



MacFarland Community Cabinet Meeting Notes

May 26th, 2016

6:30 – 8:30PM

Roosevelt High School

Presenters: Mark Sanders, Aqueelha James

Support: Teresa Biagioni, Andrew Katz-Moses

Notes:

Agenda

Time	Agenda item	Key questions
6:30 – 6:40pm	Welcome/ Review of agenda	
6:40 – 6:45pm	Celebrations	
6:45 – 6:55pm	Updates	
6:55 – 7:05pm	Community Cabinet next steps	
7:05 – 7:30pm	Small group discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can Cabinet members continue their work on MacFarland in their own communities? How does each member engage his/her own networks?• What steps do you want to see MacFarland take in engaging parents and the community moving forward into the next school year?• How can Cabinet members support parent engagement at MacFarland?
7:30 – 7:35pm	Break	
7:35 – 8:00pm	Whole group discussion, big takeaways and next steps	
8:00 – 8:15pm	Q&A with Principal James	

PARTICIPANT QUESTION/COMMENT	DCPS RESPONSE
	Working on a plan with DC Scores to get them into MacFarland for the coming year.
	Going to start with an LSAT. Advisory board for the school.
	Looking to form a MacFarland parent organization and involve neighborhood parents.
	One potential example (not a promise) is for students of MacFarland grades in neighborhood schools like Truesdell, West, and Raymond to play on MacFarland sports teams.
	Question 1: How can Cabinet members continue their work on MacFarland in their own communities? How does each member engage his/her own networks?
We can connect feeder communities with MacFarland events. We've got communication paths – email lists, folders that can go home. We can get information out	

in a timely manner and get any feedback to you.	
Maybe communicating some updates and good news with the community, we can help with that.	
	It was pretty powerful at John Burroughs when parents would host chat and chews. That allowed us to tap different quadrants in our ward. That could allow conversation could continue in an informal way for budding and existing MacFarland students. Essentially living room chats.
Are there any plans for a welcome event for incoming families?	Yes, several this summer.
	And something I think is really important is the building technically is under construction. Very clear that we are working super hard that we are working to provide our scholars some kind of summer bridge. We have true and very real constraints to the building being under construction. We want to have a summer program and/or open house, but building doesn't officially turn over to students until August. Pushing for earlier than that.
Maybe something more informal, like meeting at the park. Every summer for the incoming families, have water and snacks for families.	We also want to get into the homes of the families as well. Will be dependent on when we can get staff on board.
In this case it's almost doubly important because you have children coming from different schools. Great opportunity to develop the culture as you go, take advantage of every opportunity.	When they opened Brookland we learned a good lesson. When you have different communities coming under one roof it's critical to introduce them in a number of ways, town halls, cookouts, etc.
Promote the successes in the community. No matter how people share things.	
Share idea of what communities are looking for in the school and what's being put together.	Really important in terms of proactivity compared to reactivity. It's been my experience that when there's buzz politicians react. As long as we have a lot of buzz beforehand. Thinking about ANC meetings, city council meeting. Different groups on Ed. Grosso's committee, open forums and open committees like the DME. Being able to get the buzz rolling is really helpful.
Going off the buzz thing is where you all are in social media, but being present on that so parents can engage with you all there.	We've started down that road, there's a MacFarland twitter account. I will have one of my own (AP Sanders), we are almost at the point where we can announce who the staff members are who will get a good web and social media presence. Ramping that up.
Another nuts and bolts thing, have we started investigating an email server?	The District has the service provided to every school, I'm sure you all have provided the robocalls.
Paper works pretty well. In a grade or two.	And some of that is, we're going to be working with

	the leadership pat Truesdell, Raymond, and West. We currently use mailchimp for emails.
<p>Going to the schools and visiting, introducing yourselves. It's really hard because it's still not a, you don't have the students but also expanding on the global program thing. Sending out more information, we got a lot on the beginning but we haven't heard about the global program.</p> <p>Not only the dual language piece but it's comprehensive.</p>	<p>To build on that is opening consistent messaging. We'll certainly look to our monthly newsletter but thinking about our marketing tools. I remember some concerns about it not being an exclusively dual language program.</p>
<p>And I think that's what we want to hear at West – why should we be excited about this, other than it's opening? There's only so much the office of planning can do because they're not the principal.</p>	<p>So, blueprint wise the beginning of the school year next year once we get school started there's two campaigns we'll be running.</p> <p>1: One will be getting another class of 6th graders and pulling more 7th grade students too</p> <p>2: The longer term campaign will be...MacFarland is a neighborhood community school and I want everyone to hear that message loud and clear. We want everyone to be there.</p> <p>I want to be very clear with people about that so that when they walk in the door there are no surprises. We don't want them to feel left out because there's already a program up and running.</p> <p>I want the current 6th graders at those neighborhood schools to be excited when they get here in 8th grade.</p>
	<p>When we open the door for our comprehensive program we don't want to close the door on our dual language program we've worked so hard to establish.</p> <p>He's nailed it on the short and long term planning and it's a joy to sit back and listen to his thoughts.</p>
<p>I hope because this area is a big sending area for other places' schools. If we could target at least some reasonable set...showing up at the local elementary school may not do anything for them.</p>	
<p>Will there be any preference for neighborhood students who want to test in?</p>	<p>My understanding from everything I've read is that we'll be a school of right for students in the neighborhood, and 6 DL feeder schools. For students who aren't in DL they'll need to go through the lottery.</p>
<p>It would be compelling and a way to create buzz because students in the area, potentially and charters would feel like you're reaching to them specifically.</p>	<p>Also because MacFarland doesn't have a boundary yet it's hard to define it.</p>

It's something to think about for year 3, and if it's a preference you don't have to take them if you're full.	
	When you talk about DL vs. traditional I think we need to go talk to the ES's and learn from their mistakes. I know we went through it at Powell, and I'm not saying we got it right every time but we did learn.
Is it going to be uniform school or non uniform?	We're not sure...
	When we meet all our parents for next year I want them to meet the administrative staff and get their input on this, and then we'll need to make a decision. I like to say yes uniform, but that's me.
	You mentioned in regards to messaging, and even thinking about the comprehensive strand. The new hires for MacFarland are aware of and will plan with our Roosevelt teachers so they understand what global studies means. And there will be a partnership with Georgetown as well as Harvard so they can understand what it means to have a global studies program from middle to high school. So when we do open with a comprehensive program both schools will have something in common that we are a global studies school. And we want there to be a beautiful vertical articulation, and that's part of why Mr. Sanders will oversee...the high school dual language part. And phase 2, after MacFarland moves into its own building and opening that comprehensive part. I can't wait to see what it will be for a graduating 8 th grader in DL or comprehensive to make that decision to go to Roosevelt especially with that vertical articulation.
That makes sense, and I've seen some of the global studies programming in previous sessions. I think parents will want to hear more about that and what it really looks like.	Language is independent of content. Dual language elementary schools you'll read page 1-5 in English and then start on page 6 in Spanish. The language students are learning in is a feature, it's not the emphasis. The emphasis is high quality learning, rigorous classrooms. It's not like you turn left if you're in DL and right if you're in comprehensive. That's why I don't use the phrase English-only, it's comprehensive.
An academic and a messaging question What are your visions for the math programming? In comparison to other middle schools in the city.	I can give you my vision but we're going to go real broad. Math and science are fundamental if you want to operate in this world. The students who are graduating from college who are gainfully employed...the ones with no jobs are not computer science majors. Those students are finding jobs all over. I don't need to call it a math and science school to understand the utter importance of math and

	<p>science. We'll need to get a much clearer picture of offerings compared to other schools, but that's my vision.</p>
	<p>To give you a sense of the model, they'll have an English Language Arts class and a math class in English. In Spanish they'll have a Spanish Language Arts/Humanities Class, a Science class.</p> <p>We're working on getting authentic Spanish language material, not just the translation. It may not be possible in every case given procurement constraints.</p> <p>The difference between reading about the Mexican American War from a Mexican author, it's a bit of a different spin on that. And if they're studying that in the DL track, we want there to be alignment with the comprehensive program.</p> <p>And part of that is how do other people in other communities, not my community, think about these things?</p>
	<p>And I would advocate for some of the texts in English to be a translation of a Spanish text. So those students could get an idea of what it's like to experience that from another perspective.</p> <p>I would love for the comprehensive students to experience that and I love the idea that we're creating a continuum of learning.</p>
Will there be an Andrew next year? Somebody who's in touch with parents and going out to schools.	<p>That work will transfer more to the administrative team here at MacFarland, Mr. Sanders will be directing that.</p>
<p>The facility issue at Marie Reed – I want to be able to see what you're seeing so that I can relay that to Reed. We found out post enrollment when there are no other spots available at any dual language school across the city.</p> <p>Is there anything, anything that could ease that concern that parents are having? As of today Reed parents are pulling out of Reed and I know MacFarland parents are leery of sending their children to high school.</p>	<p>What I enjoy about me is I like to stay in my lane. I'm going to do that respectfully so I'll address MacFarland. MacFarland MS students will occupy this level. MacFarland middle school has a separate entrance, Roosevelt will come in through 13th. You have 6th graders that will occupy this first hall, and Roosevelt HS will occupy the 2nd and 3rd floor. There has been a schedule created to limit the exchange and interface between those students. I'm a mother, and I'm a mother first before anything else.</p> <p>And I'm working on safety issues not just for kids but for myself. I don't want to even think about a 6th grader having an experience, I need to sleep at night and I get very serious when I even think about it so there have been a lot of precautions taken to make</p>

	<p>sure it is a completely safe environment.</p> <p>There are some shared spaces, PE, Art, Music, and world languages are also in this wing. Is there a possibility a 6th grader will see a high school student? Yes ma'am. But an interaction with a high school student? It would be very, very difficult. Because there are doors and areas you just can't get through. And we're going to make sure with our schedule and instruction our students are very engaged. And I empathize with what you're saying but I can only speak to my schools.</p>
And coming from a school with a lot of open space and PK through 8 th grade a lot of parents are concerned about, I know I was. But it really hasn't been a problem, very little unplanned interaction. And there has been some planned interaction, students reading to one another, and that's been awesome.	And I agree, and I'm so passionate about this. I need to sleep at night, I've been out of my house since 6:30am because I love this and it's a selfish reason, so these children can take care of us. And we deal with a lot of parents, and not all of them who are like you and show up to meetings, and so I can explain that to you.
It's just been...the relationship is strained with DCPS and unfortunately the relationship with MacFarland and Marie Reed gets strained because of some things that aren't related but are because we're on the same property.	<p>I would echo what Principal James said, and Reed parents aren't the only ones who have this concern. I was talking with a parent 20 minutes before this who was worried about the same thing. I'm a father myself, and I've been given a huge charge which is other peoples' children and I will protect those children, sometimes at the cost of my own health. And that's my first and foremost concern is making sure children are safe and feel safe. There will likely be some planned interaction, mentors, with parent consent of course.</p> <p>And all of the students are going to learn where you can go and where you can't go. They will. There are boundaries and we're going to live within those boundaries. We're already planning the interactions we're going to have with parents over the summer and this will come up at every single one.</p>
Scheduling piece – is there a difference in arrival and departure?	Part of what we're thinking about is how we can make sure our kids are safe. Including Marie Reed. We know Marie Reed will have bussing and Bancroft will have bussing. Are we in a place where we want to ask our parents if they want to start the school day a little bit later, which would mean we end a little bit later to reduce the traffic a little bit. We're trying to figure that out, right now we're scheduled to open at the traditional teaching and learning time the district has outlined.

	Mr. Sanders was sharing with me, and I love to speak it into existence, maybe we'll want to consider having Roosevelt high school start later and MacFarland at the traditional time. We're keeping children at the core of everything we say and do, so we'll have to consult with our stakeholders i.e. our parents.
	Part of this is taking the message from here and bringing it to MacFarland. So many times decisions are made based on what someone else said. And sometimes decisions are being made based on erroneous information. And we'll work to get parents to work directly with us. And here is how they'll go from the door to the classroom.
Keeping that line between MacFarland and Roosevelt. I love how you guys have merged that. It's not the same school but the program is basically one in the same. If you have a parent of a 10 th grader who can talk to an incoming 6 th grader that's great. It's easier to have one source than to have to go to a variety of separate meetings. Keeping that line of communication open.	I think Chancellor Henderson would say a big hooray saying that because that definitely was her plan.
	One suggestion I have from the Roosevelt community was to establish PCATS – Parents, Community, Administration, Teachers, and Students. So we can hear from all those groups...and I love nonverbal and I picked up on the one seat on the LSAT for the community that that wasn't enough. And maybe we can establish a different kind of organization and we call that PCATS.
And I want to make sure the parents, teachers can weigh in the most. We had a lot of community members weighing in because they didn't want construction near their house.	<p>So information, input, decision-making. We want to leave the decision making in the hands of the current parents. The input I think we can start spreading, because we do want to hear input from all different sides. And I think we should think about this and in the next meeting maybe shore up a bit more. We want everyone to be getting information, and then we're also collecting input. And then we're having a parent group who has the authority for decision-making.</p> <p>And sometimes there's a backroom meeting. And there's a meeting, and then there's the other meeting. And what happens in the other meeting is actually what happens. And that fosters a lot of distrust. And we want to foster a great relationship with these communities, and to make sure we have that information input decision-making. And we want to make sure we're keeping what's best for kids at the</p>

	center.
You have a lot of PTA PTO members of the board, so use those. What is something you envision we can do to help, so just use as you think it will be helpful to the kids and the school and the community.	
Putting events together.	
One of the things that's been a major concern for Reed parents is where will our PTA meetings be? Maybe we could use Roosevelt.	*Nodding from Roosevelt/MacFarland admin.
I need everyone's email!	
	<p>Instead of reinventing the wheel I want to learn from others. I'm going to Cardozo tomorrow, they've got a middle and high school.</p> <p>So I want to learn about the Powell Carnival and reach out to people. Where I pump my own brakes is, I want the parents to decide how much or where they want to put those parameters.</p> <p>If I try to be open up front and transparent about here are the things we want input on, and I don't want to engage people in a false way on things that are already decided. And maybe the parents say we want to have three people on the LSAT or one from each feeder, and I would support that, but I don't want to make any decisions for them. If you take nothing else from this meeting we don't just want parents to come on back to school night and the end of the year awards ceremony. We want them to be genuinely engaged throughout the year.</p>
Taking primary input from enrolled families. But since you have these families, I don't know if you can lay out what kinds of decisions are going to be made, maybe it's uniforms and you'll stick with enrolled families. But maybe it's comprehensive programming and you're going out to the neighborhood schools. If you could lay that out for the next couple of years I think that would put people at ease a bit.	I plan on laying that out, and laying that out for this group. We're going to have an LSAT and lay some things out for the LSAT, and thinking about where we want to put information, where do we want to put input, and where do we want to put decision-making. We can't lay out three years of that, but we can put some out and check-in about where we are.
	<p>Homework: What we'd like in our next meeting is parents who are in dual language and parents who are going to be coming in later is:</p> <p>How do we brand the school? Do we brand it MacFarland Middle/MacFarland Escuela Secundaria? I could continue to ramble but we want to brand it in a way that makes everyone feel included. We want everyone excited about one</p>

	<p>school, not two that happen to have the same mascot color and building. And for those of you who speak Spanish...Mustangs translation for example.</p> <p>So please engage your communities around the branding piece.</p>
Can you give examples of school branding? Is it just the name? A motto? Slogan?	<p>This is the branding we have so far, MacFarland Middle School Mustangs. So the postcards and bracelets the school planning team is going to print and make for us. Do we put it like that? Do we put a slash? Powell puts Spanish on everything for example. That's the experience I have, but we want everyone to feel included so we're really looking for genuine input. Shirts, and bracelets, hats, bumper stickers.</p>
If we put the question out to other parents at the school...	<p>So do we put it out in Spanish and English everywhere it exists? We want to get our name out there as much as possible and establish our brand as much as possible so that it can continue consistently.</p>
	Closing