

Title I Advisory Council
Monday, November 5, 2018
Griffin Middle School
Minutes

Members present: Althoria Pickett, Nikki Bradley, Marie-Claire Leman, Jacqueline Scott, Carolyn Hector Hall, Allison Stachnik, Anita M. Whitby-Davis, Shari Gewanter, Benny Bolden, Talethia Edwards, Michele Prescott, Kelvin Norton, Robert Connors, Maria McIntyre, Ashley Scott, Giselle Marsh, Amber Mitchell, Mae Akantara, Zelena O’Banner, Anicia Robinson, Amy Reynolds, Champayne Ricciardi, Gloria Smith, Rubye Graybill, Kenia Wagner, Xiaoyu Wang, Zachery Richardson.

Impact of Hurricane Michael on Title I schools - Ms. Giselle Marsh

To minimize the effect on academics, tests were postponed and the end of the 9-weeks was postponed.

Nutrition staff predicted some hiccups but planned ahead to make sure school sites had food available prior to the storm to be prepared for delays after the storm.

At Sabal Palm – some damage due to the fall of trees. Elsewhere there was some damage to fencing here and there. The Crews have checked the school buildings thoroughly.

Lots of meetings were held for school administrators – these conference calls were to keep everyone informed. The district wanted to have schools open so that students could return to normalcy and have access to food.

In terms of students coming to Leon County schools, some schools have seen more than others. Gretchen Everheart is receiving students. There is an uptick in general but it is not Title I specific. It might still continue to increase.

Q: Was the early October student count affected? A: The DOE went back to last week of September for the count – looking historically, we can see that it was not effected.

Spotlight on Sabal Palm Elementary – Community Partnership Schools

Principal Robinson and Ms. Hutchison, community partnership school director

The concept brought down from NYC and in Florida, Evans High School in Orlando was the first school on that model. We now have 12 of them in the State. The Children Home Society brought it to Tallahassee.

There are 4 core partners:

LCS

FSU primary health – free standing clinic adjacent to Sabal Palm

FAMU to do needs assessment and then meet the identified needs

Children Home Society (CHS)

All 4 core partners make a long-term commitment of 25+ year. At this time, they are in the stage of finalizing the MOUs. In the meantime, they are getting ready to serve students' medical needs through FSU primary health. When a student needs medical attention, usually parent comes in, but they don't have to leave campus to see the doctor and the kids can be back in the classroom quickly.

Questions:

Why Sabal Palm? FSU primary health did needs assessment and saw there was a need in that community. There is not a lot around there besides the school. HOPE center (a family shelter) is zoned for Sabal Palm and a 6th of the student population (about 80 kids) are from families in transition and numbers can double by end of the year.

Do you need volunteers? Yes - they take volunteers and parents who are not employed help a lot. 150 volunteer right now – they do a training with Ms. Randolph-Hollis, the Parent Liaison.

The grand opening is coming up and they will invite everyone out to see it!

First in the State because of the contact with the FSU clinic which happened simultaneously.

There was some concern about the 25 year MOU... will agencies pull out of that commitment? How are all the entities working together and how will the communities be strengthened? FAMU and College of Education are conducting a needs assessment to determine what the community needs. They already have some idea from the Needs Assessment done 2 years ago. But this one will also be about what collaboration has to come out to this to meet the needs of the community.

Q: Ms. Wood is promoting Purpose Built Communities, and wants the city to be on board and in the loop. Are they?

Principal Robinson – The city rep is involved; they are a committed member to the effort. All partners are pledging services or resources.

Spotlight on Griffin Middle School - Principal Zelena O'Banner

We have 634 students – it is the most we have had in about 14 to 15 years!!

There was an influx of 110 students at the beginning of the year and they adjusted after the 10 day count by hiring 3 new teachers – had to re-do master schedule – hard for some kids because had to move from one class/teacher to another. But there were 28-29 students in one class and they had to move some of them. They are in the process of hiring one more teacher. Because the district gave 3 additional units, it allows some classes to have no more than 20-21 students and some even just have 18 (for an intensive math or reading).

Partnership between Griffin and TCC:

TCC offered to support with supplies from warehouse: desks, laptops.

Since Deerlake was buying new desks and they gave Griffin the old ones

A lot of the Title I budget (other than 5 teachers and 1 resource teacher), is dedicated to information technology. They have invested in 3D printers and lap top cart. Afterschool programs through 21st centeruy also have access to printer to see how it works and hope to get another to open up to more students

Principal O'Banner wants to get technology up to the point where they are not lagging behind.

What do they want to make on 3D printer? They are following a curriculum provided by FSU and a lot of them are making personal things

Testing:

Students are starting to understand that they are in the courses they are in because of the score they got in their FSA test – so this is giving students ownership of their progress. They are doing data checks with the students, that way they can chart their progress and see improvement.

Are the kids streamed by level? It depends on the class. If it is an intensive math class then yes because the students in that class are there because they scored level 1. Students who scored a Level 2 are able to take electives.

Ms. Smith expressed concern about students being put all together by level. Students feed off of each other – but when Level 1 students are put together, there are no models for them of what a level 3 would look like. Children need others to learn from. Harder to move the kids because they feel stuck.

Others suggested that the students have to get the motivation from themselves and the modeling from the teachers.

Ms. Smith fears that it will not work; that it will not be possible to move them up.

Principal O'Banner: star-testing – they changed the testing environment and it has been more successful. They focus on earning gains first and then get them to proficiency.

Griffin has seen an influx of 2 or 3 students every week and this is on a steady increasing.

School choice: Griffin tried to keep their own – by speaking at Springwood and Riley – they asked the parents to not be quick to leave or dismiss Griffin.

They are at 99% capacity and 6th grade is largest.

Parent from Griffin said she was scared when she saw the school grade but she happy to be here.

Principal O'Banner underlined that that parent gave us a chance – and it worked.

Ashley Scott: one best practice from Griffin is that they give parents everything in different languages for the parents to feel included.

Principal O'Banner reminded everyone that she has an open door policy and is very welcoming to kids.

Whole group workshop notes

What is the TAC going to do? What positions do we anticipate taking on the issues we have been discussing?

There is agreement that a needs assessment will show that we need to improve Early Childhood Education.

Ms. Scott has needs assessments from each school and district wide. Looking at data closely and will report to the TAC at the next meeting.

Resegregation of schools: (these are notes of comments that were shared by TAC members, not a statement of position adopted by the TAC)

Communities are segregated themselves in residential patterns and then there is the flight of families.

Narrative has to change: Integration closes the achievement gap because we are still battling racism, both overt racism and institutional racism.

We need to discuss options for integration since our African American schools were harmed by integration we need to do that more carefully. It should be the same education everywhere – but we don't ensure, as a society, that we provide that.

Racial Equity Institute – we easily avoid the topic, so this is what we need to keep the focus on it.

Recently, parents were upset that their kids couldn't go to Leon – Rosanne Wood hosted a meeting to talk to parents of South Wood about Rickards. We have to show them what their neighborhood school has to offer.

Change will be slow and hard (has to be done gently) need to make schools attractive to their communities –we need better quality of life at our schools and in our communities to attract all people and create equity between our schools.

Under “Other business” the TAC also shared information on the South City Revitalization Project and we had a lively discussion about the changes that could be expected from that development. TAC members were invited to the Hartsfield Town Hall meeting on Nov. 29th at 5:30 to learn more about it.