

Parent Advisory Committee

September 22, 2023

There were 24 parents in attendance

Question of the Month: What went well and what can be improved with the beginning of the school year?

Director's Update

- Dr. Luna-Vedder welcomed the group and thanked them for their participation.
- Currently, we have about 500 more students than we had this time last year. We anticipate that sometime in the next year, we will hit 40,000 students.
- Kirkwood Elementary is being built right now, and it will open next Fall.
- We have also gotten the approval to buy land near Outlaw field, and we are going to work hard to get that elementary school open as soon as possible. We are also already looking at land for the next Elementary and Middle School. We are aiming for a goal of having land 10 years out from when we need a school.
- We will be going through a major elementary rezoning as we anticipate the opening of Kirkwood Elementary.
 - We are partnering with a third-party vendor to engage in that process. There will be opportunities for engagement and public comment, so please follow all district communication channels to ensure you are aware of those opportunities.
- We have a National Blue Ribbon School! Congratulations to Middle College!
- We have received an additional award that grants us money to provide after-school programming pay for teachers. It is a \$1 million award.
- The Impact Aid form is going out soon. This is a process that allows the district to collect the revenue that we miss out on by having federally-owned property in our area that would otherwise be property-tax eligible.

Robin Burton, Executive Director for the CMC Education Foundation, provided parents with an overview of their work.

- We are a 501(c)(3) for the school system. We support the school system with efforts with entirely privately-funded money.
- Overall revenue was a little over \$460,000 last year.
- Some of the things the foundation does include school-level grants, along with celebratory events in the district:
 - Great Idea grants - \$1,200
 - Big Idea grants - \$2,500
 - Morale grants - Varying levels to support morale-boosting efforts at schools
 - Teacher of the Year Banquet
 - Pass and Go
 - Partners in Education - Local businesses partner to support schools

- Teachers Warehouse - we have been able to save teachers well over \$500,000 on school supplies.
- Leadership CMCSS - a year-long program for anyone in our community who wants to know more about the inner workings of the school system.
- The foundation has overall foundation sponsors who contribute to the organization, either through monetary donations or in-kind donations for events.
- We also receive sponsorship packages, corporate grants, and several campaigns.
 - Bash to Benefit - \$40,000 raised
 - Dash to Benefit - \$13,500 raised

The full presentation delivered by the Education Foundation can be accessed [here](#).

Anthony Johnson, Chief Communications Officer, came and spoke to families about the move to ParentSquare.

- Why the change? Ultimately, it was so we could better engage our parents and guardians.
 - 1: We can provide better language preferences for families to choose what they want or need to see.
 - 2: Two-way communication, versus the one-way communication with SchoolMessenger. Parents can send messages back to teachers and reply to posts.
 - 3: Teacher access for classroom-level messages.
- Is there any feedback that people have about ParentSquare?
 - Before, my child had Remind, where students could also get notifications. Is there a way to expand that in ParentSquare?
 - There is a StudentSquare, so if you give your permission, students can download that app. Even without the app, students can receive those communications from teachers when they send them. It is available right now in all of the high schools for principals and teachers to use.
 - I have had parents reach out to me about issues with downloading the app, getting passwords, etc. Is there someone I should tell them to email to get the link again?
 - If you lose the invitation email, that's ok. You can still register on ParentSquare with what the school has on file.
 - In an emergency situation, if there is a press release, they (parents) should have immediate notification. How do we ensure that happens?
 - There is a way to do that, and our administrator in that situation just accidentally forgot to press the correct button. There is an override setting that allows communication to go to families immediately, even if they have elected to receive the digest version of messages. There are also override settings where we can send an immediate text, call, email, etc. if

- there is truly an emergency situation, regardless of any preferences that families have selected to opt-out of phone calls on a daily basis.
- Is there a PTOSquare?
 - They do not have that, but I'm going to reach out to them and share that idea!
 - A school could also give the school PTO lead admin permission to send something to parents.
 - I love it, because it helps us hold our kids accountable.
 - Encouraging everyone to use it is key - there are some schools that have not totally gone into using it 100 percent.
 - Yes, we agree! We have a system in the data where we can see which schools have been sending messages and which have not. We try to follow up and we are working with our level directors to ensure they have access to that information as well so they can touch base with principals when it appears the communication is not happening as frequently.

The Safety and Health Department delivered an update on all of the precautions and safety measures taken by the school system, along with the broader work of their department.

The Safety and Health Department - Overview

- Student health services falls under our department, which includes all of the school nurses across the district.
- Coordinated School Health - this is a state-mandated program to ensure students get screenings and any necessary referrals that may need to happen for things like vision, high blood pressure, etc.
- The onsite clinic is another initiative of our department. Employees can use the onsite clinic at no cost, and it covers most primary care services. It is a benefit for our employees, but it is also a cost savings to the district for our insurance coverage.
- As a district, we also have our On the Job Injury program; in Tennessee, government entities do not have to have a workman's comp program. Operating that program like we do also allows us a cost savings, because we are able to work all of the claims we may get ourselves.
- We also secure all of the insurance for the school system, occupational safety falls under our umbrella, and we serve as liaisons with emergency responders and law enforcement.

School Safety

- We have an SRO in every school, and 2 in our high schools
- We have an emergency management plan, which includes school plans that the schools provide to us each year. These include maps, contact lists, and other critical information that we would need to ensure we can respond in an emergency situation.

- School Safety Teams conduct tabletops with one of our Safety and Health Specialists, which allow them to walk through their response to a scenario and refine their preparedness.
- Emergency Line - that is a new addition over the last couple of years (2021-2022 school year). It does not replace 911, but it is a line that schools can call immediately to reach the Safety team.
- Standard Response Protocol - this lays out the different types of responses that need to be used in certain situations (lockout, lockdown, hold).
- Badges, all calls, and emergency cards empower our employees to assist in medical emergencies, or call a lockdown.
- The Alertus application allows for a similar ability from a staff laptop.
- Schools have several radios, and they also have panic buttons on them that ring to Safety and Health so we can listen in.
- Raptor is a program that checks all office visitors against the Sex Offender registry.
- C.R.A.S.E. training is another offering, which teaches employees strategies in the case of an active shooter in the school.
- We also conduct school security audits 4 times per year. If they do not receive a score of 100, they will complete a survey to highlight any areas of concern and how they are going to address them.
- We are required by state law to conduct several different emergency drills.
 - Fire drills
 - Safety drills
 - Lockdown drills - the state only requires 1, but we require 4.
- School security assessments - We complete these to apply for certain grants that the state offers.
- CAD notifications - We receive a message from law enforcement when there is a situation near a school they are responding to, and that allows us to be involved in situations and respond immediately
- Security stakeholders meet 4 times per year to discuss school safety and security issues
- Schools are eligible for school safety awards for going above and beyond on tabletops, audits, etc.
- The school safety hub is accessible on the website so you can see all of these items (you can access the school safety hub by clicking [this link](#)).

Questions:

- Sometimes my daughter is in a wheelchair, and the exits don't always have walkways. Sometimes it's grass, and that's a challenge for her in an evacuation situation. What is the guidance on that?
 - There are alternative exits that the schools are expected to mark for different situations like that, and we have access to all of that information to ensure there are plans in place for whatever students might need.
- Is there a deadline for the drills to occur?

- Fire drills once a month, which we assign dates for. There is a portal for principals to see all of their upcoming drills, and if a deadline has passed without them completing one, it will send them reminder emails.
- Are those (C.R.A.S.E.) training opportunities available for new teachers?
 - They are offered multiple times a year, to multiple employee groups, with lots of options in the event that an employee misses the training at their school.
- Is there a way we can know what some of these procedures (lockout, lockdown) are so we can support our students?
 - The active threat plan video would be a good starting point that is on the Safety Hub would be a great start. There is also a lockdown book that is geared toward elementary. It is a great tool to help talk about that with your students and ensure your student knows how to be prepared. It is called [The Lockdown Drill - Book](#)
- Why isn't C.R.A.S.E. training required for every employee?
 - There are some schools that are required to at various points, and if a teacher or employee misses taking the training at that point, there are several other opportunities throughout the year for teachers to make it up. There are also times that we coordinate the training for specific groups (like substitute teachers).
- Is the training information (from C.R.A.S.E.) included in the sub folder for those who substitute?
 - It will be generic information in the sub folder, and when you get to a specific school, you should be able to ask for a map too.
- My son was at Rossvie when the lockdown happened, and it was just such a sense of peace for me because everything was so well-handled.

The full presentation delivered by the Safety and Health Team can be accessed [here](#).