

The Ivy School Board

Prescott Campus: 4212 NE Prescott Street

Board of Directors Special Meeting: Middle School Past Challenges and Improvements Made

November 14, 2017 6:00p-6:30p

Board members present: Colleen Roberts, Angela Fox, Lisa Larpenteur, Rob Coleman, Kim Carlson

Staff present: Anne O'Neal, Travis Eddy, Amy Stuhr, Cassondra Salazar

Observers Present: Scarlett Lynsky, Maya McCarthy, Rebecca Clements, Jones Estis

6:03 Open meeting

Colleen states purpose of meeting is to discuss middle school challenges and improvements in two areas: Academics and Accountability. Travis Eddy, Middle School Teacher, and Amy Stuhr, Campus Support Coordinator, provide history and information about programs implemented in the middle school in the last three years.

6:10 Middle School academics history and current state – Travis Eddy/Amy Stuhr:

Noted roadblocks that faced the middle school student academic success in the past:

- Growing pains related to lack of consistency in classroom location, classroom structure, teaching teams
- Lack of teacher retention, resulting in needing to re-visit program structure every year
- Lack of curriculum consistency, esp. in mathematics as that teaching position underwent the most changes
- Challenges with effective writing instruction curriculum as evidenced by 2016/2017 test scores
- Historically resource-scarce at upper grade levels

Feel Science has had consistency due to a strong program and teacher retention and has proven success as evidenced by SBAC scores, particularly 2016/2017.

Noted programs implemented in last few years to address academic challenges:

- **Increased professional development around and expanded use of easyCBM**, a tool that provides real-time student performance data organized so that it highlights key patterns relevant for lesson planning. Now utilized 3-times a year in fall, winter and spring (started 2015/2016)
- **Expansion of science curriculum** to enable multiple levels of exploration on a single topic; enabling flexibility for all learning levels and interest (started 2015/2016)
- **Student Learning Goals implemented**, adapted from Charlotte Danielson framework to align with Montessori. Developed in collaboration with other charter schools (started 2016/2017)
- **Montessori Coach position added** to support academics school-wide (started 2017/2018)
- **Classroom assistant position added** in middle school, in addition to the two teaching roles previously in place (Teacher 1 – Science, Humanities, Writing and Teacher 2 – Math) (started 2017/2018)
- **Middle School math teacher retained** and starting 2nd year at Ivy
- **Implementation of new writing curriculum** developed in partnership with Montessori coach (started 2017/2018)

- **Morning work-cycle adapted** from 3-hour work cycle to 4 50-minute sections that are implemented each day (started 2017/2018):
 1. Math (daily)
 2. Independent work choice time
 3. Science/Humanities/Writing rotation through the week
 4. Follow-up work time

6:25 Middle School accountability history and current state– Travis Eddy/Amy Stuhr

Noted that accountability was lacking in past due to growing pains and challenges mentioned earlier.

Noted programs implemented in last few years to address student and teacher accountability:

- **Weekly 1:1 student/teacher conference** (typically 5-10 minutes involving review of work plan progress, review of completed work, assessing areas needing additional study/support, planning for upcoming week.) Lack of progress after trying strategies with student may result in contact to parent to collaborate on a plan. Teachers report success with face-to-face accountability model (started 2017/2018)
- **New In-depth evaluation rubric** for teachers implemented with 2 sections focused on accountability: Curriculum Design and Implement and Student Learning and Growth Goals. Teacher & leaders complete evaluation and need to provide supporting evidence (started 2016/2017)
- **Expanded use and accountability of using record keeping system** to track lessons and assignments given to each student
- **Classroom assistant position**, increasing teacher to student ratio

6:40 Public Comment

Question about TAG students. Travis responds that there is no specific TAG services at Ivy. Flexibility in work choice and higher level content on topics are offered to expand on lessons and with follow up work. Examples were provided by Travis on how past students have taken topics to higher levels

Comment that based on experience, academics in middle school 3 years ago was severely lacking: completed work needed to be re-done because misplaced by staff, math instruction was not happening regularly and student's state assessment scores decreased dramatically that year as a result, students were not held accountable; expressed concern it was a lost year for their student.

Comment that programs cited at meeting sound great but uncertain about adherence and follow-through based on experience from 3 years prior.

Three observers present expressed a positive experience last year and this year as parents of students in the middle school. Acknowledged that 3 years ago the middle school was struggling.

6:50 Meeting adjourns