



Chalkboard Project Focus Group Highlights

– RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES –

Summary of research methodology: Students who have recently graduated from high school or a 2-year college, and who receive need-based financial support from The Ford Family Foundation to obtain a baccalaureate degree, were gathered for a statewide conference were asked to answer the following question: “Think back to your days in the K-12 education. Whether you attended public or private school, Chalkboard is interested in your views on what you believe worked well. Based on your personal experiences, what have you found to be the best methods for improving student success in the classroom?”

Highlights of research findings: The findings emerge from an analysis of the 70 written responses to the question they were presented.

Best Methods for Improving Student Success

“Teachers who challenge their students...”

“Personal, individualized encouragement from my parents.”

“Hands-on projects, games, activities, etc.”

“My personal success escalated in school when I had teachers who were truly passionate about what they were teaching and about the kids.”

“I feel that extra-curricular activities kept me involved and excited about going to school.

The students’ comments resulted in the following top mentions for improving student classroom success:

- ◆ Motivating, enthusiastic, passionate teachers, high expectations, challenging work
- ◆ Good relationship with teacher, individualized attention, one-on-one teaching
- ◆ Hands-on creative, experiential, interactive learning
- ◆ Parent involvement and encouragement
- ◆ Supportive, caring teachers, respect students
- ◆ Extra-curricular activities, after school programs, sports
- ◆ Small class size

– RECENT GRADUATES Continued –

Many other mentioned items related to the most-mentioned:

- ♦ Self-paced, independent learning was seen often as a hands-on approach with some one-on-one teaching
- ♦ Teaching practical and useable skills has a strong hands-on element.

Also mentioned frequently was mentoring (usually older-to-younger students, sometimes teachers, occasionally peers), peer support in general, and the learning of self-confidence, responsibility, and sense of self.