

**April 29, 2020**

**Coffee With the Executive Director (English) Meeting Minutes**

**12:00 -1:00 p.m.**

**28 Participants**

**Mercedes opens the meeting with a welcome at 1:05p.m. This not the first, nor will not be the last as the Governor just announced the extended closure. Though we were expecting it, I will speak for myself. I am still not able to put my arms around it. Especially with being in the building yesterday, I am still feeling that sense of loss. Kim was there, George was there and a few of our bus drivers working on route for next year. We are challenged and feeling the loss that came with Gov. Carney's announcement on Friday. Today is a Coffee just like all the others. We are here to support our parents in this really challenging time because our parents are serving as everything. Parents, cooks, husbands, wives, working, teacher. I would imagine even sometimes counselor to your own children because we are challenged on so many fronts. So all is welcome. Whether it is a question or concern, feeling, facts, we are open to it all. You have a good number of people across the staff. We have Sylvia Simmons, our Educational Diagnostician. We have our Specials' Teachers. I apologize, as I am trying to go through the faces so quickly. You have our School Nurse; you have our Deans of Culture. Please feel free to start your questions or concerns at any time. You can use the group chat or unmute yourself and speak to the group.**

**Parent question: I know the student is a first grader. I know last year that we received documents in the mail about whether or not students were going to continue. Will we get that letter to confirm that he is going to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in the school.**

**Mercedes shares that she is glad that the parent brought that up. We are looking at practices to see what has worked. Mayara feel free to jump in as Director of Admissions. What we have found that the letter to parents has been helpful in the short term but not necessarily in the long term to help us know whether our numbers will change. Because at the end of the day, as a parent you can pull your student at any time. At the end of the day, come the**

end of the year, if we do not see your child on a double counted list, we assume that you will be returning.

Mayara shares that in the previous years when we sent the Commitment to Return letter we sent it so we could know if the child was coming back. But, what had happened was that a parent would say that they were leaving, but then would change their mind and then we have already given their seat away. So it did not work in the way we thought. So as long as we don't see that the student is registered somewhere else, we assume that they are returning.

Parent asks if she will be able to pick up her student's medical supplies in the nurse's office since they will not be needed for the remainder of the school year.

Kim, School Nurse, shares that the nurses in the state are coming up with a plan and submitting it May 1. They are coming up with a plan for all of the schools to follow. Basically, we will be setting up appointments so that parents can safely pick up medications and medical supplies.

Mercedes shares that parents should be on the lookout for a communication from Mayara. As she will distribute a plan for what that process would look like.

Parent question, since another parent mentioned picking up things, because we had purchased Scholastic books and there were some things we were looking forward to. What should we do with that?

Mayara asks if they are from the book fair.

Parent says no, this was through Ms. Wolf. Ms. Wolf sent out info through Dojo about purchasing books. There were books, flashcards, toys that her daughter reminded her of. She actually had forgotten, but her daughter reminded her.

Mayara asks when the books were purchased.

Parent shares about 3 weeks before we closed. She doesn't remember. She placed the order on line.

Mayara shares that the books may have been sent to the school. She will talk to George who is the Director of Operations to see if he has a box at school. If

he does not, she will call Scholastic as the books may be delayed given what is going on.

Mercedes shares that once we have confirmation; we will create a plan for safe pick up. Perhaps we could do it through the Cafeteria and have runners come out to the car. But, we will figure that out. Thank you for bringing that up .

Shirley shares that the parent should check with Jen. The books may have already been received and not distributed. Shirley recommends to also talk to the teacher as well.

Parent shares a comment via the text that she has not shared with her daughter yet that there will be no more school for this year.

Mercedes asks what type of support the parent is needing.

Parent shares that her daughter talks a lot what is going on and going back and packing lunch. Looking for ideas on how parents are dealing with that. How do they assure their kids?

Parent shares that she first got her child back on routine. This is not a vacation, you are still in school. Setting the time that schoolwork will be done. Every day Monday through Friday 10-2 school is done. Before we found out that it was going to be closed for good, the good thing is that we have a routine and you will be ready to go back on May 15. Now that school is closed for the rest of the year, the good thing is that we have our routine. We need to be ready to return for the new school year. I set an alarm on his phone and we even still back his lunch so that he is eating while I am working.

Parent shares that she doesn't have a problem with the schedule and getting her world done but she wants to go back to how things were. It is more so coming to grips with this is not going to change. She is not going to see her friends.

Parent confirms that her daughter is in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

Parent shares that she has open conversations with her son. She asks, how would you feel if school didn't open up. Kind of gaging where she is. Supporting her, but having an open conversation, I would do it as soon as this weekend, so you can gage where she is and support her from there.

Parent shares that she plans on sitting her down this week and seeing how she feels and going from there.

Parent replies, and then support her. The good thing is school won't be closed for ever. Set the expectations that although you may miss your friends, school will come back.

Sylvia adds that one of the SPED teachers had a conversation with a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student and the student was very emotional. So be prepared for students to potentially to be very emotional. Be prepared for the emotionality piece if it.

Mercedes shares that she likes an idea that the parent shared. One of the things you shared was that you increased connectivity. We have our Specialists who have Zooms. We have our Deans and we have our School Counselor. What Sylvia said is important. Remember, our emotions are so much a part of who we are. We can sometimes go right into the logic of what it is and they do not care about the logic.

Wilma shares that as a parent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade she was surprised by the emotion. She was crying. She couldn't even do her routine and finish her work. What do you mean I am not going back. So we let her feel her feelings. So we explained to her about safety. And honestly, we just let her tell us how she felt. One of the things that worked was asking her what is one thing that she did at school that we could do at home. What was one practice that she did at home that they could do at home. It was super hard as apparent to see her like that, but that was something helpful. Tell me what you do with your teacher that we can do here.

Mercedes shares that a big part of completing the year is the rituals that mark the transitions. These usually are done in the school. The question is how are you as a family going to ritualize this for your family? I don't know. There are ways we could talk about it. We could get on a call and figure these things out. But, ritualized and helping them mark these transitions is going to be really important. Again, if we need to get on a call we can think about that and plan that out.

Wilma shares that from the Culture Team, you are going to be seeing information as the Culture Team met to brainstorm how can we support parents with continuing practices that were done at school. We are working

on a way to facilitate that for you so you can have tips on things that you can do at home.

Parents thanks the group. She appreciates it

Parent question: We have an issue with the website, especially Math. We made a request to get the workbooks from the school. But, for security reasons, we weren't able. But, it is very hard because I have 3 kids. The books will be given away at the end of the school year?

Mercedes shares that we have some decisions to make. Obviously, this decision to close the school year came to us the same time as it came to you. We are in the process this week as it is going to take a tremendous amount of planning to get 595 workbooks, etc. across the whole school. What is that going to look like to keep everyone safe and to stay within the parameters of what the Governor has shared. I do not have an answer for you right now, but we as a Team will be talking about this. We recognize that this extension represents a whole new phase in the process. As soon as we have an answer, we will certainly put that out. But, I want you to remain mindful as there are 595 other students that we have to do this for. I will be on a call with other Charter Leaders this week to discuss best practices.

Parent shares that they are having a hard time doing the math because the website is hard. He believes that it would be easier to have the workbook. Some of the teachers are doing that.

Mayara shares that in the last Coffee one of the parents shared that if you download the work you can then print it. I don't know, you said you are printing and sending to teachers?

Parent say yes,

Mayara says so I can connect you with Daniela so she can help you. You would be able to download and then print.

Parent shares that it is hard to print through Dojo.

Mayara shares that yes because it is a photo not a PDF.

Parents says yes. We see their work, but it is hard to access it. It is hard work because it is math. When you see it in a picture, it is difficult.

**Mayara confirms that she will connect the parent to Daniela because she has more information on how to download.**

**Daniela shares via chat that after the meeting, please call the tech support hotline and she will work with you through that.**

**Mayara shares that other parents have taken the work that is online and writing it out. Then the written work is submitted to the teacher.**

**Parent shares that that is what they are doing, but he has three kids. But, sometimes you miss things and I do not want them to miss things.**

**Mayara thanks him because she knows he even has the little one.**

**Mercedes shares that what keeps her up at night is that the challenge is that we all found out about this on March 11 at 5p.m. We had no time to prepare as far as sending kids home with anything. They kept giving us short-term dates thinking we would be back. But if we had any sense of a long term closure, we would have..but..It never dawned on any of us.**

**Grandparents shares that he is in a similar situation but with 1 child. The only thing we have done is contact the teacher on a daily basis and find out if anything is missing.**

**Parent shares that sometimes it works and sometimes it does not. I don't know if it is the English or Spanish part. But, it is difficult, once you finish it, where does it go? Do you submit, do you save? Does the teacher get it? That is the reason why I am asking, I thought the workbook would be easier. But, do to what you said, I guess we will have to wait.**

**Grandparent shares that we write down the page number and the assignment and then we send it to the teacher. Then the teacher marks whether it was done.**

**Jean shares that he will work with the teacher to see if something is wrong in the way that she is doing it. It wasn't supposed to be that way. So if you tell me who the teacher is you can work through me . I think technology should be friendlier.**

**Parent shares, that is the idea.**

**Jean shares that once you have your tablet working the flow of information shouldn't be as hard as what you are telling me.**

**Parent asks for the name of the teacher.**

**Jean shares that he will put it in the chat.**

**Parent shares her thanks because a change was made so that she can see the work on a daily basis. It depends on which browser she uses as far as being able to submit work.**

**Parent shares that first they tried it on the tablet and it didn't work. They ended up buying 2 Chromebooks.**

**Parent shares that she goes on the distant learning platform and takes a screenshot and then uploads it from there. If you have a Chromebook you can write on it. I screen shot it, and I didn't see that it was going to them, but the teacher said she was receiving it. But, I still click on my work and then screenshot and send a picture to the teacher.**

**Parent says he will give it a try.**

**Jean confirms that the parent has his number and asks him to give him a call after.**

**Michal begins to talk but he is very muffled.**

**Mercedes asks if Daniela or Rueben would like to say something.**

**Daniela shares that Ruben is suggesting that a tutorial be done for I pads or with tablets so parents can eliminate those steps. But, there are a few different ways. Technology is so complex and there are so many different ways . But, Ruben is going to make a tutorial. But, with what the parent was sharing, you don't always have to screenshot or attach something it depends on the assignment. It also depends on what technology you are using. It is very complex and it depends on the platform. But most important is that once you know the assignment you can decide what is the most comfortable for getting the work. They need to call the Tech support line so they can work it through on an individual basis. There is no overall process because there are too many ways for it to be submitted.**

**Mercedes asks if the issue has been corrected.**

**It has not.**

**Mercedes asks that he type so that the group does not miss out.**

**Mercedes asks if there is anything else.**

**Parent says ...**

**Mercedes asks who's birthday was it.**

**Parent shares her son. She will tell him of the wishes because he is in the other room.**

**Parent says that now there are more parents on, wanted to remind everyone that we have our Facebook page. Our Facebook Group is up. So along with having the responsibility of not going back to school this year the other important part is the social interaction. Through the Facebook Group, we are hoping to connect. Our teachers are doing a lot, but not everyone is able to connect at those times. So I am just throwing it out there.**

**Mercedes asks how would she join the Facebook Group? Can you give us a two-minute tutorial?**

**Parent says that most people have an existing account, if you do not, let her know and we can help with that. But, once you log in, go to the search bar and type in Parents of La Academia There is an image of colorful hands. You will see our logo so it is obvious. You can do it from your cell , from your computer. It would be the same way you would search for a friend. We can all do it. We need to connect with one another. Parents of La Academia, we are waiting for you. Please be sure to answer the security questions so we know you are who you are.**

**Mercedes asks if she will be able to make that plug in the Spanish Coffee.**

**Mayara says another parent wants to say something.**

**Parent says can you share the link through Class Dojo? I don't know, but you may be able to share that through Dojo. It could link you to it and parents can then answer the security question.**

**Parent says she will definitely do that. She will check because sometimes the links can act a it funny.**

**Parent says that maybe do a test with a teacher. Can parents talk to one another on Dojo?**

**Parent says no, which is why they wanted to do Facebook.**



**Mayara shares that usually when she does post on Dojo, if you click on the link; I am assuming that the parent can go to that link.**

**Parent shares that sometimes it is hyperlinked, sometimes it is not.**

**Parent shares that the link is within a picture for her. She has to go into Zoom and then type the Meeting Id.**

**Mayara shares that that is interesting. She didn't know you have to copy and paste sometimes.**

**Parent shares that it could be the privacy settings. Sometimes the admin has access and some do not.**

**Mayara shares that she will look into that because it is in Dojo so it is easy for parents not so that they have to do extra work. But, she will check into that.**

**Parent asks if anyone has attended an online game night.**

**Parent says that yes, they have done Family Feud because Zoom lets you have break out rooms. For example, we break out for 15 seconds and then come back to yell the answer.**

**Parent shares that Houseparty is also another app. It is new to me. But, I know it is an option as well.**

**Parent asks if it would be appropriate for students. Would they have games for students to play?**

**Greg shares that it works well, but not sure about kids playing the games because there is a version of Cards Against Humanity.**

**Mayara shares that she would like to mention that maybe through the Facebook page, parents would be able to organize Zoom meetings for the grade level. That way Kinder can meet, 1<sup>st</sup> grade can meet. Even though teachers are meeting, they see each other at recess and at lunch so I can will work teachers to possibly organize.**

**Mercedes shares that she has a Board Member who is a practicing psychologist who may come on, on Wednesday to talk about what are some of the challenges you are facing on that end. Maybe she could talk through from the perspective of a psychologist. I don't know if it would be helpful. But, if you are interested, let me know now before the call ends. It wouldn't become a**

therapy session, but she could give helpful tips that will address the whole child. There is the academic piece but there is also the social emotional piece. If that is not in place, then the academics will not flow through them.

Mercedes shares that she would like to open up to staff and faculty to see if they have anything that they would like to share before staff hangs up.

Mercedes shares a suggestion in the chat that maybe we could post questions prior to so that she could be prepared. That may even provide some anonymity.

Mercedes asks if Mayara has ideas on how we could get ideas before the call.

Mayara shares that perhaps we could create a Monkey Survey or any survey so that we could collect the questions. Maybe we call divide it up through grade level. I would then do a Robo call.

Parent shares that we could also do it through a Google Doc.

Mercedes thanks the parent for the suggestions.

Mayara shares that yes, we could do a survey through Google Doc and then have it grade level wise.

Mercedes shares that she will check on her availability for next week so we can move forward with that sooner rather than later.

Mayara asks if parents are receiving Robo calls.

Mayara says yes because a Robo call was sent this morning for Coffee.

Parent, yes.

Mayara asks because she wants to figure out what is the breakdown.

Mercedes shares that our notes are taking by Wilma and Danielle. They are both translated. They are housed on the portal.

Mayara shares that if you go to the Portal, they are all there.

Parent says that to the staff she feels that as far as if there is anything different that we could do, I just want you guys to know that we truly appreciate all that you have done. I know that my son is further advanced than a lot of the people that I run into. Of course there will be bumps, but I truly appreciate all that is done. I don't want that to be swept under the rug. I

**am more active then I ever was .You know I showed up to field trips and things that I knew about. But, now I want to do even more.**

**Mercedes thanks her for her kind words. She knows that people are working around the clock. And I want to put it right back to you. We even won the award at the Charter Network for our parents. So it is no surprise that it is be responded in kind. This particular group of parents in the past few years have helped set sail this school in a different direction. So thank you for inspiring us to lead.**

**Mercedes shares we have one minute left, is there anything else?**

**Daniela shares that she seconds what the parent has shared. We are way far above what everyone else is doing. I appreciate that.**

**Mercedes thanks Daniela.**

**Mercedes wishes everyone the best possible week they can have given the circumstances. All we can do is keep loving each other and yes we did use the word love in business because it exist and we need that connection.**

**Mayara share shares that yes we love our students.**

**Mercedes shares that yes, we thank you and we will see you all next week.**

**Meeting closes at 1:06 p.m.**