

District Advisory Council Minutes
Thursday, December 10, 2020
Virtual Meeting 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

- I. **Schools/Members Attending:** Adult & Community Education: Regina Browning, Edna Walker and Noal Weiland; Apalachee: April Wetherington; Astoria Park: Shapale Cooper; Canopy Oaks: Kristy Ward; Chaires: Kesha Paul; Chiles: Joe Burgess; Cobb: Janet Tashner; Conley: LaShawnda Swanigan; DeSoto Trail: Demaris Barrios and Michele Keltner; DAC Student Representative: Ariauna Range; Darryl Jones/LCSB: Christic Henry; ESE: Amanda Moore; Fairview: Cheryl Collier-Brown; Gilchrist: Kristy Newland; Hartsfield: Bomani Mustapha; LCTA: Scott Mazur; LCVS: Darlene Fowinkle and Jessica Lowe; Leon: Kirsten Olsen-Doolan; Montford: Becca Bertoch; Nims: Dr. Demetrius Coley; Oak Ridge: Dwanna Moore; Pineview: Jennifer Hirst; Rickards: Andrew Thomas and Johnitta Wells; Sabal Palm: Kristine Gregory and Regina Hollis; Sail: Matthew Kopka; Sealey: Nena Parnell; Springwood: Verne McLeod; Success & Second Chance: Orlando Burch; Sullivan: Emily Toner; Swift Creek: Lauren Pierce;
- II. **School Board Members/District Administration/District Staff:** LCS Administration: Rocky Hanna; LCSB: Georgia “Joy” Bowen; LCS Professional & Community Services: Dr. Michelle Gayle, Marline Feliciano and Brenda Jackson;
- I. **Excused:** Adult & Community Education : Travis Jones; Astoria Park: Cara Garrett and Beth Ray; Bond: Brenetta Lawrence; Buck Lake: Jennifer Peavy; Canopy Oaks: Linda Edson and Kandra Bryant-Rogers; Chiles/Hawks Rise: Jennifer Portero; Chiles: Chris Chaback; Desota Trail: Bill Armstrong; Darryl Jones/LCSB: Marcus Nicolas; DeeDee Rasmussen/LCSB: Ruth Feoick; Georgia “Joy” Bowen / LCSB: Louis Dilbert; LCTA: Paula Percy; Gilchrist: Amy Taylor; Godby: Desmond Cole; Heritage Trails: Josette Capuano; LESPA: Sheria Griffin; Lively: Shelley Bell; Montford: Lillie Thomas and E. Keith Berry; Raa: Julie Hatfield; Rickards: E. Melissa Cooper and Kia Sanders; Riley: April Knight; Roberts: Angela Tewfik and Jacquelyn Steele; LCS Rocky Hanna: Tonja Fitzgerald; Ruediger: Raven Anderson; Sealey: Shayla Cole; Springwood: Roshan Hamilton; Success/Second Chance: Genae Crump; Swift Creek: Selika Sampson; Woodville: Davina Young; WT Moore: Melanie Phillips;

- II. **Guests:** LCS Intervention Services: Dr. Kathleen Rodgers; Student Activities & Athletics: Scott Hansen; Nims: Dr. Bennie Bolden;
- III. **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 Brenda Jackson would call names; each individual would state their school representation and share other information about them.
- IV. **Welcome from Superintendent:** Superintendent Hanna thanked everyone for their willingness to serve.

Superintendent Hanna gave an update on the emergency order #6 from the Education Commissioner that schools would be held harmless as long as they remain open; which means they will receive 100% of their funding. Funding is based on student full time attendance (FTE) as recorded in October and February. 50% of the funding is released respectively based on the October and February FTE data. Emergency order #7 states for schools to send written notification to parents whose student is struggling in the digital academy. Parents will be given the option to send the parent to brick and mortar or continue digitally with intervention.

Parents have the option to decide before December 17 if they want to send their child to brick and mortar for the third nine weeks.

Superintendent Hanna said schools across the nation have students that are unaccounted. Most school districts have students enrolled in the digital academy struggling including students that were "A" or better students prior to pandemic.

Superintendent Hanna said monitoring for COVID-19 continues and protocols remain in place throughout the district. He said since the vaccine will be available later this month, would love to have teachers included in the essential workers list to receive the vaccine. He would also like to include transportation and food service workers. He said he's just thankful that the district made it to winter holidays without having any major COVID issues. Hopefully the holiday break will allow time for everyone to recover mentally. As part of our mental awareness Wellness Wednesday for students will be held again on Wednesday, December 16.

Superintendent Hanna said the district is in the final phase of distributing the Chrome Books. These Chrome books have allowed the district to move into the 21st century.

Superintendent Hanna ended by stating Merry Christmas and Happy New Year; hope for better times in the New Year. He said he was given a rock by Canopy Oaks that says “gratitude”.

Superintendent Hanna received the following questions, concerns or compliments from DAC members:

When will schools begin to serve hot lunches, Superintendent Hanna said hot lunches are currently served on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Will schools continue to provide free lunch; Superintendent Hanna said free lunch is provided at each elementary school. Students in middle and high school will continue to eat free or get reduced lunch.

Becca Bertoch thanked the superintendent for the transparency; we’re all in this together. Superintendent Hanna said the district recently launched the teachers’ roundtable discussions.

Regina Hollis asked if there will be a roundtable discussion for support staff. Superintendent Hanna said he hopes by the first of the year to establish a discussion group for Para’s and 10/10 employees.

Superintendent Hanna concluded by saying thank you and get some rest during the break. We appreciate your support, love and care. It’s a challenge however we’re all doing the best we can. I would like for you to get the word out to all parents to use the devices (Chrome Books) furnished by the district. These devices has everything loaded that their child will need. They should treat these devices as if they were a new text book.

V. **Welcome from School Board Chair:** School Board Chair Georgia “Joy” Bowen said thank you for allowing her to attend the meeting. She thanked everyone for their service. She gave a brief testimony of getting appointed as a DAC representative. She said that appointment allowed her to get a view from each school albeit briefly. She thanked DAC for their opinion and stated when DAC speaks the school board listens. She said the board and district would continue to be transparent. She reiterated that the devices should be used and stated that the student could be in class wherever they are. She said she look forward to the New Year and encouraged everyone to continue to wear their mask, social distant and support and encourage each other.

VI. **Welcome from Student District Advisory Council Representative:** Ariauna Range said at the student DAC meeting a representative from the

district came to discuss mental health. They are using CANVAS to post inspirational quotes daily.

- VII. **Approval of the Agenda:** A motion was made to approve the agenda by Cheryl Collier-Brown and seconded by Kristine Gregory. Motion passed.
- VIII. **Approval of the Minutes:** A motion was made to approve the minutes by Cheryl Collier-Brown and seconded by Dwanna Moore. Motion passed.
- IX. **Best Practices – R. Frank Nims Middle School:** Dr. Bennie Bolden, Principal for Nims Middle School thanked Dr. Gayle for the invitation and stated it was his 60th birthday. He said his first priority for Nims is to change the perception therefore the school’s motto is “Be the Change”. He said in order to change the perception he first must develop a strategy to retain the high achieving students. He is proud to announce that Nims has the first and only Pre-Law Magnet program in the district. He wants to get the message to the parents and students that a lack of understanding the law does not exempt you from the law.

This is a three year program integrated in the Civics course. Students in grades 6-8 may participate. Students spend the first year (6th grade) learning the law; the second year (7th grade) students are allowed to sit for the bar. If they pass the bar, they are allowed to practice law by representing their fellow students. The third and final year (8th grade) students are allowed to run for judge. There are currently 25 students in the program. Nims has partnered with FSU Cares which will allow students to become Seminoles.

Another change is related to electives offered by the school. We’ve increased the chorus and created an orchestra; removed intensive reading and math for only certain students by allowing 30 minutes during homeroom for all students to receive reading and math assistance. All students are required to walk in a line when moving around the campus. Every person on Nims campus is useful and important to the success of the school. Nims has a point to prove and we are well on our way to letting the district know we are a great school.

Dr. Bolden was asked if he has considered partnering with FAMU and he said the school already partners with FAMU police department, Jack Campbell and the Park law office. LCSB Chair “Joy” Bowen said she would like to have Dr. Bolden share this at the next school board meeting. Dr. Gayle will work on this request.

- X. **Best Practices – Intervention Services:** Dr. Kathleen Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent, announced that Leon County had won the Florida Race for Equality Challenge.

Dr. Rodgers stated intervention services is focusing on attendance and working closely with the state Departments of Children and Family Services and Juvenile Justice to reengage students with teachers and schools. She and her staff go the home (boots on the ground) of students to process compulsory school packets. Due to this process the number of unaccounted students 799 has decreased to 674. They are constantly working to locate students. They visit the home of those students who have 15 unexcused absences in a 90 day period to get answers to why the student is not in school; how can the district help and what is the next step. Dr. Rodgers said her office has partnered with several other departments within the district to provide internet connection, tech support to troubleshoot connectivity and device issues. She said her office consults with the graduation coach for those students in grades 11 and 12. Her office also utilizes both the Leon County Sheriff Department and the Tallahassee Police Department to help locate families.

The 674 unaccounted students has been divided into critical stage tiers: stage 3 absent for more than 22 days; stage 2-16-22 days absent and stage 1 – 15 or more days absent. If the team is unable to speak with a parent upon visiting the home, the door hanger with district contact information is left on the door. This process has been successful. Dr. Rodgers said they have received calls and emails from parents.

Questions to Dr. Rodgers: Matthew Kopka said he was impressed with the efforts put forth by Dr. Rodgers and her team. He wanted to know what happens when a student run into trouble with the law. Dr. Rodgers said DJJ is called whether the student was on or off campus. DJJ will assess the issue and determine if the student will be allowed to go home or be sent to juvenile detention. The principal and teachers are notified. The principal must make a decision on how to handle the student – restoration or expulsion (formal charges filed against the student helps determine the decision).

Dr. Rodgers said they are currently in the process of establishing a “Parent/Student mentoring” program to help parents and students needing intervention. Those interested should email Dr. Rodgers @ Rodgersk@leonschools.net. Once fully established the program will be made available to the community for those who desire to participate.

- XI. **Student Activities/Athletics Update:** Director Scott Hansen said it's a positive that the district is able to have sports. Rickards football will participate in the final four (4) championship playoff games this weekend (December 11, 7 p.m. @ Gene Cox stadium) and if successful will advance to the championship game (December 19 @ Doak Campbell stadium).

The district will continue with the sport participation within the county except for the aforementioned football championship games. Protocols are in place to take temperatures of those students in digital and brick and mortar learning before any practice or game. Currently only parents of the players, cheerleaders and the pep band has been allowed to events. For the upcoming championship game players will have four (4) tickets each. For the Rickards game the home team will have 1,000 tickets and the visiting team will have 500 tickets. High school sports have done well placing high within each sporting event.

Middle school sports started with outside sports; in January will start will move to basketball and soccer and in March volleyball and football. The district is currently how to allow drama/band and other groups to perform. We will probably start at 25% capacity.

- XII. **2021/2022 and 2022/2023 Calendar Updates:** Dr. Gayle said the 2020/2021 calendar gave teachers 10 days of pre-planning. January the calendar committee will meet to start work on the calendars. She reiterated that school for students cannot start prior to August 10. Currently the district is proposing 7 days of pre-planning for teachers and paraprofessionals with a soft start for students Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Suggestions given that DAC members would like to have on the calendar: full week @ Thanksgiving; ½ days before Christmas break; more planning and professional development days and possible to have days made up in digital academy instead of brick and mortar. Dr. Gayle said hopefully she will be able to present the calendar to DAC in February.

- XIII. **2021/21 Presentation Requests:** The following requests were presented: Title I and II; information for gifted students/ESE in this new norm; Tallahassee development; Safety Officer John Hunkiar; Heritage Trail – best practices; Legislative updates; school policies and the Leon County School Foundation legislative discussion to determine which items to lobby for and plan to affect the outcome of legislative actions.

- XIV. **SAC Questions:** Damaris Barrios said use Canvas in future is difficult, is it possible to enlarge the screen. Dr. Gayle said she will notify the parties involved to get an answer.

- XV. **Wrap Up on Issues:** Dr. Gayle urged DAC members to go back and share information with their SAC.

Adjournment: 7:56 p.m.

Next meeting – January 7, 2021

