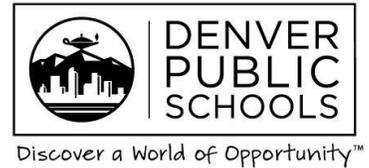


CSC Meeting Minutes

Lowry Elementary

8001 E. Cedar Ave.
Denver, CO 80230



Date: January 25, 2021 *Time:* 5:00-7:00 pm

Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/97882895035?pwd=MUtPOGhTk9vM2hJQzdabnhOTEZqQT09>

Meeting Location: Online Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

Adrienne Nault-Principal, Zed Jemison-Assistant Principal, Lisa Davis-Parent, Chanel Harper-Parent, Merlin Holmes-Parent, Amy Holthus-Pera-Parent, Barbara Volpe-Community Member, Paul Vranas-Community Member, Lexi Higgins-1st grade Teacher, Amy Morin-Literacy Intervention Teacher, Susan Rayburn-Special Education Teacher

Absent Members:

Mahmoud Kharif-Parent, Dave Miles-Special Education Teacher

Additional Attendees:

Brittany Haynes-1st Grade Teacher, Carrie Richardson-ELD Teacher/DCTA Representative, Amelia Roche-Kindergarten Teacher, Grace Wingard-ECE Teacher

Discussion Items

1. Call to order, welcome
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm.
2. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
 - a. Susan Rayburn made a motion to approve the minutes, Barbara Volpe seconded the motion. All members present voted to approve the minutes.
3. Principal's Report
 - a. ACCESS and GT Testing are currently taking place. There have been a few technical glitches, but it is going as smoothly as can be expected.
 - b. Staff has returned to some semblance of normal. The weekly professional development sessions have resumed on Wednesday mornings, as have a quick Friday huddle.
 - c. Approximately 70% of staff have returned their Intent to Return forms, with 100% of these forms indicating an intent to return next year.
 - d. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is currently revisiting their purpose, which in previous years has been to evaluate and set the master schedule. With the uniqueness of this year, they have taken on some other roles and are therefore revisiting their purpose, as well as frequency of meeting schedule.
 - e. This has been a big week/weekend preparing the budget.
4. UIP Status Update
 - a. Progress Monitoring update

- i. Goal #1 - Unit Internalization and Backwards Planning
 - 1. Status: In Progress
 - 2. Teachers are on track in developing the guiding questions.
 - 3. A common place to store these questions should be in place this week. This will allow all teachers to access the guiding questions so that content offered by intervention teachers is more robust and relevant.
- ii. Goal #2 - Whole Child Survey
 - 1. Status: In Progress
 - 2. The district announced a few days ago that the Whole Child Survey was being cancelled this year and replaced with the Wellness Survey.
 - 3. The goal will need to be reconfigured to match the questions asked on the Wellness Survey. Likely this will include whether students have a sense of belonging.
 - 4. The last Wellness Survey was filled out by 80+ students. Fifth grade teachers encouraged their students to complete it. The next survey will be promoted by all 3rd-5th grade teachers.
- iii. Goal #3 - MTSS
 - 1. Status: On Target
 - 2. All grade level teams have done a universal sweep of their class lists to identify students for next steps in MTSS. The MTSS team is meeting weekly to reestablish processes and action steps for what MTSS looks like as a whole school.
 - 3. MTSS was hard to implement in the fully remote setting. While there are still hurdles with in-person learning, they are working towards overcoming them.

5. Unfinished Business Items:

a. Constituency Group Updates

i. Parent Group

- 1. An effort has been made to include more information in the text of CSC-related School Deets announcements so that hopefully more parents read it.
- 2. The parent survey will be sent out in early February.

ii. Community

- 1. They have been discussing what the most productive way is to get the community behind the school.
- 2. Community members helped collect and distribute foods to Lowry families.
- 3. They are working on a draft survey that will be distributed to Lowry neighbors via LUN and the Lowry Foundation.
- 4. They have worked with Amy Morin to get community members involved in One Book One School. The current book, "A is for Activist" kicked off this week.
 - a. Veronica Crespín-Palmer, a Obama Foundation Fellow and co-founder of Colorado RISE, will be talking with fifth grade classes as an example of an activist.

6. New Business Items:

- a. Budget Scenarios for the 21-22 school year

- i. Lisa reminded the committee that their goal was to come to a consensus on a recommendation and what consensus means (everyone can support the decision even if it isn't your preferred option). The final decision is in Adrienne and Zed's hands.
- ii. Grounding
 1. District Priorities
 - a. The Draft District Priorities for 2021-2022 remain the three crisis priorities identified this year: health and safety, social-emotional and mental health, unfinished learning. Equity has been explicitly added to the priorities as a cornerstone of the priorities.
 2. Review of Lowry mission
 - a. Lowry Elementary School is a unified community whose purpose is to provide a rigorous and equitable education that cultivates unstoppable students. We promote leadership, passion, and an enthusiasm for learning in a fun collaborative environment.
 3. Review of Lowry UIP Goals (Major Improvement Strategies) - Our budget should ensure that the goals can be addressed.
 - a. Unit Internalization/Backwards Planning
 - b. Whole Child
 - c. MTSS
 4. DPS Budget General Information
 - a. The Mill Levy that passed in November 2020 has dramatically changed the financial outlook for the district. The Mill Levy provides an additional \$24M in funding next year to address the operating shortfall from the original budget developed in June 2020.
 - b. Across the district ECE and Kindergarten enrollment was down.
 - c. In the current year (2020-2021), DPS was able to fund all schools at their projected enrollment even though it was higher than actuals. Next year (2021-2022) we will be funded at our actual enrollment.
 5. "Positions, not People"
 - a. Budget decisions are not being made on the basis of which individuals should be eliminated, but on which positions have the least and/or most impact on Lowry meeting its mission and goals.
 6. Redundancies in staffing
 - a. As we look at where to reduce, we have to consider which positions create redundancies or overlap in responsibilities.
- iii. Budget Overview
 1. What is the student projection for the upcoming school year?
 - a. Our current projection is 473 students. This is equal to our current enrollment, but down from a projected enrollment for the current year by 43 students.
 - i. We aren't actually seeing a major decrease in students next year, even though the numbers might see otherwise because our current year's numbers are based on a projected enrollment that did not occur.

- b. The projected enrollment has three classes at each grade level with 22-27 students per class. No grade level projects a need for a fourth classroom.
 - c. Kindergarten has the biggest decrease. The projection for next year is 76, down from a projection for this year of 100. Kindergarten represents 24 of the 43 "lost" students.
 - 2. What are the 2021-2022 average general costs per position?
 - a. Lowry pays an average salary for each teacher, even though their actual cost might be different from the average. The average teacher cost, including benefits, is \$91,676. This is an increase of ~\$2,000 over the current year.
 - b. The base per pupil allocation went up to reflect the increase in teacher cost. This allows the school's purchasing power to remain the same.
 - 3. Additional, one year only, funds have been made available to Lowry for the next school year.
 - a. Due to the fluctuations in student count due to COVID at the October Count, DPS has temporarily lowered the cut-offs for Title I funding. The bottom cut-off point has been lowered from 60% to 57%. At the same time, Lowry's free and reduced lunch population has increased from 54% to 59%. The combination of these two things means that Lowry will qualify for additional Title I funding next year. This equates to \$214 per pupil who qualifies for free and reduced lunch. This funding has a significant impact on what we are able to do this year.
 - i. The cut off for Title I funding will move back to 60% in 2022-2023. However, given the upwards trajectory that Lowry's free and reduced lunch participation is taking, it is likely that Lowry will still be considered Title I in 2022-2023.
 - b. Federal Stimulus Funds have been made available for the 2021-2022 year to specifically address learning loss and social emotional/mental health. Based on national research, DPS is leveraging a specific set of strategies to be used to address these gaps.

iv. Presentation of Scenarios

- 1. We were anticipating a more grim financial outlook for this coming year. However, due to the increase in funding from Title I and Stimulus funding, the outlook is not as severe as expected.
- 2. Adrienne and Zed prepared one scenario for consideration, which they feel best meets the needs of the school while meeting the specific requirements of our new funding sources. The scenario represents an emphasis on increased intervention for students and more coaching and support for teachers. The proposed scenario includes the following changes:
 - a. Recommended Reductions:
 - i. Reduction of one Kindergarten position

1. Due to reduction in our projected Kindergarten enrollment from 100 to 76, it does not make fiscal sense to keep 4 Kindergarten Teachers.
 - ii. Reduction of Health Tech Para
 1. Funding infused into our budget allows us to now have a full time nurse. This creates a redundancy with the Health Tech Para.
 - iii. Reduction of ELA-S Paraprofessional
 1. This is a reduction made by the ELA Department, not Lowry, due to a decrease in the number of spanish speaking students.
- b. Recommended Adjustments:
 - i. Shift nurse to full time
 1. Adrienne and Zed have seen the value of health professionals and experts this year. They have partnered frequently this year and it makes sense to have a full time nurse.
 - ii. Our current half time Paraprofessional Educator Interns (UCD students who work at Lowry part-time) will be shifted from a classification of General Assignment Paraprofessional to Tutor Paraprofessional.
 1. This represents a commitment of these positions to focus on small group intervention.
- c. Recommended Additions:
 - i. Addition of a 0.5 Senior Team Lead/0.5 Literacy Intervention Teacher
 1. This position will provide instructional support for both students and teachers.
 2. A focused Literacy Intervention effort will allow more students to transition out of Intervention.
 3. A fourth Senior Team Lead will reduce the case load for the existing Senior Team Leads and allow teachers to receive more support in how to meet the needs of all students.
 - ii. DPS has allocated funding for an Amharic Native Language Tutor. We now have 15 students/families who speak Amharic.
 - iii. Addition of an additional WINGS Para.
 1. The funding from DPS for an AN Center Program is 3 paras. Lowry has merged two of these Para positions into a Behavioral Tech. A third para will be funded by Lowry to support the social emotional and academic needs of the WINGS students.
 - iv. Addition of a Mild/Moderate Special Education Para
 1. DPS provides funding for Special Education teachers based on the number of students served, not by their required hours. Some students have a need for higher hours than others. The new Para position will

help support these students in ensuring that required contact hours are met.

7. Summary of Public Input Questions

- a. The shift of the UCD Para Interns to Tutor Paras will not eliminate other General Education Paraprofessional positions at Lowry. UCD students will be given priority for these positions. The Tutor Para positions are part-time (0.475), while the General Education Paras are full time.

8. Summary of Questions and Discussion from CSC Committee Members

- a. The addition of a 0.5 Senior Team Lead will reduce the case load for the current Senior Team Lead's that they can coach more effectively. The four STL positions will coach the bulk of classroom teaching positions. This will help prioritize first, best instruction so that more students "get it" the first time around and fewer students are referred to intervention.
- b. The addition of a 0.5 Literacy Intervention position was weighed against the addition of a Math Intervention position. While there is a need for math intervention as well, the focused effort on MTSS and more robust computer program intervention is helping to meet that need currently. Parents and teachers have been vocal about the need for additional literacy intervention.
- c. While we were planning to have a fourth kindergarten this year, the enrollment effect of Covid intervened and our numbers reflect the need for only three classrooms. While there is a possibility that we could have enough interest from the Choice process to add a fourth classroom, the enrollment effects of Covid are still unknown and it feels safer to have three classrooms. This will provide us with a year of stability and we can reevaluate the possibility of adding a fourth classroom next year or the year after.
- d. Concern was brought forth as to what future years' budgets may bring since our funding to create these additional positions is coming from single year funding sources. A great deal of discussion occurred around this point with the following items brought up:
 - i. Given our current trajectory, there is a high likelihood of Lowry continuing with Title I status in 2021-2022 and continuing to receive this funding.
 - ii. Even if the STL/Literacy Intervention teacher was only for one year, a focused effort by the Intervention team (1.5 Teacher, 4-0.5 Paras) could make a significant impact of transitioning students out of intervention. The effort of the STL on coaching best practices would mean that less students are referred to Intervention. Therefore it is possible to "solve" the need for additional Intervention in one year.
 - iii. We can be very thoughtful in planning this position as a one year intervention, so that we don't become addicted to intervention.
 - iv. The positions can be advertised as one year.
 - v. Other ways to spend this money and possibly meet the same need for lost learning and bringing kids to grade level targets could include options for extended learning time (Saturday School, extended school days, summer programming), extended teacher planning time, online (computer programs) intervention. These might be easier to add as one year options than new staff.
- e. There is a concern that the graduation of the current, larger than average, fourth grade class in 2022 will create a funding drop in 2022-2023. We need to be prepared for this.

f. Concern was brought forth over needing a longer term plan than just one year. It is hard to predict what next year will bring - we've been blessed with additional money for two years now. Who knows what will come to us in 2022-2023 and beyond.

9. Setting of agenda for next meeting

- a. Summary of email conversations between CSC members.
- b. Public Input period
- c. Continued discussion of scenario among CSC members
- d. Come to consensus on recommendation of the budget scenario

10. Date for next meetings - Thursday January 28, 2021 and Thursday February 18, 2021

11. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm

Upcoming Dates:

1/27 - Coffee with the Principal, 9-10 am

1/29, 2/5, 2/12 - Asynchronous Learning Days for all students/ACCESS testing for ELD students

2/3 - Coffee with the Principal, 9-10 am

2/5 - Parent Virtual Tour, 9 -10 am

2/9 - PTO Meeting, 6:30-7:30 pm

2/15-2/16 - No School

2/17 - Coffee with the Principal

2/18 - CSC Meeting