100 YEARS

ED TALK REPORT
Broward County Public Schools

2015/16

Ed Talk 2015/16

4th Annual Ed Talk
Saturday, January 23, 2016

The School Board of Broward County, Florida

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) Ed Talk is a public forum designed to discuss and prioritize educational strategies and engage the Broward community in the next steps to educate today's students to succeed in tomorrow's world.

Attendance
Since its inception in 2012, BCPS hosted four Ed Talk events. Ed Talk 2012 garnered participation from almost 400 students, parents, teachers, District staff/administrators, and business, community and faith-based partners. Participants at the following years' events totaled more than 400 stakeholders in 2013 and 2014, and a record participation of almost 700 individuals at Ed Talk 2015/16.

Focus
Ed Talk 2012 obtained stakeholders' opinions and perceptions on the development and implementation of the District's Strategic Plan. The District integrated the community's input into the Plan and Ed Talk 2013 engaged the community in further conversation on the three core components of the Strategic Plan: high quality instruction, continuous improvement and effective communication.

Ed Talk 2014 captured the feedback received from the stakeholders to further the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan's three core components and their impact on our community, our schools, and our students. Additionally the special areas of focus outlined in the Plan: Exceptional Student Education, Gifted and Talented Student initiative, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Minority Male and the Achievement Gap initiative and Early Childhood Education were deliberated.

Ed Talk 2015/16 focused on collecting stakeholders' feedback regarding the fundamental areas of education such as literacy, college and career readiness and student learning. The District plans to use this important information for the recalibration of the District's Strategic Plan.

Outcome
Over the past four years, Ed Talk established the importance of effectively engaging the District's stakeholders in public education conversations. The community's participation influenced several BCPS initiatives, including the public referendum (SMART) initiative. Without the Broward community's support and service, public education would not be possible.

This report highlights Ed Talk's demographic trends across four years and summarizes the stakeholders' feedback from Ed Talk 2015/16. Overall, feedback shows the sense of ownership that the community has developed towards the District's Strategic Plan and its commitment to educating all students to reach their highest potential.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your race?
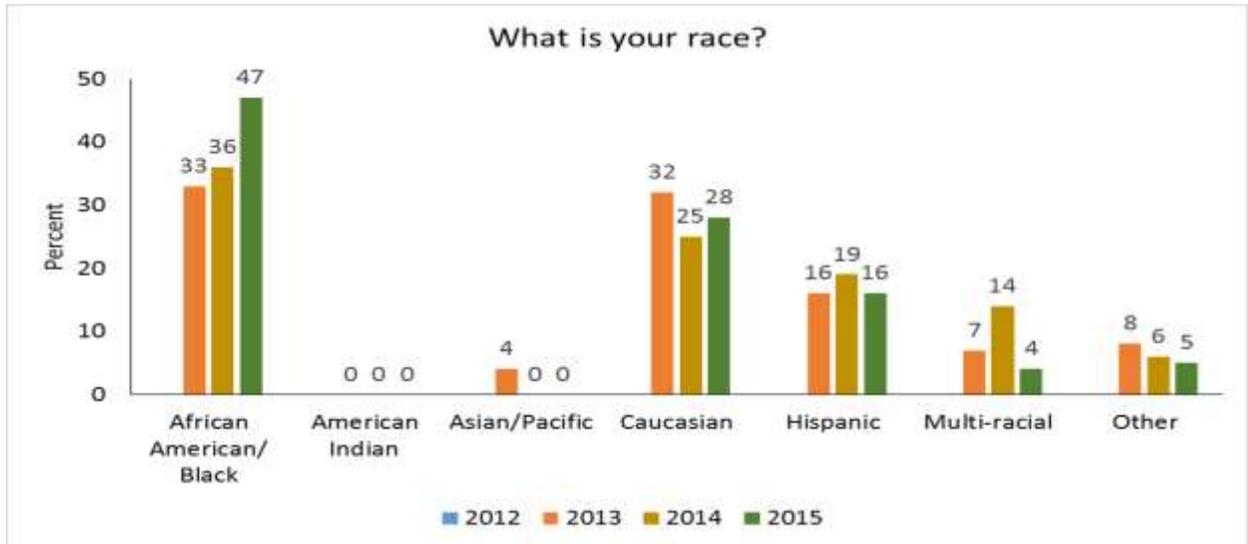
For the past three years, the majority of participants at Ed Talk are African American/Black.

What is your gender?
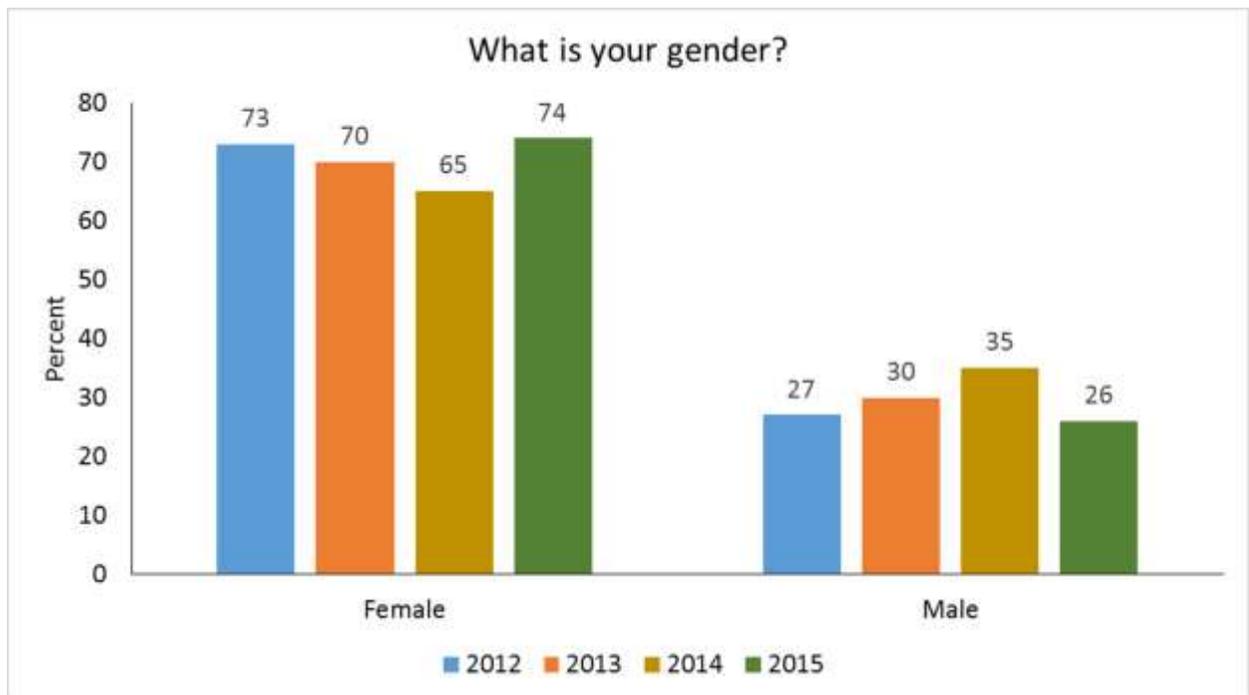
More women have attended each year, doubling the number of male attendees.

What is your age?
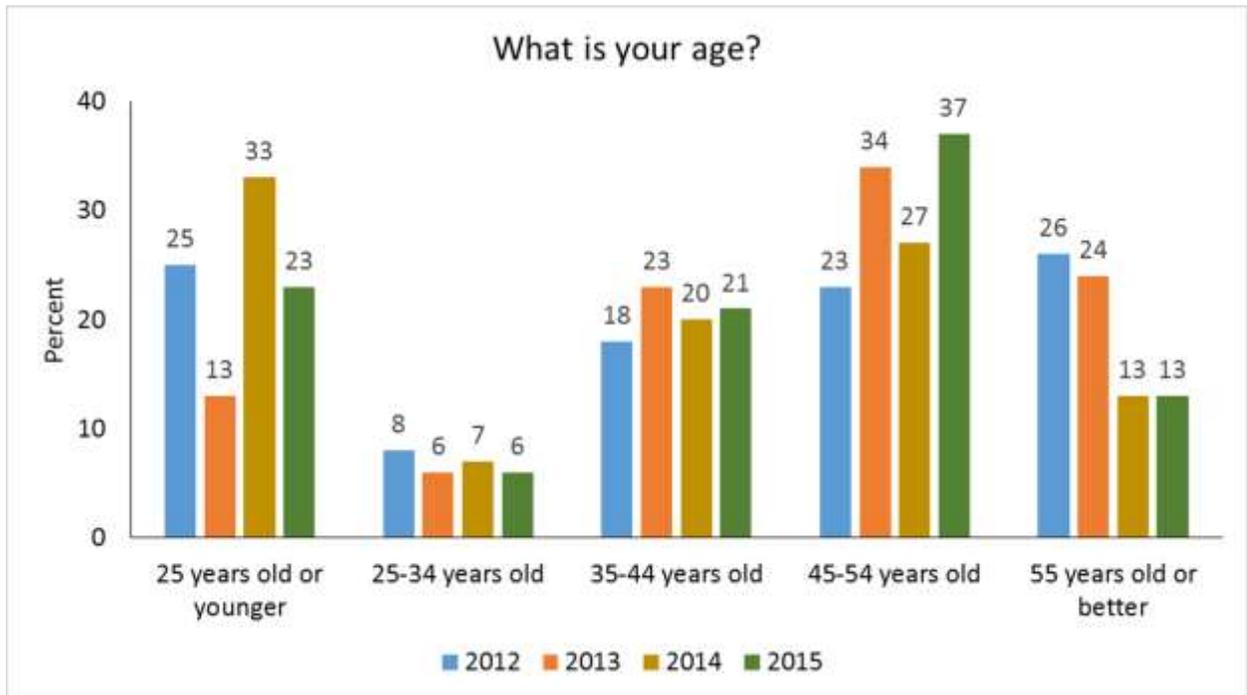
The majority of individuals attending Ed Talk are adults over 34 years of age, with a significant increase each year in those individuals between 45-54 years old.

In which BCPS district do you reside?
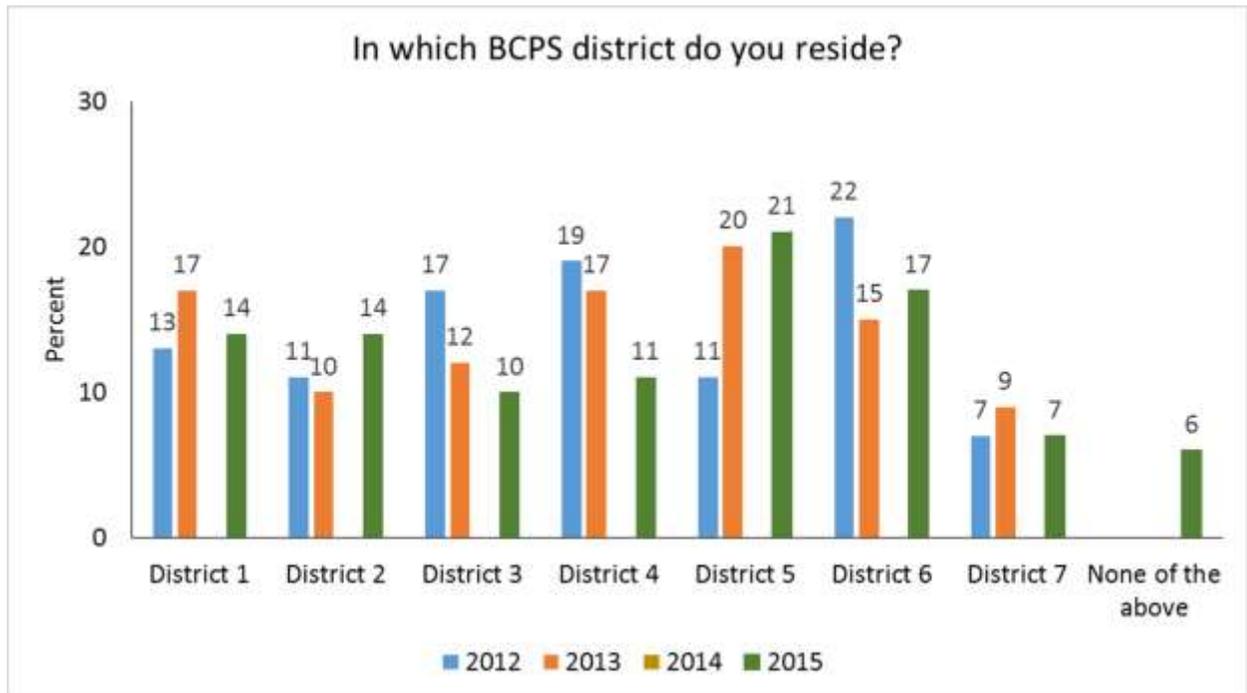
All seven districts are consistently represented at Ed Talk throughout the reported years.

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What is your educational attainment?
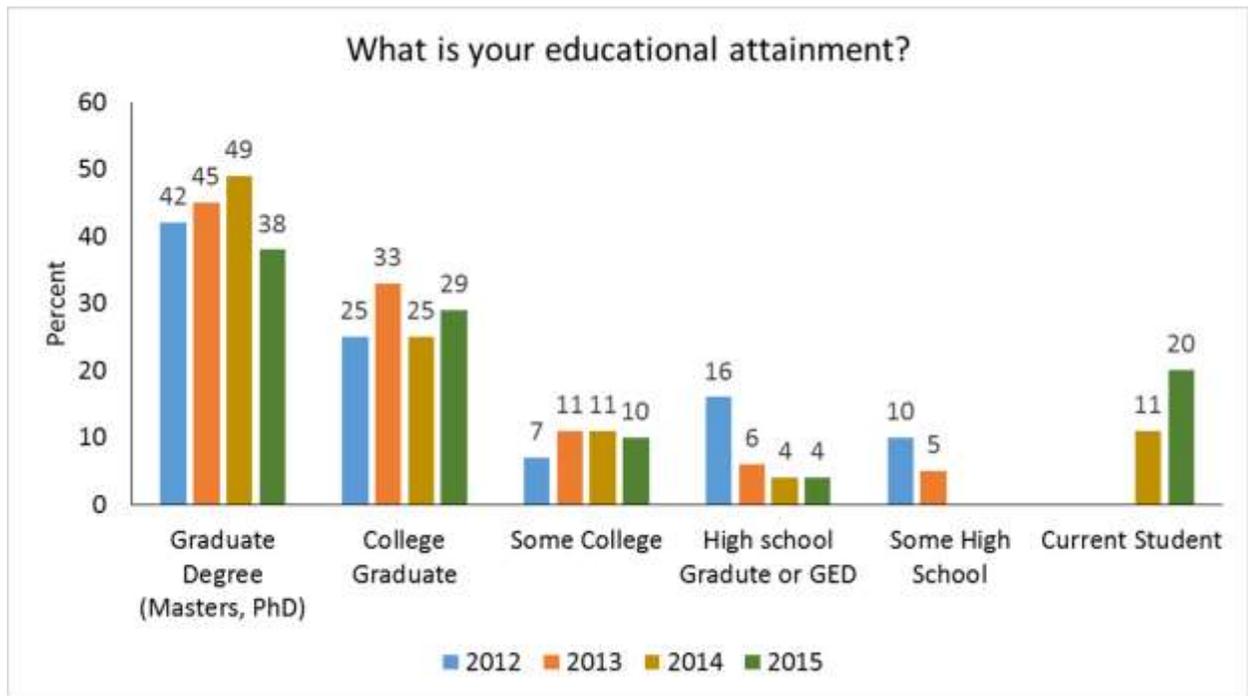
Participants with graduate and undergraduate studies represent the majority of attendees.

In terms of your role, what lens will you wear today?
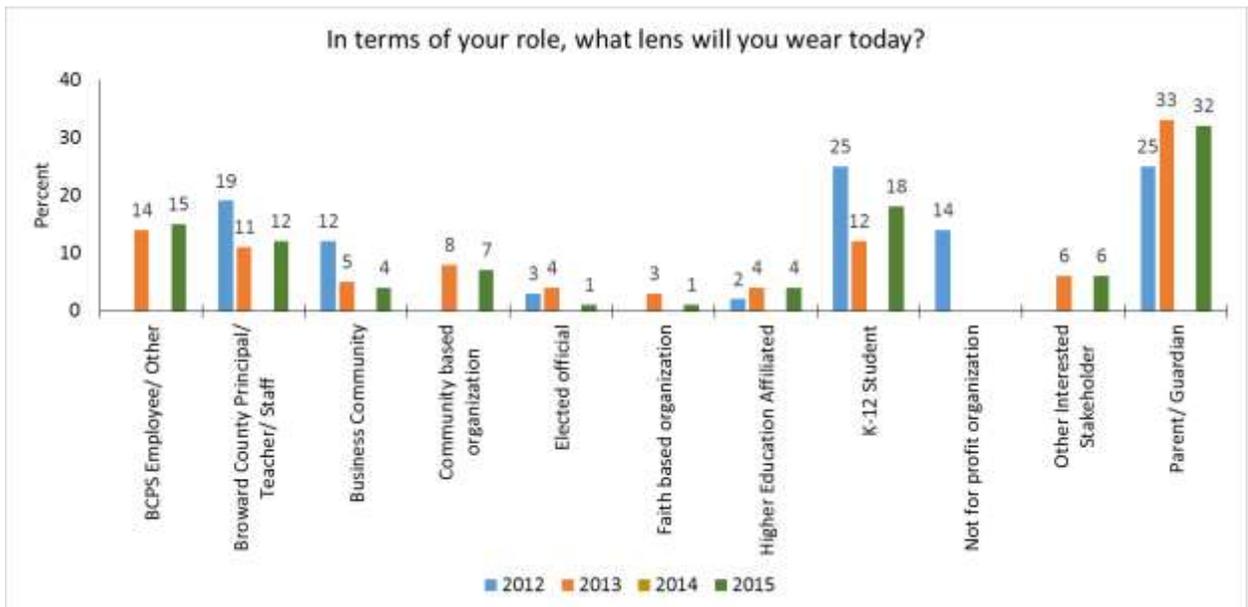
Parent and student attendees represent the highest number of participants.

OUR STUDENTS, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR FOCUS: LITERACY MATTERS!

Question 1: How do we increase literacy skills and narrow the gap in literacy?

Summary: The data analysis suggests that students should be **intrinsically motivated** to learn to read, and not reliant on extrinsic motivation. Additionally, it was found that reading is not in isolation; it is entangled with social-emotional well-being. Further, social-emotional well-being is critical for academic success and should be a focus in early childhood to help close gaps.

Theme	Responses
Assessments and Screenings	- Pre-screen all students for reading disabilities before entering kindergarten - Screen specifically for Dyslexia which may be underdiagnosed. - Screen for parental literacy when kids register for kindergarten - Early assessment to determine learning style
Community	- Outreach programs for - Preschoolers not attending VPK - Parents who do not understand English - Use religious and community centers (Churches, JCC, YMCA) to promote literacy - Create community reading rooms at schools or other public facilities - Local businesses offer incentives to students for reading
Disabilities	- Improve early screening, diagnosis, and support services. - Inform parents how they can support students with disabilities - Ensure students with IEPs are getting adequate services - Provide education about disabilities and stigmas - Allow children with ADHD to move around the classroom
Instruction	- Emotional Environment - Students should not feel they are reading under pressure - Instill a love of learning and reading; make it a **positive experience** - Personalized learning - Meaningful voice and choice in what they learn - Have students take ownership of their own learning - Find child's strength and build on it - Students should be **intrinsically motivated** to read; not reliant on extrinsic motivation

	- Teaching
	    o Be interactive and engaged with students
	    o Instill a love of learning and reading; make it a **positive experience**
	    o Teachers need to create strategies to motivate students
	
	- Differentiated Instruction
	    o Assess students prior to Kindergarten entry and separate readers from those who still need to learn letters and sounds
	    o Differentiation so that students who know how to read can read at a higher level or have some type of enrichment
	    o Teachers should be certain students get lesson before moving on
	    o Work as a team to differentiate to accommodate various learning speeds
	    o Provide meaningful learning opportunities to students who have mastered the information before the rest of the class
	    o Adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of each child
	    o Recognize that every child is unique in their ability
	
	- Strategies
	    o Foreign methods for teaching literacy can serve as examples (i.e. Finland)
	    o Give a purpose for reading and encourage critical thinking
	    o Teachers need to create strategies to motivate students
	
	- Make learning more **engaging**
	    o Give students with **choice** in that they read, providing materials that are
	        ▪ Culturally relevant
	        ▪ Appealing to different interests
	        ▪ Interesting
	    o Use **creative** ways to teach reading
	        ▪ Use creative, hands-on activities
	        ▪ Encourage kids to write their own books and present to the class
	        ▪ Act out characters of the story
	        ▪ Classroom should have interesting material so the kids want to engage in reading
	        ▪ Use centers and stations in elementary and middle schools
	        ▪ Reading buddies - partner with students with each other

	• Use cultural holidays to accentuate leaning • Provide a myriad of lesson activities to more engage students
Mentoring and Volunteerism	• High school students reading to/mentoring elementary students • Strong readers mentoring peers • Older students mentoring younger students • Engage retirees and other community members to volunteer to read at schools • Education majors from local colleges to intern as reading coaches • Encourage retired teachers to develop programs that early literacy is specifically needed • Have volunteers assist in individualizing reading plans • Have volunteers serve as Virtual Parents – a consistent person for a student to form a bond with - for students lacking role model at home • Offer community service hours to high school students who mentor

Parents/Home Environment	• **Parents can help by**
	  ○ Serving as a positive role model; reading in front of kids
	  ○ Reading to their children, beginning in the pre-natal period
	  ○ Asking questions when reading to ensure comprehension
	  ○ Making reading entertaining
	  ○ Encouraging older kids to read to younger kids
	  ○ Asking children what they read at school that day
	  ○ Establish a routine for the love of words and learning
	  ○ Monitoring what is happening in the classroom and intervening when necessary
	  ○ Reading at schools
	  ○ Forming book clubs to share information with other parents
	• **Schools can help parents by**
	  ○ Create a welcoming environment for parents/grandparents/guardians to come to school to talk to teachers
	  ○ Providing better communication to elementary school parents
	  ○ Communicating the positive - calling parents when students have a *good* day.
	  ○ Involving parents in summer learning

	- Inviting parents into the classroom to observe and provide additional support - Communicating to parents what happens in the classroom - Providing information about non-profit organizations and programs that help with literacy - Educating parents about academic expectations at each age level - Offering parent nights to give parents resources they can use at home - Educating parents about signs of learning disabilities - Giving parents resources to help educate the parenting community - Encouraging parents to read to children at the school - Educating parents about the importance of reading to children - Providing literacy training for illiterate parents
Pre-Schools/Head Start/ Early Learning Initiatives	- VPK and Headstart should have a common curriculum that is aligned with school to make better transition - BCPS can offer training to VPK staff - Offer transportation to VPK - Offer summer school to preschoolers - Start VPK at age two - Offer full day VPK - Bob's First Books – they work! - Use census to identify pre-school age students and offer things to them - Providing resources to parents in the hospital about how to educate children under age three; especially in low SES areas. - Providing a curriculum for parents to follow during the early childhood years
Policies and Miscellaneous	- Students should not be promoted when their literacy skills are not at grade level - Put the best teachers in the early grades - Alternative assessments for students who can't do well on FSA. Something like portfolio performance test for ELA 3rd grade. - Create IEPs for all students - Smaller class size (15:1); especially at Title I schools. - Common programs in all schools - Identify ways to bridge the communication and expectations between district initiatives and what is going on in the actual classroom.

	- Do not take recess away from kids as a punishment. - Offer multiple short recess breaks throughout the day. Texas study found kids were more focused when they had four 15 minute recess. - Start Kindergarten at age 6 so they are better able to focus. - Lack of consistency between schools. ESE/gifted program quality varies from school to school. - Change approach to testing to not punitive but rather to be used as an identifier - Find ways to move from accountability - Administrators should pay attention to and listen to students. If a whole class is struggling, look at the teacher. - Instructional process is under attack by all the testing and programmatic requirements - Increase pay for teachers - Encourage parents and students to get a library card - More school – longer day, longer year. - Lack of value of education in this country
Social-Emotional	*Reading is not in isolation; it is entangled with social-emotional well-being. Social-emotional well-being is critical for academic success and should be a focus in early childhood to help close gaps.* - Teach kids to feel comfortable and confident (it helps them to become good learners). - Coping and struggling through learning are important and must be supported through the social emotional aspect of learning - Use books to help teach students how to express their feelings and understand others - Coach students through disagreements - Ensure teachers are equipped/trained to deal with the emotional/social needs
Teachers and Staffing	- Teacher assistants or volunteers in classroom to help different level readers - Teachers need more time read with students, less time doing observations, paperwork, and computer work. - Develop and enhance teachers to learn how to better individualize learning for all student

OUR STUDENTS, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR FOCUS: PREPARING FOR SUCCESS!

Question 2: How can the community assist the District as we build a college and career ready culture?

Summary: The data analysis suggests that students should be **a community focus on helping students to solve real world "community" problems.** Additionally, it is suggested that **real life connection with the skills being taught in the classroom are very important for students to make connections and increase motivation and engagement in the classroom.**

The expectation should be that the student will be successful in his/her family and community, and should show excellence in any field of choice. Having expectations, encouraging success, supporting the child…teachers, parents, and the school board are a necessary part of making this happen.

Business and community members should be helping students through mentoring, internships, shadowing, career day, field trips, class presentations about career choices, and offer jobs to students over the summer. Furthermore, have leaders from the community come to the schools and share their expertise. For example, invite local banks to collaborate with teachers on the instruction of real life situations.

Theme	Responses
Counseling	- Students have a variety of skills and aptitudes and we need options for all - Identify interests and build individualized plans for personal goals - Counselors should meet with students earlier (before age 16) and more frequently - Guidance counselors should be able to focus on social emotional needs - Advise students about high school programs within the District that best meet their goals - Have BRACE advisors, and make it mandatory for students to meet with advisors face to face - Provide career map and timeline for student to have a realistic approach to college
Colleges	- Get local colleges to visit younger grade levels - Have BCPS graduates visit high school and feeder schools to talk about college experience
District	- Set up scholarship fund for businesses to contribute to - Expand the educational scope of Take Your Child to Work Day - Develop a program for small businesses to get involved with BCPS

	• Create a pipeline to more quickly develop relationships with local businesses and companies • Host out of state/country college tours starting in 9th grade
Exposure to Careers	• Start Career Days in elementary schools • Have more Career Fairs • Start exposure in elementary schools • Have classrooms themes promoting colleges and careers • Exposure to different pathways (college, technical schools, apprenticeship programs) • Exposure to a variety of careers across the spectrum of pay scales and required education • Have community members read career-related books and talk about their careers
Information to Students/Parents	• Provide information about scholarships and post high school options in middle school and early high school • Ensure students are aware of all resources available to them • Assist non-English speaking parents to understand college preparation and application process

High School	• Provide *more* opportunities in high school to expose students to different ideas and careers
	  o Electives
	  o Languages
	  o Options for acceleration for advanced students
	  o Sports
	  o Mentorships
	• Offer opportunities for growth and exploration that do not impact GPA
	• Offer more athletic scholarships and/or make it less expensive to be on athletic team
	• Introduce online courses earlier
	• Make real life connection with the skills being taught in the classroom to help increase motivation and engagement in the classroom.
	• Monitor students for mastery of material before moving on to help them be better-prepared for college
	• Give students opportunity to have open dialogue with school administrators
	• Provide more preparation for college-ready assessments
	• Give students the opportunity to study what they are interested in
	• Continue to build the International Baccalaureate and dual enrollment programs

	• Have after school clubs to fill out scholarship information
Scholarships	• Offer more student centered-scholarships that expand the focus beyond math and science to be in-tune with the strengths that many students have; an example is the LivMas scholarship from Taco Bell which focuses on creativity, ingenuity, and artistic ability. • Offer scholarship money for families who do not fall under the poverty line and are not minorities • Create a scholarship fund for businesses to contribute to District funds for students
Skills	• Work soft skills necessary to be successful • Teach perseverance by having competition in which not everyone gets an award • Instill independent life skills to prepare students to remain focused in college
Mentoring	• Expand the scope of Mentoring Tomorrow's Leaders (MTL). MTL is a program that promotes positive relationships between students and helps them to stay clear of gangs. Mentoring students give mentees advice on how to go through life in a positive manner. They also learn about college requirements and take tours around the state to see other colleges. The students are positive role-models to the younger students at the school. When students can see that someone "made it", it is inspirational. • Help students find ways to fit in to prevent them from getting involved with negative influences

OUR STUDENTS, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR FOCUS: STUDENT LEARNING!

Question 3: How can we help students?

Summary: The data analysis suggests that **students would like more ownership in how they learn, test, and progress through their academic journey.** In addition, the analysis stated that more in-depth conversations are needed regarding what the data mean and what needs to be done to improve academic standing as it relates to the data; move beyond traditional teacher-student data chats.

Theme	Responses
Instruction	- Incorporate more project-based learning to build mastery of standards where student are applying a deeper level of understanding - Use multiple ways to teach; change the delivery of the curriculum to be more effective. - Students should have the opportunity to select and own their learning process and what works for them to achieve. Student led and developed instruction, perhaps through academic games and competitions. Students can explain their process of learning and how they discovered the answer. - Teach students important skills related to school performance, including studying, note-taking, and test-taking. - Ensure courses are rigorous enough - Instead of teaching to the test, teach to the standards with rigorous, engaging lessons and activities - Have action plans for students at all levels, even those excelling.
Data	- Incorporate more project-based learning to build mastery of standards where student are applying a deeper level of understanding - Use multiple ways to teach; change the delivery of the curriculum to be more effective. - Students should have the opportunity to select and own their learning process and what works for them to achieve. Student led and developed instruction, perhaps through academic games and competitions. Students can explain their process of learning and how they discovered the answer. - Teach students important skills related to school performance, including studying, note-taking, and test-taking. - Ensure courses are rigorous enough - Instead of teaching to the test, teach to the standards with rigorous, engaging lessons and activities - Have action plans for students at all levels, even those excelling.

Additional Support	• Give their parents the list of questions provided on the EdTalk document to help students connect with their parents about school • Have tutoring available (use Broward College students) • Increase parent involvement • Provide coping strategies to students who are stressed about testing. • Ensure students are aware of the expectations of the standardized tests
How can we help parents?	• Educate parents about standardized tests: what do they measure, why are they important, what do the score levels mean, what can they do with the score information • Let them know the specific standards their child is having difficulty with and how they can help them to improve. • Teach them how to compare multiple sources of data on their child, and how to interpret the findings • Supplement communications sent home with students with an electronic version to ensure they receive it • Have teachers share and explain data reports with parents; including implications • Make parents feel comfortable and welcome when discussing data • Have data reports such as the one shared at EdTalk loaded into Virtual Counselor • Provide parents with opportunities to meet teacher and observe the classroom • Call parent as soon as the student falls behind and discuss a plan on how to help student improve • Be honest and forthcoming about where their child is as well • Provide parents with strategies they can use at home to help their kids • Post "questions you might ask your student" on school websites and give out at PTA meetings
How can we can help teachers?	• Not all student are motivated to learn. As teachers, we need to know how to motivate and explore different teaching and learning techniques to support students. • Educate parents about standardized tests: what do they measure, why are they important, what do the score levels mean, what can they do with the score information • Let them know the specific standards their child is having difficulty with and how they can help them to improve. • Teach them how to compare multiple sources of data on their child, and how to interpret the findings

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What are possible explanations for the discrepancy between the classroom grade and standardized test score?	• Classroom curriculum may not be aligned with standards in content or rigor • Could be an ESE or ESOL student who can do better with supports in classroom. • Test may have expectations that are too high and unreachable for many students • Teachers may not be truly qualified to teach higher level courses • Teachers may not know expectations of the new rigorous tests • Test may not be a good measure of if they are learning in the classroom • There may be a systemic problem with grades being inflated in order to move students along and not upset others. • There is a disconnect between the ability to meet state standards and the ability to meet classroom expectations. • Some people don't test well • Students may get promoted without being proficient