

FAC Board Report 2020-09-24

1. Back to School Night
 - a. FAC leadership met with Ms Krishna on September 9th
 - b. BTSN tentatively on October 1st or 8th
2. Question gathering form
 - a. FAC is working on a form to gather questions from our community to be addressed by admin at Back to School Night or in updates.
 - b. A draft of Question Gathering form is [here](#)
3. General feedback on distance learning (gathered primarily from UMCS Families Caregivers and Staff Facebook discussions)
 - a. Teachers are amazing and doing a great job.
 - b. This system is extremely challenging for all of us.
 - c. Peer influence is very important for some learners and lacking in distance learning.
 - i. Students are used to working next to a buddy and have a hard time focusing on independent work without a “coworker”.
 - ii. Can we explore more options to use breakout rooms for work groups during the day?
 - d. Some kids are not able to easily process information stated verbally and need to see it written down, leading to difficulty following Zoom lessons.
 - e. There may be a need for clarification around the role of parents in monitoring work. While teachers have access to all the information in different views, they don't have easy one-click access to the students' “to do” list to see quickly how many assignments the students have not completed. Long “to do” lists can develop without the teacher or parent being immediately aware. This is different from the in person model and there may be a need for some guidelines around when and how parents should work with teachers to make a plan to give the student more support in finishing their work.
 - f. There is wide variation in the amount of time students use to complete assignments, leading some students to be spending far more time on school work than they did during in person learning and some less. Do teachers have leeway to vary individual student's assignments to meet State required instructional minutes?
4. NWEA Feedback (gathered primarily from UMCS Families Caregivers and Staff Facebook discussions)
 - a. There has been a lot of concern among parents about the difficulty their children had taking the NWEA virtually, as well as about the NWEA content itself, resulting from parents having more access to the NWEA questions than when it is administered at school.
 - i. Concern that the NWEA was too much for lower elementary students.

1. Students not able to read at the level the questions required, but read aloud option not working well over Zoom.
 2. Framing of questions so different from how material is presented in the classroom as to be incomprehensible to some students (even when the skill is understood).
 3. Test had too many questions for younger kids.
- ii. Lack of clarity about why the NWEA is being used, how adaptive tests work and what language has been/should be used to talk to students about this. What information and psychological support are students getting from teachers and what can be given by parents. Getting questions wrong and encountering questions that are “too hard” seems to be leading to frustration and unhappiness.
 - iii. Parents seeing kids answer questions incorrectly that the student knew, because they were focused on getting through the test without excessive pressure and anxiety.
 - iv. Parents asked if they can opt their child out of NWEA testing in the future.
 - v. Concern that “we are testing only for privilege” - students of parents who are tech-savvy and who are privileged to be home and able to not work during the test period to support their students will perform better.
 - vi. Disparity in how breakout rooms were used during testing. Some classes used them less than others (or not at all?), leading to a distracting environment for students working on the test.
 - vii. There may be times like this that teachers should, in advance, contact parents (maybe seesaw activity creating an invitation for parents, as well as parent email) to tell them to sit in on the first 10 minutes of Monday’s morning meeting to frontload important communications (in this case about testing).
- b. Would it be possible for the Academic Oversight committee and FAC to collaborate on a post NWEA parent survey to collect feedback about how their students handled the test and whether the parent thinks it is representative? This could be used during data analysis as another information stream to help identify accurate trends and avoid highlighting trends that aren’t meaningful.
- i. Concern about validity of data
 - ii. Is white-dominant-culture-bias a concern with the NWEA