

Family Communications Committee
Roundtable Discussion: New to NHCS
October 23, 2019

Adams' Table – k & Elementary New to Wilmington

Schools Represented -

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1. What is your preferred mode of communication to learn about NHCS information? Your school, Connect 5 calls, the NHCS website, NHCS-TV, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Alert Now w/email, Facebook, -NHCS website, school website and Facebook <p>CONCERNS or RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parent doesn't feel that redistricting website isn't comprehensive; wants more info -Would like an email with school alert news -Participants didn't know how to watch NHCS-TV, how are programs marketed?
2. If you have questions about your child's education, or need resources, where do you go? Do you typically get an answer quickly and easily from that resource?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Speak with teacher directly; conferences -class tag/Seesaw, allows communication with other parents -folder note -Introduced family to teachers early on; reach out directly <p>CONCERNS or RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -PowerSchool: need help getting username and pin
3. What does NHCS do well in regards to communication? What does your school do well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Predictable calls (ex. Wrightsboro sends every Sunday at 6pm) -Parsley principal reached out to new family -Facebook and Twitter accounts share great information, district and school -Laney's website is stellar; information was easy to find and helped family get acclimated to a new school quickly and easily
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
4. What challenges have you encountered regarding communication with the district? With your school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Typo caused no communication, fixed easily -transportation and late buses are an ongoing issue -information regarding lockdowns -As a future NHCS family, not sure where to start <p>CONCERNS or RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -easily accessible "new to NHCS" button on website homepage; provide links to all applicable documents, school assignment info, etc.

<p>5. As a “new” family in NHCS, what do you wish you had known prior to the beginning of the school year? Was there information you missed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -typo in email address, so family didn't receive info -2-week transition week “summer camp” info was missed, neighbor found flyer somewhere -K schedule not sent out ahead of time, would like specials schedule -School said there would be a live broadcast of the open house meeting for those unable to attend, but parents were unable to access -unaware of all the social media options to access information -specialty program offerings at high schools
<p>6. Does your family feel part of your new school community? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lots of donation requests; would like info ahead of time about \$ (PTA membership, pictures, etc.) <p>CONCERNS or RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -provide neighborhood information; would like the opportunity to build community relationships beyond open house
<p>7. Do you feel that NHCS communication is accessible to all families? How could we improve?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -concerns about grandparents who are guardians and don't have computer access/don't understand social media
<p>8. What topics do you want to learn more about?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -redistricting-more information needed -school report card grads and what it means -options for involvement in schools/District

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Taylor's Table - 3 Families New to Wilmington

Schools Represented - Eaton, Murrayville/Noble, Ogden

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
<p>1. What is your preferred mode of communication to learn about NHCS information? Your school, Connect 5 calls, the NHCS website, NHCS-TV, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Messages through the Remind App <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One parent was jealous to learn that this was being used, as texts would be her preference Phone Calls/Emails through Connect 5 These parents were unaware of the district's and schools' (depends on school) presence on Social Media. When I shared that most schools have social media presence on all or some of the following platforms, they were surprised: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram
<p>2. If you have questions about your child's education, or need resources, where do you go? Do you typically get an answer quickly and easily from that resource?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Murrayville/Noble Parent; moved here from Wyoming last summer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School websites; struggles with the differences in how to find things across school websites - I shared that the websites had been updated to be more unified was surprised to see that parents are unable to begin the process for school registration online. mentioned Infinite Campus, the portal for all things related to the school system: websites, student grades, parent communication, etc. Receptionists and Data Managers are key to connecting with new families, sharing information, and answering questions at registration and throughout the school year
<p>3. What does NHCS do well in regards to communication? What does your school do well?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ogden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher communication through weekly emails includes classroom information, as well as school information Teacher serves as primary communicator for the school Murrayville <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entire school uses remind to communicate with parents/families Consistency of teacher sending home classroom folders with school/district on the same day each week (Tuesdays) Eaton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect 5 calls and emails

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
<p>4. What challenges have you encountered regarding communication with the district? With your school?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School websites are difficult to navigate/find the info needed • Full/Complete school year calendar needed on school websites • Seem to want the school sites to provide more, so there isn't the need to visit both the school and district websites • It is difficult for parents to get into PowerSchool; seems disconnected from website; difficult to navigate
<p>5. As a "new" family in NHCS, what do you wish you had known prior to the beginning of the school year? Was there information you missed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing/Understanding more about school choice and how it works • Dress Code - Noble parent was surprised at inconsistency in dress code from one school to the next (ex/ one middle school to another and Noble to Laney) • School Day Hours • School's Master Schedule • Opportunity to Meet the Principal • An understanding of where to go and what to do...at Open House, 1st Day, etc.
<p>6. Does your family feel part of your new school community? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat, but they feel it will take time • School Events like Fall Festival and opportunities by the PTA to volunteer (Murrayville and Ogden) • Still too soon to tell
<p>7. Do you feel that NHCS communication is accessible to all families? How could we improve?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Response was "Yes," if families know where/how information/communication will occur. • More communication by text and email • Sometimes families don't have enough notice to be able to plan/participate in school events
<p>8. What topics do you want to learn more about?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Choice • Title I • Additional opportunities to be involved at school or with the district
<p>THOUGHTS/IDEAS/TAKE-AWAYS GENERATED FOR ALDERMAN (NHCS) AS A PART OF OUR DISCUSSION:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further confirmation that communication from teachers is the best way to get information to parents • Assign new families who enroll in the summer a mentor/buddy family; maybe through PTA? • Establish a document of FAQ for new families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Include common questions as well as "who to ask what questions" info ◦ make available in both print and digital form; include on the website ◦ Immediate following registration, send a welcome email from the Principal to new families and include the FAQ document...maybe use an autocraft to automatically generate the email. • Some new parents really want to be involved, but aren't sure how to find their niche...again could a mentor/buddy help? Could there be spots reserved on certain committees/functions that could automatically be filled by these parents who are eager to find ways to volunteer, get to know other families, etc. • How can we use the above information to target families in this redistricting year, as many families (even if they are already in NHCS) will be at a new school for 20-21. 	

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Barsaleau's Table – Schools Represented -

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The conversation started with the discussion questions and then started to organically go its own way. I'm sorry that this doesn't follow or specifically answer all the questions, but I think it was still a great discussion.

Here is are the main points that the stakeholders made:

Parents are going to the NHCS website to find information, but it is usually after the news or social media has tipped them off to look into something further.

The connect messages and follow up emails are working well. The county does a great job making sure these messages are bilingual. Individual schools are not consistently sending out bilingual messages.

Parents are not able to find readily available educational resources. They suggested links to sources that could universally help them regardless of the teacher/school. Math was frequently mentioned.

Parents requested a link on the main site for them to be able to message questions to the county. They suggested a "customer service" link. There could possibly be options to direct questions to specific departments.

There was a lot of concern that all communications rely on technology. This could alienate those who don't have ready access to computers and/or Internet.

Some parents were having to use up to 5 different apps to keep up with their children's various classes. Parents new to the county were unfamiliar with these different apps and schools were making a lot of assumptions that parents were aware of the technology.

English language learners and their parents are being incredibly under-served. The EL population is over 5,000 and they are facing daily hurdles trying to communicate and receive information from teachers, schools, and the county. Google translate should be available on all school websites.

There needs to be more ways for back and forth communication that does not require technology

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Beth's Table – Schools Represented -

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1. What is your preferred mode of communication to learn about NHCS information? Your school, Connect 5 calls, the NHCS website, NHCS-TV, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter?	School Website, Teachers E-mails, School E-mails, FB/Instagram, NHCS E-mails, WECT and other news stations. One need that was brought up was the that the ESL parents are unable to understand the communications in English alone. During the discussion, there was a phone message that went out concerning adjusting the school year calendar and the ESL parents were unable to understand it as it was in English alone.
2. If you have questions about your child's education, or need resources, where do you go? Do you typically get an answer quickly and easily from that resource?	Text Back to teachers. Some ESL parents said they had tried calling the schools but received no answer. They weren't sure who/where to go to for help. Another parent expressed concern w/ her daughter's Math curriculum and the lack of Math Books. The tutoring program available through the NHC Library CLASS was mentioned and the desire to have this website link on the NHCS Home page. Help with Homework - the # of sites from different teachers and assignments was raised as a concern.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
4. What challenges have you encountered regarding communication with the district? With your school?	For ESL parents, it was getting questions answered and knowing who to go to for help. There is a lack of available personnel to help those ESL families. Some suggestions were the Ambassador Program where students could act as aids to help students in the beginning of the year find their classrooms, tutor, get assistance from another student on school activities, Possibly increased PTA Outreach - a Parent Liaison that could volunteer in the school to help ESL students. Not a Discussion Question... One parent expressed appreciation for the many activities (academic and social) that her daughter could participate in in Middle School. Would like more information on the Nurse/Mental Health Support that is available to students through the schools. Many schools have on-site medical care.