

Coffee with the Executive Director

Wednesday March 25, 2020

12:00 p.m. – 12:42 p.m.

English Meeting Minutes

Total Participants: 28

Mercedes opens the meeting at 12:07 p.m. with a greeting and a request for everyone to mute themselves. In this way, we will not have as much interference. She will be looking at the comments section through- out the call. Share in whatever way you feel comfortable.

The purpose of the call is to see our faces. We miss you all so much. Our parents and our families are the heartbeat of our community.

The purpose is for us to be able to connect around real questions, suggestions concerns, feedback because we are trying some things that are really outside of the box. We are working outside the box in every department to make sure we can give our students and all of you the best of ourselves.

Pause. This is real life, this is how it is showing up. (Dog is running around in the background.)

Governor Carney, as a quick summary, extended the school closure, at least through, and those are his words, May 15. Soon after that declaration, I was in communication with the Delaware Charter School Network and all of the Leaders in the state. We followed suit with what Governor Carney had declared. It has now pushed us to move into a different stage into continued learning opportunities and figuring out what that is going to look like for your students. We are moving as quickly as we can and working around the clock. This is a creative bunch of folks. Creative things to forward this next part of closure.

We are all open to feedback, communication. We will keep you posted as this unravels because our teachers are hard at work making sure we do a smooth transition into the next phase.

Phase 1 was resources and opportunities that we put on our website for you. It is our hope that you are able to take advantage of the resources for differentiated instruction; such as, Dreambox and Imagine Learning.

Parent comment: We do not see Dean.

Mercedes: We would love to see Dean unless he is hard at work now.

Mercedes says this is your time for any questions or concerns.

I would like for you to know who is on the call. We have our two Deans who are on the call. They have been walking steadfastly to make sure our students are served. We have Sylvia Simmons who works with our SPED students to make sure our Special Ed students are served in these circumstances. We have our Director of Communications. We have Jen Jones who has been working on our website. I believe Dr. Shirley is on who is our Academic Dean. You can ask all of us questions. I am going to be quiet so you can let us know.

Parent question: Is there a way to adjust the Spanish Imagine Learning apart from what she is doing in English? She is more exceeded in English than she is in Spanish because she is struggling in Spanish. It is having her work on syllables and things she doesn't quite understand yet.

Dr. Shirley: Ask the Grade Level (Kinder) Would you prefer if I put the directions in English?

Parent: Would like for her to expand her Spanish learning, but that could help.

Dr. Shirley: I will need your child's name so that I can go in and change her language support to her native language. Right now, she is struggling because it is showing me what she knows and what she doesn't know. As she continues, the system will adjust and show her work at her level in fun games.

Remember, by the end of 5th grade our goal is for her to be bilingual and biliterate which will happen through every day learning.

Parent: Shares student's name and homeroom teacher.

Dr. Shirley: I will look her up and fix it by the end of the day.

Parent: First question is that her student brought his report card home, the curriculum that will be posted, or what is on Dreambox and Imagine Learning, will the teachers be developing something to make sure they re

ready for the next grade or based on what they have established so far will they be ok? Or, will there be summer school? As a parent, education is important and it is important for me to know what he needs to do to be prepared for the next grade.

Dr. Shirley: Our teachers use Maravillas and Wonders and Mis Matematicas. Imagine Learning and Dreambox are supportive programs that we use in school to address any students' learning gaps. Every student is at different levels because it addresses the student at the need. It is curriculum that is connected to the standards of Delaware. It is what supports our students to be able to be ready for Smarter Balanced. Right now our teachers are transferring the hard copy to the digital platform so that the students can work digitally based on what they would be doing in school.

Parent: How much time, the things he normally does, I want him to continue. How much do you suggest as far as handwriting, coloring, his worksheets? Clarifies that he is 1st grade.

Dr. Shirley: In order to maximize the time, in Wonders he will see a game a worksheet and he can choose depending on what the teacher suggests. I do not wonder overwhelm parents or students. 20 minutes of Dreams, 20 minutes of Imagine Learning, 20 minutes of Wonders/ Maravillas, 20 minutes of Mis Matematicas. We are looking for a total of 3 hours. We do not want to stress our students, we want him to get up and stretch.

Parent: It is important for him not to be stressed, but I want him to stick as close to schedule as possible.

Student: I have problems with Imagine Learning.

Dr. Shirley: What is your problem with Imagine Learning?

Student: When I enter my log in, code...it doesn't work. I am using the one I usually use to log on.

Dr. Shirley: Ask for student's teachers.

Student: Mr. McAllister and Mr. Perez.

Dr. Shirley: Does your Mom have connection to your teachers on Dojo?

Dr. Shirley: I don't want you to worry. I have a meeting with the teachers on Zoom at 2:00 pm and I am going to have them reach out to your Mom to help her.

Mercedes ask Jen to speak to the website that students will be using.

Dr. Shirley interjects that what Jen is showing is what students will use.

Mercedes asks for a quick preview and reminds that it is not live.

Jen asks for a moment.

Jen shares her screen.

Jen shares that this is a website that we are designing. It is how students will access their work as we go through this next phase. This is separate from the school website. We will post the link on the Main School Site, but this is separate. Once you get on the site, you will click on your student's grade level and it will show you a weekly overview. As Dr. Shirley said, you can work through at your pace.

Dr. Shirley notes that the link for Imagine Learning will help the student I need.

Jen shares that there will also be a spot for Specials so that students have access to that as well. On Fridays, we will have Social Studies and Science so we are aligning to their normal schedule. We also have extra activities posted for students to keep learning and keep engaged. There is one at the very end that are non- screen activities if you would like to get them away from the screen. We also added a parent resource page which we will continue adding to regularly. Such as Q&A, meal services, services through out the state that may help. The last section is the Student Support Area. This is towards the Social Emotional piece. We will continue working on UNIDOS. There will also be resources to help our students manage through this situation.

Mercedes thanks Jen.

Mercedes notes that the page has grown even since yesterday when we viewed.

Mercedes asks if there are any questions, concerns, as we get down to our last 5 minutes.

Mercedes asks if the phone calls are helpful, would the community like us to continue. Is there any direction you would like to share with us.

Student: Asks if she can be sent worksheets because she has been bored all day because she has nothing to do. When she is done Dreambox she has nothing to do.

Jen Jones shares that we are working on that. We know how much you love learning.

Mercedes reminds the student that on the website, there are many links that will give you opportunities to continue learning.

Parent: The teachers messaged all about what they have at home. They didn't ask about printers. Do we need a printer for worksheets?

Dr. Shirley: We will not be needing worksheets in that sense. If we are able to go the way we want to go, students will be assessed through the curriculum. The printing out is optional according to parents' resources. But, it isn't obligatory and it will not be graded for now.

Parent: I also had a question about... parents are doing an awesome job, I appreciate all the resources. There are also activities that students can do; such as, crafting. I was wondering if there is a way to get supplies to students who do not have them.

Mercedes: That is a conundrum we are in. We are trying to honor the Governor's directive, but we are well aware that there are homes that do not have what we wish they had. But, the balance between keeping them safe, honoring the social distancing, and keeping everyone healthy...it is a very delicate balance. It is what keeps us up at night, every single one. I appreciate the comment. We are doing the best we can under unforeseen circumstances.

Parent: If you have a parent who is an essential worker and they have supplies and what to drop them off..is that possible? There are a lot of students at Academia who do not have resources.

Mercedes: Right now our essential workers are working from home. We are in the process of cleaning the school, the deep cleaning that is required. To do that we need to keep folks out of the building. We are aware of our student population. There are many charters struggling with this same issue. It is heartbreaking and it is difficult. But, again, the balance between keeping our

students safe and meeting needs...I know Wilma Almonte and George Schabb were delivering food boxes to our families, but we are trying to minimize risk and prioritize. The comment is appreciated; we are doing the best we can under these circumstances.

Parent: I appreciate what you guys are doing. Anything we can do to help...I can Cash App, send gifts cards...I do not mind helping in any way.

Mercedes: Thank you so much. We will continue to think, troubleshoot and think outside of the box to get as much as we can to our families. We are working around the clock as things change, intensify...I don't have to say it, we are living through it.

Parent comment in writing: Please keep the meeting going. It is very helpful.

Parent: I feel more connected through these meetings than I have in the past 2 years. These calls make me feel like I want to give back more.

Mercedes: This is going to change how we do education. This is stretching all of us.

Parent comment: Can we set up calls for classrooms?

Mercedes: I know Dr. Shirley is meeting with teachers later today and we are thinking down that road.

Dr. Shirley: Yes, we are working on doing it once a week. That way, students can connect with their teacher and their classmates.

Mercedes: Dr. Shirley will be sure to pass that along to the teachers as a suggestion.

Dr. Shirley: It may have to start next week as we are working on setting up classrooms, but we are working on it.

Parent: I know you can ask for information through Google Forms. This may help to be sure you have accurate information.

Mercedes: Thank you. I want to be cognizant of the fact that I have a call in 4 minutes for our Spanish speakers.

Student: Can we go outside?

Dr. Shirley: Well, we are following what our Governor has said, and ultimately it is up to your parents.

Mercedes thanks everyone and closes the call at 12:42p.m.