SDMC Minutes for Jane Long Academy and Las Americas 3/23

This meeting was the fourth meeting for the year and was a joint meeting between Jane Long Academy and Las Americas Newcomer School. The meeting started at 4:19. There were 11 members in attendance.

Dr. Moreno called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The agenda consisted of two items - a grading policy update and professional development needs for the upcoming school year including American Reading Company IRLA training for grades 4-8 and Achieve 3000 training for grades 9-12. Dr. Moreno also mentioned ongoing recruitment efforts at the area elementary schools for next years sixth graders.

Dr. Moreno started with questions about any news from any members. Ryan from Connect stated he’s keeping his head down and working. Dr. Moreno reviewed the damages to Jane Long and Las Americas from winter storm Uri. There was 200,000 in damages and lost supplies at Jane Long.

Dr. Moreno then moved on to the grading policy update. She said there is a state law about grading policy and it relates to principals and schools not being able to make grading policy; teachers have autonomy to put whatever grade they decide.

Schools can provide best practices regarding grading policy. Ms. Joseph has seen some changes in grading policies brought about by the discussions on campus. The more communication with teachers about grading policies and the benefits of a minimum grade of 50 could be beneficial.

Dr. Moreno then moved on to Professional Development for teachers for next year. She stated that there will be a heavy push on the IRLA assessments used as part of the American Reading Company (ARC) curriculum. The ARC program teaches students who are learning how to read and not yet reading to learn which involves comprehension. 80% at Long are currently in the learning to read category so using this curriculum will help them move to reading to learn and reading comprehension.

Achieve 3000 doesn’t go below a 5th grade reading level and doesn’t really teach learning how to read and so the high school students at the Futures Academy will continue to use that program as they have gotten good results using that.

Dr. Moreno then moved on to discussing recruitment efforts for next year’s sixth grade class. Six hundred fifth graders from feeder pattern elementary schools are zoned to Long for 6th grade. Some of these students attend Pin Oak, which has a lottery, KIPP, Yes Prep, Etoile, Ser Ninos and other area schools. This typically leaves 200-225 incoming sixth graders for Jane Long. Dr. Moreno has been visiting the surrounding elementary schools recruiting students and trying to change the area reputation of Long as a “bad” school. Dr. Moreno also discussed branding and marketing and the need for schools to market what they are best at. Dr. Moreno gave the example of Las Americas as the best program for teaching English.

Dr. Moreno then discussed some of Jane Long’s strengths. Jane Long has a high school program that focuses on medical technology and students can earn an associate’s degree while enrolled. Dr. Moreno would like to focus on strengthening the middle and magnet schools in 6th to 8th grades. One way to do this is to have middle school students begin taking the pre-requisites for the high school program such as medical terminology or others. The current system at Jane Long has all 6-8th grade students with the same schedule. Dr. Moreno wants to begin next fall differentiating for GT classes for students that don’t need the extra remediation classes that all students currently take.

Dr. Moreno is also working with the YMCA by connect to help develop an aquatics PE program. The weightlifting room and program is another area Dr. Moreno talked about investing in to increase PE class options. Swim class instruction, health classes, and other unique experiences or opportunities were also discussed as goals for the upcoming school year.

Dr. Moreno then asked if there were any questions. Ryan commented that these sound like great ideas, he applauded the effort being made to improve things and offered support as a community member going forward. Dr. Moreno then announced the Prom at Jane Long will be May 22 from 8pm –12am; Graduation is June 12 at Barnett stadium, White coat ceremony for the JLA high school students will be April 9, Project Grad is May 28th at Long, 5/3 there will be an 8th grade virtual promotion ceremony. There are also upcoming projects with the YMCA and Rental assistance for students and their families. The meeting was finished at 4:58 and the next meeting will be held on 5/3 at 4pm.