

LSC School Council Meeting

August 19, 2014

Meeting called to order at 4:02pm

Agenda

Attendance

LSC Board: Sharon Bray (Chairperson/Parent), Renee Perlstein (Vice-Chairperson/Parent), Carolyn Wood (Member/Parent), Paige Cucchi (Member/Parent), Timothy Guiney (Member/Principal), Judge Harry Bowden (Member/Teacher), Mario Herrera (Secretary/Teacher).

Atlanta Board of Education representatives: Matt Westmoreland (District 3), Leslie Grant (District 1)
note: Ms. Grant in attendance for first half of meeting.

Guests: Bailey Kish (Student), Christa Martin (Parent, PTSA President), Gigi Schwartz (Parent), Laura Kish (Parent), Laura Cohen (Parent), Sherri Caldwell (Parent), Sara Van Beck (Parent), Mary Jo Bryan (Parent).

Principal's Report

Mr. Guiney:

Beginning of school year

Students had schedules from Day One, and even though there have been some issues, overall goal achieved.

Teachers are focusing on collaboration and PLC's. Overall seen as a positive move. In-school PD such as this is seen as a guiding and positive voice in improving teaching. Planning and learning from each other is key.

Each academy leader in charge of overseeing specific departments to partner, supervise and evaluate:

Ms. MacBrien- English;

Dr. Plasczyk- Social Studies

Mr. Vincent- Math

Mr. Dawson- Science

New accountability

In transition from EOCT to Georgia Milestones, 30% of all students should be tested on computers; next year is 40%; in three years, 100%, or all students, to be tested on computers. This means we need to have more computer space. District is "refreshing" computer labs to help meet this goal. CCC is going to be made back into a computer lab. This happens mainly in October and in the spring. Room will have to be re-purposed to meet this need. Plans being made to make this sharing of space as seamless as possible.

Pearlstein: Security (windows facing the front lawn) should be considered, including entry in to lab.

Propst: Computers will be locked down.

Pearlstein: Security will still be an issue.

Propst: Steps will be taken to security computer lab.

ENROLLMENT: 1302 as of 8/19/14

400- freshman

331- sophomore

310- juniors

261- seniors

Scheduling/Leveling Process

Some classes over FTE levels, some under = leveling process in attempt to equalize those class sizes. Some classes added and collapsed. Website, GradyGram and robo-call all utilized as communication component so parents are aware of these issues.

Staffing

1 Special Education/Science position short. Awaiting approval of HR- because of leveling situations approval is needed at this time.

Other than that, we are fully staffed. Some staff are out due to personal issues/FMLA. Math position not highly qualified; May have to contact families re: highly qualified situation (teachers teaching out of content area or without certain credentials are not considered "highly qualified" as mandated by No Child Left Behind).

Facilities

Shortage of classroom, 10 floating teachers. A very challenging situation. It impacts instruction and school culture. Working with Dr. Propst, Ms. Van Beck and Central Office to address concerns.

Completed panel interviews re: Athletic Director. Consensus reached. Currently an APS employee, awaiting proper time and fulfilled obligations before announcement of candidate is made.

Freshman Friday

Letter sent to parents about activities that could be considered as hazing of freshman by upperclassmen. A few email concerns were sent to Mr. Guiney, so letter was constructed.

Wood: How is information be given to upperclassmen?

Guiney: Senior meeting tomorrow, during advisement. Letter to stay part of beginning of year protocol, at minimum for the next year.

Bowden: New traditions needed. School engagement and culture reflect some hesitation based on current “traditions.”

Perlstein: “Dragging” is part of culture, according to current seniors, despite the fact that injuries have occurred in past.

Propst: Guiney taking correct action.

Guiney: Will discuss these issues in senior meeting tomorrow.

Cucchi: This is possibly a bullying situation, and students should understand this.

Herrera: Creating a positive tradition to replace this current one under question is vital, or students will attempt to circumvent.

Guiney: Discussion can start immediately; juniors can begin to think NOW about what the new traditions will be when they become seniors.

Perry Ponder: SMART goals discussed. The CIP (Continuous Improvement Plan) is due in September and what some of the goals are and select those really align to LSC goals as well. Next meeting should happen a bit earlier as the CIP is due in September.

OLD BUSINESS

In past, APS officials met at last meeting to get updates. Some of these issues are holdovers from last year. LSC has been monitoring these goals, and action may need to be taken regarding some of the items.

Bus Lane

Propst: Sewage lines are in issue and ultimately the school is “waiting for the money” and bus lane construction should happen next summer.

Perlsten: Is it happening or not happening? Is it a financial situation? Is it construction/sewage issue? How can the LSC get actual information?

Guiney: Email Jere Smith (in charge of facilities for APS) to have this conversation.

Herrera: Communication on this issue to teachers has not been complete in the past. Is it possible to change this?

Guiney: Yes! Guiney, Bowden and Herrera

Bray: Teachers are welcome to attend if they like, and minutes are available to all. Regarding the bus lanes, ultimately, no real movement seems to be occurring.

Guiney: Jere Smith states the major obstacle is money at this point.

Bray: Jasper Jones has stated it is also a safety/logistical issue when there events in the stadium; bus lane on 10th could resolve this.

Perlstein: Students at risk, buses have trouble with turning while in the stadium lot. Buses parking in that lot despite APS saying this would not occur.

Bray: The surrounding community would like information and possible input re: the bus lanes

ENGINEERING LAB

Michael Mays from CTAE at Grady HS today to evaluate the situation. Mr. Guiney will follow-up with Mays.

Christa Martin: Engineering no longer in dance studio; class is on E-Wing.

Guiney: Mays here to assess and make sure space is appropriate and conducive to needs of the program.

Bray: Last year, Dr. Mays was at an LSC meeting to discuss the situation. We can have an engineering program without a certified lab but a lab is still necessary for the program. Needs (mentioned in past by Mr. Nichols and others): soundproofing, electrical and technical needs, etc.

Herrera: What about underneath the stadium, as discussed in past.

Perlstein: Space is available underneath stadium.

SCIENCE LABS

Bray: We have fewer than any other high school. We have 8. Science support team trying to help with temporary solution with portable sinks and other such equipment. There are science labs that are not actual labs (classrooms not outfitted with necessary equipment).

Guiney: Science teachers in classrooms (not actual labs): all those science classrooms will be retrofitted to be science classrooms.

FLOATING TEACHERS

Bray: Some science teachers concerned that they do not have any planning in their rooms to set up labs.

Guiney: As much as possible, tried to not have this situation happen, but issue was discussed with staff and all attempts are being made to avoid this situation. It is not really avoidable.

CLASSROOM SPACE

Bray: Time for new trailers?

Herrera: Add two stories to Eighth Street building?

Guiney: Can start the conversation regarding the space issue, as well as future offerings and the vision of Grady HS as we move forward. Can happen with Dr. Gadsen and Mr. Smith. Facilities challenges are major concern here at Grady HS. Need to determine what we do from this point forward. These issues are not going away. Principal does not like this deficiency, teachers do not like it, nor is not good for students. New superintendent and organization can be a way to make these changes happen.

Perlstein: Students attending out-of-zone could be contributing to numbers.

Wood: The 1302 number of enrollment: how do we know whether or not this is valid (meaning students attending are actually in zone)?

Guiney: Ms. Holland has done all she can to make sure that district protocol is followed and principal is copied when necessary. She works with counselors and social workers and follows all appropriate protocols. If someone manages to circumvent the system, options become limited. This is also an issue at Inman MS.

Herrera: SACS might be the way to do meet some of our goals, as it asks the school to look at processes and procedures.

GRAVEL PARKING LOT

Bray: Application for capital improvement. Drainage is an issue. Mr. Parsons is looking in to the situation and what can be done. The goal is to have it paved. Jere Smith should also be contacted. Because of city events, this is a situation that needs attention. Progress always seems to be occurring, but is slow at best.

FIELD SPACE SUBCOMMITTEE

Bray: No real field space at the school. A group of parents would like to see if the southwest part of the lower field be used more efficiently and the feasibility of that space. Is a subcommittee possible? Yes, one will be appointed with no objections.

ELECTION OF BUSINESS PARTNER REPRESENTATIVE

Bray: Angela Robinson was on the council since the LSC was founded. Cecily Harsch-Kinnane was nominated, voted in, but the election was invalid as she was a parent and not a business member.

Cucchi: What is the goal of having a business representative? Is it to help connect ourselves to a strategic business partner to build partnerships within our community?

Bray: Yes. Inman has partner with Federal Reserve. Also, the LSC guidebook seems to be vague with the position, as do the bylaws of the Grady HS LSC.

Wood: Important for parents and businesses in long-term, as it helps anchor Grady HS success with community success.

Guiney: Also important to school faculty, staff and students as well as for school culture.

Wood: Re-nominate Cecily Harsch-Kinnane. Has a deep knowledge of APS and Grady HS. Also, vote was unanimous.

Bowden: The bylaws regarding this position should reflect what we want the position to be.

Bray: Jennifer Kimball currently the Educational Outreach Director for the FURST Center at Georgia Tech. Recommended by John Brandhorst

Herrera: Why do we have to vote today? These members are somewhat unknown. Why not have TWO business members.

Bray: The vote has already been delayed, it may be a good idea to move forward with a full board.

Bowden: We need to look at bylaws and look at goals of the school, perhaps re-writing the bylaws to reflect the goals.

Perlstein: "Oh, let's just vote."

Voting:

For Kimball: Bray, Cucchi, Perlstein, Guiney

For Harsch-Kinnane: Wood, Herrera, Bowden

Kimball is new business representative on a vote of 4-3.

Bowden: At next meeting, look at bylaws to suggest changes in timelines and processes to clarify any discrepancies.

NEW BUSINESS

Bray: New calendar for LSC meetings for this year. What days of the week should we have the monthly meeting? Email from parent requesting that meeting times allow for parents with traditional work schedules to attend. Have moved time before, doesn't seem to make a difference. Therefore, recommendation to leave it at 4 o'clock at this time.

Herrera: Move time to allow those who work to attend, especially if it does not impact either way.

Bray: Schedule should also reflect what is best for those involved in the committee.

(Around room) 4:00pm seems to work best.

Guiney: Request: for the September meeting, meet the week of September 15.

Mr. Kish (in abstentia): Mondays or Fridays do not work for Mr. Kish, member of committee?

Bray: NEXT MEETING: September 15th, 4:00pm

Wood: SMART Goals: need to be thinking about this for this week.

New calendar approved by acclamation.

CIP

Guiney: Cluster Improvement Plan. Includes all schools within the cluster. Specifically, the goal for K-12 is to improve math scores and support for students regarding math. Increasing PD opportunities for K-12, math support in 9-10 grade. Vertical articulation; to begin conversations with feeder schools/teachers to look at curriculum from a teacher's perspective. Transition from middle school to high school can be smoother- this should help with this aspect. Important since we are moving to a more challenging assessment, including the constructed response.

Once it is completed, the entire report will be sent to team and also be placed on the school website.

Bray: Tabled: Scheduling issues/"Day One".

MASTER SCHEDULE

Guiney: All students had schedules on day one. Open House on Friday before school began meant late night from registrar and counseling to create schedules, but mission accomplished. We had many staff changes, and this caused some scheduling issue. We will have a master-schedule leader per Dr. Gadsen; Mr. Vincent is the person at Grady HS. It is a complicated schedule at Grady HS for numerous reasons and permutations, but it is being done.

APPOINTMENT FROM LSC TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Bray: CINS is changing bylaws, increasing their numbers, meaning the process of how the organization is available to other groups is in question. This is the same situation for LSC.

Wood: Since LSC has no bylaws on the process, SHOULD there be a procedure?

Bowden: Representation of the group should be in the Bylaws for several reasons, including liability.

Bray: Must wait until all of CINS changes are made to determine this aspect, since they are broadening their numbers.

ACTION ITEMS: Something broad and vague that allows for flexibility regarding CINS, and to see who should be the formal representative to CINS.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sherry Caldwell: Best way to express concerns to LSC

Bray: Email to Chair

Caldwell: Representing PTSA Special Needs Committee. I hope the LSC helps to address the needs of students with special needs.

Sara Van Beck: Re: Freshman Friday: the idea of calling the action as “bullying” might backfire. Additionally, there is an “opt-out” option for freshman who do not wish to participate. Perhaps having seniors talk with freshman during the mentorship program is a good place to start changing the mindset of this tradition.

Re: Bus lanes. So VERY confusing and difficult to find information.

Bray: Put link to minutes on Grady HS GradyGram.

Van Beck: Flooding is a huge issues. There are sewage lines underneath the construction, both known and unknown. Runoff from Grady HS has been known to cause flooding in the neighborhood. These types of real concerns need to be discussed in the plans for the bus lanes and changing the grounds at the school. Resolving such issues will most likely be expensive.

Music Midtown is approaching quickly. Is there representation from Grady HS at the meetings with organizers and the City of Atlanta to make sure school needs and concerns are being met? We need to be involved with this issue. This includes things such as sound checks, repairing damage to the corner lot as we were promised but it did not occur, re-routing of traffic during school hours, etc. An organization meeting is being held tomorrow night and hopefully there will be a representative at that meeting.

Re: Paving the gravel lot near the field. The field will flood if they are paved, and this will have a negative impact on both the field and possibly the trailers/classrooms. This is more than simply creating a parking lot: it is a possible facilities issue. All teams need to be represented when the lot is used for fundraising.

There is little field space- it needs to be shared.

Bray: There is little the LSC can do with some of these issues. Facilities need to be shared and agreements by all are the best way to approach at this time.

Laura Cohen: To Guiney: Computer use for testing such as the new Georgia Milestones for those do not have computers at home could negatively impact students.

Peer-to-Peer engagement: Shows that a lot of students do not know people at the school when they start. No program really exists so would like to see this change.

CIV: Need to be look at Special Education needs. This was done in the past, and should happen again.

Beginning of the year schedules did not seem to go as smoothly as possible. Schedule changes especially hard on students with special needs.

Thanks for email and robo-calls re: levelling of classes, Mr. Guiney! Great communication. That type of communication goes a long way.

Transition to high school is tough: a jumpstart program similar to those in the past was a good idea. Could something like this happen again?

Bray: Anytime someone would like to address the LSC about student needs, including those with special needs, they are welcome and encouraged to.

Ms. Kish: Letter and robo-call was a bit concerning as the process seems to be off-putting.

In regards to Freshman Friday and hazing: The hazing does not seem to be a big thing, but throwing of bleach balloons is. The danger in the action is obvious.

Propst: Discipline office is aware and is monitoring the situation.

Westmoreland: Over-crowding issue is known to Board, and the desire is to solve the problem is real. A system review of addresses is being discussed with Dr. Carstarphen. This issue is a problem with other schools as well.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm