

Marcy Family Connections/Marcy Parent Council Meeting
November 5th 2020

Meeting began, via zoom, at 6pm.

Kate Suchomel, Chair, began the meeting with introductions.

6:15pm, updates:

- explanation of new name, Family Connections. A place to support students, support the school, do fundraising, and bring our school together.
- Chipotle fundraiser raised \$386.00
- Book Fair, Usborne Books November 22nd-December 5th
- Carolina Almeida expressed the hope that we can help homeless and highly mobile families (Kate Clayton will address).

Donna's Principal report: The district is going to start considering inviting high needs children to come back to school. Teachers will be asked to volunteer to come back—this is all voluntary.

A survey of the staff, found 5 teachers willing to teach in person (not all of them can do a full five days)

This is all contingent on: teacher availability, SEA, and each team would figure out the neediest kids based on their performance as an on-line learner. 4 kids per room. The kids who come in may not have the same teachers, it's going to be based on who is available. The transportation department will only do full day transport (am/pm only) and will take a month to make the transportation arrangements. This means, in-person option for high needs students (as determined by the school) can't happen until December at the earliest. They will make determinations about specifics on a per kid basis.

Because of the current school distance learning format, some children who were struggling are doing better without the social distraction. Some kids have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be directly addressed by the teacher (because of the "face to face" of the current format).

Donna says they are looking forward to next year, and what it will look like as a k-5th arts magnet. Their deadline to get ready to market the school is December 5th. A virtual open house will be in December, current students will be grandfathered in BUT there may be a form that will need to be filled out (Donna will let us know). Anticipating the need for arts specific staffing (such as a dance teacher). Arts magnets usually include: drama, dance, visual arts, graphic arts, music, etc. We can anticipate arts integration in the curriculum. Professional development on how to do this will be provided to the teachers.

Mourning the loss of teachers in the middle school. The district has not yet told the school how many students there will be. Marcy administration has asked to have pre-k back in the building.

Donna doesn't know if Spanish will still be offered.

Question about volunteering. With the virus, there are strict limitations on volunteers (as in, volunteers won't be allowed to work with children).

Bell times, new bell schedule proposes 9:30am-4:00pm. One of the biggest obstacles currently is that there is no parking at Marcy, and the later time will make parking much, much, harder. The parking lot is 2 ½ blocks away and 10 dollars a day to park (paid by the district). So, the district is looking at the parking issue for teachers.

They don't yet know much about how middle schoolers will be transitioned into their new school/s. Donna encouraged middle school parents to find out where their children's friends are going and try to keep the cohorts together.

Middle school teachers are not going to be bridged into other schools as far as we know (teachers will not be moved as teams). Next week, Donna is going to find out more from HR about this. Teachers won't know where they are going before parents have to pick.

Kate Clayton: notes that this is frustrating and there is little information about how this groundwork is being laid out. Kate notes, this is important because it's about our kids. Goal: happy, healthy kids, who know what's coming. As soon as Marcy knows anything, they will.

Kate Clayton, school psychologist. She has been at Marcy 7 years, of her 9 in the district (as a full time, in-building, psychologist). She is also the lead of the special education department. Went to Carlton College, from North Dakota. Worked at Fraser for a couple of years, fell in love with anything to do with autism and kids with special needs, worked with autistic preschoolers for 2 years.

Marcy has an ASD citywide program and Marcy does a great job of inclusion. It is a welcoming space for kids with special education needs. PhD from the U. Kate LOVES early education.

Since Kate has been at Marcy, there has been a LOT of transition. Waves of retirements. A new social worker. (Kate does small groups with students). Kate saw a niche and stepped in as the coordinator of special education (the numbers of special education students has dramatically increased over the past 7 years). Current special education teachers are doing a ton of push in work because there is NOT enough room for the number of special education students. They currently have 8 special ed teachers (they now have 7). 3 teachers in the ASD program and each teacher has 7-11 kids on their caseloads. In the resource program, where kids need less support, there are 4 teachers with 15-20 kids on their caseload. Kate coordinates conversation between families, teachers, and outside support services (such as prairie care).

Number of kids? A little over 100 kids are considered special education who need specialized education (total enrollment is 669 kids—so 15% of the kids are special education students). 121 Advanced Learners (this overlaps with special education, the 2 E kids). 504 kids, 20 kids. ELL 74. 9 homeless/highly mobile students (this is a big decrease). Approximately 22% of the student body needs specialized support of some kind (this is about average for MPS). In a large district like MPS, there is a huge amount of regulation of special education. They have an OT (shared with 9 schools); 2 SLP.

Marcy covers a couple of homeless shelters and this means kids need help transitioning into the school.

Kate also coordinates 504 plans for kids (medical concerns, kids with mental health concerns—those who don't need specialized instruction but do need support). Currently there are 20 kids on 504s.

Marcy also has a differentiation specialist. They have used title 1 dollars to assist with math/reading interventions. Kate coordinates all of this and works with families to figure out next steps when the need arises.

Kate is also coordinating the in-person evaluations for kids who need them (with protections for kids/staff). Shannon, new social worker who supports the autism program. Marcy has a mental health collaborative and has licensed marriage and family therapists who can provide support. There is also a mentoring program. Kate and Chul help coordinate access to these options.

(Chul, social worker, great liaison with families.)

Newer projects:

A recent survey of 5th-8th grade students to access

Thanksgiving, culturally appropriate pedagogy—respectful of everyone's culture and heritage. Working towards an equitable partnership—bringing in Indian Education Board to help frame Thanksgiving. Shannon, social worker, spearheading this effort.

MPS is becoming more informed about what's going on in Minneapolis and the world—trying to figure out what to do, as staff have become more informed, to address our history and better support families and students. Learning about how to have conversations with students about race, racism, and systemic injustices. There is not much diversity in staff, so importance of connecting with families is huge. "Telling the truth in an age appropriate way" (Donna).

The team does a good job of helping parents when Marcy is not a good fit—letting families know options. The twice exceptional population. The data at Marcy shows that students are either doing really well and others are REALLY not. They are trying to figure out what the supports are to reach all kids.

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7:20pm, business portion of the meeting.

Chipotle fundraiser—in store, reports of long wait times and problematic social distancing. Ordering on-line was tricky for some people because it was hard to tell if the money that was directed towards Marcy was going to be properly attributed.

Family Directory, only 38 families have volunteered their information. Everyone who has filled it out has access to the information. Sidney will send something out to the teachers to remind families about this.

Book Fair, Natasha George is the lead. Usborne has the best options for money back to the school. Fair November 22nd-December 5th. She will send out posters and flyers.

Aaron Holgate—no updates on magazine sale (Aaron has been unable to reach the representative that he has worked with in the past).

Adjourned, 7:30pm.