

DOWNERS GROVE GRADE SCHOOL DISTRICT 58

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM COMMITTEE MEETING FEBRUARY 22, 2021

The District Leadership Team (DLT) met on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 3:45 p.m. at O’Neill Middle School and via Zoom video conference.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:48 p.m.

Present

Co-Chairs Darren Hughes and Tracy Weiner, Michael Cassa, Todd Drafall, Matt Durbala, Megan Hewitt, Katie Hurckes, Melissa Jerves (*Secretary*), Jason Lynde, Kevin Russell, Justin Sisul, Jason Suchy, Craig Young, Jayne Yudzentis.

Absent

Erin Guth, Emily Honn, Erin Menet, Angie Rybarczyk.

Approval of Minutes

Craig Young moved and Matt Durbala seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the August 31, 2020 meeting. Motion carried.

Goal 1: Focusing on Learning

Justin Sisul reported on how curriculum implementation timelines have been affected by the pandemic. While the new math curriculum was implemented across the District as scheduled, social studies has been delayed. Grades K-5 have delayed for a year; grades 6-8 are currently piloting materials. Professional learning opportunities have also been sacrificed due to the pandemic. However, much spontaneous, necessary professional development has occurred to respond to remote learning needs. The review and revision of curriculum implementation has been put on hold so as not to pull teachers from the classrooms in this year of shortened in-person instructional time. After the winter benchmarking period, all buildings met to discuss student data and how to adjust instructional practices.

The DLT also discussed how to define “success” for District 58 students going forward. The Strategic Plan includes objectives such as defining curricular goals and programs of instruction, including consideration of vertical alignment to the high school. The Key Performance Indicators were also established as part of the Strategic Plan; they focus more on achievement than on growth. Key questions to explore:

- How are we defining success relative to academic achievement and growth?
 - NWEA Similar Schools study data will help to determine whether we are getting an accurate picture of achievement and growth.
 - Local assessments and report cards can be reviewed.
- How do we ensure we are capturing the whole child as we define success?

- The Curriculum Council is examining the Portrait of a Graduate.
- Social Emotional Competency Assessments
- How can we be sure our success criteria actually predict future success for our students beyond their time in District 58?
 - Collaboration with District 99
 - Regular sharing of student performance data shared between D58 and D99 through 5Labs
 - ESSA criteria such as 9th grade on track

Dr. Russell reported that the District is revamping the school improvement process to create a more centralized approach across the District with a common definition of success.

Goal 2: Connecting the Community

Megan Hewitt reported that a draft districtwide communication plan was completed in spring 2020, its goals do not account for the pandemic. While some goals are in progress or completed, other have not been started and might benefit from an extended timeline. The internal staff newsletter has an 80% open rate, is succinct, and contains updates from all departments. The consistent schedule is key, and messages are particularly relevant to staff or contain a preview of information before it is shared with the community. Regarding external communication, the Superintendent's Community Advisory Council reconvened and reviewed the new website that was launched in summer 2020.

A communication survey was administered in May 2020 with the intention of the DLT reviewing the results. Though significant time has passed because other issues were more urgent, the DLT will review a high-level analysis of the data. Survey respondents who requested follow up were contacted.

Dr. Russell reported on the District's community engagement efforts, which included a partnership with the Education Foundation to provide grocery assistance to families in need, a continuing meal program for children in the District, virtual events through the District and PTAs, and reengagement of the community regarding facility needs. The District continues to seek feedback from the community through surveys and their participation on councils.

Dr. Yudzentis reported on the District's work toward the goal of consistency. Board policies have been updated to align with the IASB's model policy service, PRESS, and administrators are now working on updating administrative regulations. The next step will be to focus on consistency in broader communications from school buildings and PTAs. The Resources Review Council was not convened due to the pandemic, but that work will resume for the upcoming school year. Megan Hewitt reported that launching the new website made individual school websites consistent, and work continues on improving equity in communication to non-English speaking families.

Goal 3: Securing the Future

Todd Drafall reported that the original timeline regarding facility planning and a bond referendum had to be paused due to the pandemic. However, the District has been moving forward with progress on facility improvements. Highest priority facility needs have been

assessed and the District has used DSEB to issue bonds and restructure existing bonds to take advantage of more favorable rates. The District has also considered how to best use assets such as Longfellow and the ASC. While we have not lost sight of the larger master facility plan, the next election cycles must be considered (March 2022, November 2022). The Citizen Task Force will likely be reconvened, and the Financial Advisory Committee has shifted to monthly meetings to continue reviewing and discussing facility issues.

Regarding finances, though it has been a challenging year, the District is receiving additional federal funds in response to the pandemic. The District is building a financial plan and budget with greater advance timelines to plan for more stability in the long term.

Public Comment

There was one visitor to the meeting, but no public comments were made.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.