

## Fernbank Elementary School Council

### March Meeting Minutes

Date: March 19, 2018  
Location: Administration Conference Room

#### Attendees:

Joan Ray, Principal  
LaShia Brooks  
Ali Stetler  
Becky Vaughan  
Kara Rozell  
Brad Strawn  
Steve Langdon

#### Non-Attendees:

Simone Willingham, Assistant Principal  
Charlie Rogers  
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.

**03/19/18** – DeKalb County School District is exploring legal action.

[**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.

**03/19/18** – A second Cross-Council meeting was held February 22<sup>nd</sup> and was attended by Steve Langdon. The meeting once again included presentations by Dekalb County School District department heads and a breakout session by Region and by Cluster. Our Druid Hills cluster breakout session was well attended with school representatives from all 7 schools except McLendon Elem. The cluster representations brainstormed on several goals to better support our students, but concluded that the best first step would be to create a Council Community within the Druid Hills cluster schools. Cluster representatives plan to meet in April to continue working on the creation of the DH Council Community.

**[ACTION** – Attend initial Council Cluster meeting]

## 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

**03/19/18** – No updates on BVE’s future plans. Topic will be closed pending any changes from the School District.

[CLOSED]

### 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.

**03/19/18** – Joan Ray met with BVE Principal Cammie Neil and she confirmed that BVE is not attracted to the idea of modifying their attendance zone in order for non-Montessori students change their home school to Fernbank. With that possibility now not a likely option, several other ideas of filling the ~250 seats which will be opened after the construction of the new John Lewis Elementary were discussed. Council members will meet again in April in order to continue to discuss options.

[**ACTION** – Continue options discussion]

### 03 – Students and Teachers

#### 03.4.1 – Auction Recap

**03/19/18** - The Fernbank Foundation Auction was held February 24<sup>th</sup> and was a big success. The Council expressed thanks to everyone on the Foundation and Auction Committees that put on a great event.

[CLOSED]

#### 03.4.2 – Next Year’s School Schedule

**03/19/18** – Joan provided a preview of the proposed school schedule which will be reviewed with teachers next week. The proposed schedule maintains a 7-day rotation of specials but a small change to the specials within the rotation. One schedule item from this year that needs attention moving into next year is to provide availability of students from the Buford Highway area to participate in after school programs. Currently those students all travel home on the regular dismissal bus and are able to participate in afterschool clubs. The Council is to reach out to the County to request an additional Buford Highway route bus to pick after the clubs get out at approximately 4pm.

[**ACTION** – JR review schedule with teachers]

[**ACTION** – Council pen letter to County regarding afterschool club bus]

### 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.

**03/19/18** – Council to investigate options.

[**ACTION** – CR to contact Program Manager]

Next Meeting: 5/14/18

[End of Minutes]