

**Minutes of the Dunwoody High School
School Council Meeting
October 13, 2015**

The DHS School Council met in regular session on Tuesday, October 13, 2015 from 3:30-5:30pm in the Media Center at Dunwoody High School.

Attendance

School Council Members present: Tom McFerrin, Heather Carter, Kelly Clinch, Ashley Doolittle, Ann O'Connor, Chad Griffith, and Renate Herod. Council Members absent: Michael Berry and Grant Wells. Community members present: Melanie King, Peggy Stecker, John Henegan, Bob Mullen, Lynn Deutsch.

Welcome and Housekeeping Issues

Chairperson, Ashley Doolittle called the meeting to order at 3:37pm. Then, Ashley asked if there were any additions or deletions to the September minutes and there were none. Ashley said the minutes were approved as they stand. Then, Ashley introduced our guest speakers from DCSS Central Office Operations department—Josh Williams (COO), Dan Drake, Joseph Brew, and Richard Boyd.

Guest Speaker – Josh Williams and Dan Drake

Mr. Williams said we are at the beginning of the assessment of needs that could be funded by SPLOST and as part of that, they are assessing the overcrowding issue at DHS. He referred us to the DCSS website page on “Building S.P.A.C.E.S” where he says parents and community members can find all the details for the county’s plans and dates and times of community meetings. There is a Region 1 meeting at Chamblee HS next Tuesday, October 20 at 7pm and it’s important for stakeholders to attend to express the needs of their local schools. If people can’t make the meeting, they should share their thoughts on the website. The county really wants community input now as they are looking closely at the overcrowding in the Cross Keys and Dunwoody clusters to decide the best strategy—building and/or redistricting. Right now DHS is at 121% utilization (294 seats over). Dan Drakes says he is hoping to have firmer numbers by the end of November. After board approval, the county will contract a feasibility study to gather data to assess the needs of both Regions 1 and 2. They are focused on a data driven strategy to help alleviate overcrowding in both regions—will probably require a combination of building and redistricting. Ann asked about the timing for these assessments and decisions. Mr. Williams said the decisions about how to alleviate the issues in Cross Keys will happen on a quicker timetable, before SPLOST, as they are most urgent. The Dunwoody cluster decisions will be after SPLOST, probably this spring. Mr. Drake added that the overcrowding in Cross Keys elementary will make overcrowding in that cluster at the middle and HS level worse than Dunwoody schools are now. Lakeside is also facing serious overcrowding at over 400 seats above capacity without portable classrooms. Many teachers there are floating. Kelly expressed concern about the effectiveness of that as a “permanent” fix for overcrowding. Ashley asked about why the county hasn’t addressed these issues earlier since they have been ongoing for years. Mr. Williams said he feels it was due to the inconsistent leadership within the school system over the last few years. He says we’ve also had many shifts in demographics that have been difficult to predict. He says that as COO he is now pushing the county to have these conversations to address the issues with overcrowding. Renate asked about the possibility of redistricting every few years to keep up with the changes in

demographics/population. Mr. Williams said this could happen. Chad stated that he felt Dunwoody residents will want to stay permanently districted to Dunwoody High School. Dan Drake mentioned that they have criteria for redistricting which is not based on keeping communities (like Dunwoody) together but does include keeping distinct neighborhoods together. He also said there are specific criteria the board uses when deciding to redistrict. Community should review those criteria and offer input if they see issues as these drive redistricting. Ashley expressed concern about Hightower students losing Title I funding when they leave Hightower since PCMS is not a Title I school. Mr. Williams agreed that is a concern and one that should be addressed. Renate mentioned those students could go to Chamblee and possibly keep their Title I status since the number of students requiring free and reduced lunch at Chamblee is higher, thus making it more likely to be designated a Title I school. This would also relieve some overcrowding. Mr. Williams reiterated his desire to serve all the students of Dekalb. He wants to present all data to the board objectively. Ann asked how the data is vetted before presented and would the public have a chance to review the data first? Mr. Williams says they will look for stakeholder input throughout the process and says it is important to get involved. Mr. Drake suggested the possibility of creating steering committee composed of representative(s) from each school to get more public input. Lynn Deutsch asked about SPLOST and how needs are measured for each school. Mr. Williams acknowledged there were issues with SPLOST IV but these are being addressed and corrected. They will continue to work with School Councils and principals to make sure they understand each school's needs. Ann asked about replacing our antiquated kitchen equipment; Chad asked about the signage on our school being finished; Kelly asked about adding desperately needed performing arts space—Mr. Williams says all these needs are being addressed and considered in this process. He said information from the feasibility studies will be on the website for the public to view when completed. Ashley thanked our guests for coming and they left the meeting.

Principal's Report – Mr. McFerrin

Attendance – Enrollment is 1699 to date. We have 115 students with 6 or more excused and unexcused absences. Mr. McFerrin says this number could be a little higher this month because of the Jewish holidays.

School Safety – So far we are seeing 1-2 students in ISS per day. Very low incidents of OSS. Mr. Hughes is working on intervention strategies to help struggling students. Mr. McFerrin says the school was recently commended by the county supervisor for our low discipline referrals.

Schedules/Instructional Needs – The school is fully staffed now.

Teachers/Staff Issues – We are still working on getting more copiers for the faculty. The PTSO is renting two machines, but use is limited due to budget. When Ashley, Chad and Mr. McFerrin met with Mr. Williams, he referred them to Dr. Brantley who is assessing our needs and hoping to improve the copier shortage here soon.

Construction and Plant – See notes from guest speaker Mr. Josh Williams for information on building issues.

School Site Budget and Expenditures – Mr. McFerrin is hopeful we will have some money left over from locker installation to work on the marquee.

School Improvement Plan – Math Bootcamp starts this Saturday. They estimate 20 students attending. Chad says he will follow up with Grant Wells about providing breakfast for students from Chic-Fil-A. He also asked about the logistics of getting kids to the school. He suggested Dunwoody Dads could help. Mr. McFerrin also says he may be able to get a bus from the county if this is needed for future bootcamps.

Current Issues – None

Teacher's Report – Heather Carter

Heather said the Ms. Hawk needs help in the Media Center in the mornings before school and during lunch. We have lost support staff in the library and she needs assistance to open the MC to students. Peggy Stecker said that PTSO has a committee for Media Center volunteers and will look into ways they can help.

Unfinished Business

Nutrition and Exercise program: Ann met with Angela Presley about the cafeteria and school lunches. She said the school does not serve fried food and only serves whole grains and no trans-fats. She said she is concerned that so few students eat in the cafeteria. Even among the students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch, only 27% are eating. This could be a space issue and possibly a time issue since students only have 30 min. to eat. She said the demand for grab-and-go salads and subs is high, but the long lines put students off buying them. Ms. Presley would like a new refrigerator case and another cash register (purchased by the county) to make buying these healthier options easier. She also said the DHS kitchen has antiquated equipment and desperately needs an update. She also would love to see a greater variety of fruits and vegetables to offer. The school uses the Farm to School program, but only once a month and would like to increase this. She also wondered if the school still had a Wellness Committee who could address some of these issues. Mr. McFerrin said he would look into getting a smoothie machine for the cafeteria as well. Chad said if we have leftover funds from the lockers, perhaps we could purchase a refrigerator case. Ann mentioned the need for healthy snack options for students staying after school. She offered a CDC assessment tool to assess these food/lunch issues. Ann will continue to follow up on nutrition issues.

Faculty Survey and Response: Kelly asked what is being done to address the needs that the faculty identified in their survey at the start of school. We are working on getting more copiers, hoping the county will respond to our request. Mr. McFerrin said he has purchased a new laptop cart and a new ipad cart, as both were identified as a need by teachers. Teachers also asked for more recognition for a job well done—Mr. McFerrin said they are recognizing both students and teachers who show initiative to “follow” the Wildcat Way. Monthly “winners” are recognized on a special bulletin board and Mr. McFerrin is planning a special end of the year banquet for these students and teachers. Kelly said she would again review the survey results to make sure we are hitting all the needs identified.

CATS – Mr. McFerrin met with the new Student Advisory Committee (CATS) for a Pizza with the Principal. He chose 14 students for the committee. They hope to present to the School Council at our November meeting.

Parking -- Ashley asked about the old parking signs being replaced. Police have been ticketing students based on the old signage. Lynn D says she will email the police and Michael Smith to see if we can address these issues. She says they are trying to balance the concerns of the neighbors with the needs of the school.

Drug Prevention Program – We will update on this at our next council meeting.

New Business

Performing Arts – Josh Williams addressed this in his remarks to the council and we did not revisit.

STEM and PCMS: We tabled this discussion for next meeting due to time

Public Comment– John Henegan and Bob Mullen spoke about the Dunwoody City Council’s new initiative called “Teen Town Hall.” Their objective through the program is to get more young citizens involved and educated about local government. They have planned an event at DHS on Dec 3 through social studies classes and after school to engage and educate Dunwoody students about local government issues and function. They are working with Mr. McFerrin and Mr. Berry to organize.

Ashley adjourned the meeting at 5:40pm. The next meeting of the Dunwoody HS School Council will be held in November in the Media Center.

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