

Dean Rusk School Council Meeting

Date: Tuesday – September 17, 2019

Time: 4:30 to 6:00 PM

Location: Dean Rusk Front Office Conference Room

In Attendance:

Dawn Weinbaum – Principal

Andrew Carwile – Certified Teacher

Robyn West – Certified Teacher

Larry Blase - Parent Representative/Business Person - Chairperson

Jenna Cavin – Parent Representative - Secretary

Eric Fortner – Parent Representative/Business Person

Mitzi Hamilton- Parent Representative

Chanda Schwab - Parent Representative – Vice Chairperson

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Weinbaum, and she welcomed the members. Ms. Weinbaum introduced herself and then had each member introduce him/herself since this is the first meeting of the new school year and there are several new members on the council. Ms. Weinbaum gave each member an agenda; however, the order of Agenda was arranged based on parent questions.

School Council Training and Bylaws

Ms. Weinbaum went over the PowerPoint regarding School Council Training and expectations. She also handed out the handbook for School Council meetings. Dean Rusk School Council will meet five times throughout the year and is open to the public. Ms. Weinbaum also emailed the School Council PowerPoint to each member. The meeting dates are September 17, November 12, January 14, March 17, and May 12 from 4:30-6:00 in the front office conference room. Council members will serve two years, parents must make up the majority of the council, and a parent must serve as the chair.

School Council Positions

Each School Council must have the following positions: two parents who hold a job in the business world, a Chairperson, a Vice chairperson, and a secretary. As a group, the Council voted. Larry Blasé will be the chairperson and business person; Eric Fortner will be the other business person; Chanda Schwab will be the vice chairperson; Jenna Cavin will be the secretary. The voting went smoothly.

Beginning of School Year

Ms. Weinbaum discussed the beginning of the school year, and for the most part, there have been no major issues. Because of overcrowding or various other reasons, some bus routes and times have been changed. Ms. Weinbaum stated that these issues are handled by transportation, not Dean Rusk. Ms. Weinbaum also mentioned that we have a new officer, Corporal Adams, this year. Finally, Ms. Weinbaum discussed that the county will continue to focus on the social, emotional, and learning (SEL) components in a student's education.

7 Mindsets/ SEL

Dean Rusk will continue to use the 7 Mindsets program this year. Ms. Weinbaum discussed how Dean Rusk piloted the program and now all Cherokee County Middle Schools will be implementing the program this year. One time per week, during Chieftain Chat time, teachers will discuss a mindset. They will focus on one mindset per month. Last year, Dean Rusk started the program in January, so this will be the first full year. The response from teachers and students has been extremely positive. Mr. Carwile, a current DRMS teacher, mentioned that each grade studies the same mindset, but every grade has different lessons, so students are not repeating the exact same lesson each year. Robyn West, another DRMS teacher, also discussed the benefits of the program and how students are engaged in the discussions. A parent, Chanda Schwab, asked about the development of the program and where Ms. Weinbaum initially saw the program. Ms. Weinbaum stated that the program is developed by a company in Roswell, GA, and she witnessed the lesson implemented at South Forsyth school and was impressed by the curriculum. She recognized that a character curriculum would be beneficial to the teachers (and students) and presented 7 Mindsets for implementation at DRMS.

Furthermore, Ms. Weinbaum has created a parent page for DRMS in Canvas. Parents can access information regarding 7 Mindsets and other important information in their Canvas dashboard and click the Dean Rusk Middle School button.

In order to encourage students, each grade has either a monthly or quarterly student recognition day for those students who have lost few points on their behavior card.

Georgia Milestones

Ms. Weinbaum discussed the recent Milestones. Students have received their scores, and for the preliminary scores, most of the grade levels and subjects increased in their performance. This is excellent news. During the month of October, student growth reports will come out. The obvious goal is to see each student grow academically from the previous year. DRMS is one of the highest performers for student growth. Although it is typical for many schools, Ms. Weinbaum stated that 8th grade science and math are the weaker areas and teachers are continuing to work on ways to increase scores through daily lessons. However, there was an increase in ELA's student performance.

School Improvement Plan

Ms. Weinbaum gave each council member a handout referencing the School Improvement Plan. Like last year, the plan will focus on ELA and math. For the past two years, the focus has been instructional strategies; this year the focus will be the design of the lessons, specifically focusing on the end goal of the lesson and tailoring the assessment around the goal. Mr. Carwile explained state standards and how the intentional planning will help map out the curriculum for the year.

Student Laptops

Ms. Weinbaum discussed how DRMS is a 1:1 school and that it is a privilege for students to have the opportunity to have a personal computer. However, because of the new terms with the cost of damage, some students opted out of the program this year.

Digital Learning Day

This year the county will implement digital learning days when there is inclement weather and school is cancelled. Last year, the county had several “test” digital learning days. Ms. Weinbaum stated that these blended learning days will substitute for potential inclement weather make up days.

Basketball

DRMS basketball tryouts are starting soon, and Ms. Weinbaum mentioned that basketball and basketball cheerleading are the only school sponsored sports. A basketball schedule was given to each member. Furthermore, Scott Barber is the boys new head coach and Coach Marble will continue as the girls’ head coach.

Social Media Accounts

Ms. Weinbaum discussed DRMS has more presence on social media, including Facebook and now a new Twitter account. She would love to see more parents follow on Twitter. Almost daily, there are posts and pictures concerning what the students are learning and accomplishing. Dr. Townsend does a great job with the school Social Media accounts.

After School Recovery and Detention

Ms. Weinbaum discussed the new after school recovery and detention program that began this year. The purpose of the program is to help students who are struggling, are missing work, or have lost a certain amount of points on their behavior card. Parents cannot just send students for extra help; students must be assigned to the After School Program by a faculty member. Various teachers will stay with the students in order to help them. The program is each Tuesday and Thursday for one hour after school. A council member mentioned that this program is a great way to help parents become more aware of their student’s academic struggles and behavior. This way, parents can be more involved to help their child.

Revise/Update Principal Leadership Qualities

Ms. Weinbaum gave each council member a handout with the qualities and expectations of the Dean Rusk principal. She explained that these expectations are for the current principal and any future principals. Ms. Weinbaum asked council members to review the qualities and email her if there are any suggestions or revisions that need to be made. Finalization of the qualities will take place at the next meeting.

At the close at the meeting, Ms. Weinbaum asked if any members had questions. Chanda asked if schools have considered therapy dogs for students. Ms. Weinbaum thanked her for her suggestion and discussed the benefits but also the many logistics and costs for animals to be in the school, but it is something to be considered.

Ms. Weinbaum thanked all council members for their participation and closed the meeting. The next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2019.