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Fernbank Elementary Principal Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 1, 2019

Location: Administration Area Conference Room

Attendees:

Steve Langdon

Diana Shoemaker

Rod Eggleston

Keagan Russo

Lindsay Wolf

Kara Rozell

Alison Stetler

Rebecca Vaughan

Catherine Corser

Joan Ray

Simone Willingham

Non-Attendees:

Barbara Christiansen

Cassie Sheldon

**01 – PAC**

**Fernbank PAC Elections:** Elections were completed. Re-elected members include: Steve Langdon & Kara Rozell. New members include: Lindsay Wolf, Rod Eggleston, & Barbara Christiansen. Brad Strawn resigned his role as a member of the PAC. Keagan Russo was voted in to fulfill the remainder of Brad Strawn’s position (until Sept. 30, 2020). In order to add balance to the number of elected new members each year, it was determined previously by the PAC that one newly elected parent member and one newly elected teacher member will serve a one-year term. Kara Rozell elected to do so for the parents and Catherine Corser elected to do so for the teachers.

* **VOTE:** Approve Keagan Russo fulfill Brad Strawn’s remaining term. 1st MOTION: Kara Rozell, 2nd MOTION: Alison Stetler, VOTE: 8 YES/0 NO – **APPROVED**
* **VOTE:** Approve Kara Rozell and Catherine Corser serve one year terms. 1st MOTION: Steve Langdon, 2nd MOTION: Keagan Russo, VOTE: 7 YES/0 NO/2 ABSTAIN – **APPROVED**

**Overview of PAC Bylaws:** Steve will email all PAC members a copy of the By-laws to review.

* **ACTION:** All PAC members review the DCSD PAC by-laws within 1 month.

**Vote on PAC officer positions:** PAC members self-nominated for leadership positions. Voting new officers in will occur by email following the meeting so that those members not in attendance can have a chance to be nominated.

* **ACTION:** Kara Rozell will contact members not present to determine interest in holding PAC leadership positions, then conduct a confidential vote via email for all interested candidates, and then communicate results to the PAC and Kina Champion (DCSD).

**Determine PAC meeting dates for 2019-2020**: Meetings for the year are scheduled for December 3, February 4, March 24, April 28, and August 11.

* **ACTION:** Kara Rozell will notify webmasters for PTA and DCSD websites and PTA Co-Chairs of all meeting dates.

**Review DCSD’s PAC Compliance Checklist:** DCSD Checklist was distributed and new members were asked to schedule a time to complete training.

* **ACTION:** All members complete DCSD Training in person or online within 3 months

**Set PAC’s Goals for the 2019-2020 School Year:** Initial input about PAC goals was discussed. In order to give new members time to be acclimated to PAC responsibilities, decisions about this item were tabled to the next meeting.

* **ACTION:** Review PAC Roles & Responsibilities. Discuss specific goals at next meeting.

**02 – Principal**

**Student Enrollment Update:** FTE Count was held today. FES student enrollment is about 800.

**Fernbank CCRPI Scores:** Full results will be distributed to PAC members when available. Some preliminary results have come back. Closing the Gap scores increased from 31.5% in 2017/2018 to 95% in 2018/2019 due to hard work by every Fernbank teacher and additional Fernbank Foundation resources dedicated to 2 part-time Reading Specialists.

**Consolidated School Improvement Plan (CCSIP):** Fernbank’s CCSIP is complete and was presented to PAC members. FES used a compilation of testing data and an analysis of student/school strengths and weaknesses to guide this plan. For the 2019/2020 school year, FES will focus on literacy and numeracy improvements and will target specific standards for specific student needs.

* **ACTION:** All PAC members review CCSIP and sign signature page for approval.

**IB Recertification:** Fernbank will apply for recertification of it’s IB program in Spring 2021. Joan Ray continues to meet with DCSD administration to inform them of IB program guidelines and discuss how best to integrate IB guidelines with DCSD requirements.

**03 – Students and Teachers**

**Feedback Regarding DCSD changes to Illuminate Benchmark Testing:** DCSD did reduce the number of tests to implement throughout the 2019/2020 school year; however, the length of each test increased and the content/structure of many questions is still poor in some cases. DCSD is including these benchmark test results as part of student’s grades this year (included within the 30% Summative Assessments). Examples of issues include:

* Timing: 1st grade students take about 20 minutes per test but, with only a handful of computers per class, this takes about 1.5 hours per day for 5 days, equating to about 8 hours of lost teaching time for the first round of testing. 5th grade students are taking about 1 hr. 15 min. per test per subject, equating to about 8.5 hrs of lost teaching time for the first round of testing. There were about 20 questions for 5th grade and at least one written response question had four parts.
* Question Quality: Some teachers are very concerned about the quality level of the questions still being poor. For example, one question asked which of the 4 inventors studies were the most important as a multiple choice question. Our teachers teach that all the inventors had important contributions and believe the answer to this question is subjective.
* Alignment with GA Standards: Some questions that are part of the Illuminate tests are testing information that is not included in the GA Standards. It is confusing for teachers whether to spend time on this material because it is included in the benchmark assessment or whether to focus more on materials to be tested as part of the GA Milestones EOG assessments. Iluminate tests are supposed to be designed as a benchmark for the EOG assessment, not assessments of extension materials.
* Alignment with Teaching Schedules: Teachers and students struggle with the timing of May Benchmark Assessments given that students are also completing MAP testing and Milestone Testing during the time when teachers are supposed to be teaching materials for the final Illuminate test.
* **ACTION:** TBD.

**Spring MAP vs. GA Milestones:** Parents are asking if these two tests are redundant and too time consuming to complete, too intrusive to classroom teaching time, and too taxing on students. Teachers strongly prefer the MAP tests on the whole since they provide formative data that is useful for differentiated/targeted teaching. Some GA County school districts have received an exemption from GA Milestones requirements. Maybe DCSD could receive a similar exemption.

* **ACTION:** TBD

**New Requirement for Teachers – Instruction Modules:** All DCSD teachers are being asked to complete modules related to instruction techniques (consisting of PowerPoint presentations followed by required response activities). Different departments within DCSD are making these requirements in isolation from one another and the number of required modules seems burdensome to teachers. Additionally, the content of some of the modules seems geared toward those new to the profession and, thus, not useful to teachers that have been teaching awhile and have completed Master’s level education. This newly enforced DCSD requirement is reducing teacher morale.

* **ACTION:** TBD

**Update on whether Fernbank will implement a new school dismissal manager system:** TABLED

1. **– DeKalb County / Region 2**

**Druid Hills Cluster Alliance:** 1)Briar Vista PAC plans to submit a proposal to DCSD (with DHCA endorsement) asking for increased investment in their Montessori school program focused mostly training for current teachers, pipeline teachers, and administrators. As part of this request, BVES PAC will also request resources be dedicated to fund a Montessori/IB Coordinator position at DCSD that can liaise with schools implementing unique DCSD-approved learning models to ensure that DCSD requirements match those learning model guidelines. 2) Druid Hills Cluster-wide fundraiser: A donated shoes fundraiser will be held in Nov. at each of the Druid Hills cluster schools. FES will ask the Beta Club to manage FES’s efforts.

**Notifications:**

* On the Scene with Dr. Green: Oct. 17 7pm at Druid Hills Middle School
* Druid Hills Cluster Alliance Meeting: Monday, Oct. 21 5:30pm at Druid Hills Middle School

**05 – Facility Items:** TABLED

**06 – PTA:** NO UPDATES