

Dean Rusk School Council Meeting

Date: Tuesday – April 22, 2020

Time: 2:00 – 3:30 P.M.

Location: **Microsoft Teams due to COVID-19**

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

Via Microsoft Teams, Ms. Weinbaum called the meeting to order. She thanked the council for their support during COVID-19 and the transition to Digital Learning. She also thanked Larry Blasé and Jenna Cavin for serving on School Council the past two years. They will be rotating off of the board at the end of the year.

DIGITAL LEARNING DAYS – MARCH MAY 2020

Ms. Weinbaum discussed the overnight transition from the classroom to complete Digital Learning Days due to the coronavirus. She stated the teachers are working extremely hard to continue to present quality lessons and instruction for the students. Ms. Weinbaum also mentioned that the majority of the students are working hard as well, but for many families, the Digital Learning days are challenging for a variety of reasons. Teachers Robyn West and Andrew Carwile mentioned the excellent administrative support they have received as they navigate the challenges of Distance Learning. Chanda Schwab, a parent, stated how she is incredibly proud of the teachers' excellent work and also of the community's support. Ms. Weinbaum also stated that because DRMS has 1:1 technology, the staff and students were in a better position to transition to Digital Learning Days compared to other schools who do not have 1:1 technology. Furthermore, Ms. Weinbaum discussed how DRMS wants to continue to challenge students in their learning, but also due

to COVID-19 and the challenges that it brings to homes, the staff will show grace with classwork.

TECHNOLOGY REPAIRS

Ms. Weinbaum praised the Cherokee County Board of Education's technology department for the exceptional job they have done to ensure that every student has a working computer and is able to access Canvas. If a student was having technical issues, the county had places set up where students could have their computers fixed. Ms. Weinbaum also thanked Karen Nazemzadeh, DRMS' tech specialist, for helping many students remotely who had computer or Canvas issues

CANVAS

Ms. Weinbaum stated that at the beginning of DLD, Canvas had some portal issues, but most of the problems were resolved quickly. Ms. Weinbaum also stated that it is crucial for parents to read all communications that they receive through the county, school, and Canvas.

GEORGIA MILESTONES

Governor Kemp cancelled the Georgia Milestones this year due to COVID-19.

END OF YEAR

Because of COVID-19, the last day of school for students who are doing well in their classes will be May 8, 2020. However, May 9th - May 22nd, students who are severely struggling in their classes due to the transition to DLD will receive extra support from their teachers to help improve their grades. Teachers will contact struggling students and their parents to discuss remediation.

BUDGET

Ms. Weinbaum discussed the budget for next year, and due to the pandemic, the budget has not been set for the following school year. Hopefully, the budget will be solidified by July. Because of potential budget cuts, the school district will more than likely have "austerity reductions," especially in the 21-22 school year.

GRADING

Students will not be penalized for Digital Learning Days. If a student was doing well prior to March 13, 2020, then his/her grade will not be penalized due to online learning.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Due to COVID-19, summer school will be offered virtually. However, middle school does not offer summer school, but MS utilizes a bridge program for rising 9th graders. The county will communicate more information regarding the Bridge Program as soon as a decision is made. Ms. Weinbaum also mentioned that the county is investigating other

tutorial resources for parents and students to use throughout the summer. Furthermore, a couple of Council parents mentioned that they were concerned about academic gaps for the upcoming years. Ms. Weinbaum stated that the county is aware and discussing measures to help with remediation and fill in the missing gaps with next year's curriculum.

AWARDS

Due to the coronavirus and school closures, Ms. Weinbaum discussed how schools were going to give awards, and that the ceremonies will be different this year. The county would like for schools to be consistent, and there is a possibility that students will be recognized next year instead. However, no final decision has been made.

STUDENT COLLECTION OF ITEMS/TURN IN ITEMS

Ms. Weinbaum discussed the various phases to allow teachers and students back into the school. Phase I will allow teachers back in to clean/pack their room, and Phase II will allow for students to collect their belongings (including medication) and turn in their materials, such as their computers, books, and instruments. Currently, the administration is working on a system which is efficient and ensures everyone's safety and health.

COURSE PLACEMENT

6th and 7th grade students will receive their course placement through their advisement teacher. Rising 9th grade students will receive their course placement from Sequoyah High School. If a student is currently in advanced classes AND performing well, he/she will remain in the advanced class. However, if for some reason a student was dropped due to a glitch in the system, the parent should contact the school and staff can easily correct this issue. If a student is in on-level classes, he/she will remain in these classes next year since there is not sufficient data to change levels. However, after the first 9 weeks of class next year and if the student is excelling, teachers and administration can make class changes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Ms. Weinbaum discussed next year's middle school schedule change for all Cherokee County middle schools. There will be 6 periods (instead of 7) and Literacy Workshop and Lit Comp will be combined. Students will have their 4 core classes and 2 connections. Each core class will be 60 minutes. However, on Wednesday and Thursday, students will attend 2 core classes each day that will last 1 ½ hours each. This gives teachers more time to cover lessons, complete labs, help students, etc. Foreign Language will now be a connections class instead of an academic class. Mitzi Hamilton asked how difficult it would be to change out of Foreign Language. Ms. Weinbaum stated that it is not difficult to drop Foreign Language. Mr. Townsend will be sending information about connections' classes within the next week. Parents will be notified about the schedule change, and Ms. Weinbaum will look into when the district will be sending out the information.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND CUSTODIAL WORK

Ms. Weinbaum discussed how custodians are already at the school cleaning it for next year. Also, Corporal Adams is there each day to keep the school and its workers safe.

FIELD TRIP REFUND INFORMATION

Ms. Weinbaum shared excellent news that 8th grade parents will receive full refunds for the 8th grade trip. Once the school receives the funds back, the school will have to cut and sign a check for each family who is to be reimbursed.

CCSD MESSAGE: LAST DAY AND GRADUATION

Parents and students should receive information regarding graduation no later than July 1, 2020.

PTSA FUNDRAISER

Ms. Weinbaum stated how much she appreciates the PTSA. There will be a fundraiser next year. More details to come once a final fundraiser decision is decided.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

Larry Blasé raised the concern about the amount of school students are missing, even with the digital learning, and if the county has thought about the possibility of starting school earlier in the fall and/or establishing a mentorship program over the summer where students can mentor other students. Andrew Carwile, a teacher, stated that the budget for the year is still unknown, but as a teacher, he is confident that next year, teachers will work diligently to help students get back where they need to be academically. The council also discussed the stress that DLD has placed on many families. Furthermore, Ms. Weinbaum asked if any of the council members had suggestions on how to best have students return their computers and collect their personal belongings. This is a challenge due to social distancing and the number of students in the school. The board discussed possible ideas.

Ms. Weinbaum thanked all council members for their participation and closed the meeting. This is the last School Council Meeting for the 2019-2020 school year.