

Family Advisory Council to the Superintendent

Meeting Notes

February 16, 2023

Attendees:

Justin	Allar	FS	Clay-Battelle
Brandi	Ammons	LSIC	South Middle
Crystal	Bays	FACS	Ridgedale
Eddie	Campbell	BOE	MCS
Duana	Crum	FACS	Morgantown High
Tammy	Elliot	LSIC	Ridgedale
Diane	Halbritter	Parent	South Middle
Lisa	Henline	Parent	South Middle
Lisa	Hopper	FACS	Brookhaven
Lori	Hunter	FS	Ridgedale
Jen	Mattern	FS	North Elementary
Jesse	Mehle	FS	University High
Katie	Morrison	LSIC	Eastwood
Teresa	Nass	BOE	MCS
Tiffany	Newbold	FACS	South Middle
Ace	Parsi	FACS/LSIC	Suncrest Elementary
Sharon	Petitte		Ridgedale
Danica	Rubenstein	BOE	MCS Speaker
Mike	Ryan	BOE	MCS Speaker
Leigh	Smitley	LSIC	Skyview
Harold	Varner	FS	MTEC
Frank	Vitale	FACS	Cheat Lake/Mountaineer
Kathern	Willard	FACS	Clay-Battelle

Ace Parsi and Duana Crum opened the meeting and set the following goals outlined on the agenda:

- Deepen connections and understanding among different groups of participants, primarily between parents, educators, and administrators.
- Attain a deeper understanding of key issues raised by parents in the survey: attendance policy and mental health.
- Suggest some big ideas for consideration relating to attendance policy and mental health.

Attendees participated in an icebreaker that required participants to meet someone in the room who serving in a different role (parent, administrator, educator) and to bring back to the discussion feedback of “what keeps you coming back or staying with Monongalia County Schools.”

Superintendent Campbell introduced Danica Rubenstein, Director of Attendance and Mike Ryan, Student Services Coordinator, to speak about attendance and mental health initiatives.

Danica Rubenstein reported that the Curriculum and Instruction team as well as the administration play important roles in attendance outcomes. She also stated that the Burlington and United Methodist social workers, Matt Lacy, who works with truancy, and school-based probation officers in the middle and high schools are tasked daily with attendance issues and all practice preventative, not punitive measures.

There is a County Attendance Committee which includes social workers, outreach facilitators, principals, assistant principals who serve on the committee.

Going forward, once per month, families with attendance issues will meet with Ms. Rubenstein at the courthouse in an effort to help the family to understand the seriousness and impact of truancy on the student, as well as to work with the entire family on attendance measures.

Mike Ryan discussed the mental health initiatives and personnel that were in place well before the pandemic. Social workers, counselors, nurses, probation, school psych and other counties asked how Mon County can sustain all the supports. The reason Monongalia County did exceptionally well staying connected with families is due to personnel and resources already in place as priorities.

When Mike Ryan began his Student Services role, he sought data-driven methods for decision making. The Panorama program provided a whole child data collection opportunity to survey and track student progress for grades K-12 in school virtually/blended/full-time.

Panorama collects data on the whole child, not exclusively academics. Information is collected to better inform all supports in schools to ensure students basic needs were addressed before setting expectations for academic achievement.

Surveys for grades 3-12 receive student perceptions, K-5 receive teacher perceptions (K-2 teacher perceptions, only)

Additional supports in the Elementary and Middle schools include Second Step and High Schools use School Connect. These programs are used to strengthen students' social emotional learning skillsets. Outreach Facilitators are also assigned to each school to help families make connections with outside agencies when necessary.

Breakout Sessions on the attendance and mental health issues ensued. Groups reported feedback in terms of likes, dislikes, what's missing, and what should be explored more.

Summary of Group Feedback

Likes:

- Upcoming changes in the attendance expectations
- Information efforts and resources during the pandemic
- Panorama program

Dislikes:

- Not enough info on parent involvement in whole child approach in attendance
- High School students' ability to leave campus without parent

Missing:

- Has MCS exhausted all community resources?
- A system to track students who skip school
- Attendance mixed- messaging for health notes: Parents are asked not to send kids with specific symptoms. The symptoms are now common.
- Absence note is hackable by students

Explore:

- Peer mentorships, internship with graduate programs
- How can High School attendance be better tracked?
- Potentially allow Mental Health practitioners to be located on school campuses

Action Items:

Partnership ideas/opportunities for parents to positively engage in supporting the SEL learning and needs of students

Attendance process update

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM

