

Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

03/21/2024

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

	Name	Role
1	Angel Alicea	East Home School Assistant
2	Adrian Jimenez	East Engagement Coordinator VISTA
3	Caterina Leone-Mannino	Assistant Superintendent
4	Denise Daly	Upper School Psychologist
5	Edward Mascadri	Upper School Principal
6	Manny Ortelaza	SouthEast Neighborhood Service Center
7	LaKeya Hall	Connected Communities, New Education Project Manager
8	Nicole Gardea Butler	School Based Health Center Director
9	Carmen Torres	Children's Agenda, Parent Advocacy Leadership Coordinator

**Collective Impact Networks; Health & Wellness, Family Engagement & Support,
College Navigation, Career & Workforce Development**

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Welcome and Introduction (Agenda Review) (A. Alicea)

- Mr. Alicea opened the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda.
- All attendees introduced themselves and answered the icebreaker “Would you rather attend a BBQ or go on a picnic?”

Approve Minutes from 2/15/24

- Motion for Approval by C. Leone-Mannino
- Seconded by A. Alicea

24-25SY FACE Calendar

- First thing on our agenda is the proposed 24-25 school year FACE calendar of events
- Here is a draft for us to look over and give any suggestions or recommendations before it is sent to the Governance Council for approval.
- The goal is to have it drafted in time for families to be informed before leaving for summer vacation. June 13 I believe is the last day for students so we want to plan backwards from there.
- So we input some of the activities. One of these is the back to school barbecue orientation day, there are 2 potential days, Aug 28 or 29. We just have to decide which day we would like to have it. The district has not yet sent out the 24-25 school year yet so it is a little difficult to find out when it's going to be spring break, recesses and all those holidays and half days they do.
- But for the orientation we are looking at that Wednesday or Thursday at the end of August, then an open house mid-September. Moving along, we need to know if we are going to have 3 parent-teacher conferences as we have done in the past. Are we doing any recruitment events? We're going to look into that.
- Community Cafe, which will be combined with Title 1 events. We'll have different activities we're sharing like the Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History dinner, our English Language Learners Cultural celebration. I know we have done a career fair in the past. We also participate in the City of Rochester clean sweep and at the end of the year we have our Eagle day.

School Orientation Back to School BBQ:

1. Wednesday, August 28 or 29 - 5:30-7:00pm

Open House

1. Thursday, September 19 - 5:30 – 7:00

Parent Teacher Conferences (3):

1. Thursday, October 24 - 5:30 - 7:00 (Community Career Fair)
2. Thursday, January 9 - 5:30 – 7:00
2. Thursday, March 13 - 5:30 - 7:00

Recruitment Events

Community Café / Events Title 1 Events

1. November
2. January
3. February
4. March
5. May

Cultural Events/ Sharing meals sponsor by Title 1

1. Hispanic Heritage Dinner
2. Black History Night/Dinner
4. ENL Cultural Celebration

Job Fair

Clean Sweep

Programmatic End of Year celebrations Eagle Day

FACE Meeting dates (5:30 – 6:30pm): (All FACE meeting will be held in person and Virtual)

August 15, 2024	February 20, 2025
September 26, 2024	March 20, 2025
October 17, 2024	April 17, 2025
November 14, 2024	May 15, 2025
January 16, 2025	June 19, 2025

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- At the bottom you can see all the FACE meetings we have proposed so far for the next school year.
- Maybe we can do phone interviews with parents, phone calls and getting their feedback on events that they attended this year or other events that they would like to see and use that. And since we've been running the Community Cafes with kids and parents together, I'm wondering about that option as well getting some feedback from the kids as to what they'd like to see for their parents.
- It seems the community cafes are doing well and we're, you know, people are attending so I like that model that we are implementing for events for next year.
- The CTE open house this year we didn't get to do it in February but that would be good to add to february. That's the Career & Technical Education open house that we have to feature the different career pathways in our Upper School.

EPO Future (C. Leone-Mannino)

- We have a petition that we're working on. We're seeking to have it presented to the board. The content is requesting that there is an extension of the partnership with the University of Rochester.
- One thing that's been important to consider in this decision, which is kind of been a latest development, is the education law 211e that defines what an educational partnership organization or an EPO is, was designed as an intervention for schools that were failing. The law that was under No Child Left Behind Federal Law, then that changed to ESSA, Elementary and Secondary Schools Act. An additional law was added to 11f to the NYS education law book that talked about priority and receivership schools under this new federal law that NYS would authorize educational partnership organizations (EPOs) to act as independent receivers in charge of particular schools that were failing so that allowed the initial EPO relationship and then the continuation under receivership law.
- It's important to know that at the end of this school year because of the results that we have gotten in East Upper School, we may no longer be considered a failing school in need of intervention. This leaves us in this like nebulous land of the law that says the commissioner of education Betty Rosa can make a determination of continuation. It says that the EPo can continue to finalize and finish out its contract and it says that those decisions would be made specifically at the state level. So the question is going to be what is the state going to decide and then what if that isn't mandated by law? Will the District Board of Education and Superintendent still allow for the partnership to flourish and grow and can the achieve agreeable terms with the University of Rochester to do so?
- So it's a little bit more complicated than "renew the contract" because the contract is there, the EPO has not just been a partnership for learning, it's actually been a change in the way that East is governed. East has it's own

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superintendent, assistant superintendent, Chief academic officer. This law gives independent receiver authority over the Board of Education to some extent to say “hey this is the plan that’s approved by the state. You must do XYZ.” That’s how East has gotten additional resources, that’s how we’ve been able to do things like the curriculum differently. So now that we’re out of the failing status the question is going to be how is the partnership going to look in continuation? And what is that going to look like for the future of East? And so I was happy to hear Carmen say you know, talking to parents about advocacy and talking to kids about advocacy. We have been working with our families to really think about what does a just education look like for you and your children and how do we fight and advocate for that? And I believe that at the heart of what’s going to happen next regardless of the decision related to the EPO is that parents and kids are going to have to demand the kind of equitable experiences that they’ve had under the EPO and demand that they don’t go away.

- The general public doesn’t understand or even think about education law 211e and 211f, right? They’re like okay extend the EPO, we want this to continue, but how do we go about doing that? Is it really an issue of governance, of partnership, of law? We really want to make it known that this is something like families will demand continuation of the kind of experience that they’ve had, but if the EPO governance goes away, even if there continues to be a University of Rochester partnership. It may be possible that those things are not reallocated to East, and that’s the danger zone.
 - (C. Torres) I have a question, so now that the board or the superintendent is introducing the budget, does that mean some of the money or some of the funding from the budget or how does that work? I’m not sure when he presents this whole budget if it’s gonna be apart of the budget and eventually.
 - (C. Leone-Mannino) For right now in the 23-24 school year we are still in receivership and we still have the current superintendent Marlene Blocker presented to the board her request for the budget, they had her do it twice and gave her a really hard time. Now the question is that vote is going to come within the period of the EPO when we have the authority to question and appeal decisions made by the board. The question is what happens after July 1st when East Upper School is no longer considered a receivership school, or will the commissioner extend receivership for East Upper or like what are all these questions that are still unanswered and out of our hands. We anticipate that for the 24-25 school year it will be business as usual at the EPO but need to get ahead once it’s no longer protected by that receivership and external governance shields. It’ll be

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important to really rally up the community as to what the priorities are for, you know, keeping these experiences for kids.

- And the argument really should be, maybe what we found is the formula for what works? And maybe what Rochester has done so we spend 2.8% of the district budget at East and we serve 5.4% of the kids. It is not an irrational proportion of expenditure to students served. What we've found is the formula for success for secondary schools that we haven't found, other than the schools that hand pick their kids and we just get kids through lottery and maybe that needs to start to be the argument.
- So we're going to continue the same instructional resources like our literacy program at grade 9, our Freshman Academy model where first time ninth graders get extra support. The other thing to consider and this is not just for east this is for all schools in NYS is our graduation rates rose very quickly in NYS but there were waivers because of COVID for students that did not require them to pass certain regents exams. This cohort that's here now that entered in 2020 that should graduate in 2024 no longer has those waivers. These kids are facing regents exams for the first time without waivers and what I'm anticipating is a dip in graduation rate state-wide.
- (C. Torres) I want to see what the difference is between the cost to fund the Juvenile Justice System compared to how much East is actually spending? I was hoping to see more money going that route but it's hard to tell how much is spent in the Juvenile system because East has a lot more students than the system has in their programming, right?

Annual Family Climate Survey

- (A. Alicea) Every year at East we do a family climate survey. We're going to be starting our survey for this year next week. This is a survey to collect information so we can see what we can improve on what we are providing right now and listen to parents' recommendations. How it goes is we try to get as many families as we can to complete the survey online. We're going to try to promote this through all our after school events, sports events, you know. We have flyers, or small cards with the QR code, families can scan it and it will take them right to the link and as always it is available in English and Spanish. I am going to work with Caterina to try to get emails and robocall text messages to families. It is really important for us to collect this information because that's how we can use checks and balances on what we are doing or what we can do to improve.

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- We would like to try and have a group of volunteers and promote this at the baseball games, the home games, we also have girls flag football this year so we want to make sure we try to collect as many responses as possible this Spring.

Title 1/Family Events in April

- We have a couple events this upcoming month; the first is the April 11th Community Cafe in collaboration with Connected Communities. Registrations will be open soon, we will be promoting this so we can get many families and I believe we also want students to attend this session. There is a space limit and in the last few we have done, we've had great participation. It's a great learning opportunity.
- Then we have the Career & Technical Education Open House that is going to be held April 18th. More information will be coming soon about that event.
- After that we also have our ELL (English Language Learners) Cultural Event that will be on April 25th. There will be a flyer out soon that will also have a registration which is now open via Google Forms.

Upper & Lower School Governance Council Updates

- (E. Mascadri, Upper School) We are just a little more than halfway through the third marking period. We'll be wrapping up the third marking period at the end of the week after we return from Spring Break. We had another very successful half day for both scholars and staff a couple of weeks ago. We're in the process of planning our East Peace Out day which is a half day coming up in May. Saturday school will begin back up after Spring Break for any scholars that need Marking Period recovery tutoring or prep for regents exams. I'm also starting up independent tutoring for any scholars that needs any tutoring after school. We're imploring teachers to reach out to scholars virtually to support their tutoring needs.
- To meet their time schedule needs we're starting plans for June 4th, which is the day that we are offering the algebra regents exam this year. It's different, it is not being offered during regents week. The state is coming out with a new algebra regents exam, so typically when they do that they issue it a little bit before regents week so that they can take the results and kind of create a scoring guide according to the results from the sample school.
- We're continuing preparations for the beginning of next year for staffing, budget and scheduling. I have a meeting on Monday regarding scheduling, hoping we can notify all families and scholars before they leave so they know what courses/classes they will be taking next year when they return to the building.
- Again regarding Culture Night, it's April 25th it will be a celebration of learning and culture, there'll be student work exhibits as well as dance performances and

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food provided for all attendees. We also hope to engage parents in receiving resources of what is in the community school that is available to those families.

- (A. Alicea) I also want to mention quickly, last week Thursday was our last Parent-Teacher conference. We had about 56 families come into the building. We did something a little different this time, we reached out to families and had them sign up for conferences. We made sure to provide those requests to the teachers so they would be expecting those families and we provided them with their scholar's schedules.
- (C. Leone-Mannino) I'm wondering if there may be a more flexible approach to just having it on a certain day, like by giving teachers target numbers of families to reach out to. For example if each teacher reached out to a minimum of 20 families, and they could flex their time to do so, but to guarantee that all of our families had the opportunity to connect with a teacher. I don't know how much this is already happening, but to only have like 50 families between upper and lower for 1200 kids is a low turnout. Is that the most effective use of our time the way that we're currently doing it? How might we reflect on that through the governance council as to thinking innovatively about what some other approaches may be. So for example, there's something called homeschool partnership visits right, where there's this model by Dr. Karen Mapp where teachers actually spend time going to visit homes, and instead of asking for a Parent-Teacher conference for the teacher to just come talk to you about grades you actually go out and meet the family and train the teachers on that model to go out and meet the family, extend support and serve as an ambassador for that family. So we can use the Karen model to break up our whole population and ensure that every family got one individualized visit. By taking that same amount of time that we allocate for parent-teacher conferences whereas a lot of teachers may not have anybody stop by, and utilize it in that way. So I'm just proposing that out there as an innovative way given that when we reflect on the data, we don't have a high turnout. Do we want to look at a different way of doing things?
- (D. Daly) Maybe 10 years ago we did a community blitz where we had a bunch of city buses come and pick up all the staff. It was maybe the first superintendent's conference day of the year or a summer day and we had some East High strong bags with some notebooks and stuff in them and we just divided our entire population, back then it was higher and we just broke it up by streets and we all went to pound the pavement, went knocking on doors. We had a really good time and made some great connections. Parents were just so shocked to see us all coming out with our East gear on.

Community School & Agency Updates (L. Zarate)

- City of Rochester Neighborhood Service Center (M. Ortelaza)

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- We are in full swing with our clean sweep and we received the submission for the group at East. We're coordinating with all of our community groups and all the agencies that want to take part in the Clean Sweep, which is May 4th, the first Saturday in May so that's what we're focusing on. It's a huge undertaking, the entire city we go to the Innovation field, we get a free game, free hotdog and soda and we get to beautify the city as well. So that's our biggest project that we got going on right now. I know you guys are participating and I'm sure that many of the other folks on this call are familiar with the Clean Sweep and if you're not, you know, you can reach out to me directly and I can get you information about how you can join or create your own team and your neighborhood.
- Connected Communities (L. Hall)
 - One update was our CMP update last week. Not sure if any of you were able to attend but we were there at East and just giving more information about each pillar of the different updates in our strategy area. I am the new Education Project Manager so I am making my way around our different partners and collaborators to get more information to kind of dig in and see what's being done, what has already been done and where Connected Communities can either partner, collaborate, or assist in some ways. SO some of you may be getting a phone call or email from me, I was at East earlier today trying to connect with some of the youth. I had a couple of engaging conversations, but it was good to just see a lot of the work that's being done. I met with Luis and I did see Angel while I was there and just the interaction with students, I enjoyed seeing that. So again, you may be hearing from me soon, I'm just trying to learn more about what's happening and where I can fit in to make sure that things are moving forward in the Beechwood and EMMA neighborhoods
- URM School Based Health Center (N. Gardea-Butler)
 - Some updates regarding enrollment: we have 774 students currently enrolled out of 1,139 scholars that attend East. We're at about 68% enrolled, with our minimum goal is to get to 75%. The number of scholars not enrolled is 365, so when we look at it like that, I think it is a doable goal for us to get the rest of those students enrolled. I know Adrian you emailed me and I need to get back to you, you and Luis have some ideas for incentives to get scholars enrolled.
 - Our full-time mental health therapist Lindsay decided to take another position, going back to her previous employment. So that is really going to hinder any new enrollments that we're able to accept right now for mental health counseling services. We do, however, on a positive note we have a Child and Adolescent psychiatrist Dr. Abachi who's joined us. She's

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always been with our team, but she's never officially been on staff so now she is. She is only on-site on Thursdays for about 3-4 hours. We're excited about having a psychiatrist because we know psychiatrists serving children and adolescents, you know, it's an overwhelming amount of children needing services so we're lucky to have a psychiatrist on our team. She will be seeing students who are needing more thorough assessments and she's already met with a handful of students so far.

- Even though we lost a therapist, I was interviewing and we actually found two, and we're putting an offer out and hopefully they will accept the position and we'll have two new therapists as the school year begins in August.
- I also wanted to share that we're planning to open another school-based health center over at James Monroe High School that is still in the works, construction hasn't even started. So we will know more later. But hopefully we will have those two therapists between East and Monroe as we start up over there.
- (C. Leone-Mannino) I wanted to share a shout out for teens advocating to each other. When we had the community cafe, we had two teen participating and one of them shared openly about how she had work with the mental health therapist at the clinic and how if those services hadn't been in the school, how unlikely she would have been able to access them. And she talked through how she did access them. She said, you know one day I just broke down and my teacher saw me and then she sent me to the counselor, they referred me and got me hooked up with Lindsay and she's like, and it has made a huge difference in my life. She said she talked about her parents struggle with drug addiction and she said I have learned how to love from a distance and I keep telling my dad this is the best thing I ever did and that he needs to do it too.
 - And for me that was the most awesome testimonial of why we have these services on-site.
 - (N. Gardea-Butler) Thank you so much for that, you gave me the chills just hearing that because we often don't hear that feedback. You know, we do our surveys and stuff, and actually the scholars do complete those and give us a little feedback here and there from that but thank you. That's an honor that we were able to support her in her journey.
 - I think for teens the power is when they are able to refer a friend, and that was the tabletop question that they were responding to, how do you know when it's time to seek support? How do you that

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as a strength instead of a weakness? It was so powerful and she brought me to tears.

- (N. Gardea-Butler) It's wonderful, too, how our scholars, by having the health center there with the medical and mental health, it is breaking down the stigma. It's about your health, your overall health and well-being. Thank you very much for sharing that.

- The Children's Agenda (C. Torres)
 - It always pleases me to know that students are supporting each other and I think that's a connection that needs to be more, we need to do more of. I believe in that strongly.
 - We're going to do a budget workshop, we're calling it "Show me the money RCSD" So we're going to be hosting, so that parents understand exactly what's in the budget and those things, those pieces of the budget that are most important, especially when it comes to all of these things that we all just spoke about right and making sure that we continue the mental health making sure that we continue to expand our hands outward to make sure our children get what they need to move forward. It's the 27th of this month. We are also going to be reviewing what we're going to encourage parents to write a 2 minute speech for the budget, because then the plan is to have those parents go to the board and speak on behalf of the budget, what they feel you know, parts that they feel they're not really agreeing with or would like to see more of and in areas that maybe are lacking funding. So that's on the 9th and on the 10th we'll be over at the board speaking on behalf of all children.