

Minutes from May 15, 2017 Meeting of the Fernbank Elementary School Council
Prepared by School Council Secretary Brad Strawn

The Fernbank Elementary School Council met on May 15, 2017, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., in the administration conference room at the school. All scheduled Council meetings are open to the public. Attendees at the meeting were: Principal Joan Ray; Assistant Principal Simone Willingham; Kortni Boyd; Steve Langdon; Amanda Martin; Carol Reed; Odette Diaz Schuler, and Brad Strawn. Topics discussed in the meeting included: (a) upcoming School Council elections; (b) school year 2017-2018 updates (c) physical plant update; (d) ESPLOST technology update; and (e) the summer initiative and events.

The meeting began by planning the next steps to hold a School Council election to install members for the 2017-2018 school-year. Historically, the council consists of the Principal, five parents/guardians of current students (at least two of whom also are business persons), and three full-time Fernbank teachers. Members unanimously voted to continue with the same composition, which, including the Principal position, retains a nine-member composition. Next, the members discussed holding elections at the end of this month for next year's council. Members unanimously voted to hold separate elections for the teacher and parent/guardian positions in person at the school on May 23 and 24. Separate elections will be held on both day for the three teacher positions and the parent-guardian positions, with the teachers elected from Fernbank's full-time teacher population and the parent-guardians elected from Fernbank's parent/guardian population. This year, all three teacher positions will be open for election and four of the five parent/guardian positions are open for election. Terms for parent/guardians are two years. Of the current parent/guardians, only Brad Strawn's term extends through the 2017-2018 school year. The terms of Chairperson Charlie Rogers, Vice-Chairperson Odette Schuler, and John Blackmon expire June 30, 2017, and Amy Howell, whose term has not yet expired, has chosen to resign her position due to many other demands on her time and schedule, thus opening a fourth position for election this month. The Council is very appreciative of Howell's dedication and contributions this year and regrets to see her resign but understand the reasons for the decision.

The Council next discussed updates to the 2017-2018 school year's budget. Fernbank will receive significantly less Title I money in next year. This year the school initially was allocated \$156,000, and that amount was decreased to \$152,000 during the year. Next year the school will receive \$84,000. Because the amount allocated for next year is so much less and if allocated to a fund another staff position would not leave a significant amount of money for other use, the school intends to use the Title I funds to purchase technology that can be used by students as one-to-one education resources, such as Chromebooks or iPads.

Next year's School Choice assignments and process were then discussed. Typically, Fernbank opens up its School Choice enrollment seats in August once the administration has a good understanding of the school's student census size and can then determine the appropriate number of students to enroll through the choice program. This year the County has already assigned and sent out acceptances to approximately 70 School Choice students for next year. These assignments have been made much earlier than in prior years, which somewhat reduces future flexibility. As the next school year and August approach, Fernbank will evaluate how many

more School Choice seats to make available based on the anticipated student census. Fernbank intends to maintain a student population above 786 next year in order to support its current staff and funding allocation.

In order to increase resources available for student instruction, next year Fernbank will hire another Instructional Support Specialist staff member to support teachers in developing strategies, lesson plans, and curriculum to address differentiation within classes. April Poindexter, who has been successfully working as an Instructional Support Specialist, next year will lead the International Baccalaureate program. This past year Fernbank sent 8 teachers to an IB conference and received training from IB consultants to further enhance the school's IB program.

Fernbank's physical plant then was discussed. Problems arose with the school's floors because they initially were installed on a less than optimal surface. Several repairs to hallways throughout the building were completed over Spring Break. The main hallways' floors still need repair, and the school hopes to have them repaired and replace this summer. Construction of the Katie Bashor Memorial Shade Structure is moving forward. Over \$12,000 has been raised thus far, and the structure will be built after this school year ends. Further, the Fernbank school sign soon will be installed on the building and an irrigation system will be installed throughout the school grounds.

Fernbank's ESPLOST purchased technology resources have arrived. The school received the following instructional resources: 127 Chromebooks; 2 flat screen mobile carts; 5 laptop charging carts; 150 headsets; 40 Lenovo student laptops; and 10 ELMO document cameras.

This summer's initiatives include hosting Fernbank summer camp through June. Additionally, Fernbank was recently notified that due to renovations at other schools in early summer, Fernbank may be designated to host summer school for portions of the county. If so, the county will need to work with Fernbank to provide sufficient resources to administer both summer school and summer camp. There still is the possibility that the summer school program will be reassigned to another school building.

The school is moving forward with the Ident-A-Kid software for tracking employees, students and visitors to help improve security. Key fobs will be used by teachers and visitors for access to the building to increase visibility as to who is in the building and when.

Finally, the Council discussed the fact that there is a 22-student general pre-K class for next year. A waiting list does exist for those students who were not selected through the lottery.

Upon a vote of those present, the meeting was then adjourned.