

Coal Creek Accountability Team

February 20, 2020, Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Chris Meyer, Sara Remington, Brian Munoz, Wendy Buffer, Susan Courson, Will Ostendorf, Becky Swanstrom, Hannah Jones, Jennifer Gurney, Michele Hibl, Carie Whalen, Sheridan Budin, Ann Bruinsma, Alexis Karnauskas, John Clasby, Deborah Snyder, Judy Walden, Nita Chettiar, Gabby Sfiligoi, Leah Vanberg, Kristen McDermott

Next Meeting: March 19, 2020 at 7am

Agenda:

Presentation from LMS Principal – Chris Meyer

Book Drive

DAC updates

Action Items:

Action: Brian Munoz will work with the staff to determine which students would benefit from a book drive donation.

Presentation from LMS Principal

Chris Meyer is the principal of Louisville Middle School. He has been working in BVSD for 22 years at multiple schools in various roles (para-educator, teacher, assistant principal, and now principal). LMS is a special school; the educators are passionate and fully invested in what they do. The educators think outside the box and push the limits. LMS is fortunate to be located on Main street, where student experiences can be broadened by their relationship with the larger community. This year LMS participated in the Labor day parade, and recently a student group (No Place for Hate) presented a proclamation of respect in front of city council. LMS participates in the LMS Gives program, in which students volunteer in the community for a day. It is amazing that the 180 slots fill up immediately, as there is tremendous involvement from the students.

Academics is a key component of LMS, where the academic standard is high, learning is stressed in a collaborative sense, and the goal is to make sure kids are not just ready for high school but also leaders in high school. We hear from high school teachers that they can tell which students come from LMS because they are so well prepared.

Safety is important at LMS. We want to make sure school is a safe environment, both physically and emotionally. LMS hosts Pride assemblies and provides direct instruction around stress management, goal setting, advocating for yourself, and more social emotional topics. 6th graders participate in a 360 program. The transition from 5th grade to middle school is difficult, and this program helps 6th graders to feel like the school is theirs.

At LMS there are 7 classes per day. 5 are content classes, including reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. The electives include mandatory music and PE on alternating days, and the wheel for testing various electives. There are many extracurricular programs and clubs at LMS. We highly recommend that students participate in activities beyond the school day, as research shows that students excel more in their lives when they are involved and find their place. Some of the extracurriculars include: Lego league, dodge ball club, D&D, track, wrestling, basketball, volleyball, destination imagination, etc.

Chris Meyer has noticed that the kids in our community are overstressed. It's up to us to provide balance and make sure they are taking care of who they are. At the same time, our children need to be a little gritty and resilient. They need to be willing to take risks, fail a little, and be fostered through that.

Question: How are Coal Creek students doing at LMS? Do they need additional support to be successful in middle school?

Answer: Coal Creek students are doing great at LMS, with a strong foundation. Many are leaders and many excel academically. Open enrollment students at LMS tend to need more support.

Question: How does the LMS math curriculum look for next year? Some high school science courses are only available to students with advanced math. Is there a way for students to accelerate in middle school?

Answer: LMS is currently working with the elementary schools to ensure that the math programs are aligned. 6th grade math is very foundational for student growth in the math curriculum. There is also a 7th grade math and 7th/8th grade compacted math, which can be accessed by 6th graders. Kids in regular math can still become engineers and achieve anything. Be careful pushing kids too fast!

Question: How do the Coal Creek students bring the Habits of Mind into LMS?

Answer: At LMS they have found that many Coal Creek students use Habits of Mind terminology when working through difficult situations. It's great that they have HOM in their vocabulary.

Question: Please share the cell phone policy at LMS.

Answer: Cell phones should be turned off and in the locker from 8:30am-3:40pm. If a staff member sees a cell phone or it is a distraction, the phone is taken away and parents are called. LMS believes in strict rules with follow up. That said, occasionally phones are allowed in class if they are useful to a specific lesson.

Question: How are Chromebooks used at LMS? How many hours per day are they utilized? Tell us about the firewalls. What type of oversight is used?

Answer: Starting next year, all students at LMS will have a personal Chromebook. Students are using the Chromebooks approximately 2 hours per day, in purposeful and targeted ways. BVSD utilizes a white listing system for internet access; websites must be requested and approved before they are made available within the BVSD firewall. Students are quick to find work arounds, so teachers also use GoGuardian and old fashioned monitoring with teachers and parents being active and aware.

Question: When and where are we teaching our kids to type? Middle school teachers expects kids to learn to type in elementary school. But how much is it in our curriculum in elementary school?

Answer: Typing skills are taught at Coal Creek in 4th and 5th grade. That said, typing is a big discussion at Coal Creek now, and the staff is discussing ways to improve the typing curriculum.

Book Drive

One of the CCAT charters is to help underserved children in our school. It has been mentioned by teachers that availability of books at home is difficult for some students. Would it be possible to do a book drive to collect and distribute books?

Option 1: Parents donate books. Books are available to all students. In this way, no child is singled out as needing a handout, and all children can receive a handful of neat books!

Option 2: Enact a targeted campaign for the students who need books. Work with the teachers to determine those in need and the types of books recommended, and then gather the books for these students.

It is mentioned that a targeted campaign for kids in need is much more manageable. It would take a tremendous work effort to provide books to the entire school (managing, collecting, and

sorting books). A targeted campaign could be done covertly, and provide books to students at the start of summer break. Note that Ecocycle has a room of used books available to support teachers' classrooms.

Action: Brian Munoz will work with the staff to determine which students would benefit from a book drive donation.

DAC Update:

The school climate survey results from students are available. BVSD is higher than national averages. The findings show that accelerated students tend to rate school as a friendly place to be. Other groups, such as free and reduced lunch and ethnic minorities, tend to rate schools as less friendly. The March meeting we will review these results.

Other:

It's wonderful to have so many parents at these meetings! This involvement is very helpful for our school and the success of our students.

Next meetings: March 19, 2020 at 7am