

DSA School Improvement Team Meeting - September 18, 2013: Minutes

Attendance: David Hawks, Rodney Berry, Ken Jones, Melba Payan, Carl Martin, David Stein, Roseanna Morgan, Patrick Smith, Larry Downing, Benjamin Bailey, Sarah Nagel, Laurence Isaacs, William Tolbert, Mark Maya, Helen Cunny (Chair and recorder), Allison Rice, Joan Jacobs, Rina Borg, Gwen Yueh, Gin Chan, Karen Ciccone

The meeting was called to order. New teacher representatives were welcomed to the team. Elections for 3 new parent reps will be held on Oct 3 at the DSA PTSA meeting.

Mr. Hawks gave a school update. This year there are 1589 students enrolled (there were 1575 slots). New things at school this year include the renovated media center, the new piano lab, the enlarged chorus room, new seats in the Black Box Theatre along with a new lighting and sound system, and a noise treatment for the atrium (so it can be better utilized as a gathering area and an informal performance area). Most data regarding student academic achievement has not been received by the school. However, information on ACT and SAT just arrived.

The School Improvement Plan created last year is good for 2 years. The goals of this plan were reviewed. It was agreed to keep the current plan for use this year with the additions of the required new inserts of the Emergency Checklist and Middle to High School Transition Plan. This was proposed by Jones and seconded by Bailey, followed by a vote of agreement by all.

The form for the Middle to high school transition plan was reviewed. Since DSA is a secondary school (grades 6-12), 8th graders are already on a high school campus, so transitions are simple, smooth and direct. Students have opportunities to interact through math, art pathway and other elective classes, as well as attending student performances. This information will be used to fill out the form for DSA. Mr. Hawks will submit the SIP with new inserts to the district.

David Stein explained how the Duke University "Doing Good in the Neighborhood" grant (DGIN) process worked. Teachers fill out a short form to apply for a grant for special projects designed to reach students needing help. The SIT reviews the proposals to determine if they are worthy of funding. If approved, teachers get funding through the school treasurer with money donated by Duke employees.

Dr. Nagel presented some data on occurrences of negative student behaviors such as tardiness. There was some discussion regarding ways to reduce these types of behaviors, including stronger support for positive behavior. Mr. Hawks cautioned about creating a system where the goal was to reduce the "reporting" of negative behaviors as the actual desired goal might not be achieved using this method. Dr. Nagel will try to get more specific data by grade on the negative behaviors.

For the next meeting, the team will brainstorm "hot topics" related to school needs that the team would like to address in future meetings. It was suggested that the SIT break into small focus groups during the year to address issues and bring information gained back to the main group. An example of a group would be one for ACT and SAT score analysis.