

Minutes from 9/20/16 PAR Evening

Attendees: Angela Renals, Yvette Quintans, Sudhir Prabhu, Crystal McKnight, Nitin Daniel, Jessica Spencer, Sara Orrell, Irina Schwartz

Ms. Williams: Tonight we will discuss new initiatives, new verbiage and acronyms, give you some detailed information; add to your understanding of what we are doing at the school level.

Please let me know if this is the kind of information you find helpful, or have other areas of interest you'd suggest.

- AdvancED Accreditation - distinguish between this and Advanced STEM certification
- MAP
- Gifted Education (new process)
- GA Milestones - completed this spring, results came in over the summer, parents may ask for copies, 5th grade went to the middle school; available for anyone who wants their child's scores
- STEM at Chesnut

AdvancED Accreditation - 3 years ago, DCSD received partial accreditation, but we were given the timeline to get that done. There were three areas still to be addressed, now we have full accreditation. The old acronym was SACS. The new tool that is used to accredit a school is now AdvancED. This is the overarching organization, under it, you have AdvancED STEM certification, a subgroup. Because it took us several years to complete our initial accreditation, we have now approached the time to resubmit for this accreditation. We have a committee here at school made up of teachers who are involved in in-services at county level. They train to look at how this next step will be taken with DCSD. We have to complete tools at the school level and I have sent out a link that 40% of our parents need to complete, our input about DCSD schools. 60% of teachers also have to complete the survey and 20% of the student body. It's about 10 questions, we are focusing on 3-5 because we know those students can take the survey quickly.

MAP Testing - Measures of Academic Progress. It is a different type of test. You remember STAR reading and math, that was the county's universal screener, every school uses this same instrument to assess their students. This is a new instrument for teachers, administrators, DCSD. There are other counties that have used it. It is an adaptive test. Your child's experience is unique because the questions become easier or more difficult based on the child's success in answering the questions. Our testing window was 20 days, we used the extension that we were given. The logistics of this, we need to streamline, it was time-consuming and lengthy for many of the children. The K-2 children who aren't experienced with the mouse also had a longer test time. We have to get through this process sooner. Mr. McFarlane has to monitor the test and dedicated 22 days to this task. Media center down in the mornings for 22 days. Computer science classes still happened in the afternoons. Get the word out to parents to familiarize their children with the mouse. Sara Orrell -- we can't take the test on iPad? Ms. Williams - no, it is securely uploaded to our laptops and desktops.

Mr. McFarlane - the MAP measures the student's achievement three times, Sept., Dec/Jan., the last window is in April. Correlated with national norms, each achievement level has a percentile ranking. There is a RIT score associated with each domain within the reading. Also creates a growth comparison chart for the student, that projects where the student should be by the next test. County is moving away from Levels 1, 2, 3, now everything is based on student personal RIT scores. K-2 tests on reading and math; 3-5 tests on reading, math, science and language arts. Each core subject test averages 45 minutes to one hour. Each subject is tested independently. We scheduled testing such that they were not taking two tests on the same day.

Sudhir: Can you give us advance notice of the test dates? Ms. Williams: Teachers have a schedule of the days/times when they will test based on a schedule created by Mr. McFarlane and me. We are used

to doing STAR tests without notifying parents. Sudhir: It would be helpful to make sure the student is attending.

Williams: We will create a schedule for parents; however it is not an official test schedule like the one created by the county for Milestones.

We were told average of 20 minutes, but students had average of 57 questions. Crystal: Do we need a computer lab at Chesnut? Ms. Williams: Yes, because we had to do the test in groups of 12 for the younger children. The older kids also used the laptops. Having enough technology in one location for all the students was a concern. Younger students didn't have the technology skills to quickly log themselves in.

Sudhir: When you test in the beginning of the year, are you testing what she learned the previous year?

Ms. Williams: It is a test to give us an idea of what she knows and what she does not know. Sudhir:

Anything parents can do to prepare the children for the test? Ms. Williams: Make sure they are reading every night. Spend some time of the day learning, having them write, including basic skills in real life applications. They shouldn't have to go home and have school. We need parent support. Yes, they use iXL. LaunchPad, the county set it up, there are about 9 online sites that logs the child into their grade-level appropriate iXL renews in January, so can use over the summer. G: Reading Egg and Reflex Math. Ms Williams prefers iXL to Reflex Math. Reading Egg, Spelling City, some programs are specific to grade level. ReadTheory - free program, 4/5 using it. Jessica: Does someone have to set it up on the grade level? Ms. Radden brought it to Chesnut.

MAP is gifted ed screener. The procedures have changed. The MAP score doesn't qualify the child for gifted. MAP is a screener. Every parent in the school will get a letter with the exception of students who are already being served in the gifted program. The letter will tell them whether or not their child is qualified for further gifted testing. The letter will probably go out next week.

GA Milestones - Last year our students participated. Our students did not do as well as I know they are capable of doing. Our students leave Chesnut and are very successful. A couple years ago, the state dept. decided that every school would participate in computer-based assessments. The first year, it was 30% of our students who had to take this end-of-year test online. We simply do not have the technology to support a testing environment, we had outages. We were not alone in this. We received the word a day after the testing window that the test would not count for promotion purposes, because of the problems that our county and schools throughout the test had. This is a new test that is tweaked every year. It is expected that there will be bumps and dips in the scores. Overall, we maintained scores higher than the state and Metro RESA (the big five counties - Gwinnett, Fulton, DCSD, APS, Cobb) average. We have a problem with our third grade math and we are working on that. We are focusing on the standards and making sure our students have everything they need to be prepared for the test. I am very focused on protecting our instructional time. It is crucial that we protect it, that our students are in class and teachers are present. I believe we have a great program. I do not believe the tests reflect what we are able to do as a school. At DHS, 8 out of last 10 valedictorians have come from Chesnut Elementary. We have students recognized at tech, social science, robotics, arts fairs. We went through the STEM process and received that certification. I'm very proud of our kids and the accomplishments that we have made. Last year our new superintendent sent letters of accommodation for outstanding accomplishments. Chesnut had 13 letters of accommodation.

STEM Certified - How do we move forward? We have been asked to mentor a neighboring school to guide them through STEM process. We continuously integrate science technology engineering and math into our curriculum. Mr. McFarlane and Ms. Williams took on the first CEO Day - it extended over 6 days. In the way of real application, let's look at our school and look at the real science, math, technology in our building that we could go and see. The students spent 1.5 hours in STEM activities and then went on mini field trip of the cafeteria. They have never seen what goes on in the back. They have never seen the huge equipment behind the lunch line. Ms. Williams adapted it by grade level. Acquainted our students with

jobs and responsibilities of other adults in the building that they don't usually interact with. Can you imagine how much science, technology, math goes into preparing the lunch? It was wonderful, we had great math problems, how long does it take to prepare 220 lunches, how many students go through the line in a given period of time. CEO Days are days of celebration, it is not THE day we have STEM, because STEM is interwoven into curriculum on a daily basis. Each grade level has an area of expertise, we try to align this with the age of the child, and what they would actually be interested in. K-1: Gardening, Growing, Plant Life. 2: Hydroponics. 3: 3-D Printing/Coding. 4: Flying Classroom/Aviation. 5: Coding. Last week we had a drone flying down the hall, students are programming it to be able to fly throughout the building while they stay in one central location.

Thank you for coming. I hope the word gets out that there is a lot of information you can get about the academics at Chesnut, from these meetings.

Q&A

G: In terms of testing, I find it helpful to know in advance, I'll make sure my son gets a full night's sleep.

Ms. Williams: Happy to do that. Don't get the students too nervous about the test. This MAP isn't presented the same way as Milestones. We don't shut down the building.

Angela: MAP has more gravity than STAR because the first MAP test acts as pre-screener for gifted eligibility and end of year MAP test will be used by the middle school to determine placement for rising 6th graders.

Mr. McFarlane: Teachers proctor the MAP test, I can see which question they are on. Teachers can pause the test, and resume even the next day. So the child is not rushed. And the proctor is sure that they are completing the test.

Jessica: How will scores be shared with parents?

Ms. Williams: Before upcoming conference night, they will come home. They are 4-5 pages long. There are 4-6 optional reports. If you want more detail, you can make an appointment with Mr. McFarlane.

Angela: Is there going to be a letter that goes home with the test to request parents' involvement towards whatever growth goals are recommended by the MAP test?

Ms. Williams: Typically this comes from the county.

Jessica: From the teachers' point of view, how are the teachers going to use it to help the kids?

Ms. Williams: We will use the same procedure we used with STAR. There are many reports that tell us what the child needs to work on. From that, the teacher differentiates what they teach in the classroom. For example, centers in the classroom.

Mr. McFarlane: The kids will be fused into different quadrants within the domains based on their RIT score. The teacher will see her students in groups that have similar foundational skills. MAP reports give the teacher the foundational skills that the child has not mastered. Powerful for teacher and parent to see that.

Ms. Williams: Teacher can gather data on child's strengths and areas of improvement.

Sudhir: If you are capturing this, why not share with parents online where parents can login?

Ms. Williams: Not available yet and not sure on the county's plans, but at the school level, we are happy to sit down with you and drill down.

Angela: We would have to come in and sit down to drill down into the specifics of the child's strength/weakness.

Sudhir: Is there a way to generate pdf report to email to parents?

Mr. McFarlane: County will not allow private results to be emailed.

Angela: Ask county to link their MAP reports to their Infinite Campus accounts.

Jessica: Can we tie this to iXL areas of focus? For example, "your child needs to strengthen x foundational skills, using this area of iXL." Can we get a form letter that says your child needs to work on x, y, z, based on their MAP recommendations? Math skills in iXL are easy to identify, while selecting which Language Arts area is appropriate for your child is more vague.

Ms. Williams: Teachers can share with you, they can say child is having trouble with double digit multiplication. I agree Language Arts part of iXL is like that.

Angela: Can we further discuss in Curriculum & Instruction Action Team how we can standardize a process by which our teachers take actionable student achievement data and educate individual families about what our child needs to do at home?

Ms. Williams: 3rd grade monthly parent workshops, almost weekly. They met with parents this morning, shared information about the technology program for 3rd grade. They are making that effort to reach out to parents.

Parents thank administration for taking time to do this.