

Fernbank Elementary School Council

November Meeting Minutes

Date: January 16, 2018

Location: Joan Ray's Office

Attendees:

Joan Ray, Principal
Simone Willingham, Assistant Principal
LaShia Brooks
Ali Stetler
Becky Vaughan
Charlie Rogers
Kara Rozell
Brad Strawn
Steve Langdon

Non-Attendees:

Jas Sullivan

Copies to: All

Prepared by: Steve Langdon

01 – County/City Government

01.2.1 – Emory Annexation

11/13/17 – Council has authored a letter to Atlanta City Council members regarding Emory's Annexation. Letter confirmed our agreement with Dr. Green's stance that the annexation should neither involve nor disturb long-standing school attendance boundaries. Annexation has yet to be confirmed by the Atlanta City Council. The Atlanta Mayoral election resulted in a runoff to be held in December. Council is expecting an update from the Atlanta City Council after the mayoral race is confirmed.

01/16/18 – Atlanta City Council voted to approve Emory Annexation into the City of Atlanta on 12/4/17. Contrary to Emory's original letter to request annexation, Atlanta City Council included an adjustment to the school's attendance boundaries. Therefore, the students within the annexation are scheduled to attend APS schools this fall and a reported \$2.5 million in school taxes is scheduled to be shifted from DeKalb County School District to APS. DeKalb County School District is challenging school boundary change.

[ACTION – Monitor Annexation]

01.3.1 – Cross-Council Meeting

01/16/18 – DeKalb County School District held a Cross-Council Meeting on 12/14/17. Steve Langdon represented Fernbank Council at the meeting. The meeting included an introduction of several key department heads within the school district, an update on the planned re-districting within the Stone Mountain cluster, and a break-out session by Region. SL attended the Region 2 breakout and was joined by members of the Briar Vista and Laurel Ridge councils within the Druid Hills High School cluster. Also included in the Region 2 room were Tucker and Lakeside clusters, as well as council representatives from DeKalb School for the Arts. The clusters break-out topic was "how can the councils better support the needs of the students." Each group

discussed and shared notes with the other Region 2 clusters. DCSD staff made record of the notes and distributed to all Region councils. There is a follow-up meeting on 2/22/18. SL is scheduled to attend.

[ACTION – Attend next meeting and share notes with Council]

01.3.2 – DCSD Updated Regions

01/16/18 – DeKalb County School District is updating the school Region map. Our Region, Region 2, will only be slightly affected as the two Arts schools within Region 2 will become part of Region 7. The rest of Region 2 will remain unchanged.

[ACTION – None]

02 – Future Student Population

02.1.1 – Briar Vista Elementary K-8 Montessori

9/18/17 - Erin Littles from the Briar Vista Elementary (BVE) School Council was a guest attendee. She came to discuss a proposal that BVE become a Montessori-only Kindergarten through 8th Grade school. As part of this proposal, the traditional learner students at BVE would join Fernbank. There are currently approximately 500 students at BVE, of which slightly more than half are students within the Montessori program, some are from within the BVE attendance zone but most are from School Choice. The Council recommended that we hold a special Council meeting in October to discuss further and request Marshall Orson attend to provide further information from DeKalb County.

11/13/17 – No updates to BVE's future plans.

01/16/18 – No updates to BVE's future plans. Members of the Council and Ms. Ray to contact BVE Council and Principal Neill to discuss further.

[ACTION – Contact BVE for update]

02.2.1 – Stabilize Attendance Zone

11/13/17 – John Lewis Elementary remains on target for a fall '19 opening and therefore the Fernbank students from the Buford Highway corridor will have a new school in less than 2 years. With the expected vacancy of ~225 seats, in addition to the BVE expansion, the Council discussed other options to stabilize Fernbank's future student population including a continuous attendance zone expansion into Medlock, transition to a K-8 school, increasing the gifted program population and continuing to offer overflow expansion to other Dekalb County schools. Council agreed that a meeting with Dr. Green should be scheduled to discuss further.

01/16/18 – Meeting held with Dr. Green on 12/19/18. Fernbank was represented by Charlie Rogers, Brad Strawn, Sarah Boelhouwer and Beth Collums. Marshall Orson was also in attendance. At the meeting Fernbank representatives brought forth the topic that our community is interested in stabilizing our attendance zone and not interested in being a swing school once John Lewis Elementary is opens in 2019. Stabilizing our attendance zone would help the County by shoring up the western boundary to APS. Dr. Green acknowledged that Fernbank stepped up when asked to meet the needs of the County regarding temporary re-districting within the Cross Keys Cluster and that Fernbank would not be asked to do that again. Fernbank members brought forth ideas for discussion regarding a stable attendance zone. Dr. Green supported the idea of further discussion with Briar Vista Elementary parents regarding their attendance zone.

[ACTION – Schedule meeting with BVE parent groups]

03 – Students and Teachers

03.2.1 – Katie Bashor Sun Shelter

11/13/17 – Thanks to generous donations, the new Katie Bashor sun shelter will be erected near the playground later this month. The dedication is scheduled for Dec 4th.

01/16/18 – A beautiful dedication was held on 12/4/17 and the shelter is being used by the students.

[CLOSED]

03.2.2 – Student Technology

11/13/17 – 427 new Chromebooks arrived from Dekalb County this month. Chromebooks will be distributed to the classrooms for in-class student use. Grade levels 3-5 will be provided one for each student and grades K-2 will provided laptops at a 1 book : 2 student ratio.

[CLOSED]

04 – Facility Issues

04.3.1 – Irrigation Meter

01/16/18 – An irrigation meter for the landscaping was not included in the school construction project. Charlie Rogers to contact the construction project's Program Manager to get further details.

[ACTION – CR to contact Program Manager]

Next Meeting: 3/19/18

[End of Minutes]