

McNamara Elementary
Shared Decision-Making Committee Minutes
April 28, 2021
3:15 – 4:30 PM

Members Present:

Toufic Elachkar
Carol Applebaum
Melanie Brooks
Sanfora Foote
Charity Maina
David Sadof
Lindsey Turner

Agenda Items:

Welcome/Check-In

- Teachers and students participated in Earth Day.
- Teachers sent pictures of students planting herbs, flowers, and artwork.
- Lessons on recycling were taught and other activities were completed. Activities were posted on Class Dojo and the school website.
- These activities were positive and fun hands on activities especially during this time.
- Mr. Washington, one of our crossing guards, is in the hospital. He is undergoing surgery on Friday. He is a one of the kindness men and a unique crossing guard. He knows all the students and parents who cross daily and greets them with a smile. We truly admire him, and we will keep him in our prayers.
- We have one teacher expecting her first child, two teachers retiring, one staff member who was promoted, and one staff member moving overseas.

Budget

- The budget is not yet finalized.
- There was a scare of cuts, but it did not materialize
- We will receive the full amount per student, and we can keep teachers and staff.
- We may add a third-grade bilingual teacher and a kindergarten and first grade ESL teacher to manage class sizes and benefit students.
- Our school has been in the green because we spend conservatively while meeting the needs of students and ordering materials.
- Next year's enrollment projection is 916 students (26 more than this year).
- We can make up the numbers in Pre-K alone and expect more in kindergarten as well.
- Our projection may be under, but we will remain conservative and add later if needed rather than loose funding.
- A portion of the money in the budget is for interventions and tutoring.
- Interventions are more crucial next year due to the pandemic and virtual learning.

Testing

- STAAR fourth grade writing was about 50% in-person.
- There were some glitches. The testing was “paralyzed” meaning it couldn’t get started/logged in.
- There was 30 minutes of time when the students were logged in but unable to test and that time is lost.
- Writing was postponed to the next week and went better. The teachers monitored.
- TELPAS testing has been administered over the last month. This is the last week.
- The students were tested one grade level at a time.
- The End of Year Assessment window opens May 3.
- May 3-28: Benchmark Running Records (K-3rd)
- May 3- June 4: CIRCLE (Pre-K)
- May 3- June 4: Renaissance 360 (1st-5th)
- May 10-21: High Frequency Word Evaluation #3 (1st-2nd)
- May 17-June 11: District Pre-Approved Assessments (K-5th)
- STAAR Testing (May 11-May27)
- Virtual students don’t have to test. They have a choice.
- In-person student are required to test.
- Testing doesn’t count in one way and does count in another way. (Student Achievement will not count so schools will not receive a grade, Student Progress will count, and Closing the Gap will count)

Interventions

- We are purchasing Reading Mastery- New Transformation
- Cost- a little over \$60,000
- Reading Mastery has been around a long time.
- The program is evidence based direct instruction for K-5th.l
- Reading Mastery (K-2nd and 3rd when needed) Corrective Reading (3rd-5th)
- We are asking teachers to buy into the program.
- Teachers shared testimonies of their experience and/or experiences of former colleagues.
- All testimonies were that the program is structured and that it works if used with fidelity.
- The program will be used during interventions by classroom teachers, other teachers, and hourly interventionists and during tutorials.
- Tutorials are in place now but will continue next year using Reding Master and Corrective Reading.

Attendance

- Student attendance is improving.
- The attendance rate for the last six weeks was 91%.
- The attendance rates this six weeks went up to 92/19%
- Last year we were at 96% and our goal is 97%.
- Every percentage rate matter.

- Ms. Varela with Communities in Schools and Ms. Palos our Wraparound Specialist have been working diligently, conducting home visits, and making phone calls to check on reasons for student absences.
- Some home visits show that the family has moved, and they speak to management to gather forwarding information to check on families and confirm and make sure they safe before withdrawing.
- Ms. Varela is moving up to the CIS main office next week. She will be replaced next year.
- Ms. Palos will be with us the remainder of the year, but she is going overseas to work for International Health. She will be replaced next year.

EOY Class Celebrations

- We have decided to hold our class celebrations virtually.
- Teachers were part of the decision to have the virtual celebrations.
- Certificates will be mailed to students.
- There were a few suggestions for in-person celebrations.
- One suggestion was to hold the celebrations outdoors, but weather is unpredictable.
- Another suggestion was Drive Bys, but not feasible because all parents do not have cars, parade route concerns and manpower to conduct it safely.

Summer School

- Summer school for grade K- 5 will start late and end late (June 17 – July 8).
- Pre-K students will start a week later.
- There is a total of 264 students who qualify for summer school.
- This number is based on data- Renaissance, Grades, Imagine Learning, High Frequency Words (1st-2nd), and other testing.
- So far 17-18 teachers have signed up to teach summer school.
- The Concurrent Model (what we are doing now) will not be used.
- The district is asking for us to use the Split Staffing Model (few teachers virtual and others in-person).
- Teachers who are more comfortable with technology will be selected for virtual.
- We will look to see how it works before we agree. It all depends on numbers.
- We can't put more than 10 in the classrooms and follow social distancing guidelines.
- Instruction will be more small group interventions so that students catch up with grade level.

Safety

- COVID- Last week one student with a presumed case turned out to be a positive case. Last night (April 27) at 10 pm, a staff member tested positive.
- Reports will be done today for several presumed cases to the city and HISD. Also, notification will be sent through a call out to parents and an email to faculty and staff.
- An announcement was made today asking everyone to continue to follow guidelines, keep masks on and social distancing.
- When indoors everyone still must wear masks.
- This week and the remaining weeks faculty and staff will be reminded to keep masks on.

- The district announced that the school playgrounds can open but administrators and custodial staff checked the playgrounds and a few repairs need to be made before opening.
- The work orders were placed for the repairs on the playgrounds and for the basketball goals which were vandalized over the summer.

Comments, Questions, Suggestions

- Ms. Applebaum, volunteer at McNamara for 15 years, stated that she admires the dedication of our faculty and staff through these challenging times and is grateful for everyone who has remained well.
- She also would like to know if she can come back to volunteer next year and when.
- She was informed that those decisions will be made during summer and she will be notified.
- She is ready to come back with all the energy to help with as many students as she can.