

McCallum Campus Advisory Council (CAC)

January 10, 2022

MINUTES

Present via Zoom: Administrative Representatives Nicole Griffith, Larry Featherstone; Teacher/Staff Representatives Rachel Murray, Andrea Rogers, Kenneth Rogers, Joe Carcione, Margaret Smith, Elaine Bohls-Graham; Parent Representatives Lisa Alverson, Viva Garzaa, Alexis Pruitt, Ashli Pate, Carlene Wegmann Todd, Amanda Holleman, Kate Hayes; Community Representative Susan Moffat.

1. Welcome and Call to Order. Co-chair Lisa Alverson called the meeting of the CAC to order at 5:47pm. As background to the principal's report, Co-chair Rachel Murray noted that the district has not yet provided the final campus budget for next year, but general budget information is available on the AISD website at <https://www.austinisd.org/budget>. General data about the McCallum campus is also available at <https://www.austinisd.org/schools/mccallum>

2. Minutes. Minutes of the December CAC meeting were approved by email vote prior to the January meeting and posted to the McCallum website.

3. Principal's Report.

Good News. Principal Nicole Griffith reported that Mac Journalism is a finalist in the Columbia National Press Association Awards for both the yearbook and The Shield. The McCallum Dance show was a beautiful experience, and was held at the district's PAC so the audience could spread out safely. Mac Choir also gave a wonderful performance before the winter break. Ms. Griffith stressed that McCallum is using great caution for events, but that staff wants students to continue to have meaningful learning and performance experiences, especially in Fine Arts and Athletics. Students are very cooperative regarding Covid protocols and have matured significantly since the start of school last fall. McCallum is getting a high fence extension on Grover to avoid damage to cars and pedestrians from flying baseballs.

Budget/Scheduling. As noted above, Ms. Griffith has not yet received the final campus BTO, but was able to share some general information about budget and scheduling. Because AISD is facing a \$60 million shortfall, district leaders have been forced to make hard decisions. As discussed at the December CAC meeting, under McCallum's current schedule most teachers teach six of eight periods, with two planning periods per day. Under the new budget beginning next fall, most teachers will teach seven of eight periods with just one planning period per day. Monday will be C day, with students being released one hour early so that faculty members can have time once a week to plan as a team. Other days will consist of eight periods, generally with block scheduling. In essence, these changes mean teachers will have more students and less time to plan. It's hoped the extra planning hour on Mondays will help somewhat, but Ms. Griffith noted the need to rethink current teaching approaches to maintain high quality academics while ensuring a reasonable work/life balance for teachers. To this end, she is putting together a Teacher Efficiency Solutions Team and still needs faculty representatives from the

Humanities to participate. There will also be a workshop this summer for all teachers to help rethink instruction under the new schedule. Ms. Griffith underscored that a teacher's job is already extremely demanding, and that this change will not be easy, but she is committed to supporting the faculty in any way she can. Ms. Alverson stated that there are also many parents willing to offer support. Ms. Griffith said that the best way parents can help teachers is by being supportive, trusting their professionalism, not over communicating, and helping students learn to advocate for themselves. In response to a question, Ms. Griffith said these scheduling changes will be implemented district-wide, affecting all high schools, middle schools and elementary schools. Ms. Griffith emphasized that McCallum will still maintain high expectations to ensure students are ready for college or career. She hopes to have more detailed budget information available for the February CAC meeting.

SCA 2 Data. The data from the second Short Cycle Assessments (SCA 2) has been released. These tests assess state-mandated EOC (End of Course) subject areas and are intended to serve as a temperature check on basic skills. Overall, McCallum did well, notably outperforming the average on Algebra 1, Biology, and English 1 and 2. Staff is continuing to focus on a few gaps, but the data did not reveal any major concerns.

Covid Update. With the advent of the omicron variant, Covid cases are rising everywhere and McCallum is no exception. For the most part, students are doing a good job with mask wearing, and the entire administrative team is now engaged in contact tracing. Both Fine Arts and Athletics are doing well with safety protocols, and student performers will be masked for the spring musical. Because McCallum and the district as a whole continue to experience staffing shortages due to Covid, AISD has started sending substitutes from central office, which is helpful. McCallum continues to serve as a Covid testing hub for the district, and staff members are actively monitoring symptoms throughout the school. A parent representative lauded Ms. Griffith and the school staff for their excellent handling of her daughter's recent Covid case. Ms. Griffith stated that the biggest concern is keeping everyone as safe as possible.

Passing Rates. Ms. Griffith recently checked McCallum's passing rates to determine how the two pandemic school years compared with 2018-19, the last fully normal in-person school year. Not surprisingly, McCallum experienced a dip in passing rates during the pandemic, but has regained some ground in the current school year. She noted that sophomore year is typically a big academic stretch for many students, as they often begin Chemistry, Physics, and AP History that year. Female students are doing slightly better than their male counterparts, and most students appear to be adjusting well to in-person learning this year.

4. Other Business. A parent representative raised a question about End of Course (EOC) and STAAR exams. A number of students opted out of these exams last spring because the state required them be taken in person, and parents were concerned about Covid safety. At that time, parents were told students could skip these tests without penalty. However, as Ms. Griffith explained, the Texas Legislature subsequently passed House Bill 4545, which, among other things, requires any student who did not pass last year's STAAR or EOC exams to receive "accelerated instruction" in the form of mandatory tutoring before school, after school, or embedded in the school day. McCallum had the district's highest rate of in-person testing last spring, and many students who did not take

the tests then were able to make up them up in December. However, a number of current 9th graders did not take the 8th grade STAAR test last spring, which McCallum, as a high school, does not offer as a make-up exam. The new law does allow districts to administer a grade level proficiency test with students who pass being excused from mandatory tutoring, and McCallum administered this test last fall. However, students who did not pass the proficiency test and did not pass or take last year's STAAR or EOC exams will be required to participate in mandatory tutoring; a letter will go home shortly to families with affected students. The law allows tutoring to be offered online, but students must be in school to participate; they cannot do it from home. McCallum and other campuses are still working out details, but Ms. Griffith expects the required tutoring to be offered in groups before and after school, during FIT, and during Saturday School. AISD has received some federal funding for tutoring so teachers who volunteer to assist with this project will be compensated. Ms. Griffith will put this item on next month's CAC agenda for an update. The Texas Education Agency has also posted FAQs regarding HB 4545 at this link: https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/house-bill-4545-frequently-asked-questions_0.pdf

5. Citizens Communication. No one present wished to speak.

6. Adjourn. There being no further business, the McCallum CAC adjourned its meeting at 6:34pm.