

Parent Coffee 9.18.13 Minutes

Attendees:

Staff/Administration: Jan Haberlein, Susan Barrie, Sue Young, Beth Burke, Amy Shinn

PTA: Sherry Madden, Melissa Wanner

13 additional parents

Began: 915am

Adjourned: 1020am

The focus of the discussion and questions surrounded MSAs, the PARCC exam and Common Core.

- I. MSAs
 - a. Will there be MSAs this year? Grades 3-8 will take MSA, including 5th grade who will take the science MSA. School performance index MSA means very little this year and won't be valid since the curriculum is now Common Core, and the MSA is not designed to test that content.
 - b. Teachers and principals' unions are questioning the wisdom of MSA administration now what we are teaching Common Core. However, if Maryland does not administer a standardized test this year we would lose millions of federal dollars for not complying with what remains of 'No Child Left Behind.' 'Race to the Top' is the new Obama Administration Educational Program: what students will need for college was determined and curricula were mapped backwards to pre-K.
 - c. Mrs. Haberlein will keep us up to date as soon as she hears anything new from the Board of Education/State of Maryland.
 - d. PARCC is the assessment for Common Core (K-12) and will be all online (math and reading both). Has not been piloted. Haven't gotten baseline test data to evaluate the questions. All in State of Maryland will take it by spring 2015.
 - e. PARCC is designed to demand students take a different approach to math test taking: multiple correct answers will exist and students should mark ALL that are true (i.e., $8-1=9$ is correct but so are $4+4$ and $10-2$; all 3 answers should be marked for complete credit). Teachers will instruct students on this. We will see things coming home. Reinforce it. (Not so for Reading: only 1 correct answer.)
 - f. Performance Series tests going on now in grades 2-5. Another benchmark to help us ensure students growing throughout the year.
- II. Gap between last year and Common Core this year
 - a. Parents have noticed a huge gap between what was taught last at the end of the 2012-13 school year and what students are expected to do this year right out of the gate. For example, 3rd grade math is multiplication and division at week 3. This is a huge leap from what they were doing at the end of 2nd grade.
 - b. Several parents shared that their children who typically do very well in math were very upset and did very poorly (50-60%) on recent math Common Core Scranton exam. Exams come from the Central office and teachers do not see the exam until the day prior. Can't ensure they are teaching the material

- beforehand. CES is teaching what we were told to teach, but the exams coming out of Central are often not 'married.' Disconnects exist.
- c. Mrs. Haberlein is aware of it and on top of things. CES will provide parents with options/tools to bridge that gap.
 - i. Math in-service: FASTT math which is for children grades 1-3 that students can use at home. Will get a login.
 - ii. 'First in Math': 4-5th graders. Students could use it at home online. Modeled after math 24.
 - d. Concern raised for current 5th graders and how they will transition to middle school. Three out of the 4 of the CES 5th grade teachers are National Board Certified. Mrs. Haberlein is confident in the 5th grade team and that we will get our students where they need to be before MS. She is passionate about minimizing the influence of the 'disconnects' between Common Core and the Central office exams, and getting students where we need to be. She feels fortunate that she has a very generous PTA and money available to provide supplemental tools/materials/online subscriptions, etc. Information/details forthcoming.
 - e. Parents identified the emotional component to these early math tests when students are not doing well. Mrs. Haberlein very aware and sensitive to this fact and is addressing it head on.
 - i. This is just a formative assessment. Lets teachers know where to start. No big decisions about student performance or placement will be made based upon these tests alone.
 - f. A SRHS STEM student is going to do an internship here for 5th grades. She will work 136 hours this school year with teachers and students. Fantastic opportunity for us. Help 5th grades gain insight into the STEM program.
 - g. Reading: What can we do as parents to help prepare our children for MS reading? Best way to do better in reading is to read. Emphasize more non-fiction. Kids tend to choose more fiction. Common Core gives reading and writing equal focus. 'No Child Left Behind' focused more on reading, less on writing. Have children do any type of writing. Common Core requires more essay-type writing: several paragraphs, etc. Return of 'the essay.' Writing will be based on the text and presenting text evidence.
 - i. 'Type to Learn' starts in 1st grade while students are in computer lab. Reading, writing exams will be on the computer as well. Concern raised about students' ability to efficiently type since Common Core exams will be computer based (reading and writing too)
 - ii. www.LazyReaders.com
 1. Great quality books for all ages up to adult: 100 pages or less
 - iii. Will be working on writing stamina in class so students can write the expected 2-3 pages of text at 'one sitting' by the end of 5th grade.
 - iv. Cursive emphasized in Common Core
 1. Activates different areas of the brain
 2. Data show students do better overall when they work in cursive. Sloppy printers often write in neat cursive.

3. www.SpellingCity.com can put in spelling words and links to them in cursive. Great for practice.
 4. Cursive practice websites: Will ask Mary Bredbenner. Will send out in eblast to get 'Type to Learn' at home. \$20 per family to have it at home. Currently being arranged.
 5. Parents could consider having students type homework and send it in via email attachment to teachers to gain further typing practice.
- h. Parent Connect: Scheduled for 10.15.13. Many glitches with MS and HS rollout. May be delayed while those are worked out.
 - i. School Bus Safety: all buses meet county maintenance standards. Mrs. Haberlein has never had a hose or any other dangerous issue like that before. Art teacher saw the disabled bus and returned to school to get Mrs. Haberlein. Mrs. Haberlein, Susan Barrie and Beth Burke were at the scene within 10 minutes with bus lists and parent contact numbers. Police and ambulances there within minutes. CES administrators triaged scene, rode with children to AAMC and ensured parents were contacted and notified of situation. Susan Barrie rode home with students on the substitute bus to help answer questions/reassure students/parents, etc.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Wanner

9.20.13