

Presenters and Purpose

- Names and Background
- Why we are here:
 - To give an overview of what we are trying to accomplish
 - To gauge interest and gather reactions

Rochester Open School

“School the way it should be”

What is an open school?

- A student driven learning environment
 - Children are not told what to learn, or how to learn it.
 - Examples:
 - Summerhill (1921)
 - Sudbury Valley School (1968)
 - Albany Free School (1969)

Why non-compulsory?

- Human beings like to learn, no need for compulsion
 - observe any young child or college student
- Compulsion spoils learning
 - Intrinsically adversarial relationship between the teacher and the learner
- Some Authors:
 - A.S. Neill, John Holt, John Taylor Gatto

What is an Open School?

- A place for self reflection
 - Students evaluate themselves
 - No grades or scores
 - Staff do not judge student work unless asked

What is an Open School?

- An exercise in democracy
 - Students operate a legislature and a judiciary
 - Students experience self-governance
 - Perhaps the single most important skill for a citizen in a free society

Review: The Three Pillars and their effects

- Self-initiated learning → self-motivation
- Self-evaluation → maturity
- Self-governing → responsible citizenship

What (else) is an Open School

- Mixed age groups
- Respect for play as a form of learning
- Significant interaction with external community

Role of Staff

- Responsive
- Resourceful
- Mentors
- Role Models

Unique Aspect

- Monroe County is home to seven institutions of higher learning, with over 80,000 undergraduate and graduate students
- Offer them the opportunity to act as adjunct faculty

The Plan...

- Spend the next year selecting a location and faculty.
- Obtain charter from NYS and enroll students for September 2009.
- In the interim, operate as a part-time enrichment program for homeschoolers and kindergarten students.

What we need

- Location
 - Urban vs Rural
- Faculty
 - Educators ready to respect children
- Board
 - Belief in vision, ready to commit time and money
- At least 40 students
 - Parents ready to trust children

Questions ?

More resources

For more info see “Unschooling”, “Free School”,
“Democratic School”