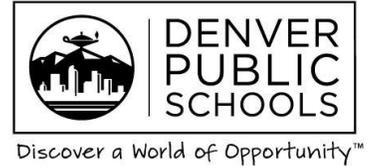


CSC Meeting Minutes

Lowry Elementary

8001 E. Cedar Ave.
Denver, CO 80230



Date: February 17, 2022 *Time:* 5:00- 7:00 pm

Meeting Link: Online Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

Alona Hastings-Administrative Support (Principal's Designee), Lisa Davis-4th grade Parent, Committee Chair, Dindi Gaines-5th grade Parent, Courtney Riordon-Kindergarten Parent, Secretary, Kelly Tasky-3rd grade Parent, Barbara Volpe-Community Member, Dave Miles-Special Education Teacher

Members Absent:

Adrienne Cruz-Principal, Zed Jemison-Assistant Principal, Adler Dacunha-5th grade Parent, Merlin Holmes-5th grade Parent, Lexi Higgins-1st grade Teacher

Additional Attendees:

Stephanie Creen-Parent, Amy Holthus-Pera-Parent, Kaleigh Riedlin-Parent, Stephanie Thielen - GT Coordinator/STL, Grace Wingard-ECE Teacher

Discussion Items

1. Call to order, welcome
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm.
2. Public Input
 - a. There was no public input at this time.
3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
 - a. Kelly Tasky motioned to approve the minutes. Dave Miles seconded the motion. All members voted to approve the minutes.
4. Unfinished Business Items:
 - a. Budget Updates
 - i. The 2022-2023 Budget was presented in its current form. Changes may be necessary based on our final enrollment in the fall. While the administration is not thrilled with the outcome, they are okay with it. It feels pretty good and more hopeful than it did a week ago. They feel we have a good model that will continue to serve students and appreciate the robust conversation surrounding the hard budget decisions.
 - ii. Lowry received budget assistance that has provided a positive impact on the budget. Cuts were initially proposed, budget assistance received and final staffing numbers made as follows. Which staff members are stepping back as a self RIB (volunteered to be cut) has still not been completely formalized, these will be announced later.

1. Special Education (SpEd): In the current school year, Lowry has 2.5 FTE - 2.0 was from the district and 0.5 was school funded. This was initially cut to 1.5. We received 0.5 FTE in budget assistance. We will have 2 full time Mild Moderate teachers in 2022-2023. A teacher self RIB the remaining 0.5 FTE.
 2. Senior Team Leads (STL): In the current school year, Lowry has 4 people in this position (each of these people are part time STL, part time Intervention or GT). This was initially cut to 2 people. We received 1 additional position through budget assistance. We are able to use federal stimulus money to fill in the remaining position. STL staffing will remain at 4 positions for 2022-2023. With reductions in stimulus money anticipated next year (2023-2024), there may be some hard decisions next year.
 3. Multilingual Education (MLE): In the current school year, Lowry has 3.0 FTE - all funded by the district. Our allocation was reduced to 2.5 FTE. The initial request for budget assistance of 0.5 FTE was denied. After additional advocacy with the director of the MLE program, our request was granted after hours on Friday afternoon. We will remain at 3.0 FTE for 2022-2023.
 4. General Fund: Administration appreciates the robust discussion on priorities. Initially 4.6 FTE in cuts were proposed (1.0 Second Grade, 1.0 Intervention, 1.0 Fifth Grade, 1.0 Third Grade, 0.6 Specials). We received 2.0 FTE in Budget Assistance which allowed us to protect (i.e. not cut) Second Grade and Intervention. Cuts were made at Third and Fifth Grade and Specials. There was a self RIB in both Third and Fifth grade.
 5. Specials: We currently have 3.6 FTE in Specials. This was cut to 3.0 FTE and no budget assistance was applied for. The decision was made to keep Art, PE/Dance and Music each at full-time. STEM will be eliminated (the current STEM teacher is not planning to return to Lowry, which was announced prior to budgeting). Staffing is still being determined for the move from 0.6 to 1.0 Music. Lowry really loves and appreciates our current music teacher and we are hoping to find someone else to job share the position. There are some potential candidates to fill this role and as we move from budget to staffing, this will be addressed.
- iii. Because of the self-RIB, there was no need for any teacher to re-interview for their positions.
 - iv. In total, Lowry received 4.0 FTE in budget assistance. The district provided this because the cause of our enrollment decline is still unknown whether it is a true downsizing of our school or a result of being caught in pandemic circumstances. The assistance prevents us from facing a funding cliff, but makes the cuts more gentle (similar to a slope). If we had lost too many teachers, it would have been hard to rebuild if these were just pandemic circumstances. The hope is to build back to three classrooms at each grade level.
 - v. The budget and staffing are set for now. In the event we have significantly lower enrollment in the fall, we may face additional RIBs at that time. We are trying to set some money aside in the general fund to account for a possible fall enrollment decline.
 - vi. Several questions/suggestions were asked and discussed:
 1. There is the possibility of RIBs to the Administration (Principal, Assistant Principal, Senior Team Leads) in the fall if we determine we are too top

heavy. In our imperfect world, anything is possible. The goal is typically to keep these cuts as far away from students as possible. That is a conversation that would occur in the fall.

2. Both third and fifth grade will be reduced to two classrooms in 2022-2023. Administration is looking into additional paraprofessional support and other support for these two grade levels.
3. There is the possibility that fifth grade can change classrooms to larger rooms to accommodate for the large class sizes and bigger student bodies.
4. Several of our empty paraprofessional positions in the current year are in the ECE and SpEd departments, which are funded by the district, and are not technically our money to save as a carry forward for next year. The district is moving away from allowing schools to keep a carry forward. The school is looking at ways we can spend money now on items for next year (student math workbooks, copy paper, etc.) to free up more money in the fall.
5. The budget for next year does include a new full-time Restorative Justice Coordinator, paid for with stimulus funding. Because we do not have anybody in the position now, this position could potentially be eliminated if our numbers come in low to minimize cuts elsewhere.

b. Meeting the needs of all students - recap from November meeting and recommendations

- i. The committee recognizes that all parents want their child to have compelling experiences at school, to feel connected and to learn at an engaging level.
- ii. In analyzing the feedback received and discussed in the November meeting, several themes were identified and discussed. Recommendations were made as follows:
 1. Positive Attention/Rewards: Lowry should initiate the use of some sort of program to provide positive attention to students.
 - a. This could focus on character traits from our social emotional learning (SEL) themes, SOAR themes or other positive behavior.
 - b. Carson has a program that was started by parent volunteers and is quite successful. Lowry's program should be owned by staff.
 - c. There is a tricky balance between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for promoting positive behavior.
 - d. Positive recognition could come in the form of school-wide assemblies, grade level assemblies, just in classrooms or principal lunches.
 2. Small Groups: Lowry should commit to providing small group meetings/instruction to all students every day.
 - a. Lowry has many students who receive extra support through SpEd, Intervention, GT, MLE, etc. Other students miss out on extra supports and may only meet in in-class small group work once or twice a week. Small group work is critical for all students to feel connection and support.
 - b. Small groups could be focused on academic or social emotional needs.
 - c. The possibility of a set time in each day to flood the classroom with extra adults could be investigated, but it makes it hard for students

with legally required minutes in multiple areas to have all their needs met this way.

- d. This could be a good way to re-engage parents in the school after a pandemic absence. Parents could run book discussion groups, work one on one with students, provide enrichment activities, etc.
3. Communication: Regular and standardized communication via Digital Deets both school-wide and from grade-level/individual classrooms should be a common expectation across the school. All families need to know why we do what we do and how their child is doing.
 - a. Some, but not all, teachers send out regular communication to families. In many classrooms, parents have no idea what is being taught and how they can support students at home.
 - b. Information from grade levels/individual classrooms should focus on the curriculum, what is being taught and how they can support their student at home.
 - c. Parents do not know how to access information on how their students are doing via Report Cards and iStation scores.
 - d. School-wide communication can focus on informing parents about school-wide practices - why, how, when, etc.
4. Social Emotional/Behavioral - No recommendations were made at this time.
 - a. While we recognize there are many gaps in the social emotional health and behavioral needs of the students, many new processes have recently been put in place and we need to see how these play out before adding new variables.
 - b. We started using the Empowering Education curriculum at the first of the year. It includes a weekly theme, differentiated by grade level, with 20 minute lessons daily with books to read and role playing, and home links for parents to use at home. This is in addition to the embedded Conscious Discipline rituals and routines. So far teachers have had positive feedback.
 - c. Alongside of communication improvements, parents need to be more aware of the new social-emotional curriculum and how they can support it at home.
5. GT: No recommendations were made at this time.
 - a. Many parents wish their child had access to advanced content via the GT teacher.
 - b. Just like MLE services are limited to students who speak a language other than English at home or SpEd services are limited to students on an IEP; the services of the GT teacher is limited to students who are identified as GT, in Talent Development, have one data point towards identification, have high scores from interim assessment or are recommended by their teacher. Mrs. Thielen runs 21 groups a week to serve the needs of these students.
 - c. For students who do not qualify for GT services, the differentiation should come from the classroom. All teachers have access to enrichment menus created by the GT Teacher to provide to any student.

iii. Mural Update

1. In ensuring that all stakeholders were okay with the installation of the mural, we missed the deadline with Councilwoman Sawyer's office and another location was chosen for the mural.
2. Should an opportunity like this come again, we are now prepared to act quicker.
3. In the process of discussing the possibility of the mural, a new location was identified for installation - the side of the brick storage building on the west side of the first grade playground.

5. New Business Items:

a. Engaging community in school

- i. The pandemic made Lowry lose a lot of who we were and what we used to be. The recommendations made above can become the groundwork for us to rebuild upon.
- ii. Due to a lack of time, we did not brainstorm specific ways that we can engage the community and make Lowry stand out as unique. We are committed to having this conversation at not only the next meeting, but ongoing at future meetings.

6. Principal's Report

- a. Ms. Nault-Cruz returns tomorrow (1/18).
- b. Thanks to Mrs. Spearman for all of her support.
- c. Masks, while not required after 2/25, will still be encouraged.
- d. The office area, cafeteria and auditorium will be remodeled in June using money from the 2020 Bond. Drawings should be available at the next meeting.

7. UIP Status

- a. No update was provided.

8. Black Excellence Plan

- a. No update was provided.

9. Additional Discussion

- a. Alona will remain at Lowry for two more weeks (two days per week) to help support Adrienne's transition back. She will be running the building during these days so that Zed and Adrienne have the time to meet.

10. Setting of agenda for next meeting

- a. Budget Updates
- b. Enrollment Updates
- c. Engaging the Community and making Lowry unique

11. Date for next meeting - March 17, 2022

12. The meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm.

Upcoming Dates:

2/21-22 - No School (Teacher PD on 2/22)
3/8 - PTO Meeting

3/28-4/4 - Spring Break (Teacher PD on 4/4)
4/11-4/29 - CMAS Testing