North Oakland Community Charter School
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Head of School Report

Date: February 5, 2016
To: North Oakland Community Charter School Board of Directors
From: Stephen Ajani, Head of School

Staffing Update

Jamilyn Mercer, safe passages/Elev8 staff member, has given her two-week notice. She is moving back to Atlanta. Safe Passages is working to provide us with a quarter time replacement for her. Until then we will cover her duties in house.

Jen Gambaro, One of our K/1 teachers, will be taking a leave of absence from February 15-26 to be with her ailing mother. Nancy Rodriguez will be taking on her duties during this time.

Therese Slade will be joins NOCCS as a volunteer 2 days a week. She will spend the majority of her time with Ms. King learning how to lesson plan and leading small groups. Ms. Slade is currently working toward her teaching credential. This is a good opportunity for Ms. King to do some coaching and receive some extra help in class.

Mr. Bates, our new 6th grade teacher, is settling in well. Students are adjusting to a more structured classroom environment. We have seen a dramatic improvement in classroom environment and work completion.

Academics/Instruction

Teacher Evaluations:

Teachers are being provided with the Marzano evaluation rubric. Marzano is teacher evaluation tool that looks at teacher practice in a more comprehensive than we have before at NOCCS. It has explicit language around hard to reach learners and provides examples of what excellence looks like for each criterion which includes, pedagogy, content knowledge, professionalism family and community outreach. Having a rubric for the first time allows us to ground the evaluation conversation in common desired outcomes which administrators and teachers will work together to meet. Teachers will have the opportunity to work with the rubric as a staff and think through what elements of their instruction could be used as evidence for a particular score on the rubric. They will also think through how the Marzano rubric ties to the core principles of NOCCS on their own. Self-evaluations on the rubric will be reviewed by the administration and start conversations with teachers to identify professional strengths, goals, and potential professional improvement plans (PIPs). The rubric is being translated into a Google form so data can be collected and recorded over time. All teachers will be able to react to the new process during professional development on February 12th. The few teachers who had a chance to

preview the new process expressed excitement about having more guidance on what they should be writing from the rubric.

SBAC Performance:

Prior to seeing the results from our interim assessments, I am expecting a dip in SBAC scores this year. This is due having an high number of new staff members and staff spending time creating our new programs(special education, RtI, and teacher pipeline). I feel confident that the new systems we are implementing will ensure greater success of all students moving forward.

Enrollment & Applications

CURRENT ENROLLMENT

Grade	Enrolled	Status	Notes
Kindergarten	22	Full	
1st	22	Full	
2nd	23	Full	
3rd	23	Full	New 3rd grader enrolled 2/8/16
4th	27	Full	
5th	27	Full	New 5th grader enrolled in Jan.
6th	24	3 open seats	Prospective student visiting 2/5/16
7th	26	1 open seat	New 7th grader enrolled 2/8/16
8th	28	Over-enrolled by 1	*Two* 8th grade girls enrolled in Jan.
All Grades	**222**	**4 open seats**	**98.6% enrolled**

Applications:

We have received 128 applications to date.

Grade	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Number of Applications	64	13	9	9	7	4	19	3	0

We received 305 applications for this school year. This includes applications received this school year for open seats. We do not have a record of how our current number of applications compares to last year, but are putting systems in place to track this for next year. Last year 52 people declined their offer and there were a total of 57 seats to fill. We have an email going out to all families on last year's waiting list to encourage them to apply again. We are placing an emphasis on recruiting 6-8th grade students as that is where we are expecting the highest need.

Goal Updates

1. Response to Intervention (RtI)/Special Education(SPED): In 15-16, 75% of NOCCS students

receiving RTI and/or Special Education services will meet or exceed 75% or more of their individual RTI/SPED goals.

Improvement to RtI model:
The RtI program continues to grow and develop based on our school needs. Recently, a process called Student Team Meetings was identified as an important element in student success. Students that have been part of these meeting are seeing increased success in school. For example, a decrease in Back on Track referrals and increased work completion and quality. Students leave these meetings feeling celebrated and knowing the adults in their life are working together to ensure their success. These meetings have been happening informally in our middle school since the beginning of the year. During Student Team meetings we invite parents and other influential adults in the child's life (other family members, coaches, pastors, etc.). We discuss the student's strengths and areas of growth. By the end of each meeting we have worked an individualized action plan to ensure the success of the student. We are incorporating these meetings into our RtI referral process and formalizing the note-taking and record keeping from these meetings in order to track student success. Teachers will be brought up to speed with these changes at our Feb 12 all day PD.

IEE Policy:
I ran the feedback to the policy by staff at the El Dorado SELPA. While they liked the changes we made. It would still need to be vetted by a Special Education lawyer. The template provided to us by our SELPA has already been vetted by multiple Special Education lawyers. My recommendation is that we move forward with policy from El Dorado that was proposed at our last board meeting.

2. Financial: By the end of 15-16 NOCCS will have a plan for a school model that can run its core program without raising additional funds.

<u>Next steps for EDP Spring Session 2016</u>

RESEARCH:

The most notable finding is that the percentage of EDP-enrolled students whose families pay zero to half of the regular fee price (due to qualifying for scholarship) has *doubled* since last year:

Year	EDP Enrollment	% receiving full scholarship	% receiving partial scholarship	Observed trends… (Data and notes provided by Krea Gomez)
2014-15	**96**	**21%**	**7%**	• EDP-dedicated staff, working 2:30-6 • 26 students who paid full price for EDP graduated or dis-enrolled from NOCCS at the end of this year.

2015-16	**113**	**42%**	**12%**	• 20 of 22 Kinders attend Seedlings. • For Gr 1-8, less experience. staff working longer and in multiple capacities, offering fewer enrichment activities. • Enrollment more by need than by choice.

The way the program is staffed has also changed significantly, as have the number and quality of enrichment activities.

It appears that *fewer* families that have a degree of choice / ability to pay (due to flexible work schedules/income) are choosing EDP, while *more* working parents with limited income are relying on it. One notable exception to this trend is the K Seedlings program, which enrolls virtually *all* kindergarten families.

One aspect of EDP that has *not* changed is the registration and billing systems, which are mostly paper-based and provide myriad options. The latter provides parents with considerable flexibility to customize their child(ren)'s EDP schedule, yet it can be confusing and is time consuming to track, invoice and manage.

Next steps

Make EDP processes simpler and more accessible and responsive—for parents *and* staff—with the goal of freeing up resources to make the program more creative and dynamic for students. Suggestions for how to do this:

- Limit package options.
- Make it easy for parents to register online (see draft form, note that dollar amounts are placeholders)
- Track enrollments and payments via spreadsheet (that the reg. form collects from)
- Require pre-payment.
- Clarify methods of payment, and add option to pay online via credit card.
- Use a cloud-based time card system for student sign-in/out and actual hours tracking. This has the advantage of being able to automatically add up drop-in hours/fees.
- Consider a nominal increase in fees.

Safe Passages Update:

I had the opportunity to tour a Safe Passages after school program with their Executive Director and was impressed with their program. The Safe Passages program offers homework support and wide variety of enrichments (soccer, dance, art, etc). They are interested in growing our partnership and are currently researching what is needed for them to run their first fee-based afterschool program. They are currently the only organization I have met with that I believe is ready to take on our programing. I would like to identify one or two more.

Increasing enrollment at NOCCS:
With the uncertainty of future SB740 funding and the fact that we currently need to raise around 180K annually to run our core academic program. I propose adding 16 students to NOCCS. This would give us about an additional $128,000. Research varies on the effects on class size and student learning. What we do know is smaller class sizes in grades K-3 have greater impact in on student outcomes. What research consistently supports is the impact of quality teachers on student learning. I floated the idea of increasing enrollment students to the administrative team and a few teachers. Initial concerns are around space in classroom and individual attention to students. It will be a heavy lift to get teacher buy-in across the board, but necessary to ensure the financial stability of the school.

	Currently	Proposed
K:	22	24
1:	22	24
2:	23	25
3:	23	25
4:	27	28
5:	27	28
6:	27	29
7:	27	29
8:	27	29
Total:	225	238

3. School Culture: By the end of 15-16, families–including all significant subgroups – will rate the school at a 3.5 or higher in the annual family survey data.

During the fall we saw a large number of students being assigned to Back on Track (detention), which is our form of detention, as well as sent to the office with low level referrals for things such as not following directions and being off task, common referrals we have seen come from new teachers, who are still developing when it comes to classroom management. After discussing our concerns with students, teachers and data from observations, we realized that there were two things happening:

1) School Teachers were not consistent with expectations or classroom management. This is due to lack of experience, race and gender discrepancies, and not wanting parent push back around consequences.

2) School Teachers were not enlisting the backing of parents to support expectations they were setting at school.

We are addressing these with three strategies:
1) Identify what teachers were consistently issuing referrals and identify any trends in the reasons for the referral. Support them with students behavior redirection as it happens, giving immediate feedback on what modifications may support specific students and

behaviors.

2) Creating Student Team meetings for students who have received more than 3 BOTs or referrals. These Student Team meetings include the student, all of their teachers, parents and additional community members they feel can support them in their academic and social endeavors.

3) Immediate follow up on referrals from the Dean or other administrator, which includes a phone call home and if necessary, a behavior plan.

Student Accountability has increased- with students required to go back to the teacher who issued the referral and discuss with them how to improve their conduct and how they can "right their wrongs". We see these behaviors and incidents as "teachable moments" for both school teachers and students.

Since the implementation of these tools we have seen a reduction in referrals for off task behavior. We have also seen a reduction in BOTs from, 36 in November, 29 in December to only 12 in January.

We have also seen referrals sent for only more serious behaviors such as physical altercations or destruction of school materials. We have addressed this behavior by deeming these behaviors immediate consequences of in-house suspension (for physical altercations) and prohibited from attending the next scheduled field trip (for destruction of school materials).

4. External Engagement #1: By the end of 15-16 NOCCS will double the number of applications of students who are zoned to Hoover or Emerson and qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Our online application system is only able to track students from the Hoover and Emerson enrollment zones who are applying to Kindergarten. We have a meeting set with SchoolMint to work out how to track this for all incoming applications.

5. External Engagement#2: By the end of 15-16 NOCCS Interview at least two high quality candidates for every open position.
No update at this time.

6. Talent: By the end of 15-16 NOCCS will have piloted and codified our talent pipeline program.

No update at this time

<u>Successes</u>

Improvements in middle school culture: While we still have some growth to make, the middle school has been showing well on tours. Multiple visitors who toured the school last year have commented on how calm the middle school feels compared to last year.

NAACP: Invited to meet with NAACP to discuss joining their education board. If I join I would be the first charter school representative to serve on the board. This could be a very beneficial

relationship for many reasons, especially as the political climate becomes more difficult for charter sector.

Challenges

Illuminate: We purchased Illuminate this year as a data collection, evaluation, and test creation tool that is aligned to our state test. We are not currently getting what we need from Illuminate. We have a screen sharing meeting with a Illuminate scheduled for early March Our Dean of Instruction has begun researching other programs that can better meet our needs. We are have to following challenges with the program:
- Timing of reports. It is taking them months to generate reports that we expect immediately.
- Item bank is helpful but about the only thing we're using.
- RtI component is not as robust as we were hoping. We were hoping that once we uploaded reading data it would allow us to identify student who were far below grade level in our to create pull out groups.
- Power School and Illuminate is still unable to speak to each other.