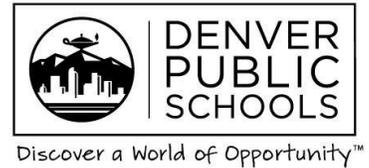


CSC Meeting Minutes

Lowry Elementary

8001 E. Cedar Ave.
Denver, CO 80230



Date: February 1, 2022 *Time:* 5:00-7:00 pm

Meeting Link: Online Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

Zed Jemison-Interim Principal, Alona Hastings-Administrative Support, Adler Dacunha-5th grade Parent, Lisa Davis-4th grade Parent, Committee Chair, Merlin Holmes-5th grade Parent, Courtney Riordon-Kindergarten Parent, Secretary, Kelly Tasky-3rd grade Parent, Dindi Gaines-5th grade Parent, Barbara Volpe-Community Member, Lexi Higgins-1st grade Teacher, Dave Miles-Special Education Teacher

Members Absent:

Adrienne Cruz-Principal (on leave), Janice Spearman-Administrator on Special Assignment

Additional Attendees:

Kelly Woodman, Alex Park, Kim Headrick, Maya Otsuki, Amanda Encinias, Stephanie Thielan, Kassidi Boening, Brittany Haynes, Carrie Richardson, Beth Sprake-Jones, Lauren Schuster, Amy Morin, Anthony Barela, Debbie MacGilvray, Grace Wingard, Sussi Raber, Katie Gray, Danielle Britt, Carolyn Lohr, Carla Whitney, Amy Holthus-Pera, Lydia Acosta, Natalie Chedsey, Shaun Anderson, Amanda Horn, Ivy Martinez, Rina Washington, Karina Desserich, Susan Stearman, Bochra Bendjebbar, Leyla Zaoui, Erica Marquez, Heather Mills, Jess Palko

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. Kelly Tasky motioned to approve the minutes. Merlin Holmes seconded the motion. All members voted to approve the minutes.
3. Principal's Report
 - a. What is currently going well? Lowry's social media presence is gaining traction and helping to promote the school; a big thanks to Lexi Higgins and Grace Wingard for taking on this effort. Ms. Patricia has been working diligently to connect families with necessary supports. Dr. Jemison met with contractors to discuss the cafeteria, auditorium, and front office renovations, which will begin this summer; he hopes to share pictures at the next meeting. The security issue and subsequent press from last week were handled well, but are also an opportunity for reflection.
 - b. What are current struggles/pain points? There continue to be staffing shortages. Central office staff have come to school to support/assist.
 - c. Updates: No additional updates at this time.

4. Summary of feedback received by CSC Members from Lowry Community: The scenarios that were discussed on January 27 have shifted based on the new budget information. The summary of feedback is included below.
5. New Budget Scenarios
 - a. Why changes were needed: The administrative team operated in good faith with the information they received. They desire to protect allocations and positions in service to students. The previous presented budget was in the red and there was a miscommunication between the DPS finance office and Lowry administration. Instead of needing to reduce the staff by 1.6 FTE, the administrative team is now tasked with reducing staff by 4.6 FTE.
 - b. Presentation of scenarios
 - i. The following are areas for possible staffing reductions (items in red are newly presented reductions):
 1. **0.5 FTE Special Education** (Allocation reduction by DPS)
 2. **0.5 FTE Multi-Linguistic Learners** (Allocation reduction by DPS)
 3. **2 Teacher Leader positions** (Allocation reduction by DPS. Lowry's current allocation is for 4 people to serve as teacher leaders; however, each person has 0.5 FTE allocated to being a Senior Team Lead (STL). DPS is cutting 2 positions, the equivalent of 1.0 FTE.)
 4. **1.0 FTE 2nd grade classroom** (due to lower enrollment—projected at 57 students in 2022-2023)
 5. 1.0 FTE 3rd grade classroom (due to lower enrollment—projected at 55 students in 2022-2023)
 6. 1.0 FTE 5th grade classroom (due to lower enrollment—projected at 61 students in 2022-2023)
 7. 1.0 FTE Intervention (Intervention is found in the other half of teacher leadership—.5 leadership/.5 intervention)
 8. .6 FTE reduction in Specials (programming change)
 - ii. General questions that were asked prior to discussing a specific scenario:
 1. How will Specials be impacted by a reduction of grade-level classrooms? The Specials teachers could potentially support classroom academics or the grade-level classes could be split into 3 for the Specials rotations.
 2. What happens if more students choice into the school after the budget is completed? There is a process to add more teachers to the roster.
 3. What is the average class size according to DPS? 34 is the maximum class size, but 26-27 students per class are needed to pay for a teacher.
 - iii. Budget assistance requests: Budget assistance can only be received in specific areas. Hopefully by spreading out the requests, it will be possible to receive as much as 4.5 FTE in assistance. In addition, Lowry has not been in this position before and the administrative team is hoping to be able to step down the staffing instead of jumping to a reduction of 6.6 (4.6 Lowry Budget + 2.0 DPS Allocation). The first three items directly address some of the DPS allocation reductions. The administrative team will seek budget assistance in the following areas.
 1. 0.5 FTE Special Education: There are a number of students who are currently in process to receive services; an argument could be made for a 1.0 request due to student needs
 2. 0.5 FTE Multi-Linguistic Learners/Language Support

3. 1.0-1.5 positions Instructional Leadership Team/Senior Team Leads: Administration will ask for a total of 3 teacher leader positions because of the size of the school.
 4. 2.0 FTE General Budget: Lowry has had a large enrollment reduction in the past 2 years and the administrative team is hoping to have an enrollment increase again after the pandemic. These positions may be classroom teachers and/or intervention teachers.
- c. Questions/clarifications on scenarios
- i. CSC Members
 1. Are there any other staffing areas that could be reduced? There is not a surplus of staff.
 2. Is more platooning a possibility? Platooning across grades does not always work well and platooning does not work for all students.
 3. How does enrollment shift during the year? In general, enrollments and withdrawals tend to be relatively even. Since winter break, more students have enrolled (8) than withdrawn (3).
 4. The number of classrooms at each grade level can shift in the future due to enrollment.
 5. Typically, primary classrooms (2nd grade) are protected in reductions because those students need the foundational skills.
 - ii. Public Comment
 1. Is it possible to cut any paraprofessional positions? It is crucial to have paras in Kindergarten and 1st grade. The library also utilizes a para. UCD students who are part of the Paraeducator Intern Program (PEI) and Student Teacher Residents (STR), which have minimal cost to Lowry, are spread across the other grades to support as needed. The PEI students are sometimes used to support Intervention.
 2. 30+ students in a 5th grade class may help students prepare for middle school, but that is a lot of 5th graders in one class.
 3. 30-31 students in a class is borderline—the number can quickly go up to 34.
- d. Discussion of scenarios
- i. Public Comment (including feedback received prior to the meeting, some of which was geared towards choosing one scenario)
 1. Scenario: Reduction of Third Grade from 3 classrooms to 2 classrooms

Pluses (What Works Well)	Deltas (What change could be considered)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incoming third grade classes will be the smallest (2) ● This maintains interventionists to support teachers and students. ● This change could last for three years, at which point enrollment could increase to allow for 3 classrooms at each grade level again. ● Reduce third grade over fifth grade (from two parents with students in both grades). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a big shift in third grade academic content. ● This is the first year for academic testing.

2. Scenario: Reduction of Fifth Grade from 3 classrooms to 2 classrooms

Pluses (What Works Well)	Deltas (What change could be considered)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Older students could “absorb the change” more than the younger students (2) ● This reduction maintains the interventionists to support teachers and students. ● This grade is the easiest to plateau. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since this staffing level is likely to not just be a one year fix, but persist for several years, this would require finding a new grade level to move to two classrooms next year. ● This is the largest class size of the three up for consideration. Their bodies are bigger and it would be harder to fit in the classroom. ● 5th graders and their teachers will need support. They take the most standardized testing. ● 29-30 5th graders look different in a classroom than 29-30 2nd or 3rd graders.

3. Scenario: Reduction of Intervention Staff by 1.0 FTE

Pluses (What Works Well)	Deltas (What change could be considered)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Several of our Intervention staff also serve as STL and provide professional development to classroom teachers ensuring that students receive best instruction in the classroom first. ● Intervention serves all students in an indirect way. Intervention teachers pull significantly below grade level students out of the classroom and give them the small group attention they need to meet learning objectives. This allows classroom teachers to spend more time addressing the needs of the remaining students and more small group time and attention for these students. ● Intervention is a highly specialized and complex position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who would support the MTSS process? ● We potentially would need to find a new READ Act coordinator and new Early Literacy Content Lead. ● How would our students that are Significantly Below Grade Level receive enough support without impacting the needs of other students? Intervention is currently supporting 9-23% of students at each grade level. (2) ● I’m wondering if we can raise funds or have a cadre of volunteers or parents trained and able to come in (pending health regulations) to help with interventions - I know there has been a small pilot that might be able to be leveraged (READERS program). Also wondering about the student teaching program and if that could provide some small group intervention. I think we could find funding for this type of specific role. ● How would losing reading intervention change our work on the Science of Reading? ● Is there the ability to hold some recurring training that parents could go to, in order to

	<p>do more at home to reduce the need for interventionists?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of PEI in providing intervention • Would larger class sizes create an increase in need for intervention?
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4. Scenario: Reduction of Second Grade from 3 classrooms to 2

Pluses (What Works Well)	Deltas (What change could be considered)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will need to consider more para support in second grade. • Have we considered the possibility of academic retention on class sizes?

ii. CSC Members

1. Scenario: Reduction of Third Grade from 3 classrooms to 2 classrooms

Pluses (what works well)	Deltas (what change could be considered)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3rd grade is relatively mellow this year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would it be advantageous to platoon? • Could we platoon across grade levels? Could we do a 2-3 split to protect one of the positions? No, there is a different literacy curriculum for grades 2 and 3. • This is the first CMAS testing year.

2. Scenario: Reduction of Fifth Grade from 3 classrooms to 2 classrooms

Pluses (what works well)	Deltas (what change could be considered)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5th graders are potentially more capable of the change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are potential behavior concerns with 5th grade classes being so large.

3. Scenario: Reduction of Intervention Staff by 1.0 FTE

Pluses (what works well)	Deltas (what change could be considered)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Would a struggling student need even more intervention because of a larger class size? ● If Intervention is cut, that will impact the classroom teacher in terms of needing to provide more/different classroom instruction. Intervention is a second opportunity, it does not replace classroom instruction.

4. Scenario: Reduction of Second Grade from 3 classrooms to 2 classrooms

Pluses (what works well)	Deltas (what change could be considered)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The social-emotional challenges with 2nd graders. ● They experienced more interrupted instruction (or lack of instruction) during Covid than other grades. ● It is a primary/foundational grade.

5. If Lowry receives budget assistance, the assistance would go towards other positions (Special Education, Multi-Linguistic Learner, Senior Team Leads) before putting them back into 2nd grade, 3rd grade, 5th grade, or Intervention.
6. Are there other current staffing positions that Lowry may not have next year, i.e., restorative justice? There is a .5 Restorative Justice Coordinator right now, but that position will probably have to be cut in order to reconcile the budget. However, this money cannot be used for a classroom position.
7. When considering the recommendations, it is important to look at this one year at a time.

- e. Consensus agreement on budget recommendation:
 - i. CSC recommends reducing 3rd grade classrooms to 2.
 - ii. If additional reductions are needed, they should occur in this order: reduce 5th grade, reduce Intervention, reduce 2nd grade (protect 2nd grade the most since it is a foundational year).

6. Discussion of Specials offerings (Art vs. STEAM): looking to make a .6 reduction
 - a. Public Comment (including feedback received prior to the meeting, some of which was geared towards choosing one scenario)
 - i. Under Mill Levy funding, Lowry is required to have PE/Dance and some form of art (can be music or visual art).
 - ii. The current STEM teacher is leaving Lowry, which allows for a reformatting of Specials.

iii. 32 responses advocate for keeping Art.

Pluses (What Works Well)	Deltas (What change could be considered)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prefer Art (22 parents, 10 staff) ● Lowry currently has a successful art program, evidenced by students who sign up for the yearbook cover and the artwork around the school. ● Art is a very important way for kids of all ages and economic backgrounds to express themselves. ● Kids are already over stimulated with computer/technology usage - STEM or STEAM would just be more technology time as opposed to using another brain function to do something creative. ● There are many other avenues for STEM exposure, such as through Enrichments. ● Art provides consistency for kids (teacher and program) and they need that after the past 2 years ● Art gives kids something to look forward to ● As kids get older they don't get art in their day, not all kids like gym or science but an art option is great for those kids. ● Art hones into those kids' creative side that can often go unnoticed. Need a true art teacher to do this. ● Art is an outlet for many kids. ● If not STEM, science can be reintegrated into classroom instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Would require hiring new teacher or getting certified to teach STEM ● Option to offer .5 art or STEM and .5 music in order to keep all specials for students ● Could 0.5 Music be paired with 0.5 Theater class? ● Providing time for DDI ● The school has struggled to find a good teacher fit for the STEM program. ● While we do not want to think about current teachers, losing our beloved art teacher would be a real loss to Lowry! ● If STEAM is chosen, it should be heavy on Art with at least $\frac{1}{3}$ of time devoted to it, not $\frac{1}{5}$ as acronym suggests. ● Could we split two classroom grade levels into three groups to make the classes smaller? ● With less classes, could ECE be offered Specials

b. Discussion and consensus recommendation by CSC Members

Pluses (What Works Well)	Deltas (What change could be considered)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prospective Parent interest in Lowry due to STEM Lab. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A desire for consistency with programming (i.e., the equivalent of 1.0 FTE of the same content). ● It is important to provide art and time for creativity. ● STEAM would dilute the importance of each of those 5 areas. ● Incorporating science back into the grade-level classrooms will be challenging.

- i. CSC recommends Art over STEAM.
- ii. The overall consensus recommendation is to keep Music offered full-time whether that is a 1.0 FTE or split between two .5 FTE. This will offer needed consistency for students.
- iii. A final decision on all budget decisions will be made by Kevin King, Instructional Superintendent, on/by February 4. Budget assistance will be announced on February 10.

7. Additional Discussion

- a. No additional discussion at this time

8. Setting of agenda for next meeting

- a. Discussion and recommendations on meeting the needs of all students (continuing from November meeting).

9. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm

10. Date for next meeting - February 17, 2022, 5-7 pm

Upcoming Dates:

2/4 - Virtual Tour, 9:15 am

2/8 - PTO Meeting

2/14 - Choice Deadline

2/21-2/22 - No School