

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING:

VISION TEAM REPRESENTATIVES WORK SESSION (10/17/11)

Summarized by Tom Olson

Work Session Facilitator

ENTHUSIASMS

- Helping students develop critical thinking ability by adding “real world/authentic” relevance to their classroom learning
- Builds a stronger sense of “community” (intergenerational, community cares, “win/win”, adults caring helps with student self esteem)

CAUTIONS

- Be very careful to tie volunteer work directly to teachers’ goals for developing/reinforcing critical thinking skills
- Work to broaden and deepen staff and community understanding of the program
- “Its all about relationships”----work very carefully to “match” volunteers with students (and teachers) and develop a strong program for training of staff in effective ways to use volunteers, and training of volunteers
- Don’t “rush” the program. Timeline for preparing for the bench test may be too short
- Worry constantly about “sustainability” of the program over time. Maintain a clear and sharp focus to the work and continuously collect good data to identify successes and needed refinements in the program

TYPES OF HELP IN NEXT STEPS THAT THE VISION TEAM REPRESENTATIVES OFFERED (in order of frequency mentioned)

- Participating in the Design Conference
- Spreading the word about the program and recruiting community volunteers
- Getting my organization to provide expertise through tours of work sites (govt. and private retail and manufacturing businesses), job shadowing, guest speakers, use of our technology expertise, explaining critical thinking work demands in the faith based community)
- Researching opportunities for additional funding and grant writing
- Offer help to the Coordinator (“opening doors” to relevant people, understanding our specific school context, briefing on existing similar efforts like ASPIRE, encouraging participation in the program, highlighting successes)