

# **COMMUNITY RESEARCH TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC PLANNING**

## **Winter 2018 FOCUS GROUPS REPORT OF FINDINGS Parents, Staff, Students, Superintendents, and Community Leaders**

January 8, 2019

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## INTRODUCTION

As Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD) embarks on a long range strategic plan, we recognize it is essential to communicate with and involve its communities of parents, staff, local district superintendents, community leaders and students into its planning process. Consequently, TBAISD has commissioned Superintendent Dr. Nick Ceglarek to conduct this related community research.

The value of this community research is threefold:

1. First, this community research collects each stakeholder group's distinct perceptions of the TBAISD's relevant education needs, issues, culture and performance.
2. Simultaneously, this research enables TBAISD to engage in dialogue with its various community members and strengthen a collaborative relationship.
3. Finally, this research acts to inform district residents, staff and students about the areas of potential improvement facing TBAISD and alternative solutions.

This community research centers around plans to improve teaching and learning as well as improving services and programming within Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District -- including academic achievement, instruction and curriculum, parental support for their children's learning, the surrounding educational culture and environment, and supporting programs, services and infrastructure comprising the total educational experience for TBAISD students and their families.

## Methodology

This report describes findings from the first phase of this community research study - eleven focus groups conducted between October 12-November 30 with a *total of 90* parents, superintendents, business/community leaders, staff and students. Attendance was outstanding – excluding one parent group (3 out of 11), 87 out of 130 students, leaders and staff who responded to the invitation actually attended, representing a 67% response rate.

Four groups were conducted with 29 representative of TBAISD current students attending the Career-Tech Center, New Campus, Adult Community Experience (ACE), and Life Skills Center; two focus groups with 11 parents, business, and community leaders; four groups represented 37 staff from Oak Park, Traverse Heights, Life Skills, Career-Tech Center, Administration Building, Early Childhood, and Itinerant Staff; one group represented by 13 of the local district superintendents.

The second phase of this community research is comprised of a series of surveys scheduled for Spring 2019 with TBAISD current parents and other residents, staff, local district leaders and students in TBAISD programs. These focus group findings guide development of the survey questionnaires.

Most focus group participants were randomly selected and emailed invitations by the superintendent's office approximately two weeks prior to the group sessions (Superintendent, Business/Community Leaders and New Campus, ACE, Life Skills Center student groups were not random). Random selection was accomplished by utilizing the staff directory segregated by building, then randomized selection. The PowerSchool data base was utilized to randomize the student and parent selections. Invitations to designated community leaders and parents were extended via mail, email and telephone by the superintendent's office.

Additional information regarding participants included:

- CTC Students AM/PM (all counties represented, homeschool and Grand Traverse Academy)
- Adult Community Experience (ACE) Program and Life Skills Center
- New Campus (representing Antrim, Grand Traverse, Benzie and Kalkaska counties)
- Parents (Head Start/Early Childhood, New Campus and Life Skills – Districts from: Benzie, Mancelona, and Kingsley)
- Superintendents (districts represented: Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS), Glen Lake, Kingsley, Leland, Elk Rapids, Benzie, Suttons Bay, Buckley, Kalkaska, Forest Area, Frankfort-Elberta, Northport, Grand Traverse Academy)
- Executive/Business Partners: (TCAPS, Leelanau County, Village of Kingsley, Traverse City Tourism, Northwestern Michigan College, National Cherry Festival, Traverse Connect, City Manager of Traverse City)
- TBAISD Staff: (Traverse Heights, Oak Park, New Campus, satellite locations, Career-Tech Center, Life Skills Center, Infant Toddler, itinerants, Administration building/East Arnell)

Dates, times and locations of the eleven focus groups include:

Superintendents:

Friday, October 12, 2018 at 11:00 a.m., located at Crystal Mountain Resort, 12500 Crystal Mountain Drive, Thompsonville

Students:

Wednesday, November 7, 2018 at 9:45 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., Career-Tech Center (CTC students)

Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 8:30 a.m., Life Skills Center (ACE and LSC students) and 12:30 p.m., TBAISD Administration Building (New Campus students)

Parents and other residents (business/community leaders):

Thursday, November 15, 2018 at 4:15 p.m., TBAISD Administration Building

Wednesday, November 21, 2018 at 12:00 p.m., Career-Tech Center

Staff members:

Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at 3:30 p.m., Traverse Heights Elementary School

Wednesday, November 28, 2018 at 3:00 p.m., Career Tech Center

Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 3:00 p.m., TBAISD Administration Building

Friday, November 30, 2018 at 2:00 p.m., TBAISD Administration Building

The student and staff groups lasted 60 minutes, while the parent and community leaders groups lasted between 90 and 120 minutes.

The research design, recruiting invitations, confirmation letters, moderator's discussion guide and this report were developed by Dr. Nick Ceglarek. The focus group discussions were moderated by Dr. Nick Ceglarek.

The contributions by Renee Childers, Coordinator of Human Resources & Administrative Services are duly and appreciably noted here.

## CONCLUSIONS

The *“caring, expert staff” are the greatest asset of Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District. Students, parents and leaders applaud them for their commitment and personal attention ...* “they treat us (students) with respect and like adults. They actually care about us and want us to be successful.”

TBAISD is highly respected. *“Because of the support of the board and administration, staff are highly trained and provide that expertise and experience to enhance the work of others.* CTC is one of, if not the BEST, tech center in the nation.” And, *“I feel surrounded by colleagues that are brilliant and passionate.”*

TBAISD embraces continuous improvement model, and staff feel encouraged/supported to grow professionally. *“TBAISD has given me the opportunity for a lot of professional development. Also, materials, supplies, and testing equipment is always supported to ensure we do our job to the best of our ability.”*

Building upon and enhancing local school partnerships/relationships is looked on favorably with all constituents while it is recognized that depending on the district, the needs vary. *“With limited resources local districts rely heavily on TBAISD expertise and support in areas like Business Services, Professional Learning, and Technology. That will be needed more into the future.”*

Transportation, ride times, and effects of multiple school start- and end-times continues to need further research. *“I understand that you have a large geographically region, what...is it 5 counties? But, over an hour and 45 minutes on the bus seems excessive.”*

Many *believe there is community confusion around the role and function of TBAISD. Majority supported considering messaging and branding.* “Whenever I tell someone I work at TBAISD, they ask how my psychology degree is helping me with the credit union. That's almost exactly my experience in 6 years, I find it amazing how many people don't even know we exist.”

Facilities needs include additional space for certain programs (Early Childhood, office space for itinerants, and certain CTC programs) and significant updates or alternative placement for the ACE program. *“It is important for us to learn independence so we cook and clean and budget. Right now we do not have a kitchen, it is more like a stove in a room.”*

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The ***“caring, expert staff” are the greatest asset of Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District. Students, parents and leaders applaud them for their commitment and personal attention ... “they treat us (students) with respect and like adults. They actually care about us and want us to be successful.”*** From the majority of focus group participants, there was consensus that staff are highly respected in their respective field. *“Everyone is dedicated to the students.”*
2. Students noted that teachers go far beyond helping in the classroom. *“Teachers help us with housing, grades, budgeting. They are there when you need them, they help us, they are great at what they do. We are fortunate to have our teachers because they **treat us as equals.**”*
3. In most areas, CTC instruction and Itinerant Services specifically highlighted, TBAISD is state-wide and nationally respected. ***“Because of the support of the board and administration, staff are highly trained and provide that expertise and experience to enhance the work of others. CTC is one of if not the BEST tech center in the nation.”*** Supporting statements included, *“What this Career Tech Center has done for our area and region has been tremendous. And I will speak for those who sometime do not have a voice, the programing and services TBAISD provides for our center-based students is second to none and so appreciated.”*
4. Staff also appreciate the strong relationships among all levels of staff, underscored with mutual respect and support ... *“we’re all one family working together” and “**we’re able to learn from each other.**”* In a few, staff members did express a dissatisfaction with supervisors or “higher ups” decisions with respect to staffing. *“We have students with significant behaviors in the classrooms and we need additional certified staff to supervise. Because of elevating a person, we are now down with no additional support.”*
5. Building upon and enhancing local school partnerships/relationships is looked on favorability with all constituents while it is recognized that depending on the district, the needs vary. ***“With limited resources local districts rely heavily on TBAISD expertise and support in areas like Business Services, Professional Learning, and Technology. That will be needed more into the future.”*** Furthermore, a participant suggested, *“finding a way to support a district of 300 students might look very different to support a district of 10,000 students, and that is okay.”*
6. **Certification, college credit, and transitional skills** are some of the most appreciated services valued by students and parents. *“I am learning skills that will make me employable and when I am done I will get my certification.”*
7. Students love the programs and offerings from dual enrollment, to early college, to the English and math credits interwoven into CTC classes. **“I am a part of CTC NHS and Student Senate, it is awesome!”**
8. There is a feeling, by some, that it is important to continue to build upon the culture of collaboration within our TBAISD and local school district staff. *“At times, it can feel like it is the local district is in competition with TBAISD. Even the tag line, ‘To be the best District in the World’ suggests TBAISD is a stand-alone district in competition with others.”* However, other



individuals countered that with, *“I can share that when a TBAISD itinerant staff member is in my district serving my students and staff, I feel, as do others, that they are one of us.”*

9. Transportation, ride times, and effects of multiple school start- and end-times continues to need further research. *“I understand that you have a large geographical region, what...is it 5 counties? But, over an hour and 45 minutes on the bus seems excessive.”* Along with the length of bus runs, many participants noted difficulty navigating traffic in Traverse City. *“It is one thing to google map the distance between my house and the Life Skills Center, but that 45 minutes turns into one and a half hours once the bus hits TC city limits.”* Furthermore, some wonder about start times, *“Is there a way to better stagger start and end times to gain efficiencies with transportation?”*
10. Many believe there is community confusion around the role and function of TBAISD. Majority supported considering messaging and branding. **“Whenever I tell someone I work at TBAISD, they ask how my psychology degree is helping me with the credit union. That's almost exactly my experience in 6 years, I find it amazing how many people don't even know we exist.”** Supporting statements included, *“I think there is still a large population that doesn't know what TBAISD does. It's kind of funny but it is not, my wife works here and she tells people she works at TBA and they think she works at the credit union. A lot of people think credit union.”* TBAISD should continue to think about branding and messaging the great programs and services.
11. Staff members appreciate the value TBAISD places on training, professional development, and growth. **“TBAISD has given me the opportunity for a lot of professional development. Also, materials, supplies, and testing equipment is always supported to ensure we do our job to the best of our ability.”**
12. From staff members, there is an **overall satisfaction with technology support** (both devices and technical support) provided by TBAISD. *“I also feel like we are very supported with technology, between laptop, iPads, and cell phone stipends, all those things when you travel a lot and in a lot of buildings it makes communication with teachers and parents and peers and staff so much easier...It is pretty amazing that our employer does that.”*
13. From students, while there is a **satisfaction with technology support**, they desire more flexibility especially with cell phones. *“It would be nice to have our cell phones during lunch time or free time (New Campus).”* And, *“my bus driver does not allow us to use cell phones, kids act up.”*
14. Some dissatisfaction expressed by students with the new four-point grading scale at the Career-Tech Center. *“Not an accurate representation of what like your grade would be 4 is 100% and 3 is 95% and 2 is 85% and 1 is 75%. We, some of my classmates, are kind of voicing their opinions about it. It is confusing and it doesn't make much sense to them.”* And *“Just not an accurate representation because if someone gets the very end of a 3 and someone gets the top of a 3 it doesn't represent the difference.”*
15. **Staff appreciate the numerous opportunities and support for professional and personal growth.** *“A great example is Adaptive Schools training. This allows us to become better leaders and trainers by growing our facilitation skills set. It is huge that an organization grows leader to be better leaders.”*
16. Expanding the professional and social circle, similar interests of students, and expertise of

the staff are seen as very positive attributes of centralized programs like CTC, Life Skills Center, New Campus, Oak Park, ACE, and Traverse Heights. *“I like how we get to meet students from other schools and I also like the teachers and how we get to learn stuff that we wouldn't have learned to just by going to school. **We get to learn practical stuff.**”*

17. Family-like feeling is a predominate impression among the students within TBAISD programs. *“I was going to say like, even though it's a larger district or larger school, it almost feels like more of a community here. Like at school, I do get to meet people from other schools, but at the same time, like maybe it's just because we have like smaller class periods, but **it really feels like kind of like a family.** And I'm like in student senate and stuff and like the whole school, like I really like how engaged we are with the student population.”* And several students commented *“it's all-around a good place to kind of get yourself started.”*
18. It would be helpful to explore enhancing support and communication for our parents in our special education programs with transitions either from one program to another or assistance with other governmental agencies. **“Navigating transitions is huge and any help or support about what we do next or how my daughter will be ready for the next step would be welcomed.”**
19. Facility upgrades remain a challenge for transition programs like ACE I and ACE II downtown TC. Students and staff appreciate the location for the ACE programs, especially the need to be centrally located to banking, shopping and work; however, **“It is important for us to learn independence so we cook and clean and budget. Right now we do not have a kitchen, it is more like a stove in a room.”**
20. Staff seemed very positive about the beginning of the 2018-19 school year and greatly appreciated the opening day activities to help build culture and servant climate. *“I just about fell off my chair at opening day when one of the books was leadership, servant leadership. That is what we do and should be teaching our students.”*
21. Staff seem to be receptive and appreciative to New Staff Orientation Training to the point of expanding for a second offering. *“I was hired after the beginning of the school year and while my supervisor and teacher were great, I also felt like I missed a lot of training.”* Supporting the concept of mentoring, a staff member reflects, *“I think when new employees are hired, regardless of what their position is, whether it be a secretary or teacher, that, you know, they have a mentor that can help them through that first year or full year.”*
22. **Staff would appreciate consistency with communication and expectations.** Some expressed some miscommunication that has created confusion. *“With so many people providing support for some of our higher needs students, it is not uncommon to have three or four different people coming in telling us all of these different things with all these different goals we should be working on. It is confusing for our staff.”*
23. Staff appreciate autonomy, but desire district-wide consistency with certain standard practices and procedures; especially around safety. *“I came from one building to work in another, and the “all call” for enacting safety procedures was different. **Communication and consistency is key.**”*

24. Students suggested confusion and dissatisfaction around absence policy of the CTC and communication between home school and CTC. *“We get 5 days or lose your credit. Like during the winter time, a lot of people get sick for five days. It's really hard to make up the day for people that have their parents work on weekends or can't drive themselves.”*

## FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

### Favorite attributes of Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District

#### Student comments:

#### CTC:

- Students appreciate guest speakers in the field visit our program
- Getting to go out to companies is welcome
- Can receive certification in the field (2)
- People with same interest
- Getting a self-start
- People with same interest and team building exercises
- Likes hands-on
- Help from teachers is huge
- Early College program
- Opens opportunities, meet students from other schools, more of a community/family feel at CTC (2)
- Student senate
- Good experience, schedules are good
- Mentorships and internships
- Dual math and English teacher support
- Good experiences with curriculum, teaching and applications
- Connections with jobs
- Opportunities – name out there for future work
- Treated adult-like
- Feel more prepared and opportunities
- Most all will continue or military
- Transition to military – more lenient
- Inter-program collaboration

#### LSC/ACE Students

- Focused on individual goals
- Access downtown
- BATA
- Options for banking, shopping are convenient
- Connection to individual students

## New Campus Students

- Support
- Basketball (sports like basketball, soccer)
- Lunch
- Different options it gives you – out of a bad spot
- Educational fieldtrips

## Staff comments:

- Enjoy time to have PLC group
- Everyone is excited about every child
- TBA feels more up to date
- Students being able to communicate and equipment
- Rewarding to work with kids
- People care about kid's success
- We are well supported with materials and PD to do work with students
- Genuine wanting to help with what is best for kids
- Sit down meeting with people from hiring
- Seeing kids progress
- Faculty – welcoming and open
- Staff support each other very well
- Enjoy impacting students and future
- Enjoy my job
- TBA values early childhood
- From interviewing, to onboarding process very helpful
- Very supportive coworkers and supervisors
- Staff are into students – there for each other
- Outside help/teams at LSC very helpful and rely on
- Different strengths
- Continuous improvement model
- Learn different strategies with coworkers
- Peer-to-peer program
- Trauma conference for 3 days
- Opportunities to grow
- Supervisors dare to be different, step out of the box
- Quality of supervision

- Supervisor's help
- Family atmosphere, New Campus, LSC, Oak Park, Traverse Heights
- Teamwork, collaboration across the board
- Staff: Administration building/East staff/Out county itinerants
- Feel supported; great team, team approach
- Colleagues brilliant and passionate
- Everyone is dedicated to helping students
- A lot of PD given me, materials, supplies
- We challenge professional improvement to be better or better ways
- We have value and ability to grow, to better our students

### **Business/Community Leaders:**

- Consultant support in local districts for special education, academics and trainings
- Career-Tech Center – staff and programs
- Students out working in community/organizations
- Provide different methods than in a traditional setting
- Getting students prepared for college
- Life skills learning
- Glue that holds the rural area together, similar to healthcare
- Partnerships
- Student success at both CTC and SE programs
- Students integrate into the workforce are ready to go
- Students learn differently and we value professional learning while learning problem solving skills

### **Parents and Residents comments:**

- ISD Staff are polite, approachable, knowledgeable, family feeling, welcoming, making the kids feel important
- Programs – strengths relating to connecting the kids to “want” to be there (New Campus/CTC/Early Childhood). “Even if school is closed for snow day and CTC is open, I want to be there”
- Transportation is a challenge – work around with our own transportation
- Programs are very positive, kids and staff both

## Superintendents

- Marzano leadership at a regional level
- Key senior leadership point people
- CTC
- Technology support
- Business services
- Special Education Supervisors
- Preschool Early Childhood support
- Tech services
- Instructional services support
- Build a culture of we vs. LEA-TBAISD
- Support system of accountability

Wonders: regionalization of programs, social studies support, general education/special education consistency

## Unaided suggestions to improve Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District

### Student comments:

- They do a poor job at home school marking us absent or for half days (communication)
- More space – auto body needs more space for storage
- Having an internship – needs more time to complete classes
- Job shadowing
- Sometimes it glitches out – we have enough access and tech support (technology)
- Sick days need to be more than 5 days
- Stickers in car – don't put them inside the car – figure out a different way
- Vending machine – eating their money
- 4 point grading scale – confusing and not accurate presentation - % at their home school; 3 is a 3
- 30-45 minute commute to get to CTC
- Didn't learn anything in AG science last year
- They like curriculum – would like deeper study in 2<sup>nd</sup> year
- Smartboard
- More storage
- Heating and air conditioning
- BATA access every day
- Bigger kitchen to cook/update kitchen
- Appliances need to be upgraded
- Technology:
  - Laptops are slow to start up/they have 10 with 21 students
  - Faster Wi-Fi
  - Newer technology/projector
- Sports – intermural basketball or soccer
- Finish painting cool down room
- Food
- Hands on experience (therapy dog)
- Chromebooks given on good behavior
- Having our phones to use during lunch - some flexibility to use phone

### Suggestions by Parents:

- Concerns about after graduation/transition – the unknowns
- Early childhood transition – the unknowns



- Transportation issues for preschool
- “Navigating Transitions”
- Communication:
  - A lot of people just don’t know about the resources the ISD offers
  - Various outreach needed – school newsletters good; mailing to parents about services; radio drive time, Facebook/social media; connect with churches/community centers; school district events – “Info Booth”; Kingsley newsletter, the Express; the North coast Record Eagle free
- Facilities:
  - Great, secure, New Campus work well
- SE center to LSC – transition to a different building has not always been clear, more advance notice and preparation for transition needed
- Staff responsiveness and school is good
- Staff responsiveness on bus needs work
- Bus aide and transition with staff sometime difficult
- Would it be a benefit to have Wi-Fi on busses? Yes, long drive times/boredom factor
- Geography + 550 employees

#### **Suggestions by Superintendents:**

- Business services/TBAISD employees looking out for local district’s interests
- Special Education Supervisors/Technology support from a leadership perspective
- CTC/PowerSchool expertise-schedule
- Preschool Early Childhood support/New Campus enrollment process
- Tech services
- Instructional services support

#### **Suggestions by Business/Community Leaders:**

- Knowledge on CTC and community college vs four year degree
- Design thinking and talent development
- People don’t generally know what TBAISD is

#### **Suggestions by Staff:**

- A lot of equipment to learn, training before starting the job
- Every child’s chair is different
- Equipment cost – need more in room but one piece costs \$1,500
- New employees need training, how to change diaper, how things mechanically work, it’s train as you go
- Training manual, general information about autism, more time at beginning of year
- Master’s teacher was helpful and TA modules

- Finding subs and keeping teacher assistants
- Continued improvement needed and able to perform
- Enrichment programs, CPI Training to refresh your brain
- Open to training before or after work day
- Lack of listening from supervisor
- Lack of forethought – transfers and classroom with no teacher, no current TA
- Some programs are on an island
- Turnover – make more money as custodian than parapro
- Miscommunication not lack of communication
- What does everyone do at TBA – cross department communication
- When new employee is hired have mentor – full year of support – even when one is transferred
- Building has call signs/same building language
- Clear communication on expectations
- We focus on trauma and mental health staff are out of the building for students/staff
- Not as much support from community
- Dangerous situations – not fully staffed
- How can we hire some experienced staff
- How can we get all kids supported
- Behavior strategies – need for Kingsley Elementary and PD for sub
- Sub training
- Marzano doesn't show the whole person
- Trainings are not relevant to New Campus for PD – we need mental health training
- Build trust with TCAPS
- Have supervisors be more visible
- Sometimes communication is missing, learning about the organization, more of services we provide, why does staff go here or there
- New staff orientation
- We are very well supported by technology, laptop, cell phone (bumps are getting our devices synced into local district Wi-Fi)
- Printers at LEA's are hard to connect to – open guest account is hard – some don't work at TCAPS

## TBAISD Future Focus Suggestions:

- Virtual reality
- Newer technology but not as important – what we have works well, maybe just newer, our experiences is what we want.
- Film – new media – use Mac but we use PC - would like Mac experience (technology)
- We have the best teachers
- Some students do not like change – gradually make change
- Teachers help them figure out housing, grades, budgeting. They are there when you need them, they help us, great at what they do, allow flexibility, fortunate to have teachers, they treat us as equal
- CTC/TC caseloads to help move-ins and overages
- Build a culture of we vs. LEA-TBAISD/Social emotional supports growing need
- Representation appropriate?/Support system of accountability
- Explore regionalization of programs, social studies support, GE/SE consistency
- Lack of awareness that happens in our centers
- Our title from ISD to service agency
- Spend money on advertising
- Name change is an opportunity
- New cell phones for Infant Toddler staff
- Internet in LSC is terrible
- Cell service in LSC/CTC is not great
- Oak Park needs help – heat, mice, air conditioning
- Speakers in some areas of LSC do not work
- Areas of LSC is cold/loud
- We should have more center based programs
- What is ISD – some say ESD
- Greater vision and build relationships
- Proud to work here
- With TCAPS it's tense
- Technology – fantastic – Grant's are good
- Office in LEA is good
- Loves West Senior High – no windows for students
- Security at New Campus concern on climate/culture – we are a school but safety is a concern
- Take a look at the structure then look at differences
- Department SE and GE “names” we can structure differently
- Break down silos – what is GE team was on the SE team – need more tier 1 and 2 supports

- We need support from GE but there are few interactions between departments
- What is LSC, ACE – GE & SE need more work
- Extend new staff orientation to 2 days or have tour or have people come in to explain their job
- Definition of roles in TBA are not clear (efficient work flow)
- Who does what, when, each district is different
- How do we define to make sure we are efficient within our ISD
- Attributable growth – audit our practices
- Consistency on delivery, curriculum, especially when you have new staff, district principals, team and assignments consistent
- National Standards of Practice – school psych’s have 10 domains, across the board assignments – each building needs that team
- More slots at CTC
- More instructors
- Switch teacher/parapro in classroom
- Move CTC closer to my home school (Mancelona – 1-hour drive)
- Later in day start time; not 7:30 a.m. (our region serves 5 counties is challenge)
- Having more than 1 teacher in class
- TC High School kids treated differently (climate)
- Newer hardware/equipment
- Sick days
- More real world experience, we’ve had journalists and real world people in that arena
- Don’t like leaving at 2:15 (feels rushed because of bussing)
- Traffic light at 3 Mile
- Newer, up to date equipment
- Closing comments: Like-minded people to connect with – adult like atmosphere
- Likes staff
- Transportation: 2 – 2 ½ hour rides
- Wi-Fi on busses would be great
- Buses to have outlets
- Getting on bus at 6:00 a.m. – get to school at 7:20 a.m.
- More money for CBI/allows students to budget
- Wi-Fi on busses would be great
- Transportation
- Basketball Team
- Better consequences
- Food
- Encourage people to learn about ISD resources...do the research for your child

- Beyond happy about ISD programs
- New Campus needs a diploma program
- Positive feeling about the future
- Building staff care
- Communication about transition
- Life after 26, keeping kids engaged
- Rainbow of Hope program – example/model
- Chicago-based program – living/work-based opportunities giving structure to adult life
- Something other than assisted living/nursing home
- Community partners
- Special Olympics is connected to ISD, challenge with transportation to these events and practice times; BATA is a collaborative partner; Age 18/guardianship – help with transition and awareness of each step for parents and child. How does guardianship look?
- Use of CTC year around
- How do we better support facilities – NMC, High School or CTC
- Awareness of workplace ready
- Metropolitan area in Traverse City discussion with region
- Form bonds with constituents
- Facilities – students have sensory issues, need adaptive playground and air conditioning at Oak Park
- Kids don't function well with heat
- Not enough space at Oak Park
- Collaboration between SE and GE – school improvement plans
- Worry about older students with younger ones at Oak Park
- Need more track systems at Traverse Heights
- Communication – good, emails and CIO are good
- We see experts, professional respect, consistency in how they perform, respect to parents, students and confidentiality is good
- Great hopes for our new superintendent, bring cultural shift for morale, community, optimism, fully appreciated; \$ is secondary
- Having a supervisor that supports you at work makes a difference, don't be afraid to talk to your supervisor
- Community liaison – foster care, New Campus – to have someone that goes out there to support, uncertainty with parents, students, going to new programs
- More room/spaces; a lot of schools not great or private areas
- We like to have designated spaces in LEA's
- Printers are an issue in LEA's
- Out-county students are not getting needs met
- Transportation

- RESA speaks to more of what we do; ISD makes me think more competing
- If we rebrand then we need to deliver or structure differently (not just new signage)
- We can't control those negative effects about state funding (TBA/TCAPS)
- Mentoring program is excellent
- TBA should be behind scenes leading, celebrate our work, so much of what we do is service
- Itinerants are part of local districts

## MODERATOR'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

- 5 - 10 min.    **(1) Getting acquainted and comfortable.**
- ◇ *{Briefly describe focus group structure and purpose, and scope of entire community research.}*
  - ◇ Let's introduce ourselves to each other. Tell us your name, what neighborhood you live in, something about your work and your family situation, including how many children you have, their ages and where they go to school.
- 15 – 20 min.    **(2) Favorite attributes of Traverse Bay Intermediate School District.**
- ◇ What do you like best about TBAISD?
  - ◇ Probe for quality of education and services delivered.
- 40 - 45 min.    **(3) Suggestions to improve TBAISD.**
- ◇ Because no place is perfect, what are your suggestions to improve your organization?
  - ◇ Probe for improvements related to curriculum, teaching and learning, service to locals, specialized program, and regional efforts
  - ◇ Probe for improvements related to special education.
  - ◇ Probe for improvements related to CTC.
  - ◇ Probe for improvements to technology.
  - ◇ Probe for improvements related to TBAISD facilities, including both condition and capacity of its buildings.
  - ◇ Probe for improvements to how TBAISD communicates to you, including digital communications (website, Facebook, mobile app, etc).

20 - 25 (4) **Community Perceptions**  
min

- ◇ As an organization of 550 employees and providing programs/services to over 20,000 regional students in 16 different district schools, what are the perceptions of TBAISD?
- ◇ What could our organization be mindful of as we approach our work?

10-15 (5) **Confidence in TBAISD moving forward**  
min.

- ◇ In order to deliver the education needed for today's students and their families, do you trust your Board of Education and Leadership Team to develop good plans, make the right decisions, and be responsible stewards of taxpayers' money? If not, where or how can they do better?
- ◇ Do you feel that the district is accomplishing its goals from its strategic planning? Probe for specific examples.

5 min. (6) **Closing comments.**

- ◇ Do you have any other comments on what we have discussed or on TBAISD schools, programs or services in general?