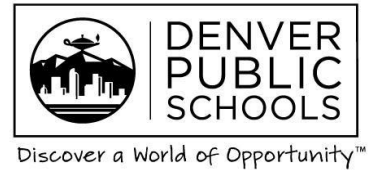


CSC Meeting Minutes

Lowry Elementary

8001 E. Cedar Ave.
Denver, CO 80230



Date: August 26, 2021 *Time:* 5:00- 7:00 pm

Meeting Location: Online Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

Zed Jemison-Interim Principal, Janice Spearman-Administrator on Special Assignment, Adler Dacunha-5th grade Parent, Lisa Davis-4th grade Parent, Merlin Holmes-5th grade Parent, Kelly Tasky-3rd grade Parent, Dindi Wade-5th grade Parent, Barbara Volpe-Community Member, Lexi Higgins-1st grade Teacher, Dave Miles-Special Education Teacher

Absent Members:

Adrienne Nault-Principal (on leave), Courtney Riordon-Kindergarten Parent

Additional Attendees:

none

Discussion Items

1. Call to order, welcome
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm.
2. Selection of Committee Chair and Secretary
 - a. Lisa Davis has volunteered to be chair and Courtney Riordon has volunteered to be secretary. Members offered positive comments on appointing both of them to these positions. There was a unanimous consensus that both should be appointed to these positions.
3. Public Input
 - a. There were no additional attendees present to provide input.
4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
 - a. All members present voted in favor of approving the minutes.
5. Principal's Report
 - a. What is currently going well?
 - i. The BBQ was a major success. Families felt welcome and staff enjoyed talking with and making connections with families.
 - ii. Zed is working hard to establish relationships with the community and will be attending several external events.
 1. Councilwoman Amanda Sawyer has been holding events with community partners to help develop a direction for the greater Lowry community. Zed has attended two of these so far.
 2. CSU is currently conducting a study involving some of the families at Blue Spruce and Alton Way to see how these families can be encouraged to use

their voice more to advocate for themselves. Zed will be working alongside to see how we can get these families to participate more in the school community.

- a. Zed is planning to visit these communities on a monthly basis to help build relationships and trust. Kaleigh Riedlin, PTO President, will be joining him.
 - iii. Zed is making an effort to be visible and has heard from families that this is going well. He is outside every morning and afternoon, talking to families and listening to their voices.
- b. What are current struggles/pain points?
- i. Enrollment - to be discussed on a separate agenda item.
 - ii. Zed is really trying to build relationships with families. He wants to be present, honest and transparent with families. He has had some positive and negative experiences already. Right now he is trying his best just to listen to families, but is not making promises he cannot keep. Families are welcome to come in and talk to him.
 - iii. The first day of school was disappointing to many families. It was just a long line to go into school without the opportunity for camaraderie and seeing teacher's faces. Zed was trying to balance families desire for health and safety protocols, but admits he missed the mark. They will be working to establish other ways to be warm and welcoming throughout the school year.
- c. Updates
- i. The website is currently being redone and will be launched in mid-September with a look and feel similar to Hill Middle School's website. The new website will be more user friendly and contain updated information. Videos will be used throughout the website so that families can see the inside of the school - this is extremely important right now since families cannot access the school. Student led videos will be used in addition to staff videos.
 - ii. Signs are being made for the Kiss and Go lanes.
 - iii. 20 new computers have been purchased for staff members to replace outdated technology. New Promethean Boards have been ordered for 4th and 5th grades. We want to see how the new models work before ordering new ones for the entire school. The current Promethean Boards are over 10 years old. As we expect our students to be 21st Century Thinkers, we have to be using modern technology to enable this.
 - iv. Zed is the process of hiring a dedicated in-house guest teacher so that there is always one guest teacher available to lead classes when needed.

6. Enrollment Updates

- a. Lowry's annual budget is directly tied to the number of students who are officially enrolled at the school. In September, DPS conducts a count of students and adjusts budgets accordingly.
- b. Our projected enrollment from which the budget was developed back in January is 476 K-5 students (ECE students are counted and paid for separately).
- c. Mid week before school started we were at 320 students. Staff made a huge push to contact families, including outreach in many languages. Following this first push, enrollment increased to 369 students.

- d. Lots of families showed up without registering on the first day and we currently have 424 students registered. Staff is working with these families to get them officially registered.
 - i. There are 9 Lowry students who have opted in to the District-wide Virtual Program, but are still counted as students at Lowry for budgeting purposes. Subtracting these 9 students, we have 415 students in-person at Lowry.
- e. There are still students on our rosters (who attended Lowry last year) and haven't shown up within DPS Schools. Staff is continuing to reach out to families to see what their plans are and to try and get them officially enrolled and showing up.
- f. The student count is down district-wide . There are some schools with increased enrollment, but overall most schools are down.
- g. Lowry's trend was up for several years, but has trended down for the last two years. We cannot focus on the past, but have to focus on right now and what we can do moving forward to increase these numbers.
- h. Assuming we stay at ~50 students down from our projected enrollment, we can expect approximately \$250,000 to be taken from our budget. Zed does not want to present the "what if" scenarios quite yet as he is hopeful our numbers will move upward, but will be considering several scenarios. He is positive that regardless of the outcome, we can make it reflect positively on the school and students.
 - i. The official Fall Adjustment count is on the day of our next meeting (September 16), but we may not have enough data at that point to discuss options. CSC members should anticipate an emergency meeting to discuss budget implications of the Fall Adjustment.

7. Spring 2021 Community/Survey Results Discussion

a. Themes Discussion

- i. CSC Members reviewed the survey results prior to the meeting and we discussed several themes that were present in both surveys. These themes included:
 1. Gifted and Talented (GT) Program - Parents feel there is a lack of support for GT students and for higher performing students who are not identified as GT, but still need an extra challenge. There is confusion as to why the Highly Gifted Talented (HGT) program was eliminated.
 2. Diversity - Parents and the community appreciate the diversity of the school, but feel that non-white and low-income students receive more attention than white and higher income students.
 3. WINGS - Many people are concerned about behavioral and safety issues from WINGS students.
 4. Behavior Issues - Outside of WINGS, people are concerned that too much time is spent on behavioral issues and takes away from learning.
 5. Enrollment - Families are leaving Lowry or not even considering Lowry because of these concerns.

b. Next Steps

- i. CSC members agreed that better communication and transparency with families and the community is an important way to address these concerns. The school needs to take control of spreading facts, rather than letting emotions create rumors and mis-information.
 1. We can spotlight different programs at the school to help create a better understanding of how these concerns are addressed at the school on a daily basis. Programs with high priority to be highlighted included: addition of Paraprofessionals and Restorative Justice Coordinator,

curriculum differentiation, how WINGS benefits our school, and why the HGT program was eliminated.

2. Members brainstormed various venues in which information about the school can be shared including: parent letters, school website, Lowry Aviator, Denver Post Hub, Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter).
 3. Members acknowledged the power of word of mouth. We need to make people at the school happy and it will spread.
 - ii. Focus Groups with families to help better understand their perspective is a possibility. These can occur with current as well as families in the neighborhood that have opted to attend elsewhere.
 - iii. To address behavior issues, the school has committed a Paraprofessional to all but two of the classrooms. ECE, Kindergarten, and First Grade classrooms have a full-time Para. Other classrooms have at least a part-time Para. Additionally a Restorative Justice Coordinator has been added to the staff to help students work through disagreements and problems.
 - iv. More intervention staff has been hired to help with underperforming students so that not as many classroom resources are dedicated to these students.
8. UIP (Unified Improvement Plan) Status Update
- a. Due to a lack of time, this agenda item will be moved to the September meeting.
9. Unfinished Business Items:
- a. New/Revised Website Update
 - i. This was discussed at other points during the meeting.
 - ii. A new website is currently being developed and will launch in mid-September. A priority for the website will be sharing current and relevant information for families and given families/community members a peek inside our school.
 - iii. Because of the possibility of "lost information" in the transition, no new information is being added to our current website. CSC members expressed that the current website should at least state something about this so visitors understand why there is no new content about this school year.
10. New Business Items:
- a. none at this time
11. Additional Discussion
- a. Lowry is currently without a dedicated nurse. A district nurse is on-site half time each day to serve the school. If anyone knows of a nurse looking for a position, they can apply directly to the Lowry Nurse position using job number 1552-7472.
 - b. The district is extremely short on guest teachers. Could we make an effort to reach out to the community to recruit guest teachers for Lowry?
 - c. CSC should work with PTO to create more community events like the BBQ
12. Setting of agenda for next meeting
- a. UIP (Unified Improvement Plan)
 - b. New Member Orientation
13. Date for next meeting - September 16, 2021, 5-7 pm
14. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm

Upcoming Dates:

9/6 - No School (Labor Day)

9/16 - Fall Adjustment Count Day

9/27 - No School (Teacher Professional Development)

10/6 - CDE Fall Count Day