

# **Rabbit Creek Community Café Notes: long version**

**September 28, 2016 7-9pm**

**About 50 parents, staff, and students present**

1. Coffee (provided by Café & Communitas 12-100), cookies, and an ice cream sundae bar and ice cream float bar were offered upon sign in.
2. Our former PTA President and current Community VP, Val Buckendorf, welcomed guests, thanked them, and explained the purpose of the café. She also introduced two special guests.
3. Our new ASD Superintendent, Dr. Deena Paramo, briefly introduced herself.
4. June Sobocinski, United Way's coordinator for the 90% by 2020 initiative, spoke briefly about the importance of parent engagement.
5. Young children played with Lego and art supplies at a table at the side of the room.
6. Chocolate bars and gift certificates for movies, books, and ice cream were given as door prizes.
7. Parents, staff, and students met each other, ate, mingled then settled for a series of conversations.
8. Conversations. The following notes are copied from notes taken at each table, and from the reporting out to the group (called "threading"). In order to preserve the strength of the comments these notes are verbatim, with repeats to help us to see the commonalities.

## **1. What are your hopes and dreams for every child at Rabbit Creek?**

- To be known
- They find something in which they excel
- Humanity
- Interconnectedness
- Community
- Every child feels valued in their uniqueness
- Sense of belonging—being a part of something better
- Respect others in your community
- Feeling you have capabilities
- Safe
- Valued
- Love, healthy relationships
- Have hope
- Progress/direction/change
- Highest potential
- Achieve goals
- Information skills----read and write
- Successful person
- Feel safe—student & adults
- Information skills—read and write.
- Be a successful person
- Happy
- Grit/perseverance
- Embrace not knowing

- Success comes from struggle
- Risk-taking is healthy
- Value life
- Engaged with peers
- Present
- Lifetime community
- Success
- Memories
- Health
- Friendships
- Teachers/mentors
- Family
- Community
- Happy
- Thoughtful
- The ripple effect
- Safe
- Fed & healthy
- Passion
- Independent
- To continue to take advantage of opportunities
- To be successful, whether by going to college or vocational schools and love what they end up doing as a career
- Not to feel left out

- To be appreciated for the talents they have
- Safety at school
- Willing to take risks/willing to fail
- Love to learn
- Resilient
- Confident
- Leadership, negotiation skills
- Empathy
- Understand the pros and cons of technology
- Positive
- Hopeful
- Happy
- Honest
- Ready for middle school
- Healthy educated respectful
- Confident
- Proud
- Read
- Happy
- Child being confident and be themselves
- Respectful
- Excited to learn
- After-school activities that spark interest

## **THREADING**

- perseverance (risk taking)
- grit
- cursive
- to love what they do for a career
- literacy
- be respectful/be respected
- sense of belonging

- compassionate
- goal setters
- aware of gifts
- self identity
- love of learning
- community
- physical and mental health

## 2. How are we supporting every child well, and what might be missing?

What are we doing well?	What might be missing?
A parent feeling of “welcomeness” by staff and transparency within the school	We could use more simple, efficient and user-friendly technology. Too many choices can be overwhelming! At times, communication is fragmented.
Parents are connected—through newsletters, BLOOMZ app, robocall, etc.	Extracurricular activities exposure
Variety of activities	Longer lunch period
Special/diverse programs	Chad says more recess
Strong community	Could be more grandparents involved.
Opportunities after school	One-on-one time between students and teachers
PTA	Too many kids in class
Great teachers	Teacher-child connection
Children happy to go to school	
Good at teaching how to be polite/showing respect to others	Maybe there is not equal access by all children? How can we respectfully address that? (transportation)
Teachers model respect	There are times when having a counselor here, providing wrap-around services, would help, but we don’t have one.
Teaching to the whole child/values	Discussion on efficacy of homework—school-wide policy on homework limits
Supporting family partnership/team	Playtime/recess benefits
Dedicated teachers—go “above and beyond”	Administration supporting teachers when there is a conflict with parent(s)
Teachers collaborate across grade levels	Lunch presentation
Depth of teacher experience/low turnover	Chaos
Extracurricular activities offered by teachers	Sound dampeners
Volunteer appreciation	Relocatables
Parent involvement	Classroom support for all learners
Community	Number of kids in the classroom
Genuine interest in school community	Weed control
Extra activities	Volunteer recruitment
Music, Happy, Safe	
Communication, Organization	
Great playground	
Good volunteer help	

## **THREADING**

- Really appreciate the outside presenters, like the Iditarod musher and the hip-hop dancer.
- Rabbit Creek has great extracurricular activities.
- Happy, respectful environment
- Teachers collaborate across grade levels.
- Our teachers are experienced.
- We need counselors, too—not just Title I schools need this support.
- What are other supports we can reach out to to get counseling help for our students and families?
- Kids need longer lunch periods to finish their lunches.
- Class sizes are too large. It's hard to make a personal connection with every child every day when our classes are too big. It helps to have more adults in the classrooms—volunteer assistance.
- We could use help scheduling volunteers. Parents need to know how teachers would like them to tie into classrooms to help.
- Volunteering transparency—where is help needed?
- Communication is a little fragmented. There are too many methods, and it can be overwhelming.
- We could improve on communicating volunteer opportunities—helping with reading, math etc.
- We could also ask parents if they are interested in sharing their passion with a classroom—a hobby or interest.
- Not every child may have access to activities because of a lack of transportation.
- We need a discussion about how much homework is beneficial: more vs. less
- Kids need more recess time.
- The administration should support teachers when there is a conflict with parents.
- There should be classroom support for all learners, including advanced and remedial students and everyone in between.
- Sometimes counseling and wrap-around care is needed, and we don't have a counselor.

## **3. How can I create more opportunities for student success in my role?**

- I can share information on the Inupiaq culture.
- I can volunteer in other classrooms
- Marilyn will find about "Guys Read" program in Fairbanks
- Marilyn is a Master Gardener and a native flora expert. She can share information.
- Dedicating TIME to the child/children
- Be a good role model
- Talking with your child/children about issues that have/are/may arise in the classroom

- Learning about and getting to know my students—to make connections with them while instructing.
- Advocating
- As a high school student, to come help a teacher in the classroom after high school ends, to be a role model to students.
- Staying engaged with students' homework
- Help coordinate access to activities for kids who need help
- Get my kids to lunch on time
- Spelling Bee Club
- Potato Bed support
- Theater opportunity
- Running/walking club for 10-15 minutes right before school (8:45-9:00)
- Send my children to school ready to learn
- Be in the classroom
- Courage to follow through with ideas
- Listen—making the personal connection
- Take time for the conversation
- Communicate to other parents and encourage them to volunteer
- I can volunteer in classrooms on a weekly basis
- Ask retirees I know to volunteer
- Be involved with All-Pro Dads
- Directly ask more dads to get involved
- As a parent, provide support and perspective and balance
- Set up a table for parents to leave work that working parents could do after school hours (For parents who can't help in the classroom during the day.) They could stop by after work and pick up a task for the teacher.

## **THREADING**

- Stephany: I'd like to help students who don't have transportation to and from after-school activities. I'd like to add a box to permission slips: Do you need help with transportation?
- Greg will look into the "on the radar" program to help with communication.
- Val & Alison will work on making an informational form that will ask if parents or other community members would like to volunteer in a classroom (even if it's not their child's classroom), or if people have an interest or passion to share with a classroom. They will look into setting up a clearinghouse where people can check to see where classroom volunteers are needed, and volunteer their time and services.
- I will send my child ready to learn.
- I will have conversations with my child about what we expect of them, both in terms of social interactions and of their learning.
- I will talk to my child about the Buddy Benches on the playground. (They will be installed soon, now that the school construction is complete.) If a child is lonely, they can sit on the

bench and other children can go to the bench and invite that child to include them in their play. I will ASK MY CHILD about the buddy bench.

- Caitlyn is a high school student and she will come and help in the classroom after her high school classes are out.
- Cheryl would like to be able to go to a table with stacks of work from teachers for parents that work during the day to work on. She would like to be able to help teachers after school hours are over.
- Marilyn will find out about the Fairbanks program, "Guys Read" and share information with the group.
- George will invite more dads to join All-Pro Dads. All-Pro Dads is in its second year, and meets the last Friday of each month and have breakfast one hour before school starts.
- I will dedicate time to our child.
- I will be an active role model in our neighborhood.
- I will discuss issues with my child about the classroom.
- I will make personal connections with my students.
- Jackie: By sponsoring student council, I will help them become quality citizens, focusing more on their outside community than on themselves.
- Dan will talk to his friends about his volunteer opportunities, and encourage them to volunteer as well.
- We will communicate with each other about how to support our students in the classroom.
- Sharlene is going to set up a program called Protecting Young Minds to protect our kids from pornography. She will present this to the Rabbit Creek PTA and to the principal, and invite others to join her.