

Local School Council Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2014

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

Guests: Christa Martin, PTSA President

Agenda approved: unanimous.

Minutes: Addition by Cucchi previously emailed to Secretary was added. Approved unanimously, with noted revision.

Guiney:

Mr. Guiney spoke with Jere Smith and Rudy Parsons to discuss a few items regarding the facility. The proposed bus lane on Eighth Street was discussed. The lane has been designed after working with city with planning. Construction could begin next spring and summer, funding permitting. The new lanes could cost between \$500,000 to \$600,000, much more expensive than originally envisioned.

Dr. Propst told Mr. Guiney that the paving/gravel for the northwest corner of the area by the trailers that is currently being used for parking has not been approved due to system processes. Mr. Parson's states it is a maintenance issue.

The subject of taking a look at the big picture and the use of facilities as well as overall space issues, trailers, and floating teachers was also discussed. Jere Smith, suggested that he (Mr. Guiney) bring the issues to Mr. Larry Hoskins, COO. Such a meeting held and Mr. Hoskins was told of the issues. Alva Hardy and Dr. Gadsen were in attendance as well. Number of course offerings, the fact that we have ten trailers, and have ten teachers without physical, permanent classrooms that must float were all discussed in the meeting. Mr. Hoskins asked for details regarding the master schedule to fully understand the issues facing Grady HS. Nothing was said definitively at this particular meeting. Mr. Guiney stated it was important to notice that the school has many electives and this fact makes space an issue.

Ms. Van Beck provided info re: field space. Proposal by Ms. Van Beck (word document) forwarded to Mr. Hoskins, Hoskins stated he would review the situation. Ms. Bray stated she would send the document to the members of the LSC.

At this point Ms. Wood asked if there was any sense of a time-frame for action to be taken regarding the issue of space and facilities. Mr. Guiney stated that he hoped there would be a follow-up in the next month or so. He also spoke of the need to look at the master schedule for next year before any next step can be taken. At that point the space and facilities issues will be factored in.

Ms. Bray reported that Mr. Hardy had informed the LCS that an audit of the Grady HS facilities had been conducted but no report has been seen by Mr. Guiney. The audit will be requested, and specifically the report/audit for facilities of Grady HS. The report/audit comes out of a request to determine ongoing maintenance needs at Grady HS requested by the LSC last year.

Regarding the field located at Charles Allen Dr. and Tenth St., Ms. Perlstein stated that the particular part of the field that is used quite frequently for outside vendors and trailers and issues concerning the field need to be addressed as it is an ongoing issue.

Ms. Perlstein also asked if the idea of trailers for next year been broached. Mr. Guiney stated that such an idea has not been broached at this point. Once the master schedule is in place and our needs are more fully understood, looking at that type of expansion would be discussed. He also mentioned that many of these types of decisions are made at a District level, within several levels of the District itself.

Regarding enrollment at the school, Ms. Bray pointed out that it seems more resources from the District regarding fraudulent issues.

Mr. Kish asked that if, regarding the statement made by Mr. Guiney about the large number of electives offered at Grady HS, there would be pressure to reduce the number of offerings next year in order to reduce the number of floating teachers.

Mr. Guiney stated that much would depend on the Pathways offered. Foreign Language, Fine Arts, CTAE are all pathways. It is a possibility that some or all of these new Pathways could be offered next year. Conversations have been held with administrative and leadership teams to assess the impact this change would have on the whole of the community. The reduction of offerings could ultimately occur depending on the impact and numbers of certain pathways, but it is quite difficult to assess that at this point.

Ms. Cucchi shared some dissatisfaction with the Biomedical Pathway as there is no fourth year component of the pathway for graduating seniors, making graduating from the Biomedical Pathway not as impactful as other pathways. It is important, she stated, that we look at the totality of the student.

Mr. Guiney agreed that this issue needs further review. When the leadership has conversations regarding offerings at the school next year and the year after, we must determine how the offering help and support all students. Strong leadership of academies/pathways seems to be key.

Ms. Wood asked if the district would cut classes such as AP classes in order to reduce the total number of teachers at Grady HS, as this would not be popular at all with the community.

Mr. Guiney responded by stating that enrollment numbers are actually what the District looks to for information regarding such decisions.

(Judge Bowden arrived at 4:29)

Mr. Kish inquired as to whether or not there is a comparative high school to look at within the area to help make determinations of electives and classes.

Mr. Guiney replied that there is not really a comparable high school within the District, given our demographics, facility, data and location. He also mentioned that a number of high schools within the District may be under enrollment.

OLD BUSINESS

Bus Lane-

Ms. Bray stated that the cost of the proposed bus lanes is an exorbitant amount of money. The original request was made due to safety issues and neighborhood concerns. Initial thoughts seemed that the problem is relatively an easy fix. She asked whether or not the proposal and project should be halted. She also asked if the current proposal is a quick solution rather than the BEST solution. The LSC, she stated, could request to look at Grady HS's master plan to look at alternatives.

Ms. Perlstein stated that we should indeed look to long term solutions, as we seem to always be "putting out fires."

Ms. Cucchi pointed out that the Inman Middle School master plan has been put in to place. She asked if there is a way to do so at Grady HS. Ms. Bray stated she sent a letter for such a request to be included in the next SPLOST. She asked if the Grady HS LSC like to look at such a letter for Grady HS.

Ms. Wood remarked that the LSC need plans that work and that help with what is best for students in such a process.

Ms. Bray said that for the next meeting she would take a look at Morningside ES letter, explore the situation, and create a sub-committee for these issues.

Ms. Wood asked whether or not this action would this be helpful to Mr. Guiney.

Mr. Guiney responded with information about/from the district that illuminates some of the process. Some schools have low enrollment. Sometimes the district will look to re-zoning- there are many issues with this situation. Creating an organized letter and communication to ask the district to look at Grady HS and what the cost would be. NOTE: Inman is at a population of 1,000- they may all come to Grady HS.

Ms. Bray stated that the loss of magnets, re-districting and other such changes impact school demographics. Now is the time to look. Should we create a sub-committee now?

Mr. Kish: Yes. Timing is everything.

Judge Bowden: Does the fact that the LSC is involved with issues regarding facilities and grounds conflict with similar actions being taken by the PTSA. Specifically, does the LSC subcommittee conflict with any similar PTSA committee? Ms. Bray stated that the LSC committee is a different type of committee.

Ms. Cucchi commented that in a Biomedical and Engineering pathway meeting, there was a request for a space/capacity study which did not happen, so such inquiry is important.

Ms. Bray, Mr. Kish and Mr. Herrera will work on the letter to create a rough draft for the next meeting, with the input of Mr. Guiney.

Regarding the need for an Engineering Lab- a workable solution is in place.

Regarding the need for retro-fitting general education classrooms into Science Labs: All have been retro-fitted.

Ms. Bray shared the fact that Mr. Sellers, science teacher, used the online resource of Donors Choose, and received a grant for his science classes. Other science classes are doing the same with this website.

Ms. Cucchi pointed out that there will be a media splash on the DonorsChoose.org website regarding Mr. Sellers. Mr. Esposito, also a teacher in the science department, currently has a project on the

website. Ms. Bray suggested that including this funding possibility in the Grady Gram might be helpful for teachers.

This issue of “floating teachers” was removed from the agenda until next spring as the issue cannot really be addressed until then.

The gravel parking lot was also removed from the agenda until further notice.

Regarding renovating/utilizing practice fields off-site, Ms. Bray recommending writing a letter of support from the LSC to Ms. Van Beck’s proposal. The actual proposal will be sent to the LSC sub-committee members. Goal is to have Walden MS as our practice field. Ms. Perlstein asked if there would be a need for security at this site, specifically if a police officer. Ms. Bray responded that ultimately this issue is an APS issue. Ms. Wood asked who the committee would ultimately represent, and Ms. Bray responded that it would represent the LSC. Ms. Perlstein motioned that the LSC draft a letter on behalf of a subcommittee. Ms. Cucchi will write the letter. Judge Bowden asked where Walden MS is located (the proposed field location). It is near Parkway and the King Center.

Ms. Bray discussed the idea of an LSC representative to CINS. At this point, no formal process exists for such representative. Cindy Holbert was approved by the PTSA as the representative to CINS. Therefore there is no need to formalize Ms. Holbert as an LSC representative. There is no issue as we have not had representation as in the past. If we want representation to CINS, perhaps we should wait as CINS changes their organizational structure.

Ms. Wood asked how Grady HS representatives impact/influence CINS.

Christa Martin, current president of the PTSA, replied by stating that such roles are fluid as interest in CINS increases. If the LSC would like to have a representative, CINS likes to be more inclusive and most likely be open to such a proposal. Structure of the organization is, current representatives can be flexible. Ms. Wood stated that she was aware that elementary schools have official representation, so perhaps high school should as well. Ms. Bray asked how the Council should move forward. Should there be action taken this year or next year? Christa Martin and Cindy Holbert should perhaps be the reps for the remainder of this year, with a request that the LSC be included for representation. An email will be sent to CINS about this issue.

NEW BUSINESS

CINS Facilities letter- to parent school leadership. Most schools have facilities issues. They are going to write a letter from a cluster level. CINS looks at three areas: facilities from a space/enrollment issues, from a maintenance perspective, enrollment and fraudulent enrollment. Letter will be drafted quickly, to be sent to board and superintendent. Ms. Cucchi asked that such information of the age of facility needs to be considered. Ms. Perlstein pointed out that Atlanta Public Schools utilizes Grady HS facilities quite often, often with monetary remuneration. None of those funds seem to be used at Grady HS to maintain facilities. Ms. Wood gave the example of the movie filmed here this summer. Other such examples include football games, music midtown and arts festivals. Some of those events used rented tents, equipment etc. It was also pointed out that there is very little coordination with the school from other entities regarding facility use.

Enrollment issues are important to be mentioned. Mr. Kish stated that if school offering change, our facility needs change.

Ms. Bray mentioned that a Master plan is needed for Grady HS to make sure the point is clear on this issue.

Regarding facilities, Mr. Kish added that because we have students here late at night, the campus is should be well-lit.

Additionally, Ms. Cucchi stated that outdated chemical pick-up from the District has been a problem in the past.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr. Guiney told us that Ms. Perry-Ponder suggested we should determine our SMART goals for the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP).

Math and English are transitioning to the new Georgia Milestone Assessment, which replaces the End-of-Course Test. A major difference will be a constructed response to both of these tests. SMART goals, therefore, will be determined a bit different. It will be difficult to quantify numbers with unlike assessments. With the new test, new wording and expectations will be introduced.

We need to continuously make all attempts to assist our students with disabilities as much as possible as they are have the potential to fall behind. This focus should also be on this new test.

ACTION STEPS: Look at the data, look at areas to use as SMART goals in order to have the goals available for next meeting. Additionally, Mr. Guiney stated that input can be included in the school improvement plan from the LSC in the next week, and such input should be copied to Byron Barnes.

Ms. Perlstein asked if this test will count toward the improvement of the school/be applied to data and numbers next year. Mr. Guiney stated that nothing had been finalized by the State, but it is better to act as if the assessments will be approved and counted. Nothing has officially be said that this will be a “hold-harmless” year. This decision ultimately is in the hands of the DOE.

Ms. Wood inquired as to our Students With Disabilities (SWD) population and the percentage of the specific SWD population. Mr. Guiney responded that it is less than 10% of population. This number Includes all students with an IEP. There are different sets of students to meet specific needs who are using the GAA rather than traditional testing and graduation. This is probably about 20 students.

Ms. Bray asked if the school has transfers to Grady HS with special needs, as opposed to no general transfers. The information is unknown.

Mr. Herrera commented that the numbers/statistics in the CIP seem a bit out-of-line and that data seemed to be missing in the first set of data. Mr. Guiney stated that numbers more in line with further data-sets, and the document should be reviewed for errors. Ms. Wood asked what actions could be done to help with this review, including a close-reading of the information. Mr. Guiney agreed this would be a good idea. He also noted that all data is lagging. For instance, last year’s graduation rate is not yet known, we are waiting on the data to come from the Georgia Department of Education. For any noted review items, sent emails to Mr. Guiney and copy Mr. Barnes.

Judge Bowden remarked that teachers should be part of the conversation regarding the Continuous Improvement Plan. Mr. Guiney responded that we can look at that fact and act accordingly. We need to include teachers involved so that tasks being asked of teachers are known.

Ms. Bray asked if the CIP is simply a template document or whether or not the LSC can add/subtract. Mr. Guiney responded that we should keep the basic template, but revisions are quite possible.

Ms. Bray also commented that finding AP scores is sometimes difficult and wondered if AP information could be part of the CIP. Additionally, the question was asked as to what the function/purpose of AP goals means to the school. Mr. Guiney stated that such information could indeed be part of the CIP. Ms. Wood commented that with the number of AP offered at the school, evaluation of the program makes sense.

MUSIC MIDTOWN

Ms. Bray recommended that the school monitor the impact of the festival on the school day. Specifically, attendance and tardies should be monitored. In the past sound-checks and construction of the stages in Piedmont Park have had a negative impact in the classroom, as well as on extra-curricular activities, practices, tutorials, etc. Teachers should take note of any disruptions. A survey, possibly through survey monkey, will be sent out after the festival. Ms. Cucchi suggested that perhaps we should work with the Children's School to see if the same issues are being felt at both schools. Ms. Bray stated that it is the job of the LSC to gather information and then the information to the appropriate parties. This discussion will be on next month's agenda.

The LSC meeting for October was scheduled for October 20 at 6pm and has been moved to October 21 at 4:00pm.

No Public comment offered.

Meeting adjourned.