

Parent Communications
September 15, 2016

The first Parent Communications meeting for the 2016-2017 school year was held on September 15, 2016, with more than 50 parent representatives/ambassadors present.

Dr. Worthington, Director of Schools, welcomed the group and briefly talked about their role which is to gain pertinent information to push back out into the community and our stakeholders. Another important role is to become a communication tool to assist parents in navigating our website with things like PowerSchool, Khan Academy, and Engage TV. Dr. Worthington commented the district is the largest it has ever been with over 1,000 more students than this time last year. With this huge increase in numbers, our opportunities and challenges to reach more parents are even greater. By providing parents with knowledge about the system and keeping them engaged, we can ensure a much better outcome for our students.

Dr. Worthington referenced the 2016-2017 strategic work overview. An important component of our strategic work is engaging the public in support of student achievement and ensuring parents are aware of what's going on within the schools to stay connected and engaged. Esperanza Soriano-McCrary discussed ways to expand parental engagement opportunities and align community resources with district work. From the CMCSS web page under "Students & Parents" Ms. McCrary illustrated how to navigate the website by accessing some of the most frequently searched topics that parent are seeking.

- Curriculum Navigator – developed to share the Tennessee State Standards with parents and community members, and how each student's daily instruction is aligned with achieving a deep understanding of each core content area. Ask your child, "What was your learning target for today?" Within the curriculum navigator, parents are able to follow classroom activities.
- Testing & Assessments – grade-level or school-wide assessments are administered throughout the school year to measure progress toward achieving content proficiency and to identify areas of strength. These measurements allow CMCSS to provide instruction tailored to the needs of the individual student while meeting the standards set by the TDOE. ACT's are now mandatory for graduation this year.
- PowerSchool – parents can view their child's academic progress, attendance, and test scores all in one location. Visit powerschool.cmcoss.net, create a username and password and enter the email address on file at the school. Access codes will be emailed to that address. Download the APP and use CMCSS district code PZQN.
- EngageTV – answers many frequently asked questions in video format. It provides parents with anytime-anywhere learning opportunities and are structured to help parents support student success at home. Visit <https://cmcssfocus.net> and search for EngageTV.
- Online Calendar – Subscribe to the online calendar to stay in the know about school and district-wide events and meetings. Visit the calendar at events.cmcoss.net, click on subscribe, select area(s) and school(s) of interest, then enter your email address. Notifications will be emailed to you based on your selected area(s) of interest.

Websites listed below can be accessed at home and are excellent resources for parents and students. For a comprehensive list, please visit : <http://www.cmcoss.net.students.learningresources.aspx>

KhanAcademy – KhanAcademy offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower learners to study at their own pace in and outside of the classroom. It serves students of all ages. www.khanacademy.org .

Homework Hotline – 888-868-5777 - provides one-on-one free tutoring by phone to Tennessee students and parents. With Homework Hotline, students tackle new concepts, learn to read, complete challenging assignments, and gain academic skills.

Read to be Ready – provides activities and resources that parents can use to enrich the literacy journey of students. It can be accessed by visiting: <https://tn.gov/readtobeready/section/parents-main-page> .

Ready! For Kindergarten App – This APP was created to help develop school readiness skills while playing games. It is a convenient learning tool for your mobile devices. It can be accessed by visiting: www.tryready.org from your mobile device.

Ms. McCrary reminded reps and ambassadors of the Teacher Warehouse and how they can serve as “proxy shoppers” for their teachers. If you need additional information, please email : esperanza.mccrary@cmcss.net .

Dr. Worthington continued with the strategic work hand-out explaining this overview is developed each year by the Senior Leadership Team and is tied to a 3 year plan. Our mission is to educate and empower our students to reach their potential. Our vision is all students will be college and/or career ready. Along with engaging the public support which Ms. McCrary addressed, other goals include:

- Improve Student Achievement
 - Align assessment practices with TNReady expectations
 - Many standards changes in the past 4 – 5 years. Standards will be upgraded one last time beginning next year. More rigorous assessments are expected because the standards are at a much high level. Classroom teachers must ensure what is being assessed in the classroom each day is going to align with what the standards are asking students to do.
 - Expand college and career academy opportunities
 - This will be our 4th year for our college and career academies within all high schools. The STEM academy has been going for 7 years focusing on more certifications and dual enrollment opportunities inside the world of the academies.
 - Refine TN State Standards implementation of English/Language Arts and Math
 - Working on getting the standards aligned which will be tweaked again next year once the state releases that information
 - Expand Response to Instruction and Intervention to high schools and refine in elementary and middle schools
 - RTI is actually more of a skill and is not necessarily looking at the standards per se but would be in addition to the standards. (For example, if a student needs more assistance in phonemic awareness.) Students are not being taken out of their regular Tier 1 classroom instruction; instead, they are receiving “enriched” coaching.
 - Expand digital blended learning opportunities
 - Schools now have more access to technology inside the classroom than ever before. Currently, there are approximately 20,000 computers throughout the school system. Technology is not intended to replace the teachers. It is another strategy to provide quick access to the curriculum that a 12 year old textbook may not have. Students will not be assessed on technology this year.
- Maximize Employee Capacity
 - Refine recruitment and retention strategies
 - This is the first year the district has experienced difficulty in finding elementary teachers and seems to be a nation-wide problem.
 - Expand employee and student health and wellness opportunities

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness
 - Continue district security upgrades
 - All elementary schools should have their front entrances completed. Two high schools (Clarksville High and Northeast) are next in line and then middle schools. Raptor software has been installed. There are some inconsistencies in procedures across the schools which are being currently addressed.
 - Refine and expand energy efficiency opportunities
 - Cutting off lights and equipment when not in use is a small example but can make a huge difference across 39 schools every day
 - Improve organization efficiency through technology
 - Study and implement county partnership opportunities
 - Looking at ways we can be more cost efficient in areas like purchasing by partnering with other large county departments
 - Expand pilot for on-line fee payment while researching other software application options
 - The on-line fee payment pilot is on-going. We will continue to investigate options to lessen the collection burden on teachers and parents.

November 10 – Parent Group Meeting – Cyber Security. There will be a speaker from Homeland Security giving a presentation that is designed to inform educational leaders and parents about the risks that children face in the online environment. Principals will also be invited to attend.

Question of the Month: Does the district's strategic work reflect a continuous plan to improve student achievement? If not, what are your concerns? Please send comments to Deb Cummings (deborah.cummings@cmcss.net).

The meeting notes from each month (another useful tool to share with parents and principals) are posted on the CMCSS website under the "Students & Parents" tab.