

Problems:

Now focuses on passing SOLs and standardized tests

Teaching to the test

Not learning

Stress

Focused on getting into college

Schools are trying to fit every student in the same mold

Students are taking easy classes in order to pass--not pushing themselves to potential

Solutions:

Should focus on life after high school

Tests should not matter as much as they do

Discussions are better than memorization

Individualized learning

Less focus on college diploma (vocational schools okay!)

Assessment

- More hands-on activities and group projects
- More creativity→ allow students to be successful in their own way
- Progress and growth on assessments should be most important
- Expose students to different environments when test taking
- NO TEACHING TO THE TEST

Class Instruction

- Group activities
- Support from teachers
- In class work for effective
- Don't teach to the test
- **Passionate teachers are better/welcoming environment**
- Integrate all types of learning abilities
- More interactive
- Class groups by learning type
- Should prepare us for future
- Process of learning v. assessment based learning
- Eliminate busy work
- Individualized--make time to cater to every student's needs
- Help students become interested in classes they aren't interested in (real world applications)
- Allow student opinion
- Let the students know the "why" of classes in general, and each class
- Should be an environment that helps each student to develop their own voice
- Smaller classes
- State government checks on teachers to make sure they are teaching effectively

Requirements/Credit

- Internships
- More teamwork
- Based on what students want to do
- Well-rounded but should have more options in classes
- Less written exams
- Credit for extracurriculars
- Electives more focused on careers
- Classes like gov, econ, and finance

Workplace Skills

- Final projects instead of written exams (project-based learning)
- Notes to worksheet to test cycle bad
- Community service clubs
- Personal laptops
- More technology
- GIS→ gifted independent study (job shadowing/mentorships)
- Collaboration in school helps with future jobs
- Allow students to take more responsibility so they can learn to become responsible young adults in a safe environment

Community Engagement

- Important but not met in schools
- Community and career go hand in hand
- Government class with mandatory community service
- Sports should have required service to be on team
- Applying social and cultural acceptance starting in lower school levels
- Influencing positive ethnic and cultural interaction at home

Civic Responsibility

- Career class
- Internships
- Explore earlier
- Build strong community
- Educate students on issues they can be involved in
- Government students can take interactive field trips
- Student councils can participate in school board meetings

Content Knowledge

- Should not be SOL based→ should go beyond
 - Disconnect between class grades and SOL scores
- Clubs should be classes
- More STEM classes
- Final projects not tests

- More interactive in classroom
- Should prepare for life after high school
- Offer classes for future career
- More classes teaching things necessary for the future
- Internships
- Strict schedule of learning material doesn't allow exploration of further knowledge
- Teachers could submit their own layout and schedule for teaching, to be approved by the school board with broader guidelines to allow for more curriculum flexibility
- Ability to test out of certain subjects

School Climate

- Individualized
- Public place to find volunteer opportunities (website)
- Promote people of different demographics interacting
- Look for different punishment methods (don't just suspend kids)
- Anonymous ways to report bullying

Real World Application

- School should prepare you for life
- Job opportunities
- Relate topics to real world
- Don't cater to tests
- Allow expression for teachers
- Even in classes without applications teacher should state objective
- Certification programs (CNA, sports medicine)
- Career classes
- Potentially counselors could meet with students once a month to help create an individualized track through school for each student, including introducing them individually to college-- also recognizing that not everyone has to go to college
- Life skills class (checkbooks, taxes, cooking, etc.)

Main points:

Kids hate SOLs. They think they make learning boring, they're stressful, and they cause teaching to the test

They want more "hands-on" learning and project-based assessments instead of memorization and written exams

They want school to focus and prepare you more for after high school whatever that may be (college, job, vocational school) and lay out all career and education options for you

Real world application is key and internships are great ways to do that

They want more individualized learning→ catering to different learning abilities and feeling a sense of importance from their teacher

They think community service should be a larger part of your school life (more opportunities, requirements, information)

Want classes that teach “real life” skills and get credit for your extracurriculars/classes about what you want to do in future

Peer tutoring/mentorship/study groups are a great way to delve into a subject and better understand topics