

Letter from the Grade Level Representatives

Dear ECS Families and Faculty,

We wanted to let you know about a collaborative initiative amongst the school administration and Parent Community of ECS - the Grade Representatives Committee. This committee is comprised of school principals and volunteer representatives from each grade level.

The purpose of the Grade Reps program is to collect trending concerns and feedback from each grade to share with the administration with an eye toward problem solving when needed. We welcome your questions and concerns and look forward to addressing them during these monthly meetings. Feedback / notes will be shared through the room parents and can also be found online: <http://ecspco.org/volunteer/grade-representatives/>

Notes from Wednesday, October 4, 2017

Accolades:

- Both Kindergarten and 4th grade have had lots of great outdoors time; kindergartners love mystery animals
- 4th graders are quoting Shakespeare at home!
- 4th graders are doing more writing this year (even if they're complaining about it)
- Parents loved back to school night, but would like to know in advance that it is a parent only event
- Parents also enjoyed learning about our PE program during bring your parent to PE week

Celebrations

- Our 4th graders had a blast at McKeever and grew as a community of learners
- PSSA scores went home in backpacks the week of 10/16/17
- The new format for progress reports was a great success

Equity and Diversity

- Melanie Cowherd shared about our Equity and Diversity committee
 - Dr Lovelace is our consultant on the committee from Duquesne University
 - The committee followed a data, research, audit process
 - Experiences for staff included: speakers (ex: Majestic Lane), Facing Race conference, building awareness of a culturally responsive environment and growth of the small internal team
 - Entered into an agreement with PPS to redesign our lottery policy to allow increased equity of access. more information about the change in the lottery policy, [check out here](#).

Q and A

Q: How do families find out if they are eligible for the weighted lottery?

- Eligibility for free and reduced lunch is now on the enrollment application for ECS. Families eligible for free and reduced lunch can select this on the Schoolmint application for the 2018 school year, and receive an additional weight in the lottery.
- There is a question on the 2018-19 application that asks if a family qualifies for free or reduced lunch, along with a income eligibility chart. If the parent/guardian indicates that the family meets the eligibility guidelines, then a parent/guardian must sign the following statement: I certify (promise) that my response is accurate to the best of my knowledge and reflects all household income. I understand that school officials may confirm the accuracy of this statement upon any subsequent submission of a Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals. I am aware that if I give inaccurate information, my children may lose their enrollment preference and, if enrolled, may be removed from the Charter School's rolls.

Parent/Guardian Certification of Free or Reduced Lunch Status If a parent/guardian answer yes to the free or reduced lunch status, the student will receive an additional weight which is receiving two numbers(ball, tickets) in the lottery instead of one.

Q: How is our band and orchestra program going?

- Ms. Perdue started the year with the existing band and orchestra students. Last week information went home about become a new member of the band and orchestra and how to rent an instrument. We are looking forward to both our winter and spring concerts this year!

Q: Can we do just a little more outreach so that each grade's parents know who their reps are and when they would reach out to them?

- Notes are available to all parents through grade level newsletters. The parents will also share this information to their grade levels when necessary.

Q: Who do we contact to bring specific issues around equity and diversity?

- You can reach out to the building principals and they will direct you to a member of the internal team.
- Proposed - Equity@ ECS email address to send questions - would be great the team will think about this email

Q: Are we continuing to audit discipline practices?

- This is a continuous and ongoing practice. We strive to be restorative rather than punitive and are working to ensure we are using preventative measures (ECS tickets, honey pot, etc.) and reteaching when necessary.
- Some of the parents discussed the possibility of having a speaker come to a PCO meeting to review relationships and restorative practices for parenting methods. Another idea was to have a family “Mix It Up Day” to help model for the practice with our students

Q: What is the focus of expansion? Do we want to retain our students or just keep growing our lottery list?

- Retention is our goal - we want you here!
- Want the families to be with us on this journey from K-12

Q: Where are the comments on progress reports?

- The new eschool plus system is a great 1 stop student data system. There were comments and then comment “numbers” (a comment assigned to a number) on progress reports. With report cards comments will be more robust, however we encourage the communication to come during conferences and frequent parent/teacher communication.

Q: What does 1,2,3 mean at LS on progress reports, the description was missing?

- Corrections already done moving forward
- **3 Established:** Student demonstrates proficiency in targeted standard. Student consistently applies learned skill.
- **2 Developing:** Student requires some additional support to meet proficiency in targeted standard. Student inconsistently applies learned skill.
- **1 Emerging:** Student does not meet proficiency in targeted standard. Student does not apply learned skill.

Q: How are grades developed starting in 4th?

- Our students are learning to transition into a graded system with their teachers. The teaching team sent out information regarding how each course is graded through their grade level newsletter. Teachers are also working with students to make sure they are setting goals and learning how to navigate turning assignments and projects in that are now graded. We will continue this work this year!

Q: How long is 4th grade lunch?

- 30 minutes

Q: Can we provide childcare during back to school night?

- PCO to help - Marla will take it to the PCO

Q: Can we help families who did not get their yearbooks?

- Contact Jaleah Robinson if you have not received your yearbook
- This year one of our 8th grade exploratory courses is in charge of the yearbook

Q: Will the PSSAs be 30 minutes shorter this year?

- The test creators are saying yes based on an estimation because it is untimed currently
- The entire testing window is shorter than last year due to when Spring break falls in the calendar

Q: Can we communicate to parents what times to not take their child during PSSAs?

- When we have our schedule, we will communicate via grade level newsletters

Q: Differentiation

- Differentiation happens for students below and above grade level during class and in ME/PRIME Time
- Enrichment is supported by our gifted coordinator
- Students receive small group instruction when needed to either support conceptual understanding or skill development
- If you have specific questions about how differentiation looks in your child's classroom, please reach out to the teaching team