



2009 Leadership Hendricks County Team Study Report

Enhancing Community Awareness of Hendricks County Schools



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Participants

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Education Group 2009 Project Synopsis

Group Members

The 2009 Leadership Hendricks County Education Team focused its discussion and efforts on a project related to enhancing information available to parents about Hendricks County schools. Team members were: Sue Bogan, Linda Eichenberger, Mike Garrett, Max Hank, Kirby Kirkpatrick, Steph Martindale, Susan Rozzi, and Darcie Webster.

Initial Topic Idea and Project Description

Originally the team discussed several avenues for its efforts, including educating the community about non-profit organizations, initiating a CASA program, investigating the need and opportunities for alternative education for students in the county, and providing information for parents as they make school choices for their children. After meeting several times to discuss the alternatives, it was decided that with the continued growth of Hendricks County, it would be helpful to provide parents with an information source to compare and contrast various educational opportunities in Hendricks County, including public and private schools.

More specifically, our original project idea was to create a resource guide identifying and highlighting the capabilities and strengths of every elementary, middle, and high school within Hendricks County. The resulting information would be compiled for online access (pdf and/or in conjunction with 2006 education project website, www.theyreourkids.org) to provide helpful and easy-to-use information for parents. This information would hopefully encourage increased levels of parental involvement and help overcome perceived barriers to higher education.

To execute this project, we intended to develop a series of profiles of students with various needs, learning styles, abilities and career expectations. We would then interview school officials from throughout the county to determine how their particular buildings and programs best serve each of the student profiles. We hoped that the analysis of our findings would be useful to parents and students. We also hoped that our findings would highlight the potential for cooperative efforts across traditional school boundaries in order to guide families to the building and/or program most effectively meeting their needs, regardless of the building's location in Hendricks County.

Resulting Discussion and Direction of Project

Our data collection efforts began by assigning school districts and/or buildings to team members, with each conducting research about the schools' strengths, accomplishments and accolades. The goal here was to create a tool that would permit a parent to print a one sheet document comparing statistics from selected schools, rather than the parent having to maneuver through multiple web sites for the same information. Discussion continued about how best to present the information in an objective manner, and as an "apples to apples" comparison. At this point in the project, the team revisited the idea of creating student profiles. A portion of this discussion considered the ideas of interviewing

school officials and/or requesting their completion of questionnaires regarding how their buildings accommodate different types of learning styles and abilities. However, because the public schools do, in fact, accept all students and are required to educate students at all levels, needs and abilities, we determined the profiles might not be as helpful as we first had hoped.

After each team member began to collect information, we soon realized there was far too much data to compile into an easy-to-read format. Further discussion led us to abandon our idea of using spreadsheets, profiles and any other static means of sharing information we obtained about the school systems because of the need for constant updating and revisions. At this point we decided to consider the existing website, www.theyreourkids.org, created by a 2006 Leadership Hendricks County team, as our focus. Early on in the process we reviewed the information on this site and believed there was room for improvement. However, at this later point in time, we found that the site had been revised into a more user-friendly and helpful format, and that it included links to all the schools in the county, Indiana Department of Education statistics, and other local organizations and information.

With that improvement noted, our team decided that most of the information we thought was important to share with parents was, in fact, already part of the web site or its links, and that we did not have any other creative or helpful suggestions or changes. We invited the site's webmaster, Eric Ivie, to meet with us to discuss what we could do to enhance the web site or support his efforts. We shared information about our journey with Eric, from the project's original intent to our current position, and he agreed that static information would not be helpful for the site. He said what it really could use is a boost of publicity that would drive parents, community members and others to utilize the information already available on the site.

At that meeting with Eric in September we decided we could best support our desire to promote educational opportunities in Hendricks County by raising awareness of this existing web site. We made the decision to produce bookmark size cards that could be distributed to area libraries, chambers of commerce, churches and hospitals (locations noted at conclusion of narrative). The full-color bookmarks promote the www.theyreourkids.org web site and urge parents to visit for more information about local schools and organizations.

Throughout our months of study, discussion, idea sharing and investigation, our project team gained a great deal of helpful knowledge about the schools in Hendricks County and their unique opportunities and capabilities. We also gained a healthy appreciation for the magnitude of our original project ideas. When these ideas were set against our limited time frame and team resources, not to mention the large amount of raw data available on each school, the need to scale back those ideas to more manageable levels became obvious. Although we were unable to complete our original mission, it is our hope that the efforts we have made to validate the benefits of and re-invigorate exposure to www.theyreourkids.org will assist all those who have an interest in education in our communities.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Hendricks County Community Foundation for printing 3,000 bookmarks for our project, and to Eric Ivie and the 2006 Leadership Hendricks County team for creating and continuing to maintain the website, www.theyreourkids.org.

Bookmarks were distributed to:

- Avon Chamber of Commerce
- Avon United Methodist Church Play-n-Share Program
- Avon Washington Township Fire Department
- Avon Washington Township Public Library
- Brownsburg Academy
- Brownsburg Chamber of Commerce
- Brownsburg Fire Territory
- Brownsburg Public Library
- Chik-fil-A
- Clarian West Hospital
- Clayton Public Library
- Connection Pointe Christian Church
- The Dancer's Place, Avon
- Danville Public Library
- Goddard School, Avon and Brownsburg
- Hendricks County Clerk's Office
- Hendricks County Government Center
- Hendricks Regional Health Childbirth Center
- HIP Studio, Brownsburg
- Plainfield Chamber of Commerce
- Plainfield Christian Church
- Beginning Steps Preschool at Plainfield First Baptist Church
- Plainfield Methodist Church
- Plainfield Public Library

Electronic versions were sent to area Chambers of Commerce and local schools. Press releases also were written and distributed to the Flyer and Star to reinforce the efforts.

Attachments: Bookmark, Press Release

Summary – Enhancing Community Awareness of Hendricks County Schools

This project resulted in the printing and distribution of 3,000 bookmarks that brought new publicity and awareness of the website www.theyreourkids.org, a project originally conceived and developed by a 2006 LHC group. We hope our efforts bring renewed attention to this valuable resource for parents who want to learn more about local schools and organizations for their children.

STORY IDEA

November 1, 2009

For information contact:
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They're Our Kids Website

Avon, Indiana – Did you know there is a website designed just for Hendricks County Parents? Created in partnership with Leadership Hendricks County, www.TheyreOurKids.org is a compilation of links to resources to assist parents of children in Hendricks County. The website includes links to local public school corporations, schools & statistics, libraries & parks, clubs & athletic organization, and so much more.

Parental involvement is vital in the development and success of our children. Contact Eric Ivie at erivie@comcast.net for more information.

They're Our Kids!

www.theyreourkids.org



A website designed for parents!

Parental involvement is vital in the development and success of our children. This website is a compilation of links to resources to assist parents of children in Hendricks County, Indiana.

You will find links to:

- ~ local public school corporations
- ~ schools & statistics
- ~ libraries & parks
- ~ clubs & athletic organizations
- ... and so much more.

Visit us today!

Created in partnership with Leadership Hendricks County.