

NJA Education Committee
Oct. 19, 2020

Present: Maloney, Solis, Schuerman, LaBelle, Steinhafel, Gaul-Stout, Harrington, Kraemer

Excused: Schwister, Banach, Foley, Baez, Harrison

1. Prayer
2. Introductions & Next meetings poll reminder
3. Update on reopening plans 2020-21 school year
Currently NJA is in a virtual model looking to begin a hybrid model in November.

The school submitted a safety plan to the Health Dept per Milwaukee Health Dept requirements and was approved to do a hybrid model. This means that the school can be up to 50% capacity. Classes will be in person for 2 days and virtual for 3 days a week. When students are virtual, they will be live for direct instruction; small group instruction is live but with a school aide or interventionist. Classes will have 12 - 13 students in the room at a time. The school leadership team is working to identify the cohorts to be sure they are setting up students for success and using carpools and siblings as determining factors. Families will have the option staying in the all virtual model if they would like. Breakfast and lunch will still operate. For families who are not able to be in person, they can pick up food for the week. The school will maintain regular hours of instruction to help with staggered dismissal.

In developing the schedule, the school has 5 academic aides to help with recess, lunches, and small group instruction. Additionally, the school is preparing for students' return by posting signage, developing a system for taking student temperatures upon entry, identifying technology for pre-screening, and sharing with families that if they have symptoms of sickness need to stay at home.

There are two upcoming parent meetings planned before school goes hybrid. Teachers have been given a list of things to prepare for as the students return. This Friday, Maureen and Vanessa will host a listening session for faculty to be able to address their concerns. So by the first week of Nov. will plan to come back on Nov. 16th in the hybrid model. Nativity will continue to monitor case rates especially in the surrounding community.

The question was raised about how Nativity is addressing technology issues and bandwidth needs for children at home. Vanessa responded that they have done some parent education regarding internet speed and how to determine how fast your connection is. They discovered several issues with zoom limitations on the older

Chromebooks which have been generally resolved. There are still connectivity issues here and there, but it seems to be less of an issue.

The larger barrier academically in online learning is the lack of rigor teachers are able to provide when only online, which is one reason for the move to the hybrid model. It will allow for more supports to take place.

Fr. Jeff LaBelle, SJ offered that solutions for on-the-spot challenges that arise particularly regarding the stress that teachers feel having kids in front of you as well as virtually at the same time will be important. The use of the chat feature is a good solution to many of the video/bandwidth challenges that may occur. Vanessa added that professional development for teachers has been taking place and having the aides help with class or another adult in the classroom is helping. Additionally, thought has been given regarding packets previously used and if these are sustainable for students at home as well as at school. The school is also working to identify students who are in real need of being in school in person.

Maureen thanked Vanessa and the team for being so thoughtful regarding the plans and their care for the whole child as well as the level of input and engagement faculty have had in the planning.

4. Trauma Informed schools - priority for the year

Fran Maloney introduced the concept of Trauma-Informed Care and Trauma-Informed Schools as the topic to be discussed for the remaining meetings of the year. The effects of the pandemic on the social-emotional needs of students will continue well beyond this year and adds to an already growing concern about the rise of social-emotional and mental health concerns. This links into the Strategic plan as well.

Fran asked if anyone had experience with or resources they knew about regarding Trauma-Informed Care/Schools.

Jeff LaBelle has colleagues who have experience in this area so they would be a resource. He will let Vanessa & Fran know of any who may be helpful. MU also has created a group to look at trauma more holistically across the community. He shared this link with the committed as a resource. <https://www.swimmke.org/>

Fr. LaBelle also offered that he has a doctoral student who is interested in this theme and will see if she's interested in connecting with Nativity and may be able to lend some time to this.

Maureen offered that the Bader foundation brought the MU program to her attention as a resource. Jeff will connect with Dan Bader about this as well as other NJA things.

Fran offered St. A's as a local but nationally recognized resource. <https://sainta.org/trauma-informed-care> They provide background information as well as training for faculties. The program was well received at MUHS. Vanessa added that the information on the website suggests that they are tailoring their information for the times of COVID.

For the next meeting, Fran will send out some pre-reading material as well as guided questions to direct the conversation for the January meeting. The overarching goal is to make recommendations regarding a plan for becoming a trauma informed school with probable implementation in 2021-22 taking into consideration the entire educational program, including the summer and extended day programs.

Jen Gaul-Stout suggested adding faculty to the committee since the committee is talking about things that they are going to need to implement and this may increase buy-in among faculty about the initiatives. Recognizing that this may not be a good year to put more on faculty members' plates, perhaps they can be guests to the committee if not able to commit to full committee participation.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20.