

MMS SIT Meeting April 12, 2018

In attendance:

Nicole Walker, Teacher Rep/Co-Chair for 2017-2019 nswalker@chccs.k12.nc.us

Anne Miller, Parent Rep/Co-Chair for 2017-2019 acbmiller@gmail.com

Robert Bales, Principal, rbales@chccs.k12.nc.us

Chassity Coston, Assistant Principal, ccoston@chccs.k12.nc.us

Christine Lippy, Teacher Rep for 2017-2019 clippy@chccs.k12.nc.us

Wendy York, Teacher Rep for 2016-2018 wYork@chccs.k12.nc.us

Geoff Gentry, Certified Employee Rep, 2016 - 2018 ggentry@chccs.k12.nc.us

Rachel Cone, Parent Rep, 2017-2019 rcbelize@gmail.com

MaryFaith Mount-Cors, Parent Rep, 2017-2019 maryfaithm40@gmail.com

Dena Papazolou, Parent Rep, 2017-2019 dpapazog@yahoo.com

Jennifer Gill, PTA/SIT Liaison jennifer.gill247@gmail.com

Rena Dadolff - Parent

•Approval of minutes - Approved

•Principal's Announcements -

- ∞ **Benchmark Testing** - Mon.9th - Wed.11th makeups Friday 13th & Monday 16th.
- ∞ **EOG Testing (Proctors Needed):** Sign up here [link](#). Link also placed on school website. May 30 - Jun. 1 & June 5th. All online with staggered start times.
- ∞ **Superintendent's State of the School's address:** (Full address found [here](#).)
The address gave insight into what is going on in the district. Clarity of what the district is doing. What changes are in the pipeline. In the future, might need to make efforts to make administrative efforts more inclusive/including to parents. Also, need to bridge gap with staff/teachers who don't live in the district and have to be intentional about planning to come to events. MMS's back to school bash is a great step. How do we as a district build investment and engagement among students, parents and staff? Also need to address the socio economic issues that make it more difficult for some families to get involved. The district doing Facebook Live and posting the video later are great steps.
- ∞ **PTA Beautification Day** It is Saturday the 14th. Please show up and help and encourage others to do so.
- ∞ **Schedule... Vision for MS future** Mr. Bales shared a PowerPoint about scheduling and the history.
- ∞ Things that cannot change: School hours, PE everyday with health integrated, 3 electives and the "middle school" (not junior high) approach to education.
- ∞ School decision points (things we have authority to change, and benefits of the changes):
 - ∞ Repurpose Physical Activity (recess)
 - ∞ Most referrals happen during this time; also, it is not instruction time, though it is counted as instruction in reports.
 - ∞ However, it is an important time for student engagement. We want to be careful not to lose that altogether
 - ∞ Repurpose WIN time
 - ∞ Every middle school is shortening the lunch period and getting rid of WIN next year.

- ∞ More Core time, which is extremely important to help teach core classes differently and help students improve scores. Our scores have not really changed in years, and we must make changes to help the students.
- ∞ Integrated core time (Science & Math work together, ELA & SS work together)
 - ∞ Allows for integrating lesson plans; gives timing flexibility to have more time for special lessons, exercises, labs, etc.
 - ∞ Also, these classes will be next to each other, so the students will experience less chaos and anxiety due to classroom changes
- ∞ ESSA - (replacement for No Child Left Behind) is the legislation that sets up the school accountability model
 - ∞ Under this model, schools will be graded on all sub groups, which is an area we historically have low scores
 - ∞ That means we will probably be placed on a Targeted Support Improvement (TSI) plan because of our sub group scores. There may be some funding or other programs provided to schools on TSI plans.
- ∞ This issue is part of what is driving schedule changes. We need to find a way to help the students in sub groups succeed;
 - ∞ Data shows we haven't been successful for the same groups for the past 20 years
 - ∞ See [NY TIMES ARTICLE](#) on achievement gap for sub groups
- ∞ Please note that responses from the homework surveys came back 400% more than the request for feedback than from the long range plan questions.
- ∞ Review of break down of elem., mid., & high school schedules - shows that we are spending about 50% of the school day on core teaching, but core teaching time is closer to 67% for elem and high schools
- ∞ Middle School vs Junior High concepts?
 - ∞ Middle school is about exploring many different learning opportunities without a lot of pressure. There's plenty of time for that later in their school careers; this is still a time they can be kids. **That's what we want to be.**
 - ∞ Junior High is about pursuing academic credits that will be applied to high school, making more room to get college credits in high school. This concept gets them in the high-pressure treadmill that we know is not always healthy for kids.
- ∞ Showed a sample schedule that we are looking at.
- ∞ This is currently only a proposal (will be final as of May 1)
 - ∞ If there are other/better ideas, it can certainly change.
 - ∞ If people have concerns, it's helpful if they discuss/message directly with Mr. Bales to try to work out improvements.
- ∞ Features: More core time, less elective time, more flexibility overall
 - ∞ Provide the teachers the time they need to provide content in a less rushed manner. Provide flexibility and the chance for students to explore different subjects.
 - ∞ Make the overall pace of the school day less frantic, more relaxed
 - ∞ Give students multiple breaks during the day; opportunity for mindfulness, physical activity, quiet time... whatever energizes them
 - ∞ Help create an environment that provokes less anxiety for students (The film Angst is raising awareness for everyone about this issue)
 - ∞ Interventions would happen during class and some will still happen during elective classes.

- ∞ A spirit and culture of flexibility will help manage potential downsides
 - ∞ Language electives need more time for their instruction, so this extra time can be reclaimed from the break, part of the core subject time, etc.
 - ∞ Elective teachers have lost time in this model, and it is difficult. Also electives are the best time of the school day for some students.
 - ∞ Potential for elective teachers to integrate with core lessons (music, theater, technology, etc.) for more engagement and well rounded learning experience for all
 - ∞ Elective teachers can pull students from core classes occasionally when more time is needed for special projects (e.g., weekly trumpet sectional practice; work on a theater production)
- ∞ How do help get buy-in from parents and staff. How do we communicate it all?
 - ∞ Mr. Bales and Ms. Coston continue to communicate and have an open door policy to discuss any concerns or ideas.
 - ∞ Parents who know the facts, particularly those on SIT and PTA, make a point of correcting misinformation and encouraging concerned parties to communicate directly with school
- ∞ **Other topics**
- ∞ Staff openings for next year were listed.
- ∞ We will have to have SIT elections before the end of the year.
- ∞ Math 6th grade parents can elect for students to try compacted. Students can apply and go to committee if they are jumping multiple levels.

•Public Comments -

- ∞ -“Angst” documentary follow-up (shown to parents today and students saw it during the week and teachers had follow-up questions); Parents found the talk about anxiety eye opening. Dialog was helpful in giving tools for parents to use. Talking about it helps and having people to go to that they trust is great. We need to continue the conversation with the students.
- ∞ The school is helping with this issue in several ways:
 - Student services does a once a month program for parents.
 - Look to combine parents & student events involving mindfulness.
 - Therapy dogs coming regularly at lunch.
 - New district person to streamline resources and help people connect to the resources.
 - Suggestion: Possibly get some resources from the high school.

•Student Announcements - Student government elections are next Friday. They will serve on SIT and bring announcements and concerns.

•PTA Announcements - None

•Chair Announcements - None