

LIBERTY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes

November 10, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVED by DAC members on February 11, 2021

DAC Chairperson, Becky Shuler welcomed all in attendance and called the meeting to order. The following members and visitors were present: Becky Shuler, Gay Lewis, Matt Basford, Jessica Bennett, Joe Brinson, Beth Brown, Anna Jo Carson, Amy Combs, Grant Conyers, Kara Conyers, Mary C. Davis, Tim Davis, Lara Deason, Keaton Ellis, Miranda Ellis, Neil Grantham, Lynn Guthrie, Joan Hall, Leslie Lawson, Chesnee Layne, Jennifer Lee, Imma Orama, Tammy Prichard, Carson Ramsey and Jason White.

Due to issues at WRT, Chairperson Shuler agreed to let W. R. Tolar's Asst. Principal, Jason White start with his School Report, SIP, PIP and Compact so he could get back to the school as soon as possible.

Chairperson Shuler asked that everyone in the room introduce themselves.

NEW DAC MEMBERS for the 2020-2021 School Year are:

New DAC representatives from HEJHS:

Keaton Ellis, student rep.
Imma Orama, student rep.
Leslie Lawson, parent rep.
Becky Shuler, parent rep.
Miranda Ellis, teacher
Robin Blackburn, non-instructional

New DAC representatives from LCHS:

Anna Jo Carson, student rep.
Carson Ramsey, student rep.
Dana Burns, parent rep.
Tammy Prichard, parent rep.
Mary Flowers, teacher
Robyn Carpenter, non-instructional

New DAC representatives from WRT:

Joe Brinson, student rep.
Kara Conyers, student rep.
Matt Basford, parent rep.
Hannah Causseaux, parent rep.
Grant Conyers, parent & community member
Jennifer Lee, teacher
Neil Grantham, non-instructional

DAC Guidelines and Procedures

Gay Lewis disseminated the DAC Guidelines before the meeting started. Ms. Lewis presented an overview to the DAC members. She stated that the District Advisory Council serves as a resource for the superintendent, is a liaison between the district and community and assists in the preparation and evaluation of the district's school improvement plans.

She said that the council is comprised of:

1. a parent representative from each school,
2. one additional parent from each Title I school,

3. teachers from each school site,
4. 2 students from the high school and 2 students from both middle schools
5. non-instructional school district employees,
6. business or community representatives

The terms of office will be from October 1st through September 30th of each year. Students shall serve for one school-year term only, while other members can serve for two years.” Ms. Lewis reported that a “member shall no longer old membership should he cease to be a resident of the area to be served.”

She stated that each member is entitled to one vote and may cast that vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the District Advisory Council. She told the council that we would be electing new officers later during the meeting. Offices to be filled were Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. The chairperson will preside at all meetings; the duties of the vice-chairperson shall be to represent the chairperson in assigned duties as needed. The secretary shall keep the minutes of each meeting. Ms. Lewis announced that “our meetings will be held quarterly, unless an additional meeting is deemed necessary.”

NEW BUSINESS:

School Reports, SIPs, PIPs and Parent-School Compacts

WR TOLAR – Report given by Jason White, Assistant Principal

Asst. Principal Jason White stated that their School Improvement Plan is to focus on keeping their math teachers “in place.” He said that in recent years’ math teacher positions have changed too frequently. He stated that they need to keep the same teachers teaching math to bring “stability” to their math program. In English Language Arts, they are focusing on students in the lowest quartile. The third aspect of improving their school is to improve attendance. Mr. White stated that attendance was an issue last year and that they have seen improvement this year even with COVID 19. He joked that maybe it was because the students had been home since March of 2019 and parents were ready for the students to start attending brick and mortar. Mr. White asked for input from the DAC regarding additions to the plan. No additional changes were made. We will continue to monitor progress toward goals stated in the plan and report back to DAC at the next meeting.

Regarding Tolar’s Parent Involvement Plan, Mr. White reviewed the plan and asked for additional input from the committee. No further suggestions were made for additions or deletions to the plan. He stated that their PIP (Parent Involvement Plan) has been put on their school’s website. A brochure was handed out by Mr. White. Tolar’s Parent Involvement Mission Statement says that their plan is “to create partnerships amongst the school, families, and the community to help all students reach high levels of academic and social achievement.”

Ways that parents can get involved are by attending Open House at the beginning of the school year. They can agree to join the District Advisory Council, attend parent meetings at various times of the day, sign up for ParentSquare, attend Family Reading Nights, quarterly Awards Programs and Book Fairs.

Upcoming parent involvement activities tentatively planned are parent meetings, family nights, Muffins for Mom, Doughnuts for Dad, family reading nights and a book fair.

Mr. White stated that the School-Parent Compact for 2020-2021 has been reviewed and updated to address a few changes. The school has added iReady as a part of their school’s curriculum. The school

will provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in supportive and effective learning environment to help students meet the State's academic standards. They will hold parent conferences and send out reports on students' progress, provide reasonable access to teachers and staff, provide opportunities to volunteer, differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students and monitor attendance. Parents are to teach their children their responsibility in their own educational process, ensure student attendance, read with their children, volunteer if possible, aid in decisions regarding their child's education and promote positive use of their child's extracurricular time. Students should participate actively in their own education, complete assignments, read at least 30 minutes a day and abide the school's rules and expectations.

The minutes of the November 14, 2019 meeting were disseminated, and Chairperson Brown asked those in attendance to read over the minutes for approval. Due to the Corona Virus (Covid 19) our DAC meetings in the spring of 2020 were cancelled. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Lynn Guthrie and Beth Brown seconded the motion. Everyone was in favor and the minutes were approved.

HOSFORD ELEMENTARY & JR. HIGH SCHOOL – Report given by Jessica Bennett, Principal

Principal Bennett reviewed the SIP and referred to her School Improvement Plan chart from 2018-2019 school year, because we have no assessment data from Spring 2020 due to COVID 19. She also referenced initial progress monitoring data from the beginning of the school year.

The three (3) areas of focus for HEJHS is to:

1. Improve ELA Learning Gains in the lowest quartile from 49% in 2018-19 to 54% for 2020-2021.
2. Improve Math Learning Gains in the lowest quartile from 48% in 2018-19 to 53% for 2020-2021
3. Improve school wide attendance from 87% to 90% of students attending at least 90% of the school year.

Mrs. Bennett reviewed Hosford's Parent Involvement and asked for input from the committee. Parent surveys completed in the spring, prior to school shut down were used to inform the plan and address areas identified by parents as needs. She reviewed the plan Mission Statement is "to provide strategies and opportunities to increase parent's knowledge and confidence to effectively and correctly assist their child/children with at home instruction and support." She stated that Open House was done virtually and in-person. Parent meetings will be flexible to include before and after school hours, Zoom meetings and phone conferences. The school will be utilizing ParentSquare notifications also to keep parents informed. In January, HEJHS will start holding various Family Nights. They also will be having Award's day programs and a Virtual Title 1 parent event.

Mrs. Bennett presented the School-Parent Compact for HEJHS for review and input from the DAC. The compact states that the school will provide high-quality curriculum and instruction that supports success to meet the State's academic standards. They will hold child study team meetings to inform and direct decisions regarding individual student achievement. They will provide parents with frequent reports on their child's progress. Make staff reasonably accessible to parents. Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's school. They will differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. Review and monitor student attendance. And inform parents of current and upcoming activities. The School Parent Compact will be reviewed and discussed with parents during ZOOM and face to face meetings as much as feasible.

Parents are to teach their children responsibility in their own educational process, monitor and encourage student attendance. Actively engage their child in different forms of literature. Support and

volunteer with school activities. Participate in decisions relating to their child's education and promote positive use of their child's extracurricular time

Students should participate actively in their own education, complete all assignments, read at least 20 minutes a day and abide the school's rules and expectations.

LIBERTY EARLY LEARNING CENTER- Report given by Chesnee Layne, Early Learning Center Supervisor

Ms. Layne reported that Liberty Early Learning Center serves 80 preschool students between the ages of 3 to 5 years old. She stated that their goal of improving attendance was accomplished! She disclosed that if a student is out sick that they call to check on them. They have had to quarantine 2 classes as of yesterday. They have a set of twins in separate classes that were "positive for Covid-19, so both classes had to be quarantined.

Ms. Layne continued saying that the Kindergarten Readiness Test continues to be a challenge. The test must be given 30 days into the Kindergarten school year. With missing school since last March, it could present a problem. In 2019-2020 school year, the goal was to have 60% or higher kindergarteners pass the Star Literacy Test, if they don't – that program is put on probation. Hosford scored above 60, however W. R. Tolar fell below 60% and therefore their program is on probation.

She said that they have purchased a new curriculum this year in hopes that their goal of increased scores will happen. She went on to say that "it is HARD to social distance in Pre-K!" However, they are making strides in teaching handwashing and only allowing 1 class on the playground at a time.

Ms. Layne was pleased to announce that her "4 certified teachers are all infield!" She has 32 students out of 80 that have IEPs. (Individual Education Plan). There are 2 programs that are VPK and there is 1 disabilities class at each site. She has 2 students that are participating virtually.

LIBERTY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL – Report given by Tim Davis, Assistant Principal

Assistant Principal, Tim Davis, reported for the high school. He announced that the Football Playoff would be this Thursday in Sneads. He stated that the boys and girls basketball teams had started practicing. JROTC, Robotics and Band have all been busy having competitions. He announced that the Jazz Band would be holding a concert on Dec. 15th.

Mr. Davis provided an overview of the SIP for the 2020-2021 school year. He explained that this is a fluid document and the school would continue to monitor student progress and make needed adjustments to the plan as necessary. Regarding School Improvement, Mr. Davis stated there are three main goals for the school year. They are concentrating on increasing student achievement in the areas

of ELA and Algebra, as well as continuing to use “seat time” to help students catch up. If a student needs to make up time, they allow them to do so.

Mr. Davis stated that LCHS has many ways to get parents involved in their students’ educational endeavors. Parents can serve on the DAC as a parent representative. They also have flexible parent meetings before, during and after school. Another way to keep parents aware of what is going on is using ParentSquare. He said that because of Covid 19, they haven’t had as many parent meetings as usual, but that they hope to start at the beginning of the new year with their usual meetings of Senior meetings, FAFSA parent meeting, a Dual Enrollment Night, Bright Futures Parent Night, 8th Grade Parent Night and a Virtual Title I Parent Night. He said that Open House was held individually with each grade level meeting separately.

The floor was open for any suggestions or comments regarding the School Improvement Plans, Parent Involvement Plans and the School-Parent Compacts.

There were no suggestions or comments made by those in attendance, so Chairperson Shuler asked for a motion to approve the School Improvement Plans. **Lara Deason made the motion to approve the SIPs as presented. Miranda Ellis seconded the motion. All three School Improvement Plans were approved by the DAC members.**

Chairperson Shuler then moved on to the Parent Involvement Plans and asked for any comments or suggestions. None were given. Ms. Shuler asked for a motion to approve the PIPs. **Beth Brown motioned that the PIPs be approved as they were presented. Jessica Bennett seconded the motion and the PIPs were approved by the DAC members.**

Ms. Shuler asked for any input regarding the School-Parent Compacts. **Jessica Bennett made the motion to approve the compacts as they were presented. Tim Davis seconded the motion and it unanimously passed by the DAC members.**

Student Concerns:

HOSFORD ELEMENTARY & JR. HIGH SCHOOL – Student Reps: Imma Orama and Keaton Ellis

Keaton Ellis mentioned that “we spend too much time on the computers doing Canvas and iReady.” When questioned, Keaton responded that he would like more teaching verbally by the teachers.

Imma Orama stated that “We watch too many videos in Science class.”

Miranda Ellis, basically said with all the changes due to Covid 19, we as students, teachers, parents and administrators need to have “more grace in the situations we are in.”

Gay Lewis added, “Grace and common sense.” Meaning if a student has been on the computer the whole entire period previously, some other form of instruction would be beneficial.

WR TOLAR – Student Reps: Kara Conyers and Joe Brinson

No comments

LIBERTY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL – Student Reps: Anna Jo Carson and Carson Ramsey

Carson Ramsey said that he feels like the high school is doing “well with all the Covid-19 issues.”

Parent Concerns:

Hosford Elementary and Junior High School Parent Rep., Leslie Lawson stated that she had no concerns to comment on at this time.

W. R. Tolar Parent Rep., Grant Conyers brought up the issues that the middle schools athletes have mismatched uniforms and wanted to know what could be done. Several past coaches stated that fundraising is about the only way to pay for uniforms, because the gate fees go to pay the referees and the concession money goes to the schools. Mr. Basford stated, “sports equipment is expensive.”

Mr. Conyers approached the subject of having the district pay for uniforms “up front” and let the schools reimburse. No one from the Finance Department was at the meeting to address the question.

Mr. Basford mentioned that he coached last year and stated that there is a disconnect between the athletic directors, coaches and athletes regarding the need to return uniforms after the season. There needs to be an inventory system set up to keep track of the uniforms.

Lara Deason said that there should be a “rotation schedule of buying uniforms.”

Several other ideas brought up was the possibility of getting sponsors and or booster clubs. Much discussion ensued, however, no concrete decisions were made.

District Reports:

21st Century Grant – Report given by Beth Brown, Project Manager

Ms. Brown announced that we have “received word that we were approved for our 21st CCLC Extended Learning Program (ELP) Grant. She said that we are anxiously awaiting the award funds. She has advertised for the site coordinators positions and interviews for one position have been completed. The other positions should be advertised very soon. Open enrollment will be in progress soon. She asked those present to refer children that may need the extra time at school. She is looking forward to a great year!

Assessment/Food Service – Report given by Amy Combs

Ms. Combs reminded everyone that fall testing, EOCs and alternate assessments are coming soon. Not sure what the outcome of the scores will be due to no instruction the last 2 months of the school year.

The Food Service Department has had to “change everything we do!” Due to the constraints of the CDC, the way they normally operate has totally changed. But she said that all her staff have worked together and things have gone smoothly. She announced that our usual Thanksgiving feast will be only for students and staff this year due to Covid. It is sad that parents, siblings and grandparents will not be allowed to attend because this is a Liberty County tradition.

ESE/Mental Health– Report given by Lara Deason, ESE Director

Ms. Deason said that “it has been a challenging start to the school year with the addition of distance learning options. It has also increased the number of students who need mental health services.” Due to the pandemic, there is a lot of stress on students and their families.

The State funded allocation for Mental Health was \$141,553.00: and

1. must be used to directly provide mental health services in the schools
2. to pay the bulk of funds are spent on Clinical Social Workers
 - a. they provide direct services;
 - b. coordinate with outside agencies to provide services to students and families;
 - c. teach different mental health curriculums in conjunction with the school SROs
3. the remaining portion was spent this year on technology to support virtual counseling and meeting sessions;
4. to provide online mental health curriculum that is required by the statute for all students grades 6th – 12th.

Ms. Deason reported that “ESE has become more challenging with providing services to students during distance learning and quarantine periods, but we are making it work.” She stated that the ESE department is serving 249 students.

Tolar : 94

Hosford: 71

LCHS: 51

LELC: 33

Technology – Report given by Lynn Guthrie

Ms. Guthrie reported that at the new high school “all teachers and common areas have ClearTouch 75” interactive panels with integrated PCs.” She said that “two additional mobile labs have been ordered. The laptops should be delivered next week and it will fill the shortage we have at LCHS for Craig Shuler’s class as well as JROTC.

Ms. Guthrie said that we will have our new district website and school website updated soon, the last time they were updated was in 2017.

She stated that “we are continuing to train staff regarding cyber security. In November 2019, our baseline phish prone rating was 64% and our percentage now is down to 3.8%!”

In her closing remarks, Ms. Guthrie gave us some fun facts.

Fun Facts...

- Clever logins this school year
 - o teachers – 18,500
 - o students – 269,200
- Help Desk tickets submitted by staff
 - o since beginning in 2017 - 8,673
 - o this school year – 1,185

- ParentSquare this school year
 - o 1,015 posts
 - o 31,080 direct messages in 3,266 threads

- Computers
 - o Computers/laptops – just under 3,000 (not including 1,000 donated laptops)
 - o mobile labs – 70

Curriculum Update- report given by Gay Lewis, Director of Instruction/Curriculum

Ms. Lewis started her report by discussing the school calendar, she stated that the state mandates that we attended a certain number of hours each year, therefore; because we started late we had to delete some of the holidays and half-days that normally are scheduled during the last ½ of the school year.

She discussed the preparation to transition to the new standards for ELA K-2 in 2021-2022, and that the standards will be fully implemented in 2022-2023. ELA textbook adoption for grades K-12 is under way. One teacher from each grade level from each school will participate. We are looking for parents to participate in the process.

She announced the Reading Scholarships (\$500 for tutoring) available for struggling readers in grades 3 – 5. Students will be identified that are Tier 2 or 3 and authorized by the principal. The tutoring will be online.

Currently we have 1115 students enrolled in our brick and mortar schools, 109 students doing iLiberty and 43 students doing Liberty Virtual. FTE is substantially down. Thirty-six students have returned to brick and mortar at the beginning of the nine weeks.

Ms. Lewis stated that we received \$287,522.00 in the ESSER Grant which went to pay for computers, software, tech support, sanitation supplies, ParentSquare and extra instruction.

We received \$29,000.00 from the GEER Summer Recovery Grant. That money was spent on teacher salaries to provide instruction to students during summer months and supplies for summer school.

From the GEER Infrastructure Grant, we received \$65,182.00 which was spent on Ag equipment and supplies, Allied Health equipment, supplies, travel and Culinary equipment and supplies all at the new high school.

We received \$46,224.00 from the GEER Coronavirus Prevention to spend on sanitation supplies. Ms. Lewis told the DAC members, “If you need something in your schools, let us know.”

She made note that the schools are reporting their Covid results to Darrell Johnson, our Safety Coordinator. This week’s COVID-19 Report (Nov. 2, - Nov. 6, 2020) “We have 2 positive cases (employees); 20 students and 4 employees in direct contact quarantine and 6 student cases that are symptomatic.

Our Federal Grants are:

Title I, Part A - The award was \$352,428.00

Parent surveys indicated that they would like the money spent on computer software, supplemental teaching positions and instructional materials. Funds were allocated for all of those activities. Some funds were used for teacher professional development. Mrs. Lewis asked if there were any other recommendations for use of these funds. There were no suggestions given.

Perkins Secondary – awarded us \$14,378.00 which will support Ag/Welding/Allied Health programs this year. Again, Ms. Lewis asked for suggestions for usage of the funds for CTE programs. There were no responses.

Perkins Rural/Sparsely – we were awarded \$53,278.00. These funds support the salary of the allied Health teacher and supports the needs of Allied Health and Ag. A comprehensive needs assessment of CTE programs was conducted last spring and there were several programs discussed that are being considered for the coming year. They include manufacturing, construction, and welding. “We will begin planning to implement a new program for the 2021-2022 school year,” said Ms. Lewis.

Title I, N&D was awarded \$94,395. This grant pays salaries for teachers to provide opportunity for credit/course accrual for at risk students at W. R. Tolar, Hosford Elementary and Junior High and Liberty County High School. It also provides para-professionals to provide educational support to students. Through this grant we have contracted with Liberty Just to purchase instructional software.

Title II awarded us \$66,453.00 which pays for stipends for teachers to participate in professional development opportunities for curriculum alignment in ELA, Mathematics and Science. It pays for a teacher mentor for beginning teachers or teachers new to the district. Dues and Fees for teacher certification test reimbursements. Ms. Lewis again asked if there were any recommendations on how to spend these funds. There were no recommendations.

Election of 2020-2021 DAC Officers:

Mrs. Shuler opened the floor for nominations for the 2020-2021 District Advisory Council officers. Joan Hall nominated Becky Shuler for Chairperson. Beth Brown seconded the motion. No other names were brought up for nomination. The council voted “yea” on Mrs. Shuler’s nomination as DAC chairperson.

Asst. Principal Tim Davis nominated Grant Conyers as Vice-Chairperson. Gay Lewis seconded the motion and no other names were brought up for nomination. The motion carried unanimously that Grant Conyers would be the vice-chairperson.

For the office of DAC Secretary, Lara Deason nominated Joan Hall. Principal Jessica Bennett seconded the motion. Again, no other individuals were nominated, and the council unanimously voted in the affirmative.

Set Next Meeting:

Gay Lewis made the motion to set the next meeting for January 26th at 9:00 a.m. Lynn Guthrie seconded the motion and all agreed.

Adjourn Meeting:

Lynn Guthrie made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Miranda Ellis seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.