

District Advisory Council Minutes
Thursday, October 8, 2020
Virtual Meeting 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

- I. **Schools/Members Attending:** Adult & Community Education: Regina Browning, Edna Walker and Noel Weiland; Apalachee: April Wetherington; Astoria Park: Shapale Cooper and Cara Garrett; Bond: Brenetta Lawrence; Buck Lake: Jennifer Peavy and Linda Edson; Canopy Oaks: Kristy Ward; Chaires: Keshia Paul; Chiles: Jennifer Portero and Joe Burgess; Cobb: Janet Tashner; Conley: LaShawnda Swanigan; DeSoto Trail: Demaris Barrios and Michele Keltner; DAC Student Representative: Ariauna Range; Darryl Jones/LCSB: Marcus Nicolas; Fairview: Cheryl Collier-Brown; Georgia Bowen/LCBS: Louis Dilbert; Gilchrist: Kristy Newland; Godby: Desmond Cole; Gretchen: Jane Floyd-Bullen; Griffin: Delmae Darling; Heritage Trails: Josette Capuano; LCVS: Darlene Fowinkle and Jessica Lowe; LCS Student School Board Representative: Arsha Harris; Montford: E. Keith Berry and Lillie S. Thomas; Nims: Demetrius Coley; Oak Ridge: Dwanna Moore; Pineview: Jennifer Hirst; Raa: Rebecca Brown; Rickards: Andrew Thomas and Johnitta Wells; Riley: April Knight; Roberts: Angela Tewfik and Jacquelyn Steele; Student DAC Chairperson: Layne Shulte; Sabal Palm: Regina Randolph-Hollis and Kristine Gregory; Sail: Matt Kopka; Sealey: Nena Parnell and Shayla Cole; Springwood: Verne McLeod; Sullivan: Emily Toner; Swift Creek: Lauren Pierce and Selika Sampson; SUWBB: Amanda Gibson; Woodville: Davina Young; WT Moore: Melanie Phillips; (School not recorded): Darlene Fomue;
- II. **School Board Members/District Administration/District Staff:** LCS Administration: Rocky Hanna; LCSB: Darryl Jones; LCS Policy & Planning Management: Marline Feliciano; LCS Marketing: Heather Thomas; LCS Professional & Community Services: Michelle Gayle and Brenda Jackson
- III. **Excused:** Astoria Park Beth Ray; Canopy Oaks: Kandra Bryant-Rogers; Chiles/Deerlake/Hawks Rise: Chris Chaback; Desoto Trail (Alternate): Bill Armstrong, District: Shane Syfrett; ESE: Amanda Moore; Gilchrist: Amy Taylor; Hartsfield: Bomani Mustapha; Lively Technical College: Shelly Bell; Raa: Julie Hatfield; Rickards: E. Melissa Cooper and Kia Sanders; Ruediger: Raven Alexander; Darryl Jones/LCSB: Christic Henry; DeeDee Rasmussen/LCSB: Ruth Feiock,

- IV. **Guests:** Leon County Government: Charles Wu and Chris Muehleemann; LCS Mental Health Office: Tonja Fitzgerald
- V. **Welcome and Introductions:** Dr. Michelle Gayle opened the meeting at 6:01 p.m. She welcomed everyone to the meeting. Dr. Gayle then informed the group that she would call names; each individual would state their school representation and share other information about them.
- VI. **Welcome from Superintendent:** Superintendent Hanna started with a question to Sealy parent Nena Parnell as to whether her three sons were attending school digitally or conventional (brick and mortar). She responded digitally. Superintendent Hanna stated he understood that it wasn't an easy decision for parents to make however they were given the chance to decide which method was best for their household. He thanked Ms. Parnell, other parents as well as students for how they've handled this process of learning remotely. Parents again can make the decision for the next nine weeks to have their child returned to brick and mortar or digital (Deadline is Friday, October 9). Superintendent Hanna thanked everyone for their willingness to serve. He said it has been a long time since the last DAC meeting held on March 5, 2020 prior to the pandemic. He said he recalls announcing on the preceding Friday that school would resume after spring break, however the next week he was announcing that school would be conducted remotely for the remainder of the school year. It was hard however due to the diligence of teachers and school administrations the district succeeded in not only completing the school year but also held graduation ceremony for our seniors. In anticipation of the possibility of schools having to continue remotely during the next school year, chrome books were ordered.

Superintendent Hanna stated that the District worked hard to prepare for the reopening of schools in August. Several reopening task force committees were established to determine how best to reopen safely. We gave parents/guardians the option to return to the brick and mortar facility or to attend digitally. In July after the initial polling 70% of our students had indicated they would return to the brick and mortar facility while 30% would go digital. However as the numbers increased with the opening date approaching that number declined to 45% returning to brick and mortar and 55% going digital. The reopening date was pushed back to give teachers two weeks to prepare for the

schools reopening; however due to the mandate from Governor DeSantis and Education Commissioner Corcoran that Districts must open schools by August 31 or risk losing funding; we had no choice.

Superintendent Hanna thanked the teachers/administration and support staff at each school for their commitment to ensuring that our schools reopened with minimal disruption. He stated during the first two weeks of school he visited every school. Some classes have five (5) or fewer students while others have more, however he is proud to say he did not see any students without a mask covering. There were a few glitches during the first week however he stated that teachers are becoming very creative in how they are meeting this challenge.

Superintendent Hanna said he was asked why some of the laptops were being kept at each school, he explained it was so students who attend the brick and mortar school would have consistence (same teacher) if for some reason they had to attend remotely (i.e. testing positive or quarantining). He reported that the chrome books ordered back in July will be here next weeks. When the new chrome books are distributed the desk tops that are currently being utilized by some remote students will be returned and refurbished for distribution to those families who cannot afford a computer.

Superintendent Hanna said the district monitor every day for COVID. For transparency listing for positivity testing is posted each day by 4 p.m. Parents are notified if their child is affected.

Superintendent Hanna asked for any questions. Darlene Fowinkle wanted to know if there were any plans to make improvements for increased capacity. Superintendent Hanna's response: those schools that are at or over capacity are not available for school choice. Prior to his election as superintendent those schools that were at or over capacity were still available for school choice. Now students are required to attend the school within their zone. Preferential treatment for charter school and those living in Southwood were eliminated. Jacquelyn Steele asked if there were any programs available for those IEP students that attend remotely. Superintendent Hanna's response: email Dr. Alan Cox and copy him. He said Dr. Cox would be able to provide assistance. Louis Dilbert wanted to know when restrictions would be lifted for activities at the schools. Superintendent Hanna's response: we're taking baby steps on lifting the restrictions. We hope to be able to get back to allowing volunteers and others however in the mean time we will continue to take things slowly while following CDC and health department guidelines. Denise Paul asked how you will maintain social distancing in November when more students will be returning to the classroom. Superintendent Hanna's response: We'll do

the best we can. At the Title I schools this will not be a problem. Schools like Chiles and Lincoln will probably be less than the required six feet however as long as the students wear their mask there should not be any problems. Demaris Barrios asked if standardized testing would be given this year. Superintendent Hanna's response: We don't make that decision at the district this is a decision made by the Department of Education (DOE); however teachers have been told not to worry about testing or school grade. Matthew Kopka commended teachers or their handling of the "new norm" and wanted to know if any training will be provided in the future and with the upcoming teacher negotiations provide an incentive for teachers. Superintendent Hanna's response: teachers were given an extra week of planning before school reopened when they probably needed an extra month. Included in the amended calendar is an extra planning day for teachers at the end of the first nine weeks to allow time to prepare for the increase in students for the second nine weeks. There will be exciting news announced that will greatly benefit teachers next week maybe at the next school board meeting. Keith Berry asked if students will be required to take the vaccination once it becomes available before returning to school next year. Superintendent Hanna's response: that will be a decision that the parents/guardians will make. It will not be mandated by the District. Delmae Darling asked what if anything is being done to help alleviate teacher burnout. Superintendent Hanna's response: Teachers should be the best version of themselves and to pace themselves. Johnitta Wells asked about the return of field trips and playing sports teams outside the district. Superintendent Hanna's response: For safety precaution we're only allowing games between schools within the district. We will not risk the safety of our students or staff by expanding. Melanie Phillips stated students in the digital academy are being shorted. She's experienced problems with attendance errors so she wanted to know if the district would be getting new teachers to help with the return of the additional students to brick and mortar in November. Superintendent Hanna's response: She was instructed to contact administration at the school first and copy Dr. Rogers; if no action is taken then contact his office. We're trying to let students continue their learning with the same teacher therefore district will not be adding any new teachers. Janet Tashner asked if there were any procedures for sports during this pandemic. Superintendent Hanna's response: There are protocols in place. She was instructed to contact Ricky Bell and Scott Hansel.

Superintendent Hanna concluded by again thanking DAC members for their service.

- VII. **Comments from School Board Member Darryl Jones:** School Board member Darryl Jones said he's delighted to be at the meeting. He thanked everyone for the role they play and said he is grateful for the compassion foremost from our teachers, parents and students. School Board Member Jones commended Dr. Gayle for working with Second Harvest to make sure each child was provided food. He also commended Tonja Fitzgerald for working with Principals at Title I schools to organize mental health assistance for those children and parents who had any association with the numerous crimes we've experienced here in Leon County especially the shootings.
- VIII. **Welcome from Student School Board Member:** Arsha Harris a senior at Chiles High School said she is thankful to be representing the students of Leon County.
- IX. **Welcome from Student District Advisory Council Chairperson:** Layne Shulte a senior at Leon High School said she is excited to work with DAC.
- X. **Welcome from Student District Advisory Council Representative:** Ariauna Range a senior in the IB program at Rickards High School said she is honored to serve. She said her diversity will allow her to provide helpful insight on things.
- XI. **Approval of the Agenda:** A motion was made to approve the agenda by Jacquelyn Steele and seconded by Cheryl Collier-Brown. Motion passed. (Note: Although the agenda was approved as presented as the meeting progressed it became apparent that we would not be able to cover all items on this month's agenda, therefore the following items will be presented at a future meeting: 11 – New Member Orientation; 12 – Strategic Plan and 13 – Cognia Accreditation-Districtwide (formerly AdvancEd.)
- XII. **Approval of the Minutes:** A motion was made to approve the minutes by School Board Member Darryl Jones and seconded by Desmond Cole. Motion passed.

XIII. **Safe Routes to School:** Chris Muehlemann, PE presented an overview of improvements for sidewalk projects at Canopy Oaks, Oak Ridge and Woodville Elementary schools, with the endorsement from DAC, Leon County will request the Florida Department of Transportation SRTS Grant Funding to advance design and construction of these projects. (For an in-depth view of the projects, please refer to the PowerPoint presentation included in the DAC meeting material emailed by Brenda Jackson on October 8, 2020.)

The following questions were presented to Mr. Muehlemann: School Board Member Darryl Jones first thanked him for the work requested and completed on the round-about located at Orange Avenue and Jim Lee Road to provide safety for those students attending Rickards High School. His asked if in addition to the sidewalk improvements would the County also consider calming devices. Mr. Muehlemann said yes he will make a note to bring it up at the next discussion. Matthew Kopka asked if the County could look into creating sidewalks on Old Bainbridge Road located in Frenchtown close to Griffin Middle School. Mr. Muehlemann asked for specific location. School Board Member Darryl Jones said he agreed this is a hazardous area for students attending Griffin. Davina Young asked if the county was applying for funding or seeking approval for these projects and once approved how long would it take before construction would begin. Mr. Muehlemann said the projects have been approved and that the County is trying to get advanced funding to proceed with the projects. He said the County should know by early spring if the advanced funding will be granted. If so then construction could start as early as July 2021. Janet Tashner asked if there is a platform to present suggestions. Mr. Muehlemann said there is a site for citizens to provide input; he said you can either email him or go to the Leon County website. Dr. Gayle will provide Mr. Muehlemann's email address to DAC members.

XIV. **Best Practices – LCS Mental Health Plan:** Tonja Fitzgerald presented an overview on mental health services available to Leon County public and charter school students. She said funding is up slightly from last year. Approximately 91% of the funding goes directly to providing mental health services and the remaining 9% is used to provide training for staff. LCS has contracted services with Disc Village to provide mental and behavioral wellness supports on district school site. (For an in-depth view of the services provided, please refer to the presentation included in the DAC meeting material emailed by Brenda Jackson on October 8, 2020.)

- XV. **2020/2021 Calendar Amendment:** Dr. Gayle presented the amended 2020/2021 calendar. A teacher's planning day was added on November 2; first semester exams will be held January 13, 14 and 15, 2021; and student early voter registration will be held on January 20, 2021.
- XVI. **2020/21 Presentation Requests:** Dr. Gayle stated Dr. Gillian Gregory, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services will present at the November 5, 2020 meeting. Some requests presented at the meeting were: invite Dr. Alan Cox along with the Leon County Health Department to present on school health safety and the city growth plan usually presented in May. Members were encouraged to send request to Dr. Gayle.
- XVII. **SAC Questions:** DAC Chairperson Johnitta Wells admonished DAC members to bring any questions posed to them by their SAC members.
- XVIII. **Wrap Up on Issues:** Cheryl Collier-Brown asked if the minutes could be distributed as soon as possible because she meets with her SAC the week after the DAC meeting.

Adjournment: 7:57 p.m.

Next meeting – November 5, 2020.