

Parent Advisory Committee

Oct 19, 2023

Question of the Month: How do you feel about the academic preparation students receive in CMCSS?

Dr. Huff welcomed the group - there were 17 participants in attendance

Dr. Luna-Vedder delivered some updates for the group.

- With Kirkwood Elementary set to open next year, and the purchase of land for another elementary school set to open in 2026, there will be a rezoning of the elementary schools to take place this year. It will be two phases, with the hope that most of the rezoning will be done next year.
- We are working with an independent firm, and they are nearing completion of maps that will go out for feedback from the public. There will be information coming about meetings in the coming weeks.
- We will also be hiring and announcing the Kirkwood Elementary principal in the coming weeks.
- You received information about Impact Aid surveys last month, and those should have gone out to you. Please remember how important those are to fill out. It makes an impact on the district in many ways, including funding as well as grant eligibility based on our military population.
- During the month of November, there will be information coming out about school letter grades. This is based on a law that was passed several years ago that will be implemented fully for the first time this year. We are not totally sure what the criteria will be for those letter grades, as that information is currently being finalized. As a reminder, we hope that whatever comes out will ensure that we see grades reflected that show the whole picture of a school - a school may be excelling in one area, even if they have improvements to make in another.

Questions

- Could we reconsider the Fall Break timeline on Impact Aid? I'm sure a lot of people missed it coming out at that point in time.
 - We appreciate that feedback. We chose that date mainly because it was the first opportunity we could put it out, but we certainly understand that it could have missed some families. There will be reminders in the coming weeks to complete it for those who have not.
- I heard a lot of parents indicate that the links sent via email and through ParentSquare were not working, but the text links did.
 - That is a ParentSquare bug that our Technology team is working through.
UPDATE: ParentSquare fixed this bug when it was reported, and it mainly affected people with phone settings that do not automatically download and

install updated versions of apps. Most everyone should be able to access the links through ParentSquare now.

- Do we know which schools will likely be affected by the rezoning?
 - There are certainly some schools that will be affected more than others, and as a reminder, this is a two-phase process. Some schools will be affected in the first year, and then others after the opening of the other elementary school. We are working with our vendor to minimize the impact as much as possible, especially for those cases where a minimal number of students ultimately end up being rezoned (6-10 students). However, families should anticipate this will be a comprehensive rezoning that will affect many schools.
- I heard you say there will likely be a new high school or middle school until around 10 years from now. Is there enough capacity at the schools to support that?
 - Yes, we have the capacity to support growth at the secondary level for many years.
- There were several questions specifically about letter grades:
 - How much will various factors (growth, achievement, etc.) count toward the letter grade?
 - That is not clear at this point in time. I am serving on a committee right now that is offering feedback on what those criteria should include, and final decisions have not been made. We know that English and Math will be factored into those grades, and we also know that both achievement and growth will be included. Other than that, there are many measures that could be considered and we are awaiting further information.
 - Is that replacing priority schools?
 - No, this is not a replacement of the accountability designations, but an additional component.
 - What's the plan to ensure that parents understand what these letter grades mean?
 - We appreciate your interest in that, because we agree - it's very important that families understand what the letter grades mean and what they do not. The way we are approaching those designations is if we have a school that receives an F, that lets us know where we need to funnel additional support, whether it's through funding, personnel, or tailoring support to ensure principals have the time for deep instructional leadership.
 - We hope families will understand that school quality is a broad thing. I firmly believe that we have good schools all across this district, and a single letter grade does not always communicate all of the good things happening within that building. However, we take those results seriously in that it lets us know where we need to focus and where we need to put additional support.
 - Are instructional walkthroughs required in each of the schools?
 - Yes, they are required on a regular basis at the schools.
 - Who is tracking it each week at the Central Office?

- Dr. Schanda Doughty is our new Chief Academic Officer who is leading and tracking those efforts in our schools.

Dayna Paine, Director of Career and Technical Education Programs, delivered an update on how we ensure College and Career Readiness.

- The group discussed some of the terms that we think of when we define the term “ready.”
- What we mean in the Instruction Department is that students leave our district with a competitive advantage. That means they have some important skills that they leave with:
 - Professional Skills - how to keep a planner, how to manage my time
 - Technical Skills - how to do the technical requirements that are necessary for a job
- What we mean here is that we are going to have students completing a variety of post-secondary experiences through experiences in the community.
- Post-secondary does not just mean college - that is a broad term that encompasses technical school, community college, or the workforce.
- We want to ensure they make those plans and go through with that postsecondary pathway, but we also want them to persist.
- Exploration is really the focus at the elementary level. What kind of exposure can we give to students of different careers and what they require.
- In middle school, it's about experience.
 - One aspect of this is the YouScience assessment. Instead of what you think of as the “interest inventory,” we give students what is more of an aptitude test. It gives students a series of quizzes and games to gather a sense of how students think and what their strengths are. This translates into providing them with career options that align with those aptitudes.
 - They also take what are called survey classes, where they get exposure to each of the academy subjects in a 9-week course.
- Then in high school, we get CTE classes. These are career classes that are taught by seasoned professionals.

Questions

- Is there a way that we can watch for repeat courses at the middle school/survey level? That's something that happened to my kids, where they ended up getting a computer science course more than one time.
 - Yes, those issues can definitely be worked out in scheduling, and we are working to improve those things all the time.
- Kudos for all of these options that the District offers!
- Can you say more about how the academies are different from the other CTE options?
 - The academies are a cohort model, so those students start in their freshman year and work all the way through to their senior year. There is not an on ramp to an academy beyond a student's freshman year. Those same 75 students will

complete the same classes together throughout their high school career so they can do coursework that is integrated with their academy subject matter. CTE classes are available for students at any time in their high school career.

- From what I understand for the academy, there is a lottery if there are more applicants than spaces available...does it work like that for the other CTE classes?
 - The lottery for the academies is auto-generated through a computer program, yes. In a standalone, seats are prioritized for students enrolled in that school, but if I want that program, I can submit a special transfer request. If the seats are not full, the student will be accepted.
- How does someone go about getting a new curriculum or CTE program added?
 - We have an advisory committee at the District level, and we do a comprehensive needs assessment based on needs of employers, student interests, aptitudes, etc. We focus our offerings based on that.
- What does the recruitment process look like for the TCAT program? Why is it not at capacity?
 - We are working every angle we can think of. We think starting with parents is an important step, and we also spend a lot of time with 10th grade students.

Dr. Paine shared some examples of students completing CTE courses throughout the District. Those photos can be seen by reviewing the full presentation, available [here](#). Dr. Paine also shared a brochure with families, which can be accessed [here](#).

Jessica Harris and Amanda Nicks, Elementary Level Directors, delivered an update on 3rd Grade Promotion.

- First of all, if you are a 3rd grade parent, rest assured that we have the opportunities available at the District level to be sure that students can be promoted.
- The law states that a student who is not proficient on the 3rd grade reading assessment is eligible for retention.
- On October 20th, all 3rd grade students will receive a report on their reading progress. This will provide you with a benchmark report on their progress at this point in time. Students will score in one of four categories:
 - 1 - Below
 - 2 - Approaching
 - 3 - Meets
 - 4 - Exceeds
- There will be a virtual meeting for parents to learn more about the process if they have questions once those reports have gone home.
- Keep in mind that these reports are coming out at this point in the year, and we have not taught everything yet. So if your child is a 2, a 1, etc., we still have more to teach.
- Below is a table that explains the outcomes for students based on the score he/she receives:

4 - Exceeds	Promoted
3 - Meets	Promoted
2 - Approaching	Eligible for retention. Must complete either summer learning camp OR high dosage tutoring for the entire 4th grade year.
1 - Below	Eligible for retention. Must complete either summer learning camp AND high dosage tutoring for the entire 4th grade year.

- Below are the exemption eligibilities for students that would keep them from being retained, despite scoring a 1 or a 2:
 - A student will be exempt for being an English Language Learner and having received less than 2 years of instruction.
 - A student will be exempt for having been retained previously in any of the grades K-2.
 - A student will be exempt for having a disability or a suspected disability that impacts reading.
- Other FAQs:
 - What if you don't take a test?
 - You are treated as non-proficient, based on the state's terminology
 - When will we get a MOY report?
 - Those assessments are delivered in February for the MOY report.
 - How does the appeal process work?
 - You can appeal! When we get into the February meeting that will be available for parents after the mid-year report, we will provide more information about that.

Questions

- Who is facilitating the High Dosage Tutoring?
 - Teachers in 4th grade, primarily.
- Are they doing that on top of their other duties?
 - Yes - it is basically an unfunded mandate in that we do not have many extra resources to provide them with additional money for that time. The scheduling for that has been tricky, but we continue to work through it and make adjustments where we can. We are always working to get better.
- Can a teacher say that a student should be promoted based on the student's testing ability?
 - No, the teacher doesn't have that ability.

The full presentation about 3rd Grade Promotion can be accessed [here](#).

The next meeting of the Parent Advisory Committee will take place on **Nov 16, 2023**.