

D67 APT/Board of Education Liaison  
Meeting Notes  
*October 22, 2018*

**1. Have the results from the Center for Talent Development (CTD) survey been received and what changes will be implemented this year, next year, etc.? Have any new procedures been implemented in regards to the new law for advanced learners?**

<https://www.dailyherald.com/submitted/20180723/new-law-allows-kids-to-unlock-potential>

The result have been received and analyzed by D67. The Advanced Learning Committee, with additional help from a variety of stakeholders, is taking the results into account to grow our service delivery model to meet the needs of all learners. No changes will be implemented this year (2018-19), as this year is a planning and preparation year. We will be making decisions and communicating them in the winter months and working to plan targeted professional development for teachers to support any changes moving forward. Communication with the community will come in many different ways.

New procedures -- We have developed early entrance criteria to follow the mandate from the state. That information will be on the website soon.

**2. Please tell us what will be different on the new report card and why.**

The revised report cards will offer a more comprehensive snapshot of each individual learner – a personalized learning profile. It will be reflective of the whole child not just test results. In addition to standardized test scores, the new version will offer opportunities for students to list their personal goals, activities, etc. It is currently at the middle school. A version was also introduced to seniors at the high school this year, as well, and will be rolling out to all classes in the future. This is a great way to compile information across the years.

**3. It seems that there is a focus on advanced curriculum for math courses. A 6th grader can take Math 6, Math 6/7, Math 7/8 and Algebra 1. What is the advanced curriculum for language arts or other non-math course work? If there are no advanced classes, what is the reasoning? If a child is advanced/gifted in areas besides math, how are their needs met?**

This is linked to the work we have done in our English and Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, as well as work we are doing in the coming months to expand advanced learning opportunities beyond ELA and Math. Due to the fact that ELA can be more easily differentiated through a variety of texts, what is asked of students, as well as how our curriculum provides individualized goals along a continuum, the advanced curriculum doesn't necessarily need to be in different classes.

**4. We have had children in District 67 schools for the past seven years and have noticed a wide variety of approaches taken by teachers regarding homework. Some teachers give a lot and some not much at all. Does the district offer homework guidelines and pedagogy for its teachers to follow? I am wondering where the district stands on this issue that affects every family's home life in the evenings and weekends.**

The purpose of homework is to extend learning through practice or reinforcement of skills presented in class, preparation for future class work, extension of ideas or concepts, creative or personal expression related to learning, application of knowledge or skills, and completion of class work. The type, frequency, and quantity of independent work will be based on the learning to be accomplished, and the needs of the individual student as determined by the professional judgment of the teacher. Homework will reinforce, or be an application of, the classroom instruction. Homework often takes different students different amounts of time, so sometimes, even if there is a standard, it doesn't play out that way for every student. If you have a specific concern please talk to your classroom teacher or principal.

**5. My concern is for the volume of homework I'm seeing this year in 4th grade. Every day there is reading for 30 minutes, a math sheet, math fact fluency practice, three spelling assignments per week, music practice for orchestra, and occasionally there is additional reading or writing assignments. Perhaps I was just not prepared for the drastic jump in homework from previous grades, but this seems like a lot. To be clear, I am not anti-homework, but it should be meaningful homework. Some of the work this year may be new - I don't recall any focus on math facts in prior years, even though I agree they are important and should have been included long ago, and we've never had spelling tests. But still, this is a lot to cram into one evening for elementary students, especially given that many studies show that, outside of reading, there is little value to elementary school homework. Would love to hear your thoughts. Thank you!**

See #4 above.

**6. Please inquire about the outcome of the Northwesterns Center for Talent Development review of our Explore and Quest programs last year. When will the information be made available to parents? Did it impact our curriculum programming? If so, how and when will it be implemented?**

See #1 above.

**7. What is the rationale for which classes get co-teachers in elementary school? Is there a specific profile for what type of child is placed in those classes? What is the long-term plan for co-taught classes?**

Principals consider many different factors in placing co-teachers together. A couple of the factors are teacher match and student need. Some students are strategically placed in the classroom by needs explained through the Individual Educational Plans (IEP), while others are simply a fit to the student and teacher make up. There isn't a

particular profile. All students in these classrooms benefit from two teachers. The district has made a financial commitment to providing staff for this model so there is a long-term commitment to this.

**8. How were class placements done at DPM for 5th grade this year? The classes seem to be very poorly balanced in terms of the mix of kids from each elementary school (i.e. there are very Everett-heavy classes next to very Cherokee-heavy classes, etc.). There are more boys than girls in 5th grade this year, but some kids were the only kids of their gender from their elementary school in their homerooms. Since homeroom assignments largely dictate the rest of your schedule, many kids lost their social support system. There is an understanding that more care is put into 5th grade class assignments to ease the transition into middle school, but that didn't seem to happen this year.**

This is always one of the most challenging aspects of student scheduling. We will always do our best to balance class sizes with students from the three elementary schools, and new students to the district, but this will vary based on the needs academic needs of students as well. For example, some students who have an IEP or different academic needs, at both ends of the spectrum, need to be placed with certain teachers for academic courses...specifically math and LA. This has been adjusted a bit over the years, but there are still some pockets that, for the most part, this year, will still be traveling together. In regards to the gender balance, this was also difficult because there are 38 more boys than girls in 5th grade...creating a great gender discrepancy. We always try our best to place classmates with peers from their elementary schools, but also welcome and celebrate the idea of fostering new connections and relationships as well. We strive to continue to meet the social and academic needs of all students.

**9. There were many complaints this year about school pictures. Examples include: the photos were inconsistent (some were taken up close and some further away), the photos were**

**bad (hair in faces, weird expressions - things the photographer should have sanity checked before moving on), and retake dates were poorly communicated. Did something change this year? How can we improve for next year?**

Nothing has changed, we are working with the same photography company as in previous years. We do evaluate every year and obtain feedback from each school. This feedback is helpful as we access for the future.

**10. Drop off procedures at both DPM and Everett (not sure about other schools) can be quite dangerous, as kids are dropped off in places that require them to cross the car line to get into school. The issues have been raised to at least one of the principals and the conditions haven't improved. It feels like a dangerous situation to have kids crossing the car line given the hectic drop off scene.**

All principals, across the district, are monitoring and evaluating drop-off and pick-up procedures. Changes have been made at some of the schools and principals have communicated the changes at the building level.

DPM - This should not be happening as the drop off point is at the door. We ask parents to make sure they are dropping off students in the appropriate locations. The Admin team will do a better job of monitoring this, especially in front of the 5/6 building.

Everett - We recognized concerns with drop off at the car line and have made changes to our procedures that I believe have enhanced the safety of the arrival and dismissal process for car riders. Everett has also made additional changes to enhance efficiency and safety in the dismissal process at the end of the day. One supervisor will go outside to place cones and then jots down names. Fewer cars are going around other vehicles and the car line is moving more smoothly on a more consistent basis than compared to recent years. In fact, we often complete dismissal of car riders less than 15 minutes.

**11. What has been done in response to last year's issue regarding the child who was given a known allergen in the lunch served in the cafeteria?**

Anne Simons, food service director was informed that the school menu did not specify the type of bread that was used for a particular sandwich and as a result more specific details are now being included on the monthly school menu. Additionally, some products have been eliminated and replaced with other products to avoid certain identified ingredients that students are allergic to.

**Has there been any change in nurse-cafeteria communication?**

Nurses maintain ongoing communication with Anne Simons related to the lunches that are being served with consideration to the information we have about our students with identified allergies.

**What is the expectation of parents?** The expectation is for parents to contact the school nurse and then she will make contact with Anne to gather specific information about the ingredients in the foods served at school

**Are they supposed to be communicating with the cafeteria directly or is information provided to the nurse enough?** Parents should communicate with the school nurse and she will relay information to the food service director and the lunch ladies.

**12. What was the rationale for combining Curriculum Night at DPM for grades 5-8? For parents of multiple middle schoolers, it was difficult to manage. Even more than getting details of the curriculum, one of the things many parents like best is seeing/hearing/learning about the teachers their children see every day. Even if you had 2 parents to cover multiple kids, you still only got to see the teachers for one middle schooler.**

The rationale behind this was that we are one school, not two. This was the first time we tried this, and for the most part it went well. I guess I would compare it to the same idea of a parent who has a 1st

and 4th grader, or a freshman and Junior at the same schools. Or, a parent who has both a 5th and 6th grader/7th and 8th grader. I respect that it's difficult to get to everyone, but if we are going to be one school we need to change some practices. This was one of those opportunities. We have heard very little negative feedback regarding the evening.

**13. There is concern about the number of times teachers are absent from the classroom for meetings. It is very difficult for some students, especially so early in the year, to have to adapt to substitute teachers and disrupted routines. Is there any way to lessen the number of absences? Is there a cap on the number of times a teacher can be pulled from his or her classroom for meetings/training?**

We do our best to keep our teachers in their classrooms and have lessened the number of planned days that they are out of the classroom. At times, we do need to offer certain professional development opportunities that can't be offered at other times. We do our best to avoid this.

**14. Many teachers and substitutes seem to punish the entire class for the behavior of 1 or 2 students. Communal punishment can be confusing to the kids who are not misbehaving. Can these types of classroom management strategies be replaced with something more effective and fair to all students?**

Yes, absolutely. I have not heard of this occurring, but we can continue to work with our teachers, as we have been doing so, regarding what our Foundational Expectations are regarding student and staff behaviors/expectations.

**15. With regard to substitute teachers, it seems like the need is great, given that there were advertisements placed at the school and on the website. How are substitutes selected and evaluated? How do you know if they are doing a good job with the kids in the classroom?**

There is a teacher and substitute shortage across Illinois. So we do advertise and interview all possible candidates. Principals evaluate substitutes and teachers also provide feedback and requests.