

Members in attendance: Sam Cederbaum, Betsey Clifford, Jamie Isherwood, Sumi Loomis, Julie Paul, Melissa Scarry

Mr. Cederbaum called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

The first agenda item is an update on our move to Blanche Ames. Mr. Cederbaum explained how things are going now that we have been in the building for about 60 days. He shared that the building opened on January 3 and things have been going pretty well. He added that while there have been bumps in the road as they've brought the three schools together, students and staff are adapting well and things are moving along nicely. Mr. Cederbaum also provided an update on the construction project. Parkview school is completely gone and Brait Builders are moving very quickly and rapidly on the fields, playground spaces, and bus loop. He added that the beginnings of the first of the two playgrounds have gone in and staff and students are both very excited about what is to come. Field trips have resumed. Students have been going to sheep pasture, the waterwise program at the YMCA, and we have zoo field trips coming up. The PAC has been very busy as well. Blanche Ames has had a successful Book Fair and Valentine's Day party. Mr. Cederbaum states that they are really beginning to use their new spaces as well.

Mrs. Paul shared some updates as well from the perspective of a teacher. She shared that it has been exciting to be in the new space and use the new technology. It has been exciting to have the whole grade level together. Everyone is working hard to try and branch out of their neighborhoods and get to know new people.

Melissa Scarry asked how students are transitioning to the new environment. Mrs. Paul talked about some of the difficulties of the transition. Students are now having to play at recess in smaller areas with students they've never played with before. Even just walking through the hallways, there are more classes present than normal. It can definitely be tougher for some of our younger students. Mr. Cederbaum states that the school adjustment counselors have a good pulse on students in need of support through the transition and are working with them on an individual basis. He also discussed the need to teach students how to play again after coming out of Covid as there wasn't as much social interaction with their peers. He also added that just as these six months are a transition time when students start school next year in September, that, too, will also be a transition as there will be new spaces to play on, new teachers to meet, and new friends to play with. Mrs. Paul suggests having the students fill out a survey about the transition. It would be good to get their perspective. Mr. Cederbaum talked about a new student orientation day over the summer for any new students coming to Blanche Ames, in the fall.

The next two agenda items revolve around our school improvement plans. Mr. Cederbaum stated will go over the current school improvement plan and then discuss the drafting of next year's school improvement plan.

2022 - 2023 School Improvement Plan

Mr. Cederbaum explained that all three schools worked together last year to draft a plan for this year. The first goal was all around the transition. Action steps included the creation of a transition team, continuing to meet with that theme regularly, developing a new PBIS model, providing professional development for our staff, and involving the larger school community in our transition.

He explained that the transition team has continued to meet. This group is about 30 faculty and staff members from across all areas of the school community. This group has been working for over a year prior to the move to strategize, organize, and prepare the staff for the big move to Blanche Ames. The team worked out a policy and protocol manual that was given to teachers before we moved in. Mr. Cederbaum explained that they are continuing to review and change these now that they are in the building. The staff is working to make Blanche

Ames run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Now that staff and students are in the building, the transition team is focusing on how to unite our staff together and build bonds among colleagues.

Mr. Cederbaum stated that this year's professional development days were spent on the move and transition. Teachers utilized these days for packing and unpacking. We have also utilized enrichment programming and assemblies to allow teachers more time to fully unpack their classrooms and spaces. When it comes to involving the community as a whole in our transition, Mr. Cederbaum discussed the communication that he has kept with families in the community throughout the moving process. He is looking for feedback from the School Council and parents/guardians as to what they may be looking for in terms of communication, now that we are here at Blanche Ames.

Mrs. Clifford agrees that it may be helpful to keep a transition goal on next year's plan but make it more professional development focused. Since so much time was spent this year on the logistics of the move, allowing teachers, as Mrs. Paul stated, to have more time for planning and getting to know each other would be more beneficial. They can also continue working on curriculum and strengthening the PBIS. Mr. Cederbaum agreed that continuing to strengthen the Blanche Ames community is very important. Mrs. Isherwood also agrees that a transition goal should stay on next year's improvement plan especially because staff and students haven't lived through the beginning months of the year at Blanche Ames.

She also expressed that it can be challenging for parents when classroom teachers are doing many things differently like their use of parent volunteers, how birthday celebrations occur, etc. She wondered if there could be consistency in these areas? Mr. Cederbaum explained that as a school administration, there are things they control like curriculum or policies around birthdays, such as there is no food allowed for celebrations. However, classroom teachers decide how they are going to use volunteers, celebrate birthdays, etc. within their own classrooms. These areas are all left up to teacher discretion.

Mrs. Isherwood also asked if homework is something that will be consistent grade to grade. Mr. Cederbaum discusses that homework is a topic that has been on School Council agendas over the last several years and states that it may be a topic to discuss again now that we are at Blanche Ames. Mrs. Paul does recall discussing homework guidelines during School Council several years ago. Mr. Cederbaum believes that the outcome of the homework discussion previously was that a guideline was set around the number of minutes that each grade level would have nightly, but that the specifics of what was assigned would be left up to each teacher. He suggests that this may be a future agenda item worth exploring.

The second goal revolved around PBIS and social emotional learning. Mr. Cederbaum explained that the action steps for this goal are to continue implementation of the Second Step program, screening students using the DESSA-mini, and conducting data meetings three times a year to look at both academic data and social emotional data. He stated that teachers are still using the Second Step program, and will be working next year to ensure that it is continuing to be used in all classrooms.

He also explained that this year because of the move, teachers or parents did not conduct the DESSA-mini on students. This practice will resume during the 2023–2024 school year. Just as teachers do academic screening three times a year, our social, emotional screener, the DESSA-mini, will be given three times a year also. This tool is now being used all the way through grade 5, so the data can be tracked for students from kindergarten through grade 5.

Mr. Cederbaum explained that the next action step is around data meetings, which are completed three times a year and the final action step is around reconvening the PBIS team. This team did work to develop the new PBIS model that we are using at Blanche Ames. Mr. Cederbaum adds that families should be hearing the PBIS language at home such as: Show Your Stripes, Following the Cub Code, earning Cub Cash and shout outs. Mrs. Scarry asked who the members of the PBIS team are. Mr. Cederbaum stated that this is also a well rounded team with members from all areas of the school community. Mrs. Isherwood stated that her daughter has latched on to a lot of the vocabulary that is being taught at school and is also very happy with the amount

of support both in school and at home that she has been provided with. She didn't even realize this was an available resource, and it has been very helpful as they've moved into Blanche Ames! Mr. Cederbaum stated how the SEL team does both individual work with students, small group work, and even goes into classrooms to provide whole class lessons to strengthen and enhance our PBIS model.

Mr. Cederbaum explained that the final goal is always a curriculum goal. This year it was about piloting a new reading program. There were six teachers in grades K to 2 piloting two different reading programs. They piloted both EL and Wit & Wisdom. After completing these pilots, the district has decided to adopt and implement Wit and Wisdom beginning in September in grades K through 6. The question was asked why there was a change in the reading program. Mr. Cederbaum explained that the program we are currently using, Reading Street, is being discontinued. It also no longer aligns with current standards, or with the research based methods of the Science of Reading. We will be using a combination of Foundations, a systematic phonics program, Heggarty, and Wit and Wisdom to teach literacy at the K to 2 level.

2023-2024 School Improvement Plan

Mr. Cederbaum asked the members if there are specific areas that they would like to focus on for Goals next year. Mrs. Clifford stated that it makes sense to keep the PBIS and SEL goal. Mrs. Isherwood asked where she could begin looking for ideas on goals for next year? Mr. Cederbaum said to think from the parent perspective what could we do at Blanche Ames moving forward to enhance the school experience for each and every child. In the past, there has been a yearly theme, for example there was a "Choose Kind" or "Reading is an Adventure" theme. Is this something we want to consider reinstating for next year? Mrs. Clifford suggests a goal around diversity, equity, and inclusion for next year's plan.

It was asked if a survey has ever been completed by the school Council. Mr. Cederbaum explained that there have been surveys in the past and now would be a great time to do another one. He added that the survey can be done at the end of this year or the beginning of next year.

Mrs. Paul brings up that while the building is beautiful, it still is very sterile looking. She wonders if there are ways that we can brighten up the building and have more representation of different cultures and throughout the school so that are ever growing population can see themselves throughout the building. Mrs. Clifford discusses how at her school, and there are photographs of students on the walls as well as student artwork throughout the building. Mrs. Isherwood shares that she knows of an artist that might be willing to work with us on some projects at Blanche Ames. She will share the contact information with Mr. Cederbaum.

Lastly, Mr. Cederbaum discusses that he would like to look at the student handbook for grades PreK to 2 with the School Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 pm