

Dear Dilworth families,

Thank you to those of you who attended the SMS Community update on Monday, May 14th – we appreciate your attendance, especially during this busy time of year. For those of you who were unable to join, we wanted to share the following updates on key outstanding decisions resulting from the target state document:

### **Bell Schedule**

- Dr. Wilcox has committed to an earlier bell schedule that is better aligned with the bell schedules of feeder elementary schools beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. This change benefits our families, students, and the SMS staff as it is something Principal Turner has requested to help with recruiting and retaining teachers. An earlier bell schedule will also help SMS positively differentiate itself from fellow magnet schools on a later schedule.

### **Academics**

- SMS will continue to offer four levels of courses (Honors, Advanced, Standard and Foundations) for Math and ELA, similar to other peer middle schools in the Central Learning Community.
- Mr. Turner and his staff shared the details of the placement rubric that will be used to map students to the appropriate course level. These details are consistent with those used by AG yet still provide the flexibility for Mr. Turner and his staff to move students to the best placement for their needs.
- Elective offerings are comparable to those at other middle schools across our learning community, with the exception of drama, which is not currently offered. Mr. Turner and his staff will continue assess the elective curriculum yearly based on student interest and adjust accordingly.

### **Staffing Recruitment**

- Dr. Wilcox committed that staffing allotments will be preserved to the current average class size of 20-22 students per class. This is a lower than standard average for CMS. This decision will stay in effect through all transition years.
- CMS has committed HR resources to support Mr. Turner in the management of current personnel and the hiring process for teachers and assist with the onboarding of the new staff.

### **Current Staff Data and Training**

- The number of current teachers deemed highly qualified by the state of North Carolina and the number of teachers holding advanced degrees is comparable or higher than at other middle schools in the Central Learning Community.
- In looking at teachers who were at SMS in 2016-17 and remain at SMS in 2017-18, the percentage who grew students per the State standards is on par or above other peers in the Central Learning Community. This success in facilitating student growth is true for

students who are in the low, middle and high performing peer groups for students using the NC state standards.

- 12 SMS teachers, including the entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade team, will attend a professional development at William and Mary this summer. This program is focused on teaching strategies for academically gifted children.
- All SMS staff will complete cultural proficiency training as part of the CMS continuing education objectives.

### **Technology and Facilities**

- CMS maintenance staff conducted a campus walkthrough in November 2017 and have completed the majority of the outstanding work orders resulting from that exercise. A second walkthrough has just been completed and additional repairs are scheduled.
- Dr. Wilcox committed to a thorough review and upgrade of the technological resources, including Chromebooks, in preparation for the 2019-20 school year, and will ensure Sprint hot spots are available for students who do not have internet access at home.
- Dr. Wilcox also committed to a thorough review and upgrade of the media center resources, books, and equipment in preparation for the 2019-20 school year.
- Discussions are currently underway with CMS, the Charlotte Department of Transportation, and the Sedgefield and Dilworth neighborhoods to address concerns about increased traffic and pedestrian safety.

It's been quite a productive year, and while we are extremely happy about the work accomplished to date, there is still more to do. Meredith Murchison and Jenn Loeffler will continue to serve as your transition leads next year with support from committee leads focused on the following key efforts: PTA development, community engagement, marketing and fundraising. Look for additional communication over the summer about ways to get involved in supporting the 2019-2020 transition planning.

Enjoy your summer!

Meredith Murchison

Lara Carson

Jenn Loeffler

SMS Transition Co-Chairs