Nov 18th School Council Meeting Notes

Wed, 18 Nov 26

Logistics and Format

- Slides deck: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1mXWHls8rKD04nF78JdWstNUK3k8_bLi4I0d3HQe6YqE/edit?usp=sharing
    - Link shared in Zoom chat; screen share not working
    - Slides to be shared with families after the meeting, with a disclaimer noting data is under review
- Meeting format changes confirmed:
    - December: no meeting
    - January and February: virtual only
    - March onward: hybrid (in-person and virtual)

MCAS Accountability Overview

- Overall classification: not requiring assistance or intervention
- Accountability percentile: 53 (performing better than 53% of comparable schools nationally)
- Cumulative criterion-referenced target: currently 45%, goal is 75%
    - 75% = all demographic groups meeting targets
    - 100% = exemplary school designation
    - Progress over time: 39 (2025) to 45 (2026)
- Designation this year: moderate progress toward targets
    - School believes this should be substantial progress; likely a miscalculation
    - District is in contact with the state to investigate

ELA MCAS Results by Grade

- Overall: students meeting or exceeding rose from 44% to 50%, performing above state, slightly below district
- Grade 3 (current 4th graders): 62% meeting or exceeding, a strong result
    - CKLA introduced in 2nd grade for this cohort; K-2 groundwork credited
- Grade 4 (current 5th graders): slight increase, 41% to 53%
- Grade 5 (last year's 5th grade): declined from 53% to 45%
    - Attributed to significant staff turnover in 5th grade that year
- Note: data compares different cohorts year to year, not the same students longitudinally

Math MCAS Results by Grade

- Overall: students meeting or exceeding rose from 42% to 47%
- Grade 3 to 4 cohort: strong jump from 35% to 50%
- Grade 5 cohort: declined; previously strong at 57%
- Core challenge: number sense
    - Foundational gap, especially among specific demographic groups
    - Rate of development varies and directly impacts performance
    - Curriculum (Illustrative Math) in place for a while; teachers more comfortable, but gap persists
- Departmentalization discussed as a potential strategy for grades 3-5
    - Previously tried and then discontinued
    - Main barrier: CKLA requires 100+ minutes, math requires 60 minutes; schedule equity hard to achieve
    - May be revisited as teachers become more acclimated and blocks can be adjusted

MCAS Results by Demographic Group

- High needs (special ed + ELL + low income, 2 of 3 required): criterion-referenced at 39%, target 75%
    - Slight decrease from 42% (2025) to 38% (2026), but 2026 data carries 60% weighting vs. 30%
- African American students: significant increase in both ELA and math, a major area of celebration
- White non-low-income: close to pre-COVID performance (approx. 76%)
- White low-income: showing a decline, opposite of district-wide trend; flagged for further investigation
- Asian students: reached 100%, exceeding targets
- White students overall: targets met
- Special education: criterion-referenced at 26%, no change from last year; identified as a key focus area
- Low-income slide: likely contains a calculation error
    - Jump from 9% to 62% appears real, but the resulting criterion-referenced figure of 41% doesn't reconcile
    - School believes the correct figure should be in the 60s, which would support a substantial progress designation
    - Department of Education asked to investigate

Intervention Strategies and Initiatives

- New this year: morning Excel program for grades 1 and 2 (math and ELA focus)
    - Previously, only afternoon Excel existed for grades 3-5
    - Students identified via I-Ready, Forefront screener, and teacher observation
    - Goal: close gaps before 3rd grade MCAS

- Interventionists pushing into kindergarten and CPP for tier 1 support (co-teach model, started last year)
- RTI: one-to-one and small group intervention continuing
- Teachers identifying 4-6 “cuspy” students per class to move to benchmark
- CKLA and Illustrative Math: shifting from rigid fidelity to data-informed pacing
- Increased coaching: more grade-level and individual coaching time added
- Increased observations and post-observation conferences, grounded in student work
    - Using DESE teacher rubric (2018) and a CKLA-specific criteria checklist
    - Principals purchased teachers’ manuals to use during observations
- Staff book: “Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain” (2nd edition, Zaretta Hammond)
    - Focus on building intellectual capacity and independence for historically marginalized students

I-Ready and Real-Time Data

- Baseline assessment given in late September
- Winter assessment coming; will provide comparison data
- I-Ready tends to predict MCAS performance reasonably well
- January or February meeting will include grade-level real-time data
    - Starting with K-2, then grades 3-5

OLA / Amigos Merger Rumor

- Rumor circulating (via WhatsApp) about OLA being merged into Amigos School when Amigos moves into the Cable Building
- Confirmed: not happening; take it as just a rumor
- Community reaction noted as very concerned; clarification appreciated