

Hoover-Meredith Performing Arts Boosters

February 18, 2025

Present: Nathan Williams, Amy Nalan, Jamey Nalan, Jacob Serfling, Stephanie Cooper, Kaia Cooper, Liz Bender, Denise Hodges, Al Johnson, Kamron Warden, Shannon Molloy, Tessa Runge-White, James White, Skylar Bender, Alanna Cooper, Ian Williams

Members present approved notes from December 3 meeting as presented.

Nathan distributed the treasurer's report.

Long-term needs of Hoover-Meredith Performing Arts

Nathan shared the current information about the Reimagining Education timeline and its effect on activities. This information comes from the district State of the Schools presentation last week and direct comments from Principal Kelly and Activities Director Zanders at the activities boosters meeting yesterday. Many details of the plan are still unknown or undetermined, which makes this an ideal time to make our voices heard.

The long-term plan (8-10 years) is that Hoover-Meredith will transition to a signature school with 7-12 grades, "signature" area(s) to be determined. It's not clear whether signature schools will have activities of their own or whether these will only be located at comprehensive high schools. We can imagine that the answer to this might depend on what signature areas are chosen.

In the short term, activities with viable student numbers will remain at Hoover and Meredith. Non-viable sports will co-op as needed with Roosevelt, following the lines established by the Reimagining attendance regions. All performing arts have viable numbers at Hoover-Meredith, although district-wide there have been reductions in staff FTEs for instrumental music.

The most immediate impact on our performing arts: football will co-op with Roosevelt for fall 2025. Hoover will not have home football games for marching band or cheerleading performances. Parades and competitions are still available. Admin (Kelly and Zanders) are on the lookout for additional performance opportunities.

Discussion followed, organized here by topic:

- Concern about what we lose, short-term and long-term
 - We will lose being a smaller school with small class sizes; opportunity for students to get to know each other and their teachers.
 - When we talk about "viable" activities, where is the line? What opportunities still exist?
 - How do we prepare our students for the more challenging expectations of Roosevelt band?
 - Talking point: Can we get DMPS institutional support (money and staff) for doing marching band in a new way, e.g. winter drumline?

- Networking: Connect with cheerleading as a performing art. They have the same challenges as other performing arts during this transition.
- Concern about equity: Combining schools changes the particulars, but the overall factors are the same.
 - What is the district's plan for tracking participation in activities so it's clear where kids are getting involved or not?
 - Transportation is an equity issue: can kids get to morning band rehearsal or after-school drama from across town?
 - By reducing classroom positions, equity gets worse. Families that can afford private lessons get more opportunities.
 - DMPS is overall reducing instrumental music teaching positions. Hoover is moving from 0.8 to 0.5 FTE; Roosevelt is reducing from 2.0 to 1.5. There is a 0.5 band lesson position at Meredith that has been unfilled all year.
 - The district has already lost 5th grade band. With 6th grade moving to elementary schools, do we lose 6th grade band as well? How can we do music outreach to 5th and 6th graders so they're ready for middle school (especially band and orchestra)?
 - Talking point: Compensate for these position reductions by floating staff down to the feeder schools so we are still building the pipeline.
 - Networking: Recruit adult volunteers to offer lessons for students. PA Boosters document this volunteer time as talking point demonstrating demand for instruction.
 - Invite student interns/service learning from Drake, Grand View, DMACC, etc.
- Strengthen Hoover-Meredith distinctives, especially demographics and cultures
 - We recognize that performing arts participation doesn't look like the student body, and we want to change that.
 - Perform music and productions from culturally diverse composers/writers.
 - Expand musical ensembles (e.g. mariachi) to better connect with students' cultures.
 - Re: marching band, explore nonwhite marching band traditions. Talk with our existing marching band kids to support what they want to see happen with this program.
 - In order to present more diverse shows (especially drama), we need to diversify the student involvement at the same time. Full-length shows take lots of lead time, so it's harder to take a risk on a production where the makeup of the cast might not pan out. Focus diversity efforts on introductory and student-led opportunities for students to get their feet in the door.
 - Warden and Molloy are working together to build relationships between high school and middle school singers. Warden chooses repertoire to build a skills base that Molloy can build on.
 - King has created opportunities for high schoolers to direct and mentor middle schoolers: building relationships, not just a pipeline.

- Create opportunities for ensembles to perform together or accompany each other, e.g. marching band accompanying dance team

Advocacy opportunities:

- Pour our priorities into Reimagining process survey:
<https://reimagine.dmschools.org/how-do-i-make-my-voice-heard/>
- Talk to more performing arts parents about this transition and our priorities. They don't have to come to performing arts boosters meetings to make a difference!
- Come to a meeting with Hoover-Meredith building admin (Qynne Kelly, Charles Zanders, Kip Colemon, Ben Hurley) to make our priorities known.

Upcoming events:

1. Band Pops Concert 2/19 - likely to be postponed, possibly combined with orchestra pops concert
2. IHSSA Individual Events 3/1, 3/15, 3/31
3. Orchestra Pops Concert 3/6
4. Performing Arts Week 3/10-12
5. Spring Musical 4/25-27
6. All City Concert Band 4/14
7. Band Spring Concert 5/7
8. Orchestra Concert 5/12
9. Drama Banquet 5/13
10. Vocal Concert 5/14
11. Graduation Performance 5/25

Next meeting: March 25, 6pm in Mr. Warden's room (Meredith 5505)