachers. For example, if it was made a standard for all teachers to use the guided practice time to continue teaching, students would focus more on learning, rather than on complaining about certain classes being longer.”

“A better mental health check in and support, as we've been in this environment for almost a year as we approach March, this has taken a toll on all of our students. It has not only affected their mental health but also learning performance, if we are needed to shut down again in the coming school year, the program needs to be better fitted to handle students’ needs and their struggles.”

“The relaunch of many one-on-one events that allow for direct connection to students, staff, and the community. Include extension classes for students that may need to catch up on classes that had fallen behind in so they are on track for graduation without having to worry about retaking classes without room in their schedules.”
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2. Normalcy

“I feel like the main focus should be getting students back in school in person as long as it is safe.”

“I would like to see the district celebrate the students a little more. This could possibly be a district-wide spirit week or something similar, just so students know that their hard work does not go unnoticed.”

“The possibility of rallies, games to watch, dances and if the district is still doing the hybrid schedule then asynchronous classes.”

3. Flexibility

“I would like to see asynchronous learning option plans for the 2021-22 school year. This should be an option for certain days or for students because I think that they can benefit from having their own schedule.”

“With the hypothetical return to some sort of traditional school setting next year, I think that easing into a full return to school could be good for the student’s mental health. After being home for a year, going back full time can seem really overwhelming socially and academically so having off days or tweaking the schedule a bit might help.”

“I'd like to see a plan that allowed clubs, programs, and groups to meet in person if we are still in the distance learning model.”

4. Safety

“I would like to see health and safety precautions as students go back to school. The health of students and staff is important, especially these days. Depending on the state of cases and how the school year is modeled, seeing health protocols put in place is the number one thing I would like to see.”

“It would be a good idea for the district to provide extra masks to school sites...and make sure that air filters & all safety protocols and equipment are up to date so there aren't any public health hazards when kids return to school.”
Educational Model Advisory Team (EMAT) Student Representatives - April 29, 2021

End-of-School Year Events
- Graduation
- In-person activities, especially for Seniors
- Opportunities to see teachers prior to the end of the school year

Summer Learning Programs
- Flexibility of ISP
- Tutoring for learning loss
- Tutoring for advanced courses (AP, IB)
- Acceleration courses
- SEL supports
- Courses on skills/knowledge needed as an adult (i.e., how to select an insurance policy, what employers are looking for in a candidate)
- Availability of meals, especially for low income students
- Transitioning into the new school year, especially elementary to middle/middle to high
- Frequent communication (status of planning for the new school year, health guidelines/expectations for events and during the school day)

2021-22 School Year
- Tutoring
- Making the most of high school to prepare for college
- Assistance with college applications
- Acknowledging the pandemic and not assuming it is a normal return to school - SEL supports