

# Manual Middle School CSC – Combined Meeting Minutes (Nov 11, 2025)

## Meeting Date & Time

Tuesday, November 11, 2025  
5:01 PM - 6:45 PM

## Attendees

Doug Clinkscales (Principal), Auon'tai M. Anderson, Kate H., Daniel K., Erin P., Darcy K., Rebecca O'Brien, and additional community parents.

## 1. Agenda Overview

1. Approval of minutes & agenda
2. State of the School Update
3. Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism
4. Suspension Data & Behavior Trends
5. Curriculum Adoption (Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies)
6. Enrollment & Class Sizes
7. Bell Time Submission Requirement
8. "Friends of Manual Middle School" / 501(c)(3) Foundation Proposal
9. Interim Testing, CMAS Fatigue & Schedule Considerations
10. Environmental/Building Conditions (temperature/HVAC)
11. Open discussion & Q&A

## 2. Discussion Summaries

### 2.1 State of the School Update

- Current attendance is 4% higher than the same point last year, hovering between 85-87% daily.

- Unlike last year, Fridays are no longer seeing a major drop-off; the district’s high-school schedule shift appears to help overall K-12 attendance.
- Chronic absenteeism remains a major challenge:
  - Last year: 50%
  - This year: 49% (goal: 36%)
- Majority of absences are **excused**, indicating strong family communication even though excused absences still count against state metrics.
- Staff expressed concern that the district’s attendance messaging does **not clearly communicate** that all absences—excused or not—count statistically.

## 2.2 Suspension & Behavior Data

- Suspension numbers decreased after a strict September reset enforcing zero tolerance for hallway horseplay.
- Main drivers of suspensions:
  - Disorderly conduct/mutual fighting
  - Severe defiance (multiple classroom removals)
  - Aiding/abetting incidents
  - Weed on campus on a few occasions
- Doug emphasized that early consequences helped curb behavior.

## 2.3 Curriculum Adoption

### ELA

- Amplify continues to show strong outcomes; interim scores suggest significant improvement since shifting to a more structured curriculum.

### Math

- District recommending adoption of a new math curriculum.
- Teachers are reviewing alignment with interim changes and acceleration pathways.

### Science

- Science scores on the first interim exceeded expectations relative to previous years. • Teachers still adjusting to the new “OpenSciEd”-style structure.

## Social Studies

- In year two of the new curriculum; generally stable implementation.

## 2.4 Enrollment & Class Size Projections

- Sixth grade remains stable with 72-80 students annually.
- Seventh and eighth grade continue to attract more transfers (often from Whittier and International).
- Enrollment projections coming next week; CSC will need to weigh **realistic projections** against **budget implications**.
- Manual was short enrollment this year and had to pay back funds, but past savings helped absorb the loss.
- Class sizes include some large sections—up to **34-35 students** in ELA/social studies and particularly in 8th-grade math due to acceleration patterns.

## 2.5 Bell Time Submission

- DPS requires principals to submit next year’s bell schedule by Friday.
- Doug requested CSC review and approval to finalize required submission.

## 2.6 501(c)(3) Foundation – “Friends of Manual Middle School.”

### Background

- Manual HS “Friends of Manual” has been unreliable in serving as fiscal sponsor (delays, unclear priorities, no donation link available).
- CSC discussed creating a **distinct nonprofit foundation** for the middle school.

## Steps & Requirements (Presented by IRS expert Eleni S.)

1. **File Articles of Incorporation** with the Secretary of State
  - Requires **three incorporators**
  - Cost: **\$25-50**
2. **Obtain an EIN** from the IRS
  - Must attach initially to one person's SSN for verification
3. **File 501(c)(3) Short-Form Application**
  - Historically ~6 weeks; may now take **2-3 months** due to federal staffing delays
4. **Draft bylaws** defining:
  - Board structure
  - Spending rules
  - Decision-making authority
5. **Ensure compliance with new DPS policies** regarding parent organizations using school addresses.

### Purpose

- Create a **separate fiscal entity** that:
  - Allows tax-deductible donations
  - Prevents DPS from absorbing community-raised funds into the school budget
  - Supports targeted fundraising (e.g., DC trip sponsorships, market donations, teacher requests)

## 2.7 Testing Fatigue, Interim Schedules & CMAS

Teachers highlighted:

- Interim/CMAS week schedule changes are **highly dysregulating** for students and staff.
- “Fun day” activities after testing help behaviorally but still add pressure.
- Sixth graders especially

struggle transitioning back to academic classes after high-adrenaline specials like gym.

- CMAS-specific issues:
  - Lingering opt-out culture post-COVID
  - Confusion around state vs. district messaging
  - Request for reconsideration of half-day testing schedules

## 2.8 Environmental / Building Conditions

- Some classrooms (e.g., math) historically too warm; this year has fewer complaints.
- HVAC issues arise sporadically; district maintenance responding more quickly than previous years.
- Teachers noted inconsistent temperatures across classrooms, with some rooms still very warm.

## 3. Decisions Made

1. CSC unanimously approved moving forward with establishing a 501(c)(3) for Manual Middle School.
2. CSC approved pursuing draft Articles of Incorporation and bylaws before the next meeting.
3. CSC approved submission of the 2026-2027 bell schedule by Friday.
4. Agreement reached to continue exploring curriculum options—especially the proposed math adoption.
5. Agreement that attendance communication to families needs clearer messaging in newsletters.

## 4. Action Items

### 4.1 501(c)(3) Foundation

- Kate H., Daniel K., and Auon'tai volunteered to help draft Articles of Incorporation. • Identify **three incorporators**.
- Determine who will serve as initial **Registered Agent** and who will take EIN responsibility. • Draft initial **bylaws** outlining board roles and fiscal rules.
- Schedule a follow-up work session with Eleni for next steps.

## 4.2 Curriculum

- Doug to provide materials comparing current and proposed math curriculum. • Teachers to share feedback on interim alignment.

## 4.3 Attendance Messaging

- Erin P. to review DPS attendance materials for clarity gaps.
- Doug to craft family-friendly explanation for newsletters about excused vs. unexcused absences.

## 4.4 Enrollment

- Doug to distribute enrollment projections and request CSC feedback. • CSC to provide recommendations on whether to adjust projections for budgeting.

## 4.5 Testing / CMAS

- Doug to raise concerns with district partners regarding:
  - Half-day testing options
  - Mental-health-related absence codes
  - Fatigue impact on middle schoolers

## 4.6 Building Conditions

- Continue reporting HVAC inconsistencies to district facilities.
- Document room-specific heat issues for next maintenance review.