

What are the Quality Indicators for the school of the future?

Craftsbury Community Forum
April 18, 2007

Facilitated and Summarized
By:

Laura Soares

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Context:

On February 19, 2007 the Craftsbury School Board made the decision to continue to educate PreK – 12 students within the town of Craftsbury. The question that will guide the Board forward is:

What will the Town of Craftsbury provide for its current Kindergarten class as they prepare to graduate in 2019?

In addition to the Guiding Question, the Board identified three other questions need to be answered in the near future. Those questions are:

1. What are the Quality Indicators for the school of the future?
2. What facilities will we provide to meet the future needs of “our” children?
3. What are the costs that we can anticipate for the future school program in Craftsbury?

As a first step, the community was invited to attend a forum to engage in a conversation about their expectations of quality for the Craftsbury Schools of the future in order to inform the board on the question of quality indicators. The forum was held on April 18 at Craftsbury Academy from 6:30 to 8: 30 PM and was facilitated by Laura Soares of Randolph.

The perspectives gathered at the forum are presented in this report to the Board.

Participation:

Approximately 40 community members attended the forum. Thirty-four people signed in [see attached sign in sheet]. Eighteen parents were identified, as well as several current staff members and many alumni of the school. Following a presentation of *Future Trends* a couple of community members left. The remaining participants engaged actively in the process. Twenty-seven people identified their priorities through voting at the end of the evening. Also in attendance were Principal Chris Young and Board Members John Madigan and John Zaber.

Format:

The community was welcomed by school board member John Zaber and was reminded of the goal of the evening: To provide community input to the board on the question: “What are the Quality Indicators for the school of the future?”

Two clarifying questions were asked by the community:

1. How is this session different from the previous forum? The facilitator responded that the previous forum focused on the advantages and disadvantages of educating students in Craftsbury. The resulting input revealed that there is not a common agreement on what was meant by a quality education. This forum is designed to identify indicators of a quality education for the school of the future as the basis of a common agreement.
2. With the focus on the future, what about what is happening/ or not happening now in our schools? The facilitator responded that the Board has decided to focus on the future. By setting a long term direction for the school, steps can be taken to make the vision a reality. Benefits to students should be realized long before the class of 2019.

The facilitator provided context for the evening with a 20 minute PowerPoint presentation entitled *Future Trends: Preparing for a Dramatically Different Future*, based on the work of futurist Gary Marx.

Following the presentation, each person was asked to individually write down on post-it notes up to ten qualities they believed were essential for students to possess when they graduated from Craftsbury Academy. The community was told these indicators did not have to be based on or come from the *Future Trends* presentation. Ten minutes was provided for this exercise.

Next the participants were asked to get into groups of 2 or 3 with people they did not come to the forum with and share their quality indicators with each other. At this time they could add additional indicators as well on additional post-it notes. Fifteen minutes were allocated.

Then each small group combined with another small group. These working groups were asked to take all of their quality indicators and classify similar indicators together into categories. Each category was to be given a heading by the group. Twenty-five minutes were provided. A total of 249 Quality Indicators were generated from this process. Each one is recorded verbatim in the data section of this report.

The headings from each group were placed on a wall at the front of the room and again grouped into like clusters by the participants. Eventually, seven clusters were formed.

The facilitator challenged that it is not enough to generate qualities the community would like the students of Craftsbury to possess upon graduation. Communities are limited in the resources they have to invest in education. In addition to the limit of finances, there is also a limit in time the students spend in school. If a school tries to accomplish too many things, it may well end up accomplishing nothing well. The critical next step is to make choices, identifying priorities and establishing a core that the school will focus on for years to come.

Each person was given three dots to use to vote on which clusters of qualities embodied the most important priorities for the Craftsbury Schools. Eighty votes were cast.

Limitations:

Time: The forum lasted two hours as planned. A longer session would have allowed for a deeper exploration of quality indicators. However, participation and engagement tend to wane after two hours in a public forum. Therefore the resulting data should be considered in light of the fact that time allotted limited whole-group discussion and development of common understanding of terms used by individuals and small groups.

Headings: Participants worked in groups to identify headings for each category of similar quality indicators. These headings were then posted on the wall of the room without further explanation to the participants as a whole. Therefore, as people sorted the headings into clusters and voted on their priority clusters, they did so without the benefit of knowing the quality indicators that were generated under each heading.

Clusters: Originally there were close to twenty clusters of the headings on the wall. When the group was given a final opportunity to check the clusters for accuracy, the rearrangement resulted in the seven clusters reported in this document. Review of the resulting clusters reveal at least two findings: Despite the efforts of the group, some similar ideas ended up in more than one cluster [i.e. democracy, personal growth and responsibility, communication] and the participants were motivated to create as few clusters as possible. Fewer clusters meant that each person's three votes could be applied to as many headings as possible. This is not surprising a surprising action, as the most difficult part of determining quality indicators is not in generating ideas, but in establishing core priorities that reflect realistic expectations of the school system given limited resources.

Summary:

Working individually and in small groups, over 35 participants generated 249 quality indicators of a school for the future. This list includes many similar ideas and much duplication. Six groups then generated 39 headings that described their quality indicators. Because each group worked independently using the indicators they generated themselves, there was still duplication among these heading areas:

1. Academics
2. Learning study skills
3. Content and academic skills
4. Basic integrated skills (academic)
5. Basic skills (**twice**)
6. Technology
7. Academic (vocational, arts, 3 R's, social studies)
8. Understand fundamental democracy/ government
9. Problem solving
10. Problem solving/ critical thinking
11. Learning how to learn
12. Creativity
13. Positive and effective communication skills
14. Diverse world
15. Diversity/ global awareness
16. Global awareness (**twice**)
17. Personal and environmental resources management
18. Ecological literacy,
19. Global/local understanding past, present
20. Responsibility
21. Morals and ethics
22. Self worth
23. Discipline and respect
24. Self confidence and respect
25. Working independently and in a team or community
26. Work ethic
27. Community membership/ interpersonal skills
28. Sense of community
29. Skills/experience with democracy
30. Community responsibility
31. Beyond academics
32. Life after school
33. Living right
34. Love of learning
35. Health wellness and diet
36. Personal skills
37. Inspiring/ Inspired Teachers

All participants had the opportunity to cluster the headings into like groupings on a wall at the front of the room. Seven cluster areas resulted:

Academics
Learning study skills
Content and academic skills
Basic integrated skills (academic)
Basic skills (*twice*)
Technology
Academic (vocational, arts, 3 R's, social studies)
Understand fundamental democracy/ government
17 votes

Responsibility
Morals and ethics
Self worth
Discipline and respect
Self confidence and respect
Working independently and in a team or community
Work ethic
14 votes

Problem solving
Problem solving/ critical thinking
Learning how to learn
Creativity
Positive and effective communication skills
17 votes

Community membership/ interpersonal skills
Sense of community
Skills/experience with democracy
Community responsibility
11 votes

Diverse world
Diversity/ global awareness
Global awareness (*twice*)
Personal and environmental resources management
Ecological literacy,
Global/local understanding past, present
15 votes

Beyond academics
Life after school
Living right
Personal skills
Love of learning
Health wellness and diet
3 votes

Inspiring/ Inspired Teachers
3 votes

Recognizing that resources are limited, including finances and time, participants then cast three votes each to identify the clusters they believe to be critical to a quality education. The vote totals are indicated in the boxes above.

Recommendations/ Next Steps:

1. **The Board should carefully review both the quality indicators generated by the forum participants and the heading clustered that received the votes.**
These two groups of data are both critical to understanding the input of the community. The quality indicators were generated by individuals and represent their individual thoughts about what qualities a Craftsbury graduate should demonstrate. The votes, however, were based on the heading clusters. Two of these clusters clearly did not garner as much community support as the remaining five. Only 3 votes separated the top five clusters.
2. **The data in from the forum presented in this report should be widely distributed to staff, parents, students, former students and the community at large.**
3. **The Board should consider drafting Quality Indicators for Craftsbury Schools based upon the community input.**
 - a. Begin with a broad statement on the purpose of the Craftsbury School System. [The Craftsbury School System will graduate students who.....]
 - b. Write a statement for each identified priority cluster area.
 - c. Further define each statement using descriptive language similar to the community generated quality indicators
 - d. Identify if any of the area take precedence over any other. [i.e. First all students shall be able to..... Second...]
4. **The Board should share this draft widely with staff, parents, students, former students and the community at large.** The guiding questions might be:
 - a. Are these the right indicators?
 - b. Have we left anything out?
 - c. Are these the right priorities?
 - d. In their entirety are these reasonable expectations given the resources we have to invest in our schools?
5. **The Board should revise the Quality Indicators after receiving feedback and adopt or approve the final document at a Board Meeting to use as the direction for Craftsbury Schools.**

Data:

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academics 2. Learning study skills 3. Content and academic skills 4. Basic integrated skills (academic) 5. Basic skills (twice) 6. Technology 7. Academic (vocational, arts, 3 R's, social studies) 8. Understand fundamental democracy/ government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student literate- read, write, compute, speak • Bodies of knowledge [English, math, history] • Solid basic skills • Basic RRR • Knowledge of core subjects • Basic math and English skills • Math skills • Have a school that fulfills all of the Vermont minimum school quality standards • Skills in reading, writing, math and basic knowledge • Able to read, write and do math • Basic core in science and math • Good English, grammar, literacy • Math concepts • Academic awareness, skills, appreciation • Verbal, written skills for effective communication with different people • Reading and writing • Ability to read and write fluently • Ability to communicate through writing [proper English, proper spelling, correct grammar etc.] and speaking • Ability to read • Listening skills • Adults who can pay attention to details on the job, i.e. spelling, punctuation, grammar, to be accurate in their work • Comprehend what is said and read • Write well • Good communication skills • Communication • Good communication skills exposure to and training in <u>self restraint</u> [as consumers and otherwise] • Learn to communicate effectively • Communicate and listen • Writing ability • Understanding of sciences [biology, chemistry, ecology, physics] adjusted to kid's levels and ability

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of American history • Knowledge of <u>roots</u> of western knowledge • Understanding of classics and core of western thinking • Ability to do mathematics at minimum as applied to real life skills [checkbook maintenance, budgeting, calculations of percents etc] and exposure to higher concepts • Manage money, balance checkbook, understand finance • Understand the value of money • A good vocabulary • Ability to concentrate • Public speaking • The ability to think for themselves- and be able to speak in front of a group to defend/ argue their positions- thoughts [public speaking] • Ability to speak clearly and be comfortable in front of an audience • Exposure to and ideally proficiency in another language- ideally beginning in elementary school when students are capable of this learning • Skills in other languages • Foreign language skill • Have basic skills to live on their own [cooking, shopping, sewing, business- write checks- balance bank statements]- budgeting • Skills to get a meaningful job [since training will be given on the job] • Trades and opportunities for local work • Vocational and industrial arts • Feel that their education was adequate to continue in college or career • Ready for college • Able to integrate into a job, college... • A grasp of technology • Applied technology • Have the physical resources to allow students learning communication in current ways [blog, webcast, myspace] • Exposure to technology- computers and internet

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology literate • Practice in the democratic process • Understanding of U.S. history and civics [government process] • Exposure to and participation in the arts as a form of self expression and a way to understand their more universal world • They would have a love for learning and an appetite to learn more throughout their life • Quest for knowledge, always strive to learn • Thinking and doing and why • Ability to analyze information for relevance • Ability to research any topic of interest-interest in continuing to learn • Proficiency in at least one area- a self confidence to recognize that skill • Advanced critical thinking, analysis • Good organizational skills • Ability to organize ideas to present a coherent point of view • Wisdom
17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problem solving 2. Problem solving/ critical thinking 3. Learning how to learn 4. Creativity 5. Positive and effective communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate a speaker • Think critically • Student knows where to look for, how to evaluate and pursue information • Know how to solve problem • Basic problem solving • Solve problems • Ability to analyze a problem • Problem solving • Critical thinking • Problem solving • Problem solving skills • Rigorous exposure to problem solving • Free thinking • Skills to learn new ideas and information • Ability to think critically [evaluate different information, analyze what it means] • Ability to process or use a scientific method to solve problems • Critical thinking enabling them to make good decisions

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to access new information from a variety of sources including technology and traditional sources • An intellect that cherishes lifelong learning curiosity • Critical analytical • Skills for critical thinking
15	38. Diverse world 39. Diversity/ global awareness 40. Global awareness (twice) 41. Personal and environmental resources management 42. Ecological literacy, 43. Global/local understanding past, present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to adjust to global dynamics • Sense of the global world, impact on them • Appreciation of differences • Exposed to a diverse set of teachers with different ways of approaching life and forming opinions • Open minds • Understanding of the world • Working knowledge of different ethnic backgrounds • Tolerance/ pragmatism • Understanding of student place/ influence on global environment • Understanding of ecology and respect for environment • They should know that they can and will make a positive difference and how to do it • Be well rounded- be exposed to many people and ideas • Caring about all people and their environment • A moral and ethical understanding of the world around them • Understanding interconnectedness of our natural communities and ourselves • Concern for environmental issues and understanding of stewardship • To appreciate mankind's role in the health of the planet • Understanding the world's diversity economically • Open mind to new ideas foreign or domestic • Understanding of diversified community • To respect other cultures and to their from their customs • Think globally • Compassion for others

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand we are all here together and need to do what helps all mankind • Respect for diversity • Respect for the world we live in • To be taught to respect the planet and try to protect it from things that affect all forms of life • Resource management • Environmental ethic • Experience with ecologically sustainable lifestyle choices • Realization of global importance • Appreciation for the “global” world and each other • Understanding and tolerance of the world and the people in it • Respectful and compassionate to others • They should have respect for others, themselves and the planet • Tolerance for other view points
14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsibility 2. Morals and ethics 3. Self worth 4. Discipline and respect 5. Self confidence and respect 6. Working independently and in a team or community 7. Work ethic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can initiate and pursue learning on his/her own • Student has skills of discipline that can be used in future study and/or work • Students learn to incorporate self-governance into their characters • Self discipline • Have self confidence and good self esteem • Leadership skills • Friendships • Tolerance of differences • Good morals • Understanding of ethics/ fair treatment • A sense of individual responsibility. • Social skills to function with other people, cooperation • Sense of responsibility and belonging to school [peers and teachers] and community [elders, neighbors, family etc.] • Morally strong • Disciplined- able to stick to a job and see it through and to be dependable- their word is their bond • A sense of who they are

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the “work ethic” as it applies to them • Productive member of society [not expecting others to take care of them] • Self esteem through learning • Peacefulness • Appreciation for hard work • Experience with collaboration, conflict, resolution, training in mediation • Concern for others i.e. compassion • Environmental concerns • Sense of purpose • Self worth • Adaptability- to adapt and thrive in diverse situations outside a classroom • Ability to think for themselves and defend their views • To be taught to do their personal best • Seek the truth
11	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community membership/ interpersonal skills 2. Sense of community 3. Skills/experience with democracy 4. Community responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to work independently and in groups • Ability to learn and defend other’s ideas • Independent work • Ability to work with other people • Team work/ community awareness • Taught to be a benefit to their community • Willing to volunteer for their community-caring adults, willing to serve others • Act locally • Democratic process • Students need to know how to effectively participate in our democracy. They should have experience doing so before graduating • Leadership • Can operate democratically/ respectfully/ ethics • Understand governance [structure, methods, civic responsibility] • Civic engagement- understanding of individual’s role in a democracy- different governmental systems, history and specifics of our democracy • Governmental understanding

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand fundamentals democracy/govermt • An understanding of democracy • They would know that their beliefs and thoughts are valuable and important and how to express those beliefs in a constructive way • Ability to participate in a democracy and appreciate our ability to do so • Understanding of U.S. and world history and ability to use critical thinking skills to evaluate what students are told • Exposure to conflicting cultures/ ideas • Not to get all of our info on the future from a socialists like Gary Marx [we need to keep something of our identity as a nation] • Understanding of the world, nation and state as well as their community • Appreciation of the past- art, history and their importance in making decisions today • Be aware of our place in history and the world • How to work as a community to affect change • Ability to understand their appearance to others • Community minded or sense of community • Be active in the community [learn to volunteer] • Sense of community and citizenship • Understand the main plus of Craftsbury as a community is the wonderful sense of community. Everybody helps and supports their fellow community members. The students understand and appreciate this fact. I think it comes naturally without too much focus from your ideas and the new world. The school is the main energizer for this • Whether or not they own it, kids need to see that land in the community can <u>provide</u> [food and shelter] <u>for them</u> in a sustainable system. Otherwise what do they have? • A sense of community • Desire for community involvement • Interconnection with their community both within school and surrounding it • A sense of place rootedness in the land • Curiosity

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beyond academics 2. Life after school 3. Living right 4. Love of learning 5. Health wellness and diet 6. Personal skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to stay healthy- take care of themselves • Student is engaged and lifelong learner • Students understand that satisfaction and happiness do not come from the thoughtless pursuit of “more” in the American model that has prevails for decades, but from striving hard at good work and “right livelihood” • Self-satisfaction of hard work and doing for oneself • Ability to see the light side of an issue • A sense of humor • Desire to make a difference • Goals for the future • Know where they are going to college • High self esteem • Thinking independently • Self motivation • Honorable • Respectful of other people • Empowerment • Positive self esteem • Social skills • Being able to feel comfortable in different environments • Ability to speak in a group • Ethics • Ability to constructively challenge convention • Independence • To work independently • Desire to learn, openness to something new • Need to keep learning • Handling pressure • Basic hygiene • Healthy lifestyle • Ability to balance work time and personal time • Have an opportunity to participate in a wide choice of sports and extra curricular activities • What can I contribute for a better future • Have a high school with enough students form which to find like-minded social groups • Ability to interact with adults and peers

Votes	Cluster of Headings	Quality Indicators
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration in community • Cooperation • Be creative and think outside the box • A sense of their creative spirit • Student has been nurtured- knows his/her education matters and that they matter to their school and teachers • Student can name an adult at the school who has made a difference in his/her life • A sensitivity to each other [so that murders no longer happen] • Respect for others point of view • Ability to ignore distractions • Teach our children how to make use of all resources that available to them to better their education • Able to accept and direct criticism • Happy and content with career • Doesn't feel limited/unprepared to face world • Able to realize the importance of changing careers if needed • High expectations for <u>themselves</u>
3	Inspiring/ Inspired Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child spends his/her time with teachers who are enthusiastic, excited, energetic, and full of ideas, and who model a curiosity and a love of learning and who work hard [and this is a “quality indicator” for the school now and C.A. has serious deficits in this area now] • Content, inspired teachers • I think in response to your talk we can do some of it at home but teachers have to teach and present your ideas • Role models, competent able teachers • A good teacher and we have many now and in the past will bring your ideas into our great strength from the past • So Be It. Craftsbury is a wonderful community. The school has had its ups and downs but overall has been most positive and can deal with some effort with your thoughts • Supportive environment • Plenty of individual attention from teachers who are energized, enthusiastic and competent who serve as role models/mentors

