



Fernbank Elementary Principal Advisory Council

Meeting Notes

Date: March 8, 2022
Time: 3pm
Location: TEAMS Virtual Meeting

Attendees:	Non-Attendance:
Joan Ray, Principal	Rod Eggleston
Steve Langdon	Becky Vaughn, Teacher
Jessica Raper	
Alison Eber	
Khalia Williams	
Josh Bornstein	
Keagan Russo	
Ruth Haas, Teacher	
Christina Heda, Teacher	
Jessica Russo, PTA	

00 – Welcome

- Approval of Agenda
- Motion: Jessica Raper, 2nd: Alison Eber
- Vote: 10-0 **Approved**

01 – PAC Items

- PAC Compliance Report has been completed
 - o **CLOSED**
- Enrollment Drive / Outreach
 - o Movie, Facebook (social media) posting, emails about Kindergarten Round-up have been going out to parents/perspective parents.
 - o PTA is looking into Fernbank signs and swag bags to be given out during Kindergarten Round-up in order to get our 'brand' out there to parents in the community.
 - o Druid Middle School – tours and outreach to 4 & 5th graders to encourage participation in the cluster have been scheduled.
 - 3/16 - Fernbank 5th graders will tour in-person Druid MS
 - 3/29 - PTA evening event with Druid MS Principal and Fernbank 6-8th grade alumni and answer 5th grade student and parent questions. Parents of younger grades also encouraging to listen in to learn more about Druid MS. Event will be both virtual and in-person.
 - o **ACTION:** All to continue to promote Fernbank and DH Cluster schools.

02 – Principal Report

- COVID Protocols
 - o Mask Policy Update
 - DCSD removed the Mask Mandate for staff, teachers, and students started on March 2nd, 2022.
 - Principal Ray made a video posted to classtag on March 2nd that explained to Fernbank students what it meant for masks to be optional.
 - As of March 8th, about ¼ of students were unmasked, but majority are still masking on school grounds.

- Surveillance Testing
 - Steve discussed with Marshall and Trenton about the timeliness of results during the Druid Hills Cluster Alliance meeting in January.
 - Principal Ray and Ms. Haas noted that the timeliness of results has improved.
 - Despite filling out the forms and contacting DCSD, parents are still having difficulty getting students on the list for surveillance testing.
- Virtual Opt-in Window
 - Some parents have requested a virtual option (especially with the removal of the Mask Mandate), but DCSD is not allowing families to opt into virtual at this time. If families were already virtual they can remain virtual, but no new families are allowed to go virtual at this time.
- Excused Absences
 - January (during Omicron surge) saw a peak in absences of 10-12% of Fernbank student body. In January meeting, questions were raised about whether Fernbank could do informal surveys and provide parents with stats on vaccinate rates, etc. that might ease their minds. Steven Langdon and Jessica Raper addressed this question with Marshall and Trenton at the Druid Hills Cluster meeting in January. They were told that even informal surveys about vaccinate rate, etc. were not allowed by DCSD. And that DCSD did not plan to conduct any formal surveys of the student bodies or staff at this time.
 - Principal Ray confirmed that there have been fewer absences now that Omicron cases have decreased. Absences are not being counting against students.
- CSIP Review
 - CSIP 3 areas of focus are Social Emotional Learning, Literacy and Numeracy.
 - Social Emotional Learning – Denise Speer is a certified Trauma Nurse and has been working with select students on anxiety through programs like “Lunch Bunch” once a week
 - Jessica Russo (PTA) asked if Fernbank Foundation dollars may be allocated toward more social emotional learning projects in the future.
 - **ACTION:** Steve Langdon and Principal Ray to bring up topic in next Foundation Meeting
 - Principal Ray mentioned additional programs already in existence to help with social emotional learning at Fernbank, including Morning Meetings use of mindfulness to check-in with students, Consciousness Discipline for conflict resolution. Principal Ray also asked for ideas or leads on counselors to come into school to help with more social emotional learning programs.
- IB Re-Certification
 - IB certification was completed March 3rd
 - **CLOSED**
- Parent Volunteers
 - DCSD revised policy on parent volunteers passed with an amendment to remove the finger printing and background check for volunteers at level 2 (volunteers with face-to-face contact with students under teacher supervision, e.g. book fair helpers, mystery readers, science outreach, etc).
 - Parent volunteers are working well in the school. One parent volunteer has been assisting with the basic chess club afterschool program, which has been a tremendous help and support for the club. Parents are starting to have in-person parent-teacher conferences and PTA members have helped with after-school club dismissal.

03 – Students and Teachers

- Winter MAP Testing Recap

- MAP testing working on ELA and seems to suggest students are not down overall on specific topics, but that students have holes in their learning (swiss cheese effect on learning during the pandemic). Teachers are tailoring learning to fill those holes for each student.
- Milestones testing will occur grades 3-5 starting on April 18th
 - There are no plans to measure progress on the Milestones since the test wasn't administered last year and many students do not have a prior test for comparison
- Class Size / Waiver
 - The State DOE has revised the full class size numbers for next year.
 - 25 students per class for 4 & 5th grades
 - 23 students for 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades
 - 21 for Kindergarten

04 – DeKalb County School District / Region 2

- Druid Hills Cluster Alliance – Mon Mar 7th 5:30pm
 - Comprehensive Master Plan / Druid Hills High School Renovation
 - Druid Hills Highschool (DHHS) is the oldest school building in DCSD, with some buildings not enough up to code for fire safety. DHHS was recommended for renovations by an outside consultant group for the DCSD Comprehensive Master Plan. During a DCSD broad meeting, DHHS was taken off the approved list to submit to the State for 'potential' renovation projects.
 - DHHS created a “Red Devil Task Force” (name based on mascot for DHHS) to help bring awareness and amplify the cluster alliances voice in convincing the DCSD board to put DHHS back on the renovation project list.
 - Fernbank students will benefit these renovations at DHHS and we encourage parents to support the Red Devil Task Force efforts.
 - **ACTION:** Steve Langdon to forward invitation to future Red Devil Task Force Meetings to all PAC members

05 – Facility Items

- Fernbank has several current facility needs. Most of these have been submitted for repairs via DCSD work orders.
 - Additional mulch on the playground for both fall protection and mud prevention
 - Elevator controller is not functioning due to low hydraulic fluid alarm
 - HVAC heating and cooling controls continue to have issues
 - Slides on the playground are broken
 - **ACTION:** Steve Langdon to discuss with Trenton Arnold

06 – PTA and Foundation Update

- Shade Structures
 - Pricing for shade structure has been sent to DCSD board for approval. Board review is scheduled for May BOE Meeting.
- Fernbank Annual Auction is scheduled for 3/18.
- PTA will meet virtually April 20th and vote on PTA positions for next year.

Next Meeting May 10, 2022.

[End of Minutes]