

Meeting Minutes

November CSC Meeting: Fall Forum

Nov. 5, 2015 6-7:30 pm Cory Library

Welcome & Introductions of Teachers & Staff, CSC members and parent attendees

Overview of CSC and goals of meeting

Update on DPS guidelines for 2015-2016 School Performance Framework

Jennifer Harris, Cory Principal

Overview of EngageNY Math Curriculum

Courtney , DPS Math Partner

Small Group Discussions

1) How Can Cory Continue to Support its Diverse Community of Learners and their Families?

- *What feedback do parents have on the ways in which Cory supports diverse learning and community needs?*
- *What programs, opportunities, etc does your child connect with most strongly at Cory? What helps them feel most a part of the Cory community?*
- *Have there been times when your child or your family has felt disconnected from Cory, and what could be done to better support students and families in those times?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for programs that could be added or strengthened at Cory?*
- *What topics would you suggest for Parent Engagement and/or Community Nights?*

Works Well

- Classroom rules and community time (to teach empathy). Second Step.
- Flexibility for Grade 1 homework (tic-tac-toe)/
- General feedback that Cory overall was doing a good job.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Better communication of core values at Cory to parents including communicating how character building is integrated in our classrooms.
- More racial diversity.
- Reduce quantity of homework. Many parents find it difficult to manage. Suggestion to provide more flexibility for homework for grades 2 to 5 (similar to the tic tac toe concept from grade 1).

- Many families cannot provide adequate access to technology for homework (particularly for multi-child families). No ability to complete electronic homework if at kaleidoscope or if there is no/limited access to technology at home.
- Teach more about cultures and diversity in classrooms. Suggestion “Culture Day” to celebrate and learn about other cultures.
- Provide more options for ergonomics (allowing kids to stand to work, etc). Universal Design Theory is being piloted at U Park.

2) How Can we Best Support our Teachers and Staff

- *What resources can parents share that might support teacher and staff satisfaction across the Cory community?*
- *How can our community best welcome our new teachers?*
- *What experience or models can we pull from other schools or other sectors for supporting team and community satisfaction?*
- Understand ‘employee motivation’ – intrinsic vs external motivators (see <http://valuingdisruption.com/home/2014/09/08/what-motivates-employees> and Harvard Business Review article on Frederick Herzberg work - <https://hbr.org/2003/01/one-more-time-how-do-you-motivate-employees/ar/1>) Intrinsic motivators that motivate people to work harder, smarter and better address people’s deep seated need for growth and achievement:
 - Interesting work with challenges
 - Allow team to develop and pursue individual areas of expertise.
 - Less controls, more “space”.
 - Increasing responsibility (with accountability) for natural units of work.
 - Mentoring program – seasoned teachers supporting new, not watch sink or swim, use existing expertise to accelerate new hires.
 - Most important attribute in hiring isn’t “Right Stuff” but eagerness to learn.
- What smaller set of values does our staff rally around?
- What can we do to make teachers happy?
- What do the teachers say they need?
- Ask teachers do you have ideas about what parents can do? And identify actionable things parents could then support.
- Can parents help with curriculum?
- Revamp teacher appreciation – not just a week. “Stock the Lounge”. What would teachers like for teacher appreciation week?
- How can room parents be better/best resources?
- Help parents understand “A Day in the Life” of a teacher.

3) How Can We Best Encourage Families to get and stay Involved in Fundraising and Volunteering?

- *What questions and suggestions do people have for how we can most clearly communicate Cory's fundraising program (both its intent/objectives and its strategy)?*
- *Updates and feedback on Draft Volunteer Handbook?*

Fundraising

- Clarity
- Timing
- Where are funds going/why?
- Repackage into video instead of novel
- When does \$ "kick in"?
- Involve teachers

Volunteering

- Stronger 1st grade/new parent orientation. Idea of a mentor for new families.
- Focus on building trusted community among Cory parents. Something like "Next Door" for Cory parents. Maybe through PTA?. Grade level "Social Chairs"?
- Dates
- Ask – what do you want to do -> more interests/ability
- Just for parents orientation.
- Send home with students...So you're a volunteer...now what?