

“A Conversation with the Community: Educating for Success in the 21st Century”
Lawrence High School Commons
April 18, 2009
8:30 AM to 11:50 AM

Marian Leibowitz, an educational consultant and Lawrence resident, moderated the discussion. There were four panelists: Rep. Rush Holt, US Congress; Eleanor Horne, vice president of the Educational Testing Service Social Investment Fund; Brett Smith, an information security professional working for Deutsche Bank; and Theresa Wrobel, founder of a marketing research consulting company. Holt is a Hopewell resident, and Horne, Smith, and Wrobel are Lawrence residents.

In considering skills important for preparing students for the future, panelists’ forecasts included: critical thinking, writing and communication, ability to apply skills, collaboration and negotiation toward common goals, and values. Additional comments included the need to reduce the high school dropout rate in America’s schools; need to prepare students to be competitive in a global market; the need to “think like a scientist” and be able to ask empirical and verifiable questions, even if they never wear a lab coat; and the need for students to be “participants” rather than “receptacles” and taught to collaborate rather than just receive information.

Additionally, Ms. Horne related that the quality of a student’s education is not just the responsibility of educators but rather, “a quality district begins and ends with the community.”

Table discussions facilitated by district administrators followed the panel. Discussions considered three main questions:

- What is needed to educate for success in a global society?
- How can this inform what we do at Lawrence Township Public Schools?
- What issues/questions does this raise for us?

Feedback obtained during the table discussions is linked on this webpage.