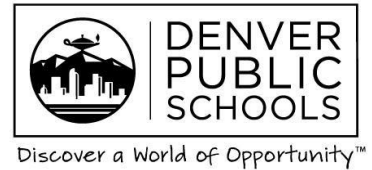


CSC Meeting Minutes

Lowry Elementary

8001 E. Cedar Ave.
Denver, CO 80230



Date: January 27, 2022 *Time:* 5:00-7:00 pm

Meeting Link: Online Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

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, Barbara Volpe-Community Member, Lexi Higgins-1st grade Teacher, Dave Miles-Special Education Teacher

Members Absent:

Adrienne Cruz-Principal (on leave), Zed Jemison-Interim Principal, Janice Spearman-Administrator on Special Assignment, Dindi Gaines-5th grade Parent

Additional Attendees:

Stephanie Thielan, Amanda Encinias, Grace Wingard, Amy Holthus-Pera, Ellen Petrila, Carrie Richardson, Kim Eikenberry, Debbie MacGilvray, Bochra Bendjebbar, Susan Rayburn, Nicole Segan, Kassidi Boening, Heather Mills, Kelli Pfaff, Brittany Haynes, Katie Gray, Lauren Schuster, Carolyn Lohr, Amy Morin, Natalie Chedsey, Kim Headrick, Susan Stearman, Lydia Acosta, Megan Lee-Malkemus, Rina Washington, Sussi Raber, Kelly Woodman, Carla Whitney, Stephanie Creen, Karina Desserich, Lincoln Lewis, Adam Palko, Heidi Laursen, Amanda Horn, Beth Sprake-Jones, Kaleigh Riedlin

Discussion Items

1. Call to order, welcome
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 5:05 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. Merlin Holmes seconded the motion. All members voted to approve the minutes.
4. Principal's Report: Alona Hastings reported on behalf of Dr. Jemison.
 - a. What is currently going well? Staff members are covering for a variety of staff shortages. Students continue to be eager to learn and play in the snow this week. The administrative team is cautiously optimistic about the 2022-2023 budget.
 - b. What are current struggles/pain points? There continue to be staff shortages, which is common across the country.
 - c. Updates: Dr. Jemison will provide additional updates and a full Principal's Report on Tuesday, 2/1.

5. 2022-2023 Budget

a. Budget Basics

i. Student Based Budgeting:

1. Denver utilizes a per pupil budget; for the 2022-2023 school year, the base budget will be \$5,564/pupil.
2. Additional money is allocated for students who qualify for Free and Reduced Meals (FARM), as well as those who receive Gifted & Talented (GT), Special Education (SPED) and/or Multilingual Education (MLE) services. We also receive Mill Levy, Title I and Federal Stimulus funding. In the current 2021-2022 school year, these additional funding sources boosted the average per pupil funding at Lowry to \$9,310.

ii. Lowry, like many schools, has seen a decrease in student enrollment. The student population is down 11.81% from last year; Colorado as a whole is down by 2.9%. Approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of DPS schools also have decreased enrollment. Most of our surrounding schools have a 8%-16% decrease.

iii. DPS has an enrollment forecaster on staff who looks at neighborhood demographics to project the following year's enrollment. For 2022-2023, Lowry's student enrollment is projected to be 397 (without ECE).

iv. Timeline: Last week, the administrative team met with Kevin King, Instructional Superintendent, and the budget partner to learn the budget goal. The final budget is due to DPS on February 4. Dr. King will make the final budget decision because Ms. Cruz is on leave. The recommendation of CSC will be taken into consideration in the final decision.

v. CSC's role in budget development:

1. The CSC is chartered by state statute to be involved in the budget development.
2. CSC is to look at the budget through the lenses of the Universal Improvement Plan (UIP) and school mission statement. In addition to CSC making a recommendation, the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) will provide recommendations on the budget.
3. The administrative team will then make a recommendation to Dr. King, who will make the final decision on behalf of the school.

b. Grounding:

i. DPS Transition Priorities are equity, to accelerate learning by re-envisioning education, and promote social-emotional and mental health.

ii. Review of Lowry mission: Fostering a joyful school family that is committed to authentic belonging and personal excellence in our diverse community.

iii. Review of Lowry UIP Goals (which are related to the DPS goals):

1. Elevating Rigor and Productive Struggle
2. Increase Student Engagement
3. Data-Driven Instruction (DDI)

iv. DPS Budget General Information: In addition to per pupil funding, Lowry has federal stimulus money. However, Lowry will receive 66% less stimulus money next year than the current year. Allocation funds have also decreased for schools due to low and changing enrollment (special education funding, GT funding, English language learners, etc.).

v. "Positions, not People": The recommendations and decisions for the 2022-2023 budget will be made on this philosophy. These decisions are not based on which

individuals should be eliminated, but on which positions could have the least and/or most impact on Lowry meeting its mission and goals.

c. Budget Overview

- i. What is the student projection for the upcoming school year?
 - 1. DPS is projecting a district-wide 5-year decline in enrollment due to decreasing birth rates and a high cost of living.
 - 2. Lowry’s student population is projected to be 397 students, a decrease of 76.
- ii. How much has our budget “changed” from the current school year?
 - 1. The 2021-2022 population was projected to be 473, but was actually 421. Our budget operated at the level of 473 students.
 - 2. Total number of students and the projected number of students (most significant declines for 2022-2023 are highlighted):

Grade Level	Total Number of Students (2021-2022)	Projected Number of Students (2022-2023)
K	76	73
1	77	78
2	76	57
3	82	55
4	75	73
5	87	61

- 3. Stimulus funding: Stimulus money has limitations and can only be used to support learning loss (i.e., intervention teachers, reading/writing paraprofessionals) and social emotional and mental health. This funding will be phased out over the next 2 years.
- iii. What are the 2022-2023 average general costs per position?
 - 1. Average Teacher Cost (2022-2023, including benefits): \$95,000
- iv. What are non-negotiables? (i.e. required to have Art and PE due to Mill Levy funding, AN Center, SEL requirements, SPED, MLE, ECE, nursing, etc.)
 - 1. DPS can adjust allocation for these positions, but individual schools cannot cut these positions below the DPS allocation.
 - 2. Many of these positions come from the DPS budget, not Lowry’s individual budget.
 - 3. DPS has reduced the allocation for some positions; however, Lowry Administration feels these positions are important to the mission of the school and therefore are not being cut from the school budget:
 - a. District MLE allocation cut from 3.0 to 2.5
 - b. District funding for STLs cut from 3.5 to 2
 - c. District funding for for special education cut from 3.5 to 3.0
 - d. District GT funding .25, Lowry funds .50

- d. Presentation of Scenarios
 - i. Scenario 1:
 - 1. 3 classrooms each in Kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 4th grade, 5th grade
 - 2. Reduce 3rd grade classrooms to 2 (projected at 55 students)
 - 3. Create 3 full-time Specials (currently 3.6 FTE)
 - 4. Total reduction of 1.6 FTE
 - ii. Scenario 2:
 - 1. 3 classrooms each in Kindergarten-4th grade
 - 2. Reduce 5th grade classrooms to 2 (projected at 61 students)
 - 3. Create 3 full-time Specials (currently 3.6 FTE)
 - 4. Total reduction of 1.6 FTE
 - iii. Scenario 3:
 - 1. 3 classrooms for each grade level (K-5)
 - 2. Reduce Interventionist staff by 1.0 FTE
 - 3. Create 3 full-time Specials (currently 3.6 FTE)
 - 4. Total reduction of 1.6 FTE
 - iv. The administrative team is planning to ask for budget assistance because they recognize the need to serve Lowry students and to ensure alignment of the school programming, mission, and vision to DPS priorities.
 - v. There needs to be discussion about the Specials offerings for the 2022-2023 year. Dance and PE, Music, and some form of Art must be offered. The current STEM teacher is not planning on coming back next year. Should STEAM be offered in place of Art?
 - vi. The administrative team met with the teachers who are potentially impacted by these staffing reductions.
- e. Questions and Discussion from CSC Committee Members
 - i. The scenarios only included a reduction by 1.6 FTE because the administration is operating on advice from the district. Dr. King, HR partners and the budget partner suggested that budget assistance will be provided because Lowry has a diverse population with some significant needs. Originally, the concern was that 3.0-3.5 FTE positions would have to be cut. 1.6 FTE is approximately \$200,000.
 - ii. Budget assistance will be decided on February 10.
 - iii. There does not seem to be a way to keep 3.6 FTE for Specials, however the administration is asking for budget assistance to help with this.
 - iv. When presenting the scenarios, the administration tried to focus on cutting whole positions, not partial positions. For this reason, they did not attempt to reduce any of the Specials positions to .5 FTE.
 - v. The Music teacher currently works 3 days a week (a .6 position). It would be ideal to find someone to teach the other 2 days a week to have a 1.0 FTE.
 - vi. A STEAM teacher would have to be certified as a general classroom teacher. It would not be possible for the current Art teacher to move into this position.
 - vii. It is possible to raise funds to pay for teacher positions. However, that does not guarantee that the positions will be funded each year. The Aviator Fund is the current fund for discretionary uses. Recently, the fund has raised less than \$10,000/year.
 - viii. If a position is cut for a specific grade, it can have a ripple effect as the enrollment shifts each year. However, teaching assignments can change from year to year. The administration's goal is to protect the 3 classrooms/grade.

- ix. When a final decision has been made about which scenario has been selected, current teachers in those positions will each have the opportunity to interview for the remaining positions. If a teacher is not hired back at Lowry, non-probationary teachers will have a guaranteed spot at another DPS school. Probationary teachers are not guaranteed a spot, but may interview for open positions at other schools.
- x. For schools larger than 300 students, it is recommended that there are 2 school leaders; with Lowry's size and the diversity of the student body, it needs 2 members of the administrative team. Would having a Dean of Culture instead of an AP positively impact the budget? Many teachers are making more money than administrators due to recent contract negotiations.
- xi. The money that had been suggested for a Dean of Culture this year was only for the 2021-2022 year and would not move forward to 2022-2023.
- xii. A number of positions still have not been filled for the 2021-2022 school year (i.e., paraprofessional positions).
- xiii. If 5th grade is impacted by a staff reduction, it could change platooning.
- xiv. If Scenario 3 is selected, it is undecided how intervention would be cut. It would likely be a reduction across all four current intervention positions rather than the elimination of a single position. The decision would be based on the needs of the students.
- xv. There may be a need to reduce the STL positions, but not cut a full position.

6. Public Input - Budget

- a. Discussion of pros, cons and opinions will be heard at the beginning of the Tuesday 2/1 meeting. Public Input at this time was limited to clarifying questions.
- b. Music class allows for teachers to have time for DDI meetings. This will need to be addressed if Specials are cut to 3.0 FTE.
- c. Paraprofessional staffing will be maintained based on student need.
- d. Lowry will cover the .5 ELD that was reduced by the district.
- e. All scenarios include the reduction of .6 specials.
- f. If Lowry does not receive budget assistance, the CSC would call an emergency meeting to recommend where and how to make additional budget cuts.
- g. Hiring within DPS happens via personnel committees. If there is a possibility of a teacher being cut, he/she may not be on the school-based personnel committee.
- h. Members and attendees are encouraged to think about the scenarios and talk with coworkers over the next few days.

7. Additional Discussion: It was amazing and encouraging to see such a supportive staff attend tonight's meeting.

8. Setting of agenda for next meeting

- a. Goal - Gain consensus among committee members on recommendation of a budget scenario

9. Date for next meeting - Tuesday February 1, 2022, 5-7 pm

10. Meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.

Upcoming Dates:

2/4 - Virtual Tour, 9:15 am

2/8 - PTO Meeting

2/14 - Choice Deadline