

## **Dean Rusk School Council Meeting**

Date: Tuesday – November 13, 2018

Time: 4:30 to 6:00 PM

Location: Dean Rusk Front Office Conference Room

### **In Attendance:**

Dawn Weinbaum – Principal

Elizabeth Castrillon – Certified Teacher

Melissa Christensen – Certified Teacher

Larry Blase – Parent Representative/Business Person

Jenna Cavin – Parent Representative

Terri Jacomine – Parent Representative

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Weinbaum, and she welcomed the members. She also added two new items to the agenda: the traffic guard situation and suicide prevention.

### **College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)**

Ms. Weinbaum provided a hard copy of the CCRPI results for the Cherokee County middle schools. The results are based heavily on the Milestone results and consider student growth compared to peers in similar type classes (gifted to gifted, etc.). The report also looks at student attendance. Ms. Weinbaum also stated that the calculation for the results is different from last year's results. Ms. Weinbaum is happy to report that DRMS improved from a 77.8% in 2016-1017 to an 81.6% for the 2017-2018 year. DRMS is also only one of two schools which received a B average, the top two in the county. Several middle schools dropped in their score from the previous year.

### **School Improvement Plan**

Ms. Weinbaum stated the DRMS School Improvement Plan was approved by the county. The plan has two primary goals: ELA and Math. However, it also incorporates goals for attendance, character education, and other areas in the school.

## **Digital Learning Day**

Ms. Weinbaum discussed the upcoming Digital Learning Day, which will be either November 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>. Once the teachers and administration decide on which day works best for the school, they will inform parents and students. Ms. Weinbaum also discussed how this day will be different from the previous two digital days. Students will complete the Digital Learning Day at home (after school) and will be assigned a 5-minute lesson for each subject. The students should be able to complete their work in 35 minutes. Ms. Weinbaum also discussed that the purpose of this digital day is practice for the students as well as the teachers. It is also to verify that the county's network capacity can handle the number of students logging in concurrently.

## **SEL Survey**

Ms. Weinbaum stated the school has received the results for the SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Survey. Teachers will be able to look at individual students and assess what their strengths and weaknesses are. Teachers can also study an entire class and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the group. Ms. Weinbaum and the teachers recognize this is a valuable tool and will discuss how to analyze and use the data to best help individual students and classes at DRMS.

## **7 Mindsets**

Ms. Weinbaum provided each member a hard copy of *7 Mindsets* character curriculum overview. Ms. Weinbaum explained the TAA (Teachers as Advisors) character class that is required once a week in Homeroom. Each week the teachers choose a different characteristic, such as kindness, bullying, etc., and develop a lesson for their class. Although the teachers have been doing a great job, Ms. Weinbaum expressed that this requires more work for teachers and detracts from the time they spend on academic lessons. Previously, Ms. Weinbaum observed a school in Forsyth County which implemented *7 Mindsets*, a character curriculum, and she was impressed. The curriculum provides a video each week, which "hooks" the students into the topic, questions for the teachers to help direct discussion, and activities to implement what the class learned. On November 6, the teachers had a full day of staff development for the new curriculum, and the response from the teachers was overwhelmingly positive. Ms. Weinbaum stated that they will implement the program second semester and full implementation will begin with the 2018 -2019 school year. Both teachers in the meeting agreed that the curriculum is excellent and is much needed.

## **Basketball**

Ms. Weinbaum gave an overview of the basketball season so far. She stated that the students are having a great time and the season is going well. The girls' teams are performing very well.

## **Principal Leadership Qualities**

Ms. Weinbaum provided copies to each member of the Principal Leadership Qualities for DRMS. Since the previous School Council Meeting, no changes have been made. The document will now be submitted to the county.

## **Traffic and Traffic Guard**

Ms. Weinbaum addressed the traffic at the entrances to DRMS and the lack of consistent traffic guards. She also stated that the traffic guards are not supplied by the school but are through the Sheriff's department. Members of the board discussed the potential danger for not having someone directing traffic. Ms. Weinbaum shared that she had reached out to the Sheriff's department about the situation. They responded and stated that guards are no longer allowed overtime and the priority is to provide traffic guard for the bus entrances. Currently, the Sheriff's department is looking at two potential hires, but Creekview High School will receive the first hire. DRMS potentially will receive the second hire. A member of the board mentioned that the Charter School has a deputy in front of the school each morning and would investigate about the possible provision of a deputy for DRMS.

## **Suicide Prevention**

Ms. Weinbaum expressed her incredible sorrow over the tragic death of an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student. Ms. Weinbaum proceeded to detail what the school did to inform and help grieving students. On Friday afternoon, November 2, 2018, a letter was sent home via email to the parents. The following Monday morning, a statement was made to the students notifying them that counselors and staff were available to talk. Ms. Weinbaum also addressed the importance of having an open dialogue with students regarding death and suicide. The school also held a moment of silence and students wore blue in the student's honor. Since there was no school on November 6<sup>th</sup> due to elections, a crisis team was also provided on Wednesday, November 7. Students were able to go to the library and talk to a counselor. Mrs. Castrillon also discussed how Ms. Weinbaum went to each of the student's classes and spoke personally to the students. On November 12, 2018, Cherokee County Board of Education held a suicide prevention meeting, and a board member attended the meeting and stated that it was informative. It was stated that suicides can happen in clusters, and the need for parents and other authority to pay attention to children's conversations and

emotional needs. A board member also asked if there was a problem with drugs in the school. Ms. Weinbaum stated that drugs were not prevalent, but vaping is an issue not only at DRMS but at all the middle schools.

Ms. Weinbaum thanked all council members for their participation and closed the meeting. The next council meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2019.