

September 3, 2015 Minutes

Board Members Present:

Curtis Douglass, Eleanor Brookins, Millie Dunn, Chip Fife, Lisa Jern, Stephen Lawrence, Mike Everly, Joleen Neel

Guests/Non-Members:

Frankie Williams, Dawnitra Quigley (PTSA Co-Presidents); Brian Henkin (Jackson LSC Parent); Amanda Funk (IB MYP); Garth Peters (Buckhead Coalition); Susan Mason (Buckhead Rotary Club); Nan Hunter (NAHS, Dept. Chair, Math)

1. Called to Order

4:20 p.m. by Ms. Dunn, Chairperson

OLD BUSINESS

2. Approval of Minutes from August 12, 2015 (Lisa Jern)

Motion by Ms. Dunn to approve minutes; second by Ms. Brookins; approved unanimously.

3. Amendment to Publication Requirements in Bylaws (Lisa Jern)

The LSC's existing bylaws require notice of meetings to be published in the county's legal organ (the Fulton County Daily Report). Because this seemed both unnecessary and ineffective to provide notice, Ms. Jern reviewed the Open Meetings Act to determine if the bylaws could be amended. The group discussed that, despite the fact that we anticipated that the LSC was going to be superseded by a form of local school governance under a charter system, it made sense to amend our bylaws, if possible, because the Open Meetings Act applies to LSGCs as well.

Because Georgia's Open Meetings Act requires publication in the newspaper *only* if the previously posted time/place/location of the meeting changes, Ms. Dunn moved to amend the bylaws to conform to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act, as well as making the additional changes proposed by Ms. Jern (as noted in Attachment A to these minutes) to conform the bylaws to the Act regarding posting of the meeting schedule and agenda.

Seconded by Ms. Brookins; approved unanimously.

4. Future Meetings (Millie Dunn)

Motion from Ms. Dunn to move April meeting one week later (from April 7 to April 14) so as not to conflict with Spring Break. Second from Mr. Fife; unanimous approval.

5. Introduction of Guests

Buckhead Coalition, Inc. (Garth Z. Peters, Executive Vice President). Mr. Peters explained that the Coalition has a long history with NAHS. They have a new Liaison Education Committee, specifically focused on NAHS. Paul Brown (Arby's CEO) chairs the committee. Its objective is to increase enrollment (59% -- Mr. Peters didn't indicate the source of this number) for Buckhead at North Atlanta. The Coalition is interested in how to acknowledge students in school—they are communicating with Mr. Douglass on this. Ms. Dunn suggested that Coalition also meet with LSC's Community Involvement Committee (Mr. Fife), but Mr. Peters thought that the communication should continue with the Principal instead.

Buckhead Rotary Club (Susan Mason). Ms. Mason described two initiatives of the Rotary Club of interest to NAHS students. First, the RC sponsors the Interact Club, in which students work along with a Rotarian on one of two projects – Open Hand or the Atlanta Humane Society. Second, the BRC is sponsoring a Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest, which Ms. Mason described as the largest essay contest in North America (Attachment B). The contest ties in with ethics instruction at APS.

Amanda Funk (NAHS, IB/MYP Coordinator). Ms. Funk is from Tampa, Florida. She has worked with IB for seven years, from elementary to high school.

Action Item: Ms. Dunn will invite Ms. Funk back next month to describe IB MYP program and initiatives. Ms. Dunn proposed that Ms. Neel and Ms. Jern meet with Ms. Funk to discuss how the LSC and parents can assist her.

6. Math Test Book Update (Mike Everly)

Mr. Everly re-capped concerns that integrated math curriculum – *i.e.*, as contrasted with discrete math (Algebra I, Geometry Algebra II) – seemed to be negatively impacting APS math test scores. APS is phasing in re-introduction of discrete math over three years. NAHS obtained funding from the Foundation to purchase Algebra I textbooks now.

Ms. Hunter reiterated that, while NAHS has had books for calculus, statistics, IB Math Studies, and IB SL (Standard Level), we haven't had them for the classes Mr. Everly

referenced. The District is staying with integrated for geometry for now and is moving to discrete next year.

Regarding the Algebra I textbooks, we are currently surveying student preferences for online vs. actual textbooks. Each student has one of the two workbooks they will ultimately have. Regarding IB Math SL (a two-year course), the Math Dept. asked parents to volunteer to purchase the books, then to donate them to the school.

To summarize, the only math textbooks that we currently do *not* have are Geometry and Algebra II (Adv. Algebra). We are going back to the District to see what funding is available for Algebra II (\$15/student/year; cost is “up front”). If that happens, then next year we would only need Geometry.

Mr. Douglass previously appointed Dwionne Freeman to organize NAHS textbooks. This was critical to our knowing what we had and what we needed, and Mr. Freeman did a great job.

7. LSGC Update (Mike Everly)

We have been referring to the governance change as the “Local School Governance Council,” but the District has started using the term “Local School Governance Team.” By way of background, APS has applied to the State to become a “charter system” (as opposed to the “charter school” or “charter cluster” model). The interview went well, and our application remains to be voted on by the State in either September or November.

The timeline on the LSGT transition is that elections would take place in January. The new Team would go into place in May, comprised of teacher, parent, student and community representatives. Formal training would occur in the spring. Mr. Everly suggested, and the Council agreed, that there would be an “overlapping process” between the LSGT and the LSC between January and May.

Action Item: Mr. Everly proposed that we have a Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 6. The meeting would be for informational purposes. The District is putting together a video and presentation. Ms. Dunn proposed that Mr. Everly reach out to Mr. Regan about videotaping the Townhall Meeting for the students, particularly since the Team will include student representation.

8. Community Engagement: Website Update (Chip Fife)

NAHS has (i) an NAHS website, for which there is mobile access; (ii) an NAHS App; and

(ii) the PTSA website. Additionally, the boosters and sports have their own sites. The PTSA and NAHS offer similar content, except for the “agenda” of the PTSA. The LSC discussed generally the concept of integrating the websites.

Action Item: Mr. Fife proposed that the NAHS website be the “home page,” with the other websites as tabs. He also proposed adding photos to the website. He will follow up with Mr. Regan and the photographers for which Ms. Dunn forwarded contact info.

NEW BUSINESS

9. College Fair: Report and Update (Joleen Neel)

NAHS has previously participated in the college fair hosted by Westminster and Lovett. After a location change, NAHS was not included in that fair. In anticipation of the 2015-16 school year, the Career & College Center, with significant input and assistance from an LSC parent subcommittee (including Ms. Neel), organized its own fair. NAHS personally invited all of the schools attending the other college fair and worked all summer to organize the fair.

Last week, 196 schools participated in a college fair hosted on North Atlanta’s campus. 700 North Atlanta juniors and seniors attended (after submitting a statement explaining why they wanted to attend). In addition, we included the top 10% of students from other APS schools (roughly 300 students).

Mr. Douglass reported that the college representatives commented specifically on how organized the fair was – high praise coming from reps who attend these fairs all the time. They also commented that the kids asked great questions, and they appreciated the Hospitality Room, which was well stocked by our parents and others.

The group generally discussed other college resources available at NAHS.

Action Item: Please thank Leslee Evans for her hard work. She deserves a lot of credit for the college fair’s success.

10. Principal Report (Curtis Douglass)

10.1 North Atlanta Cluster Mission Statement (Attachment C)

Mr. Douglass reminded the LSC that he has high expectations for North Atlanta, building the school to be the best in North America. Against this backdrop, he summarized the history of mission and vision statements within the District and asked the members to review the statements with an eye to this goal. To make sure we were reading carefully, Mr. Douglass asked the members and guests to read (aloud) the NAHS Mission and

Vision Statements. One edit was made to change the preposition “between” to “among” on the Vision Statement.

10.2 North Atlanta Student Unit Recovery Plan

Regarding unit recovery, we are moving forward as a school with the district’s unit recovery plan, but with the distinction that NAHS will permit only one re-take of unit tests and capping the second score at 80 (which is considered “mastery”). Departments will have discretion regarding re-taking quizzes. Mr. Douglass emphasized that our goal continues to be that the students learn (“master”) the material. Regarding the concept of “re-taking” as an educational tool, he compared tests in high school to other significant test that students take – SAT, LSAT, drivers test – and made the point that these exams can be taken a second time. Students aren’t required to live with those results if they perform poorly the first time.

The recovery plan will also apply to IB but with the IB grading built in.

The unit recovery plan will be published soon.

10.3 School Improvement Plan

The Title I Plan and the School Improvement Plan, previously two separate documents, will be merged going forward. Mr. Douglass just learned about this yesterday, so still needs to understand how these two will be integrated at NAHS (*e.g.*, given that the Improvement Plan includes IB and AP – and will continue to – and Title I is focused on funding).

10.4 NAHS School-Wide Data (Attachments D and E)

The LSC reviewed the information provided by Dr. Gadson, the Assistant Superintendent over high schools, to whom Mr. Douglass reports (see attachments). We should know the 2015 graduation rate in the next two weeks. Mr. Douglass noted that the end of pathway assessments are very low because the test doesn’t match up with the content of the class. Because there aren’t consequences for the student to doing poorly, no focus has been given to the test. The intention is that that will change – *i.e.*, that the course material and test will be aligned. This is key because it affects our CCRPI rate.

Regarding SAT scores, Mr. Douglass was disappointed that we still lag slightly behind Grady but noted that NAHS has significantly more kids taking the test.

10.5 Staffing Update (Attachment F)

After leveling, NAHS “earned” two additional teachers (and possibly a third – we’ll know after Labor Day). We are adding a social studies and a Spanish teacher, although we may choose not to split those classes since we’ll be six weeks into the school year.

Mr. Douglass provided information to the LSC regarding Terrence Amos (PE) and Youssef Arman (Arabic) (see Attachment). He told us that Takeshia Hollis is leaving to become an Instructional Coach at Grady. Imel Patel is moving up to teach Pre-Calculus and Advanced Algebra.

10.6 Textbook Update (Attachment G)

The District didn't budget any money for high school text books, despite the fact that the indication had been in March/April that we would get \$41,000. That money is being re-distributed, and the high school principals are now being told that the "discretionary money" in their budgets was supposed to be used for textbooks. (It appears that Drs. Carstarphen and Gadson didn't know that either.) Our discretionary funds were used for IB MYP Coordinator.

Mr. Douglass reviewed "NAHS Textbook Needs" (Attachment G) with the LSC. Information was provided by the department chairs. (Smaller numbers referenced are for classroom sets." We are looking into the option for online versions of textbooks as well. Mr. Douglass doesn't anticipate asking the Foundation to come up with the funding for textbooks.

10.7 NAHS Accreditation Review

March 15 is the SACS review. Ms. Neel volunteered to assist.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 6:17 p.m.