

DHS School Council Meeting-MINUTES  
March 13, 2018

Attendance:

Council: Bruce Kaminsky, Kevin Dankosky, Kim Weatherly, Mary K Morris, Randi Siegel, Dave Levy, Ebony Greene, Ms. Cole

Guest: Elizabeth Julian, Pam Tallmadge, David Kopel, Sylvia Worsnop, Saundre Stewart, Becky Alterney, Chanel Fairley, Schelle Purcell, Trent McEntyne, Susan Menich, Elizabeth Lieldman, Nikki Mastin, Emily McEntyne, Sam McEntyne, Liiana Hoyos

Bruce opens meeting at 4:04pm.

Minutes approved from December 12, 2017 meeting.

Guest Speakers:

- Chanel Fairley (student) and Schelle Purcell (parent), organizer of Black Lives Matter rally which took place at DHS just before Winter Break, came to have an open discussion with the School Council. Bruce opened the discussion asking what can the School Council do for them, talk about feedback from the rally, how can DHS environment improve for all students, and follow up with next steps.
- Chanel bravely articulated that the rally was not about the cheerleading photo, but about what is happening at DHS and the challenges faced by African Americans and other minority students. She feels issues are always being brushed under the rug and something needs to be done as they have been dealing with these for a few years and it's time to make a stance. Chanel wants all students to be treated equally. Chanel's friend has had personal altercations and feels the school doesn't deal with the issues fairly with students. This was one of the main reasons for the rally. Chanel clearly stated it is not about Black Lives Matter since we have many minorities at DHS and again it's about "Equality" on education, how we are treated, and dress code.
- Schelle Purcell (Chanel's mother) spoke about how they moved here from NC and did their research before choosing DHS. She chose DHS due to its high academic ratings. Schelle advocates for her children to stand up for what they believe in. Her daughter has been alienated from friends of different ethnicities after the BLM rally. She wants more inclusion for students in place and was told these steps are in place. She has heard that an African American could never win Homecoming (although her daughter has been on the homecoming court twice and an African American won Homecoming King this year). All she wants for her daughter is to feel comfortable and confident with the teachers she spends 180 days of the year with during school year. She noticed not all teachers are equal with their students. Let's have more inclusive ways to deal with racial issues—we all should be ONE.
- Questions were asked from the Council and guests in attendance.
- In Summary, the student and mom don't want to talk badly about DHS as they had the chance to talk to the media after the BLM rally, but turned them down. She wants her daughter to graduate from DHS. Others need to take a step back and put themselves in others shoes. School should feel safe for our students as they don't know what's happening at home.
- They would like to see a plan of action as to what is happening to make a change. They don't want this conversation to end. They are looking to start a Black Student Union Club. All clubs are open to everyone and this one would be open to all. Everyone should have a place they feel

they can belong to. This should be an active club that helps out in the community, not just a name.

- It was mentioned that DHS needs a vehicle on how dress code can be enforced. Students are actively protesting how the girls DHS dress code is enforced differently than the boys.
- Ms. Cole commented that since January she has done some resetting and cannot control what happened before that. Each 1st period teacher is to do a dress code check.
- School Council member asked, "How can we build understanding and compassion from other groups?" Ms. Cole commented, "We would like to get DHS to be a cultural responsive school."
- Another issue that was brought up was DHS doesn't do a quality job promoting Black History Month. There is no visibility about it except in the library.
- Teachers and Parents of the Fine Arts department came to speak to School Council. When DHS had renovations done in 2012 there were plans for a Fine Arts department, but nothing was done at that time. They want to be assured that in the upcoming construction that is to take place, Fine Arts is a top priority. DHS facility is embarrassing compared to what other schools in our district. For example, space is so small that student's seats are blocking the fire exit door, risers are in poor condition and unsafe, instruments are in bad condition as well. Who will be on the construction committee to have say in the Fine Arts renovations? Ms. Cole is waiting on parameters of who will be on the committee. The biggest issue they face is the students take orchestra, band, drama, chorus as a class, so they don't have the fees the athletic boosters clubs receive. They rely solely on booster club fundraising.
- Ms. Cole will look into seeing what the County should be providing for Fine Arts and if DHS is receiving all that they need.
- Students today are in an AP culture and will opt out of taking a fine arts class for that reason. DHS needs to do a better job promoting AP for fine arts.
- They also expressed how important it is to invest in elementary school with Fine Arts. Currently they only have 1 band and orchestra teacher who travels to the elementary school. These students only have it 1 day a week.
- Fine Arts faculty will be submitting a list of priorities they would like to see happen at DHS.
- A DHS student in attendance mentioned that the acapella club does not have a sponsor, piano or a place to practice.

#### Teacher's Report

- Kevin Dankosky attended the Dekalb Cross Council Meeting comprised of Region I schools. PCMS was not in attendance.
- Goal of the meeting is to bridge transition between elementary, middle, and high school. Teachers could go to the other schools to meet IL teachers and develop relationships and discuss objectives.
- On March 28, Village Burger is providing lunch for the staff.
- Ebony Greene reported frustration on the grab and go line. We hope by spring break the contractor will be at school to install the new electrical outlet for the grab and go station.

#### Principal's Report

- Walk out- safety measures are in place. Dunwoody Police will be at DHS during the student walk out. The students will only have 17 minutes to leave class, leave the building, and enter back to their classroom.
- Ms. Cole is currently working on budget and will be getting 4-5 new teachers for next year.
- DHS currently has 1958 students and next year projected to have 2042 which does not include private school students who will be moving over to DHS.

New Business/Unfinished Business

- Ms. Cole is looking into adding a description of each club that is offered at DHS and put on to the website.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:03 p.m.