

# **Willow Creek Elementary School School Accountability Committee**

Minutes for September 15, 2022

6:00 pm

Attendance: Mary Whitney (principal), Chris Domino (tech), Catherine Krantz (Kindergarten teacher), Ashlynn Hunt (Kindergarten teacher), Brea Porter (parent), Julia Apte (printer), Trevor Van Luit (District Safety), Christine Tokarchik (fifth-grade teacher)

1. Welcome and Introductions  
We went around the circle and introduced ourselves.
2. Principal's Back to School Welcome  
Mary shared the beginning of her slideshow with our school's mission and vision and our district's core values.
3. Why Are We Here?  
Chris distributed some handouts about accountability and briefly explained the purpose of accountability committees. Julia and Brea both volunteered to chair the committee.
4. DAC Report  
Chris reported on the District Accountability Committee. Our Superintendent, Chris Smith, showed an excerpt from the slideshow that the staff had seen a few weeks before, with a heavy emphasis on our district core values. The rest of the meeting was about the committee's duties and organization.
5. PTO Report  
No PTO officer was present.
6. Safety Report (Trevor)
  - a. Mary introduced Trevor Van Luit. Trevor is in charge of safety for the Cherry Creek High School Feeder Group, which contains all the buildings west of Dayton. He's been quite visible, and Officer Nardi (the puppy) has been here a lot. Our district has a great relationship with all of the police departments within our boundaries. He has worked with the teachers who are new to our building or district to explain all our safety protocols.
  - b. Trevor then gave an overview of his work and the district's approach to safety.
    1. Schools are still the safest place for children to be. Willow Creek's Safety Team has eleven people and meets regularly. We want our schools to be welcoming places for the community. All the teachers in the building know him.

2. At the district level, we have eight armed security coordinators (people who are district employees) on top of our SROs (School Resource Officers who are members of local police departments). The security coordinators spend a lot of time with the Arapahoe County SWAT team practicing; CCSD requires 100% firearm qualifications from these employees in order for them to carry out their duties. They do active shooter practice all summer. The coordinators are trained to respond both individually and as part of a team.
3. Safety at Willow Creek
  - a. We are working to complete the secure vestibule; over the summer, the district installed ballistic glass in front of Beth, our secretary. The vestibule is not complete because of supply chain problems. We expect the hardware to come in sometime in October or November.
  - b. We have upgraded our Raptor system, which checks visitors' driver licenses against a database.
  - c. Parent question — why is the campus not secure?  
Trevor — When an Israeli security team audited CCSD, they said we needed huge walls around our schools. We choose not to look like that because we're a community-friendly district and we don't want our campuses to look like prisons. Even if we installed fences, anyone could jump a fence or drive through it.  
We are talking to TAs about asking people without visitor badges to not be on campus while kids are here. Law enforcement can ticket those on our property. We want neighbors to keep an eye out for us; relationships are really important for our safety. We have a very vigilant community — a neighbor who drove by this summer took pictures of a door left open by carpet cleaners who needed to run a line to their truck and sent those photos to us.
  - d. Parent question — Are there drug dealers on or near campus?  
Trevor — not here. They are around middle schools and high schools.
  - e. We would like more security people in the district, but we can't find enough to hire.  
Parent question: Who decides how much security? Can we at Willow Creek pay for it?  
No, it's a district decision, and we pour more money into security each year.
4. District Standard Response Protocol
  - a. The protocol we recently adopted is used districtwide, with the same poster throughout every building (see below). We chose this protocol because it uses very clear language; it was developed by the I Love U Guys Foundation.

# IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



## **HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.**

### **STUDENTS**

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced  
Do business as usual

### **ADULTS**

Close and lock the door  
Account for students and adults  
Do business as usual



## **SECURE!**

### **Get inside. Lock outside doors.**

### **STUDENTS**

Return to inside of building  
Do business as usual

### **ADULTS**

Bring everyone indoors  
Lock outside doors  
Increase situational awareness  
Account for students and adults  
Do business as usual



## **LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.**

### **STUDENTS**

Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door

### **ADULTS**

Recover students from hallway if possible  
Lock the classroom door  
Turn out the lights  
Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door  
Prepare to evade or defend



## **EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)**

### **STUDENTS**

Leave stuff behind if required to  
If possible, bring your phone  
Follow instructions

### **ADULTS**

Lead students to Evacuation location  
Account for students and adults  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



## **SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.**

### **STUDENTS**

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

#### **Hazard**

Tornado  
Hazmat  
Earthquake  
Tsunami

#### **Safety Strategy**

Evacuate to shelter area  
Seal the room  
Drop, cover and hold  
Get to high ground

### **ADULTS**

Lead safety strategy  
Account for students and adults  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

- b. **Hold!** Could be for even minor matters, such as a kid sick in the hallway.
- c. **Secure!** Every school building in the district keeps all outside doors locked at all times. The Secure step is to keep all students inside. It indicates that something's happening in the community, like a bank being robbed two miles away.
- d. **Lockdown!** We do this drill two times a year every year. This step indicates something's happening inside or immediately outside the building. (Lockdowns can even be triggered by a mountain lion nearby.) We have added an additional layer of security to this step with the Red Bag program. This program adds a literal red bag to every space in the building; the bag contains a bleeding control kit and additional supplies and is marked on the outside with a QR tag. The teacher scans that tag with his/her mobile phone, which immediately establishes two-way communication and gives the teacher a complete user manual to the contents; during last spring's drill, 94% of teachers had scanned the tag, checked the student roster, and established communication with the security team in under 4 minutes.

Every single time, the lockdown stays in place until the security team clears every room. Our first one this year will be in October, and Mary will let parents know before it happens. For drills, Mary has a great script that walks students through the experience and keeps them calm. Drills allow the security team to make sure all the equipment (like locked doors and the PA system) works. The District dispatch center will have four or five people working and communicating with teachers during a drill. Trevor invited the two parents at the meeting to walk the drill with him in October.
- e. Questions and Comments
  - 1. Parent: How do you explain it to kindergartners?

K Teacher: Just explain that there's a bad guy and we're hiding in our safe spot; we're going to be quiet; we don't open the door for anyone. I've had tears during these drills, so we console and support them as best as we can.

Christine: I think it is harder on fifth graders because they have a better grasp of the reality of school shootings. They catch the news or see it on the Internet.

K Teacher: We practice walking through the drill beforehand. We emphasize that it's a drill.
  - 2. Parent: How does it work with subs?

Mary: Subs get training at the beginning of the year. Everything is consistent across the district; the teacher's sub plan contains info about where to find that classroom's Red Bag. In addition, the school administrator announces each step of the drill over the PA to keep every class in sync. For emergencies, TAs on

playground have walkie talkies. Each room has the announcement board which scrolls digital messages. Trevor then triggered the Severe Weather Message to demonstrate the announcement board.

3. How do you prepare kids for a lockdown drill?

Kids are learning how we respond, so our plans constantly evolve.

Mary: The Mental Health team watches the security training so they can be prepared to respond to students' trauma.

Mary: Lockdown drills are communicated to parents several days before they happen, and the drill is announced to kids several minutes before it happens. After the room is cleared by security, teachers are allowed to debrief the class.

4. Parent: What actually happens if it's real?

Mary: We practice these protocols in principal's meetings so that we don't hesitate or need to consult a guide. In a lockdown event, the Red Bag system calls 911 and district dispatch automatically.

f. **Evacuate!**

1. Parent: How do you arrange for the location?

Mary: We have two locations, which also serve as reunification zones if we need to have parents pick up the students. If the two churches are off limits for some reason (as happened during the fire in Boulder), the district buses kids to nearby schools. Evacuate is now the new name for fire drill.

7. Enrollment and Staffing

a. Our Enrollment Picture

1. During COVID, our enrollment dropped significantly, with many of our parents choosing a completely online experience. The district expected us to rebound quickly for the 2021-22 school year and projected our enrollment at 523. We did recover significantly but did not make our projection, which impacts our staffing numbers.

2. The district projection for 2022-23 is 493 (fortunately more accurate).

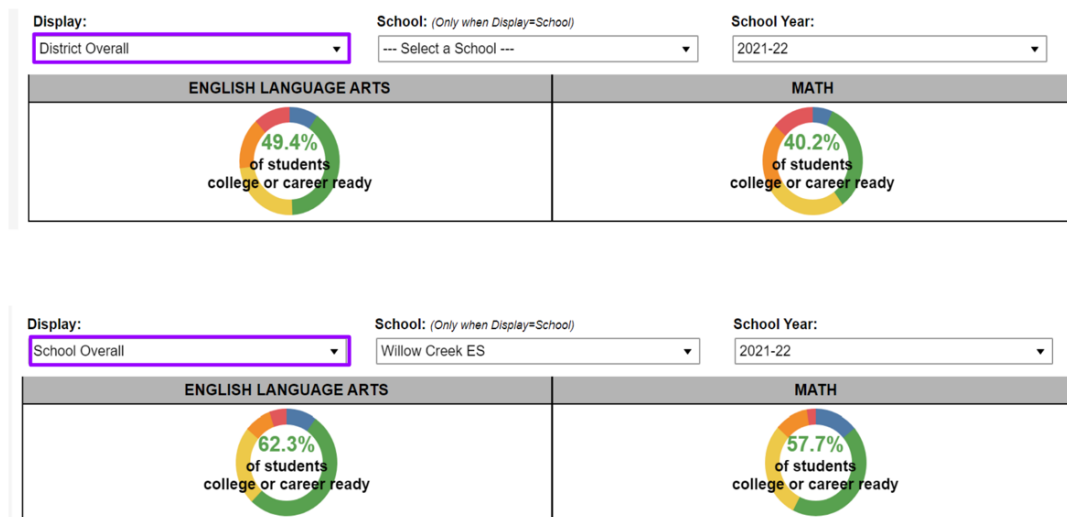
#### **Recent Willow Creek Enrollment**

	20-21	21-22		22-23
Grade	May 2021	August 2021	May 2022	August 2022
Kind.	57	73	74	66
1st	68	77	81	74
2nd	88	81	82	91
3rd	69	94	94	84
4th	84	73	74	103
5th	82	87	87	75
<b>Totals</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>493</b>

3. Of the students currently enrolled, 54 (11%) are intra-district and school of choice students, and 59 (12%) are non-residents (outside our district boundaries). We continue to rely heavily on attracting students outside the Willow Creek area to keep our enrollment near to capacity. A parent commented that she sees more families with young children moving into the Willow Creek neighborhood.
- b. Staffing
1. District Formula: The district funds school staffing by a formula of 18:1 (the total number of students enrolled divided by 18). That determines how many FTE we get (FTE = full-time equivalent). 493 students = 27.39 FTE.
  2. Class Size: The district guidance is to keep younger classes smaller in size, with larger classes at the intermediate level. Our Kindergarten classes are considerably smaller, but we value that. For many years, we preferred a “soft cap” of 23 for primary classes, but as our district enrollment patterns change, we cannot always honor that. While larger classes are harder on our teachers, research indicates that class size does not have a large effect on student achievement.

## 8. Data Story

- a. We don't have good longitudinal data for the last several years because of the erratic testing schedule during the COVID pandemic. CMAS tests were not given at all in the Spring of 2020 because students were learning from home; the following year the state only gave one assessment per grade level. Here are the summary results from Spring 2022 for the district and for Willow Creek:



As you can see, Willow Creek outperformed the district average.

Parent Question: What do those percentages mean?

Answer: They are the percent of students meeting the state standards at their grade level.

- b. School Performance Framework Report (SPF)
1. The state uses CMAS results and other measures, such as attendance, to create a rating for each public school in the state. That rating determines our accreditation status.
  2. The last SPF created before the pandemic (2019) gave us a rating of 79.0 points out of 100, which meant our accreditation status was Performance — the highest level for schools.
  3. We just received the preliminary SPF for 2022. We received a rating of 86.2 points out of 100. Our accreditation status, however, was Performance – Low Participation. The state requires that 95% of our students be tested, and we fell between 90% and 92% participation.
- c. Achievement Results
- We can be very proud of how well our students achieved overall, but when we look at the disaggregated results, it is obvious that we need to do more work with our students who have disabilities.

**9624: Willow Creek Elementary School | 0130: Cherry Creek 5**

Elementary School - (1-Year)

**ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Subject	Student Group	Count	Participation Rate	Mean Scale Score	Percentile Rank	Pts Earned/Eligible	Rating
CMAS - English Language Arts	All Students	229	90.0%	757.6	87	8.00/8	Exceeds
	Previously Identified for READ Plan	n < 16	-	-	-	0.00/0	-
	English Learners	21	91.7%	756.0	85	1.00/1	Exceeds
	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	n < 16	-	-	-	0.00/0	-
	Minority Students	73	92.6%	761.7	92	1.00/1	Exceeds
	Students with Disabilities	27	65.9%	731.1	31	0.50/1	Approaching
CMAS - Math	All Students	232	91.2%	756.2	91	8.00/8	Exceeds
	English Learners	21	91.7%	760.3	95	1.00/1	Exceeds
	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	n < 16	-	-	-	0.00/0	-
	Minority Students	73	92.6%	759.3	93	1.00/1	Exceeds
	Students with Disabilities	29	70.7%	729.1	36	0.50/1	Approaching
TOTAL	TOTAL	*	*	*	*	21.00/22	Exceeds

**d. Growth Results**

- Chris commented about the very high growth in fifth grade, which pulled our growth average up considerably.

**e. Setting School Goals for the School Improvement Plan**

- We need more data to help us guide instruction. Fortunately, we piloted the FastBridge assessment last year, and it appears to be highly correlated with CMAS. We can give it three times a year; it provides a body of evidence to identify students who need intervention and tracks student growth through the year. FastBridge also gives us immediate feedback.
- In setting school goals, we considered the evidence we had from CMAS and FastBridge. The data could have supported goals around either reading or writing. Since the district has just adopted new programs in reading that teachers are still learning how to use, we chose to make reading our major goal.