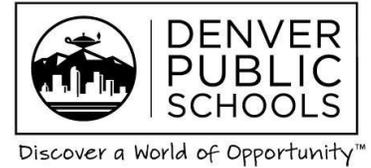


# CSC Meeting Notes

Hamilton Middle School



Date: November 13, 2018

Time: 5-6:30pm

Location: Hamilton Conference Room

**Present:** Dr. Christian Sawyer, Trista Fussner, Heather Wilson, Carolyn Leahy, Robyn DiFalco, Natasha Forrest, Martha Gomez

**Absent:** Candace Lewis (was present, had to leave), Shelley Stancer

**Guest presenter:** Rhonda Keel

1. Welcome and Gratitude Cards / Celebrations -- each member shared who they wrote cards to & why.
2. Roles and Grounding ourselves in our norms
  - Roles:
    - i. Facilitator - Candace Lewis
    - ii. Secretary - Robyn DiFalco
    - iii. Time-Keeper - Trista Fussner
    - iv. Norms-checker and observer
  - Norms Review
    - Scholars are our compass*
    - Share the air*
    - Presume positive intent*
    - 24-hour rule*
    - Begin and end on time*
    - No monopoly of expertise*
    - When we get stuck, the team needs to be free to "put a pin in it" and move on*
    - Focus on solutions*
3. **Agenda review and approval of minutes from previous meeting (10/16/18)**
  - approved by consent
4. **Equity for African American Students at Hamilton** (Presentation by Rhonda Keel, Chairperson, Taskforce for African American Equity)
  - How are we going to close the gap? Raise the bar for our students? Hold them to higher expectations? What are the first steps?
  - Presenter Rhonda Keel shared her own story from when she was a student at Hamilton, followed by a recent story from a Hamilton student. The story illustrated the importance of challenging our students to reach their highest potential despite the challenges going on at home.
  - Ideas include forming a black student alliance, holding lunch discussions, ask students what they feel they need or what is missing for them at Hamilton.
  - Having some tough conversations about race, with staff. African American students and staff reflect one another. How can staff of color step up and lead.
  - Question/suggestion about including other staff who are not in the Special Ed team (currently the task force is entirely represented by the SpEd team.)

- Discussion about students accusing a teacher of “being racist” when a teacher enforces basic school rules.
- Question about potential for “identity classes or workshops”. Sharing idea about other ethnic student alliances. And how can we ensure these are inclusive rather than excluded. Middle school is such a ripe setting for individual identity formation.
- The tough conversations have to start with the staff first.

## 5. Principal’s Report

- **Update on Community Involvement Plan** -- Dr Sawyer proposes we hold “Glow & Grow” discussions at Hamilton at every CSC meeting, first 15 minutes. All community are welcome to join and share glow, grows, concerns, and topics. This will be an integrative way for our CSC to share during this time while opening up for our guests.
  - i. suggestion to promote that community is welcome to attend, include agenda topics in the message. Another suggestion to provide general info about “what is CSC?”. Another suggestion about having an online form to submit questions or comments, in a “safe” space to engage, and have someone from CSC follow up later. Some folks may not be comfortable with face-to-face.
- **Bell Schedule decision** -- Consider changing start time for next year (2019-20). American Pediatrics recommends that schools for adolescents should start no earlier than 8:30. Cognitive impacts, effect of later start times on academic achievement is consistently established in the literature. Should Hamilton explore this?
  - i. Hamilton actually has 30 minutes more per day than other middle schools.
  - ii. Could have morning prep-time for teachers; collaborative time.
  - iii. Starting later means ending the school day later. What are pros/cons?
  - iv. November: open discussion with CSC related to the concept of changing times., Open discussion with SLT related to the concept.
  - v. December: if stakeholder groups are positive about this, work with DPS on options to present to CSC; Have community forum to hear from school community.
  - vi. January: TBA
  - vii. The general consensus of the group was that we should continue to collect further information to make the final decision provided some logistical barriers could be removed. Dr. Sawyer indicated that he would reach out to DPS leadership to understand the bussing situation and the pros and cons of changing the schedule. In addition, Dr. Sawyer indicated he would involve the Hamilton community in the decision if further research suggests it's a good approach to take.
- **Overview of Unified Improvement Plan** -- Three Major Improvement Strategies (MIS) were discussed.
  - i. MIS #1 was improving school culture. The conversation included addressing consistency in behavior expectations in school common areas among students. Areas for improvement and of success were noted. In general, the committee determined that revisiting the plan with students and staff would be helpful. In addition, it was noted that creating consistency across staff vertical and horizontal teams would lead to the highest level of success.
  - ii. MIS #2 Improve Supports and Interventions at Hamilton. The introduction of "houses" of students at Hamilton was discussed. Overall, the committee

determined that the House system was helpful in improving supports and intervention programs at Hamilton but that the inclusion of specialists and resource teachers still needed to be addressed. It was noted that some staff still needed to be included in the processes and other staff was stretched too thin.

- iii. MIS #3 Teacher leadership to improve rigor and close gaps. The addition of incident reporting and mini-response groups to address student incidents and needs was discussed. It was determined that the reporting system was working but that reteaching the system and ensuring that everyone was involved would strengthen the system.
- iv. Overall discussion revolved around proactive vs reactive ways to meet the goals of the UIP.

- o **Finalize CSC Mission Statement --**

- i. "Our mission is to support and develop an environment for our community in which the educational, social, and emotional needs of ALL Hamilton students are successfully served. This is accomplished by being proactive, transparent, and equity-minded in identifying, discussing, and addressing these needs and creating solutions. We work together to provide for the short- and long-term direction and provide critical feedback from parent, staff, and community perspectives." Approved by consent.

6. Input from CSC:

- o What's going well:
- o What needs to improve:

7. Setting of agenda for next meeting

Date for next meeting -- December 11, 2018? ***Reviewed and Approved by all members 12/11/18.***