

**Maryland Youth Advisory Council
Carroll County Community Conversation
February 15, 2017
Century High School
6:00 – 8:00 pm**

Assets and Strengths in Carroll County		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Education System • Youth Leadership Opportunities • Growing Community • New Businesses • Economically Affluent Area • Parents working in D.C., NYC, and Philadelphia – close proximity to metropolitan cities • Access to information – news, reliable sources • Informed Community • Large number of schools • Diversity of community – background and experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extracurricular activities – clubs, art, drama, sports • Farmland – Agriculture • Growing housing developments • Senator Ready – Scholarship Opportunity • Desire of Youth to Make Change • Vocal Youth Leaders • Outreach Opportunities through variety of clubs • MYAC • Maryland Association of Student Councils and local Student Government Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maryland Leadership Workshop • Carroll CAN - activist group on local issues • HOBY • Coach Holzman and Coach Wunder • Involved Parents • Church Communities • Connections to youth outside of Carroll County • Future Business Leaders of America

Problems, Issues, and Concerns in the Community		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth do not access all information • Youth not able to make well-informed decisions/opinions • Not open to other opinions – Bias • Cost of College • Not enough merit-based financial aid • Student loans – hard to pay back, not forgiven debt • Lack of LGBTQ acceptance • Backlash from changing graduation robes to be unisex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumption of sexuality based on interest • Lack of religious acceptance of LGBTQ community • Not a lot of diversity in county = not as accepting vvv • Racism • Not having connection with people who are different – uncomfortable with unknown • Cyberbullying – not just violence is hallways • How schools address bullying is not look like what is actually occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health issues • Partying • Lack of resources or knowledge about how to help support youth in crisis • Stigma – youth are scared to share when they need help • School Assemblies and curriculum does not relate to youth – how presented vvv • Over testing – HAS, AP, Finals, PARCC vvv • Educations focus on Grades and AP exams

Prioritized Issue Areas
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School assemblies not relating to or created by youth 2. Lack of diversity and acceptance

Causes of Ineffective School Assemblies

- Created by adults with no youth input
- Student-created plans must be approved by adults
- Student expectation that assemblies will be boring
- Not personalized to needs of youth or particular school
- Assemblies feel like a requirement
- Messages are “don’t do this, or be punished”
- Messages from Sheriff are not meaningful or memorable
- Stigma to share personal story – peer pressure to be like everyone else
- No debriefing opportunities after difficult conversations
- Not enough time to go in-depth
- Adults are not aware of what students need following assemblies
- Administration does not want to take away instruction time for discussions
- Hard to have uncomfortable conversations with people you do not know or trust
- Advisors do not know how to facilitate conversations when they feel uncomfortable
- Not everyone has strong relationships with teachers
- Teachers need to listen better to students
- Teachers are not open to build relationships with students
- Teachers/Administrators do not know what students want or like
- “It’s my job to be your teacher, not your friend.”
- Not enough collaboration with students and interactive participation
- Administration is not involved as participants of assemblies
- Debriefing is not on the test

Solutions

Have a meeting with Administration Regarding Unity Day

- Set a formal time and agenda in advanced – more than one meeting
- Involve administration in the process of planning
- Have a clear objective; provide multiple options for feedback on full execution
- Feedback is not just ‘yes’ or ‘no’ but a conversation

Students need to invite advocates to meetings and know about the plans

- Outline of how adults can help

Staff share information with each other and honor the ideas of students

Get clubs involved

- Use personal network to encourage students to participate
- Build culture of participation and normalize

Students (not just leadership positions) get involved

Advertise/encourage directly and personally – not just a flyer and multiple times

Identify strengths of people to tasks or talents

Conversations with teachers prior to debriefings to make them comfortable and prepared

Structure debriefing as a conversation – not just “how did you feel?”

- What connected with you? What impacted you?
- What bothered you? What did you disagree with?
- What was missing? What more did you want?