



Fernbank Elementary Principal Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 11, 2022
Time: 3:00-4:30pm
Location: Fernbank Administration Conference Room and MS Teams

Attendees

- Syrenthia Bines-Truitt, Interim Principal
- Simone Willingham, Assistant Principal
- Aaronlyn Wright, Assistant Principal
- Catherine Corser, Teacher
- Ruth Haas, Teacher
- Christina Heda, Teacher
- Becky Vaughn, Teacher
- Josh Bornstein
- Alison Eber
- Kristina Johnson
- Steve Langdon
- Jeff Oliver
- Martina Stanley
- Khalia Williams

Absent Members:

- None

00 – Welcome

- Welcome New Members. Introductions made.
- Approval of Agenda
 - o Motion: Khalia Williams, 2nd: Josh Bornstein
 - o Agenda approved without objection. **12-0 Approved**

01 – PAC Items

- Governance Training
 - o Members were reminded that all PAC members are required to take the DCSD governance training if they have not yet done so. Members were reminded of the Fall Cross-Council meeting on October 26. Fernbank PAC must have at least one representative at the meeting.
ACTION: All reps will ensure compliance with training
ACTION: Chair to circulate email to determine rep(s) for Cross-Council Meeting
- 2022-2023 PAC Board
 - o Members were nominated and unanimously approved as follows:
Officers (each nominated and unanimously voted)
 - o Steve Langdon, Chair
 - o Khalia Williams, Vice Chair
 - o Josh Bornstein, Secretary
ACTION: Chair to circulate bylaws
- Principal Search Status

- The PAC discussed the status of the search for the next principal. The steps include:
 - Step 1 – Position Posting
 - Step 2 – Leadership Attribute Survey
 - Step 3 – Resume Review
 - Step 4 – Professional Interviews
 - Step 5 – Focus Group
- It was discussed that Fernbank has the only open position right now. Regional Supt. very supportive of making this a strong process and indicates a good hire is more important than speed. It was noted that Laurel Ridge and Briarlake are also looking for principals right now. Briarlake closed right before we started. Laurel Ridge completed interviews 2 weeks ago.
- The process is in Steps 2 and 3 right now. There are 61 applicants to date. The Leadership Attribute Survey closes on Friday. It was discussed that the resume panel will take one week and the panel will include PAC, PTA, and faculty. The goal is to determine top 5-6 applicants. This will happen in the coming weeks. Interviews will follow shortly thereafter. For the professional interviews, the Regional Superintendent will create questions based on the responses to the Leadership Survey. Last, there will be a broader panel for the final 2 candidates within the Focus Group round. The Fernbank PAC will create 5 questions for the finalists. The final 2 will go to the Superintendent with PAC notes and preferences. The PAC discussed general qualifications and asked clarifying questions regarding certifications, DCSD review, and participation in the process.

ACTION: Chair to share process flow chart.

ACTION: Chair to post a reminder to Facebook group for the Leadership Attribute Survey

ACTION: Administrators to include a reminder for the survey in the Fernbank Flash

02 – Principal Report

- Covid Protocols
 - The PAC was briefed on the current COVID protocols which mirror CDC guidance. The PAC was briefed that 95 students are signed up for COVID-19 surveillance testing which started last Wednesday.
- CSIP Status
 - The PAC was briefed that the data are not yet prepared for review. Once ready, the PAC will review the data. The new principal will be able to adjust priorities. Last year, literacy, mathematics, and school climate were the top areas for action.
- Student Counts
 - As of today, 742 students are enrolled, which is up from 701 in our August meeting. Kindergarten and first grade are very large. This is also a concern across DCSD. At Fernbank, paraprofessionals are being used to reduce the student/teacher count in the larger classrooms.
 - In response to a question about getting more teachers, it was provided that likely no teachers will be added this school year since we are right on the bubble. 21 students are needed for each class. Fernbank's faculty number remains steady this year (i.e., no gains or losses).

03 – Students and Teachers

- Fall MAP recap
 - o The PAC received an update on the MAP data. Overall, there are very good scores in all grades. It was noted that kindergarteners have a lot of energy and skills. Reading and math scores are strong (part of CSIP focus). Instruction is differentiated for those in different areas to keep progress going no matter where kids are today. Winter MAP starts in December.
- School Nurse Support
 - o The PAC continued discussion on the school nurse. All administrators had not seen the letter provided to the Regional Superintendent. It was noted that the school nurse does have a backup (retired RN who now has current training and needed access to student records).
ACTION: Chair to send Administrators a copy of the letter regarding the school nurse for action.
- Canvas
 - o The PAC discussed the transition to Canvas. SL provided that, at the August Druid Hills Cluster Alliance meeting, he brought forward the concern about the abrupt transition and the challenges for the youngest students are having to adapt to a new online platform after they were very accustomed to Google Classroom. SL indicated that the high and middle schools teacher and students liked it, and it would take time for the elementary students to adapt. The District is committed to Canvas and will be on the only supported online platform. It was noted that, at Fernbank, 5th grade went “all-in” and they are making it work. Third grade is using it. Others stated that it is harder for lower grades. It was noted that teachers do not have access to all modules but that should be coming (e.g., merging courses). The PAC discussed a need for a progression of computer skills through the grades as well as the use of Canvas by parents. It was noted that Administrators could encourage and remind parents to use it, and tip sheets can be sent again. Teachers need to invite parents into Canvas.
ACTION: Teachers to inform Administration of needs.
ACTION: Chair to raise at alliance meeting to see how other elementary schools are doing with Canvas.

04 – DeKalb County School District / Region 2

- Druid Hills Cluster Alliance
 - o It was noted that the next Druid Hills Cluster Alliance meetings will be Oct 24 and Nov 28.
ACTION: Chair to forward meeting invitation to all PAC members.
- Red Devil Task Force
 - o PAC members were reminded that the Red Devil Task Force was created in Spring 2022 to address DCSD’s initial decision to remove DHHS from the funding proposal list to the State. DCSD subsequently committed to a \$50M modernization in June. DHHS projects are on the SPLOST 6 which just started. SPLOST 4 projects are being completed now. SPLOST 5 projects are underway. It was noted that the Task Force would like to see DCSD hire a firm for planning. The PAC noted there should be a focus on sustainability is encouraged as well.

05 – Facility Items

- Work Order Status
 - o It was noted that Fernbank’s facility status is much improved. 7 out of 11 work orders

from September were fixed; 2 just submitted last week. Specifically,

- Elevator has been fixed
- HVAC is doing much better
- Playground fully open; mulch added
- Grounds beautification after the fun run this Saturday
- The fence was fixed with Foundation support

ACTION: Secretary to draft letter to Trenton Arnold thanking him for the responsiveness

06 – PTA and Foundation Update

- Outdoor Classroom
 - There were several updates on PTA and Foundation projects and programs. With respect to the outdoor classroom, the Foundation continues to look at options and layout ideas. There is a grandparent working on science ideas.
- Fun Run
 - PAC members were reminded that the Fun Run and grounds cleanup are this Saturday, October 15.
- Fund the Fern
 - PAC members were reminded that Fund the Fern started today and runs through the end of the month.
- Fernbank Auction
 - PAC members were asked to hold March 17 for the Fernbank Auction.

07 – General

- Academic Supplies
 - Science supplies low; Administrators said each grade level should submit needs to them and they will replenish with per pupil funds
- Gifted Information Meeting
 - The webinar on the gifted program will be tomorrow, October 12, at 5:30pm. PAC members were reminded that all Fernbank teachers are gifted-certified in grades 1-5.
- Future Meeting Schedule
 - PAC Members decided to set the meetings to once a month on the second Thursday of the month at 3pm in a hybrid format.

ACTION: Chair to send out a recurring meeting invitation.

Next Meeting: November 10th, 2022

[end of minutes]