

CSC Meeting Minutes

Lowry Elementary

8001 E. Cedar Ave.
Denver, CO 80230



Date: December 17, 2020 *Time:* 5:00-7:00pm

Meeting Link: Online Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

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

Absent Members:

Chanel Harper-Parent, Merlin Holmes-Parent, Mahmoud Kharif-Parent

Additional Attendees:

Stephanie Thielan-GT Teacher

Discussion Items

1. Call to order, welcome
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm
2. Public Input
 - a. There were no issues brought forth.
3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
 - a. Barbara Volpe made a motion to approve the minutes. Dave Miles seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of approving the minutes.
4. Principal's Report
 - a. What is currently going well?
 - i. There was a Math Rigor Walk last week with Kevin King, our instructional superintendent and other representatives from Near Northeast. They sat in on math lessons in three 4th and 5th grade classes and evaluated the rigor of math lessons using the IQA tool. The results were positive. Students and teachers were engaging in high-level conversations that were allowing students to push past a procedural understanding of math into a conceptual understanding.
 1. While the Math Rigor Walk specifically evaluated three 4th/5th grade classes, ILT feels that school wide, we are sitting in the middle of the evaluation scale, which is an improvement from past years.
 - ii. Observation and Feedback cycles have started again. Instructional coaches were able to visit every virtual classroom in the past few weeks and give feedback to teachers. They are planning to continue this after break, but the staff cohort limits will make this more challenging with a return to in-person learning.

- iii. The results from the district-wide wellness survey came out. Lowry had 150-160 responses. There are a lot of responses to sift through still and we should have a summary at the next meeting.

b. What are current struggles/pain points?

- i. Devices are repeatedly getting broken and damaged, sometimes beyond repair. The district has a shortfall of replacement devices and are still waiting on new shipments. Lowry staff is working through overcoming this obstacle on a case by case basis.
- ii. As staff prepares for another return to in-person learning, there is some anxiety and worry among staff. Teachers are trying to find time to prepare classrooms again.
- iii. In January there is mandatory ACCESS testing for our ELD students that must occur in person, regardless of a student's chosen learning environment. Staff is currently working through how this will work.
 - 1. CMAS is still up in the air, but some similar pain points could occur with this.

c. Updates

- i. There are similar numbers of students who have selected in-person vs. remote learning for the spring as there was in the fall. There have been some changes, but nothing extraordinary.
- ii. The District has put a new matrix that correlates in-person/remote learning to the color-coded statewide Covid-19 Dial Dashboard. In this new matrix, a purple level (stay at home) is the only level that would require a full remote learning environment at the elementary level.

5. UIP Status Update

a. Progress Monitoring update

- i. The final goal has been locked into place - this goal focuses on developing higher level thinking among students for each unit. This will begin in January.
- ii. The stop light measure on our progress monitoring will be updated in January. No significant changes have occurred since November.

b. Compliance Review update

- i. The UIP has been submitted to DPS for review. It is currently under review and Lowry has not received any feedback.

6. Black Excellence Plan Update

- a. The Black Excellence Plan is something that we want to permeate every aspect of our building wide culture. With a return to school in January, so of the systems to facilitate this will be put back in place.
- b. School-wide Professional Development will return in January with sessions on Wednesday and Friday mornings. Culturally responsive education will continue to be a focus of these sessions.
- c. OBOS (One Book One School) is continuing with their book study, but also in implementing school-wide opportunities for student involvement and sharing of narratives.
 - i. The next book will bring in community leaders with experience in civil rights and the black resistance. In unpacking the next book, the themes of equity, justice

and resistance will be explored. Students will be asked what they want to take action on and hopefully leverage this into service learning.

- ii. The whole goal is to end silence and provide all students with an opportunity to share their narratives.
 1. The group is currently creating templates that students can use to share their identity beneath their surface. These templates are building towards We Are Lowry night.
- iii. Any community member is invited to attend OBOS.

7. Unfinished Business Items:

a. Constituency Group Updates

- i. The parent group is currently working with the ELD Team to explore ways to open up two-way communication with ELL families.
- ii. Student voice was heard this past month through videos that students recorded of what they like about Lowry. One theme that was present through the videos is how Lowry is a welcoming place. The positivity in these videos is great food for the teacher's soul, particularly right now. These videos will be used as part of the Prospective Parent tours.
- iii. The community has been involved in working with the Salvation Army to consistently drop off food boxes to families living at Blue Spruce and Renaissance. This will help alleviate food insecurity with these families. Their goal is to have systems and processes in place so there isn't any food insecurity in our community.
- iv. The community group is working with OBOS to get speakers. A Lowry resident, Carlotta Walls LaNier was part of the Little Rock Nine, and will hopefully be working with Lowry Elementary in some capacity.
- v. Stephanie Thielan will be working in the new year to get more community support for students with affective needs. She is building a committee to develop programming for students with the community.

8. New Business Items:

a. Budget Planning

- i. As a whole district, we are coming into tricky times. There will be difficult decision making district-wide.
- ii. As we move into budget, we need to remember "positions not people". Our focus needs to be on what programming and positions we need at Lowry, not on what people fill those positions. Yet, we still need to be sensitive to the fact that there are people in those positions.
- iii. Preliminary Projected Enrollment - Budget Implications
 1. Our projected enrollment for next year is 473, which closely matches our current enrollment. This is 40 fewer students than our projected enrollment for 2020-2021, which will result in an approximate budget decrease of \$360,000.
 2. One immediate impact is that our Kindergarten is projected to be 76 students, down from 96 last year. While there are no specific scenarios in play yet and nothing specific has been decided, there is a good possibility that a Kindergarten teacher will be RIFed. The Kindergarten team met today to discuss the implications of this.
 3. With the savings of not hiring a second Assistant Principal this year as budgeted and the likely loss of a Kindergarten teacher, we will likely still

need to reduce 1 FTE. This could be 1 position, 2-0.5 positions, 5-0.2 positions, all possibilities are open and nothing has been decided.

4. Adrienne and Zed will be looking at the budget and Lowry's priorities and considering a variety of different scenarios. At our January meetings, we will be discussing these scenarios and making recommendations on which scenario will best meet the needs of the school.

iv. What needs are not being met?

1. A major priority will be with MTSS and Intervention. This is part of our UIP and a need at Lowry. As the budget is developed, we will need to be mindful of this process.
 - a. 10% of students have IEPs and GThas 50 formally identified students with ~100 on the current case load.

v. Additional Budget Thoughts

1. We have a large carry forward that can help buffer the budget. However, we don't want to use it all next year as these budget woes will likely continue for several years. Our budget partner has advised us to put part of our carry forward into a reserve fund. This will put us in a place where we are on fiscally solid ground.
2. Due to the increase in teacher salaries due to the strike, teacher salaries will go up. Each teacher is budgeted ~\$92,000 (including benefits).
3. The group discussed the process of pulling students off of wait lists and why it is not a viable solution to increase enrollment (because staffing changes cannot occur until after October count, leaving students in large classes for up to 4 months) and also the possibility of a long term enrollment strategy, once numbers stabilize after Covid.

vi. Ultimately, all budget decisions will prioritize what is best for Lowry students.

b. Parent Survey

- i. The Wellness Survey has a lot of good feedback, but it is mostly related to remote learning. The group debated the need for another survey and determined that a Lowry-specific survey could provide staff with valuable feedback to help improve Lowry.
- ii. Members will brainstorm questions for a parent survey and send them to Lisa. Lisa will put together a set of questions and then Adrienne and Zed will create the survey. This will be sent out in mid to late January.
- iii. Barbara and Paul will work on developing a survey to the community to help gauge their impression of Lowry Elementary. Members can send their ideas for this survey to them.

9. Other Discussion Items

- a. While teachers are all really busy, a handful of teachers have responded that they would like to have community members as guests in their classroom. Paul and Barbara have brainstormed a list of possible community members to work in this program. After the first of the year, Lexi will work to recruit a "community guest coordinator" for the intermediate grades and she will act as the primary grades coordinator. They will work with Paul and Barbara on getting this program up and running.
- b. The question was brought up as to whether or not Lowry students experiencing homelessness would be provided transportation when in-person learning returns. Patricia Vaughn and Adrienne are working to secure this transportation, which is required by the McKinney-Vento Act.

10. Setting of agenda for next meeting
a. Budget Development

11. Date for next meeting(s) - January 21 and 28, 2021

12. The meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm.

Upcoming Dates:

12/19 - 1/4: Winter Break - No School

1/6: Coffee with the Principal

1/8: Virtual School Tour

1/11: Return to In-Person Learning

1/12: PTO Meeting

1/13: Coffee with the Principal

1/18: No School - MLK Day

1/20: Coffee with the Principal