

Fort Daniel Elementary
Local School Council
Meeting Minutes
September 15th, 2022

Fort Daniel Elementary School Council met in regular session, in person.
Member present: Barbara Tucker Lindsay Park, Katy Hulse, Andy Pelphrey, Joysmir Arbelaez-Jimenez and Lea Raker.

Meeting started 8:01 am.

Dr. Tucker:

- Meeting as cluster principals next week to decide whether the next meeting will be at the high school. The next meeting is tentative for this reason.
- Before the pandemic, district leaders would be at this meeting, and everybody had the opportunity to share as a cluster. So hopefully this meeting will be able to take place this year.
- Our enrollment as of today is 687 students. That is high for us at this time in the school year. Usually, we reach this number by February or March, but we are already at 687. We will keep an eye on enrollment.

Kendall Bennett (New Gifted teacher):

- She is new to Fort Daniel, but she has been in the county since 2008 and has been teaching gifted students since 2011.
- This year and moving forward, Ms. Bennett hopes to enrich our students' academic experience by using real-world application in our standards, working with homeroom teachers to help give them opportunities to interact with the local and global community.
- For example, 3rd graders are learning about problems with equity in education. They have decided to help by building a "little free library" here at Fort Daniel. This is a place where people in the community can take a book, leave a book, and we can help facilitate a love of literacy in our school and our surrounding community.

Dr. Tucker:

- 4th and 5th grade will be working with a retirement community, collaborating about poetry, writing, etc. Exciting community outreach.
- Our district's blueprint for the future: Our school and school district over the past few years have faced some challenges as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic and the learning loss that our students experienced during that time. We want to make sure we are filling in the gaps for our students.
- Our district's initiatives center around the four E's.
 1. Empathy- The ability to understand the feelings of another person and place yourself in their position. This is the entry point in creating the Equity piece.
 2. Equity- The redesign of our systems and programs and initiatives to make sure that we reduce educational inequity, to make sure every single student is getting what they specifically need. Targeted supports to support our struggling learners. Enrich activities to support those students who need enrichment. We want all of our students to succeed, so we are going to increase opportunities.

3. Effectiveness- The district's challenge to sustain our legacy of excellent performance. Gwinnett is Rhode Prize winners. Every district in Georgia and the nation puts their eye on Gwinnett County Schools. Our goal is to sustain the culture of excellence and to keep that going, even in the midst of a changing community and school district. That's why we have to look at each student and support them individually.
 4. Excellence- Strategic priority, the longstanding thinking that we want to be a world class organization in everything that we do. Communication, supporting our students, supporting our families.
- Each principal in Gwinnett was asked to work with their staff in selecting 5 focus areas. Each strategic priority has 3 goals. Our staff met in July during pre-planning to determine which ones we wanted to focus on as a school.
 - We decided to focus on staff and student wellbeing, our multi-tiered system of supports, opportunity and access, results-based evaluation system, and world-class communication and engagement.
 - Empathy 1B: Staff and student wellbeing
 - Student
 - Our students have morning meeting every day, a time for them to connect with their teacher and one another prior to instruction beginning. SEL focused morning meetings.
 - Restorative practice opportunities for our students who might get off track. Kids are kids, and they make mistakes. We have to give them the opportunity to self-correct. Conflict resolution for our students to make better decisions.
 - Counseling lessons are being restructured to focus on Social Emotional Learning. We need to focus on the whole student, not just academics. Making sure we continue our PBIS program and rewarding students for good behavior. Focusing on clubs and bringing those back.
 - Staff
 - For staff, we want to focus on staff wellbeing as well. Teambuilding, connecting with one another. It's important to take time to decompress. We have the Hawk's Nest, a quiet place for teachers to go at times they don't have their students. Teacher talks with admin and collaboration for support with problem solving.
 - We want staff to feel like Fort Daniel is the place to be. Example, a staff pizza party to thank teachers for eating lunch with their students for the entire month of August.
 - Equity 2A: Multi-tiered system of supports
 - MTSS, Multi-tiered system of supports: Academic and social emotional piece. Universal screeners just ended for language arts and math (given 3 times a year). We will have targeted interventions based on that data. We have Hawk Time in the morning for these interventions.
 - Professional learning for our teachers. We are piloting EL, a language arts program. Our teachers are excited to have this resource, despite it being something new and different they are having to get used to. 30 schools in the district are involved in the pilot this year. Each grade level talked about it last year. Teachers have not had a literacy resource in a long time. We have district leaders coming in to support us as we maneuver the EL pilot. There are a lot of different conversations and real-

life dialogue through EL. What they are learning can be taken beyond the walls of Fort Daniel.

- Making sure we are supporting students and have a mechanism for updating families as students go through tier 2 and tier 3 interventions. Making sure families are involved in the decisions making process for the SST.
- Equity 2B: Opportunity and access
 - This year we have the Play2Learn program, which is a district wide program. We will continue to have schoolwide multicultural events, enrichment opportunities during Hawk Time, continuation of our PBIS implementation, our STEM vertical, professional learning for teachers, peer observations, collaborative learning teams, increasing identification of gifted students.
- Effectiveness 3A: Results-Based Evaluation System
 - Implementing the tiered interventions based on MTSS. MTSS is something we need in order to meet the needs of each student, especially after the pandemic. Also opportunities to celebrate and reward student success, which includes the January award celebration.
- Excellence 4C: World-class communications and engagement:
 - Ensure consistency across grade levels in regard to newsletters, grading, etc. Focus group of parents to determine the best practices for two-way communication, so the voices of parents and community are heard. Coffee chats with principal, volunteer training, parent informational sessions, etc. Ensuring communication is available in the languages represented by our school. Increasing parent participation.

Upcoming events:

- Hispanic Heritage Month - 9/15-10/15
- Parent workshop series - 9/27
- Fall break - 10/6-10/10
- Literacy Night - 10/13
- Early release conferences - 10/19-20
- Book character dress-up day and parade - 10/28

School Council

- Chair, co-chair, and secretary positions are open for nomination.
- Andy: Last year at Fort Daniel, he has been on the school council for 9 years. He has been very supportive with the Mill Creek cluster through the years.
- Orientation: School council improves communication, participation of parents and the community.
- How can school councils make a difference?
 - Bring committees and schools together in the spirit of cooperation to solve difficult- educational problems.
 - Improve academic achievement.
 - Provide support for teachers and administrators.
 - Bring parents into the school-based decision-making process.
- What's the purpose of school councils?
 - To help local school boards of education and to nurture participation.

- To bring parents and the community together to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's concerns.
 - To share ideas for school improvement.
- What is the mission of school council?
 - The mission is by providing advice and recommendations to the school principal and (when appropriate) the superintendent and the local board of education on any matter related to student achievement and school improvement.
 - The law specifically mentions 14 topics which school councils can address.
 - The 14 topics fall into 3 broad categories:
 - 1. Student learning
 - LSPI, Curriculum and assessments, Reports from principal regarding progress of student goals, Report cards, Delivery of early intervention services
 - 2. Local school board policies
 - Extracurricular activities, Community use of our facilities, School budget priorities (capital improvement plans), Student discipline and attendance.
 - 3. Communication and collaboration
 - Developing our school profile with data, Services and interventions, Environment of our school, Communication strategies, Methods of involving parents and the community.
- What is a school council legally authorized to do?
 - Advise and make recommendations to the principal, local board of education and superintendent on matters relating to student achievement.
 - Participate in selection of school principals in accordance with written policy.
 - Review and approve school improvement plan.
 - Additional responsibilities: Appointing committees, study groups, utilizing advisory groups, providing parent members to serve on an intervention team, participate in any learning at the local school ordered by the state board of education.
- What are expectations of all school council members?
 - Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues
 - Regularly participate in school council meetings
 - Participate in information and training programs
 - Act as a link/ambassador between the school council and the community
 - Encourage participation of parents and others within the school community
 - Work to improve student achievement and performance
- What are other responsibilities of the local board of education?
 - Provide all nonconfidential information including budgets, expenditure information, class sizes to the council as requested
 - Designate a representative to attend council meetings
 - Receive and consider all recommendations of the school council
- School council membership
 - Principal
 - Parents/guardians of enrolled students
 - At least two parents must be businesspersons
 - At least two certified teachers
- What is the term of school council members?
 - Terms must be staggered, ½ of parents and teachers will be elected to 1-year terms, and ½ will be elected to 2-year terms
- When does a vacancy occur?

- When a member withdraws by submitting a written resignation from the council
 - An inactive member as defined in bylaws
 - A member no longer meets specified qualifications
- Who is a vacancy filled?
 - An election to fill a vacancy must occur within 30 days
- Who are the officers of the council?
 - Officers elected at first meeting
 - Terms specified by council bylaws
 - Chairperson - parent member
 - Vice chairperson -
 - Steps in in absence of chairperson
 - Secretary - usually school AA
 - Attend all meetings
 - Give notice of all meetings
 - Principal
 - Sets agenda and meeting time/location and notify all council members
 - Perform all duties required by law
 - Develop school improvement plan and school operations plan
 - Aid in development of agenda of each meeting, after taking suggestions into consideration
- Conducting business
 - A quorum is comprised of a majority of the members
 - Amending bylaws requires $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of the council
 - Adopts bylaws as appropriate to conduct business
 - Bylaws template is available
 - Meetings must be held at least 4 times per year (may be called by the chairperson or by the request of the majority of the council)
 - Voting- each council member has one vote, each vote must be recorded and kept for that purpose.
 - Agenda- items may be added at request of board members, must be posted at meeting site within 2 weeks of the meeting
 - Minutes- secretary makes minutes available to the public at the school site, a summary of the meeting, votes must be listed with each person voting for or against
 - Open meetings- school councils are subject to open meetings, open to the public
 - Confidentiality law- student records or personnel evaluations are not accessible to school council members
- What are school councils doing?
 - Learning about test scores, assessments, school budgets, teacher allocations, student interventions and support items, curriculum and instruction, discipline and other student policies.
 - The most frequently addressed topics are math and reading literacy, attendance, parental involvement, developing plans to reduce absenteeism and tardiness, publicizing goals and achievements, addressing a variety of needs in the school.
- 2022-2023 School Council training was completed.
- We were unable to vote for Chair parent and Co-Chair. Voting will be done electronically.

Meeting ended at 8:41am