

WJMS ACCOUNTABILITY MINUTES

August 2024

Date | 8/26/2024 | Meeting called to order by Christopher Bauer

In Attendance

Lauren Achziger	Ashley Grieb	JP Squires
Allison Barker	Hal Grieb	Miranda Tucker
Christopher Bauer	Melissa Gutierrez	Dominique van Noordenberg
Benjamin Brickweg	Kim Halingstad	Kari Vernon
Kristen Ellis	Myetta Hoover	Jackie White
Kyle Ellis	Karin Plow	Jen Wilson
Carrie Evans	Abby Redwine	

Introductions and Minutes

Attendees introduced themselves and noted their relationship to the school. Most attendees have students at the school; attendees also represented the school staff, PTA, and community. A sign-in sheet was circulated for recordkeeping.

The May 2024 minutes, drafts of which were made available the day after the meeting, were briefly reviewed for acceptance. While reviewing the minutes, an error in a subheading was found that incorrectly described spring MAP testing results as CMAS testing. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the May 2024 minutes into record with the correction to that subheading.

The committee's meeting norms were reviewed: start and stop on time; each meeting's agenda is emailed prior to meetings to committee members and published for the public on the school website; minutes are taken and published for the public on the school website; members will respect the opinions of others and be considerate of differing points of view; only one person will speak at a time; each committee member will be equal; and decisions needing approval will be put through the Robert's Rules of Order.

The purpose of the committee was reviewed: the School Accountability Committee (SAC) is an advisory committee for the school. The committee advises on the school's annual Unified Improvement Plan, budget priorities, school fees, review summarized test scores, and provides feedback on school-related issues. A parent asked if the school must follow the committee's recommendations; they do not, the school considers them and chooses what to do.

Old Business

2024-25 Student Fees

A question from the May meeting about whether the \$125 instrument rental fee is the same regardless of instrument played has not yet been answered. Our understanding is that renting is only an option for instruments that are available to rent - not all are. The administration will check with the band instructor Mr. Hills about what instruments may be rented, and the parent with the question will contact Mr. Hills as well.

A parent observed that they did not know prior to the first day of school that students should bring their instrument to school starting the first full week of classes. The school will add that to the back-to-school information sent out prior to the start of school going forward.

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SAC Calendar

The attendees considered whether to stay with meeting the fourth Monday for the 2024-25 school year. In recent years, the committee has met on the fourth Monday of the month, skipping December due to the limited time before winter break, and March due to state testing. There was a concern regarding possible conflicts with PTA meeting times; their board has previously met on the second Thursday of the month with general meeting dates on a less formal frequency. It was suggested to move the meeting start time to 4:15 pm to accommodate the after-school pickup traffic and parking lot availability.

A parent asked when the school budget is submitted. It is released to schools in January, and the school submits their budget in mid-February for the upcoming school year. Not holding a December meeting does not impact the committee's opportunity to provide input on the budget.

It was agreed to meet on the fourth Monday of the month at 4:15 pm for the 2024-2025 school year, with the November meeting on the third Monday to avoid Thanksgiving break. December and March remain off.

Principal's Report

Kim Halingstad gave the principal's report.

Enrollment

Our school has 504 enrolled students as of August 26. This number is slightly above our projected enrollment as we have several new students from out of state. We would like to be at or slightly over the projected enrollment, so the school doesn't have to repay the state after October pupil count. The district has corrected an issue that had homes in Indian Hills that listed both Evergreen Middle and West Jeff Middle as the home school for students in the affected area to have West Jeff Middle listed as the home school; families in the area that want to attend Evergreen Middle may choose that during open enrollment. The correction will help the schools have accurate numbers for budgeting.

Project updates

Kim Halingstad and Amy Baker attended training for Jeffco Partners in Education, a volunteer management system to help match projects/needs to volunteers. It can include PTA and WatchDOGS opportunities and cover everything from specific events to general needs such as sitting with students revising writing, working on math, or supervising breakfast service for 15 minutes. A volunteer signup link will be sent out this Wednesday. There will be two levels of background check depending on whether a specific opportunity will have licensed supervision.

A parent asked whether the Partners in Education signup will be required to visit and observe the school. Visitors that want to observe classes only need to contact the office in advance, then sign in on the day of their visit and advise where they want to observe.

Safety Issues/Concerns

Our campus supervisor this year, Travis Hoffman, has been a huge help. He is easily spotted in a bright blue shirt and is part of the morning and afternoon campus walks with administration. A parent asked if the position is new, or Mr. Hoffman is simply new to the school. The position is new to our school this year, and the supervisor is new

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to our school. It was asked if the position was part of the school budget; no, it is part of the district's security budget. It was asked if the supervisor is armed; no, he is not. It was asked if the campus supervisor is an employee of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office or the school district; they are employed by the school district.

While we still share our School Resource Officer (which is a Jefferson County Sheriff's Office deputy) with Conifer High School, Deputy Joslin is moving down to Deer Creek Middle in September. The incoming SRO will be Dave Warner, starting the week of September 23.

A parent stated that the School Resource Officer last year spent much of their time on our campus in and around the office and asked if this will change in the upcoming year. Our understanding is that the School Resource Officer generally does not go into classrooms and interacts with students as they pass through the commons and during lunches. The campus supervisor interacts more with students. It was asked if the committee can ask the sheriff's office about expectations for the minimum standard for the School Resource Officer's interaction with students. Kim will follow up on that.

A parent asked about receiving advance notice of drills. The school does advise families in advance for lockdown drills; we have one coming up in October or November and families will be notified. We do evacuation (fire) drills monthly and these are not announced in advance.

A parent asked how students are trained how to react in drill situations. Our classroom teachers go over [Standard Response Protocol](#) with classes and teachers tell students where to go to within their classroom in the event of a lockdown. Lockdown drills are scheduled with the district because district staff clear the building after the drill.

Increase in inappropriate behavior at King Soopers

We have had an uptick this year in students at King Soopers after school engaging in antisocial behaviors such as stealing doughnuts, opening cans of soda, and stealing watermelons and smashing them outside. The store is acquiring security video footage. School administration will review the footage to help identify students and give information to the sheriff's office to issue tickets and/or file charges as appropriate.

A parent asked about student transportation. We are still short bus drivers but are in better shape this year than last year. The use of hubs for areas impacted by cancelled routes is expected to continue this year. If the bus rider registration form doesn't work, call the West Area bus barn (303-982-5215) and they will help you get it sorted out.

It was asked if there could be an option for the bus drivers to do something like campus security between driving shifts. Chris Bauer can raise that suggestion to our District Accountability Committee representative.

School Changes

This year we have a free breakfast serviced from 8:20 - 8:35 am in the cafeteria. This is largely a grab-and-go meal and students should not have open food containers outside of the cafeteria, but may hold onto unopened food, such as cereal cups, to eat later in the day.

The staff is focused on clear and consistent expectations for behavior and respect this year. Our leadership team is reiterating with teachers the importance of consistency.

Students and visitors to the school may have seen posters around school about non-negotiables regarding devices, hoods, backpacks, and grading policy. We've only had to confiscate a handful of devices so far this school year.

A parent asked how the school helps students learn to use phones as a tool rather than as a distraction. We are reinforcing using the Chromebook primarily for apps.

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We have several new staff members this year:

- Tiffany Few will be teaching sixth grade Math;
- Victoria Hutchen will be teaching sixth grade Science;
- Tony Varvoutis will be teaching sixth and seventh grade Social Studies;
- Victoria Ogden will be teaching seventh grade English/Language Arts;
- Rachel Windon will be teaching seventh/eighth grade Math, a new position this year;
- Jessica Pickard will be teaching eighth grade English/Language Arts this year while Haley Bishop is on family leave;
- Keeley Cestare will be teaching Spanish and World Languages/Cultures;
- Joseph Hills will be teaching band in a position shared with Conifer High School;
- Sean Duffy is our new Speech-Language Pathologist;
- Liz Wehr is our new counselor; and
- Jeanne Rael-part-time

It was asked about why the number of new staff differed from the update at the May meeting. The school hired three teachers during the first round of 2024-2025 hiring (February – April). Many positions were hired over the summer due to when the school was notified a staff member was not returning. The reasons for the changes vary – retirement, moving to teach at another age level, moving out of state, and leaving the teaching profession. Many parents would have appreciated communication about the long-term substitute for Ms. Bishop as her room was empty at Back-to-School Night.

Our school will be using [Savvas myPerspectives](#) English/Language Arts curriculum this year. Every student has an actual workbook they will use that stays in the classroom. The curriculum lets teachers focus on what's important for their students' needs and the spiraling curriculum allows concepts to be revisited throughout the year.

A parent asked why we were using a new curriculum. When Superintendent Dorland joined our district, she was surprised by the variety of curriculum used across schools. This will standardize what students experience between schools and reduce costs to individual schools.

We are a pilot school for My Perspectives, just as we were a pilot school for Illustrative Math, which is the math curriculum used across the district. We have found this consistency has helped students that may attend more than one Jeffco school.

Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)

The data used for Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) work is embargoed until August 29th. Kim will make a summary sheet to share with the committee for reference at the September meeting. While the school submits the 2024-24 Unified Improvement Plan to the area superintendent on September 23, it goes to the Colorado Department of Education later, so we have some wiggle room to adjust the plan based on feedback received at the September meeting. It was asked if the committee can view the data and draft plan prior to the September meeting, and then give feedback at the meeting. Kim will find out.

Another item for the committee is to review whether the prior year plan achieved the targets. Kim Halingsstad that based on the data she has seen but cannot share with families until August 29th, it appears the targets have been met in at least 7th and 8th grade.

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New Business

The following topics were tabled to the September meeting for discussion:

- Student/family handbook revisions
- Safety and security concerns
- A Roadmap for the Student Experience Update
 - Student leadership advisory group (this is being communicated in the August 28 newsletter)
- Additions to the UIP in 24-25 to increase engagement – if we set a goal that uses Make Your Voice Heard survey results, we have to set a specific numeric target
- Improving community presence in the school

The meeting adjourned at 5:12 pm.

Next Meeting

Date: 9/23/2024

Time: 4:15 pm

Location: WJMS / Google Meet