

Norcross High School Council
Thursday, February 14, 2008

Members Present:

Jonathan Patterson, Kirstin Baker, Darrell Cicchetti, Adria Whitworth, Harvey Snider, Mario Mireles, John Purcell, Laurie Slaff, Peter See, Chuck King

Members Absent:

Rick Falkowski

The minutes and agenda were approved as read.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Mr. Patterson addressed the issue of the school's allotment for the 2008 – 2009 school year. The allotment is based on student and enrollment with one teacher equaling one point and one administrator equaling 1.5 points. Norcross High School's tentative regular education allotment is 196.876 points and the special education allotment is 25.60 points. In addition to teachers and administrators, counselors and clerks count for the allotted points. Some of the points are categorical and must be spent in specific areas (ie – gifted teachers), while others may be used wherever there is a need. Mr. Patterson said he plans to hire up to the point limit given to the school because this is the time of year the most qualified candidates are available. The down side of hiring to the limit is that if the school does not make the enrollment prediction, we will lose newly hired teachers to other Gwinnett schools.

The transfer process which will be open between February 15 – 29, allows teachers to move from one Gwinnett County school to another and is open to teachers with three or more years of experience at their current school. When the transfer period ends, teaching positions will be open to outside candidates.

Mr. Patterson and other administrators will attend the Gwinnett County Public Schools job fair on March 3.

In conjunction with the discussion of hiring new teachers, council members asked what the process is to terminate poor classroom teachers. It was explained that there is a documentation process that must be followed, a professional development plan must be formulated for the teacher, and the administration must prove that the teacher has failed to comply with duties and responsibilities. Mr. Patterson stressed the administrators need to have the courage to address weaknesses and issues with the teacher, and then develop a plan for improvement.

It was shared there is a strategic planning retreat for the leadership team, which consists of administrators and department chairs, at Simpsonwood Conference Center on

February 25. This meeting will focus on where we are as a school now and begin the process to set the direction the school will go in during the 2008 – 2009 school year. This will be followed by a three day leadership conference in June, which will include curriculum leaders.

Maria Chininis reported on the school's AYP status. AYP is determined by the success of first time test takers in the eleventh grade who taking the math and language arts portion of the Georgia High School Graduation Test. Students must pass the benchmark and have attendance of 95% or more in subgroups in order to make AYP. Each year the benchmark is raised and by 2014, the benchmark will be a score of 100%. Council members expressed concern that it is not feasible or realistic to expect every student to meet the 100% benchmark.

When asked what the school is doing to prepare students to take the GHSGT, Ms. Chininis replied that we are targeting students who need support, promoting teacher awareness of students needing support, and offering interventions, such as the Success Academy. Teachers have received a list of first time test takers and have been working on test preparation in Sacred Wednesday department meetings. Ms. Chininis stated that she feels we are at a good spot right now in our preparedness for the test.

Ms. Chininis also shared information about the GCPS School Board supported Credit Recovery Program. This is a program offered to students who failed a core class with a score of 60 – 69. The course is an after school class held two days a week at a charge to the student of \$100.00. If the student passes, he/she will earn credit and will be able move on to the next level of instruction. This is a much better option for most Norcross students than summer school, which costs \$250.00 per class, or taking an on-line class, which is even more expensive.

Nathan Ballantine presented a comparison of discipline incidents and discipline numbers from the 2006 – 2007 and 2007 – 2008 school years. When questioned why the number of Rule 12: Chronic Behavior Problem Student had drastically reduced to date this year (7) from last year (171), Mr. Ballantine responded that with the implementation of a county policy that a school can no longer issue a Rule 12 to a student entering with a lengthy discipline history. In essence, the student enters with a “clean slate” and must have several discipline referrals before he/she can be placed on a Rule 12. Rule 12 students who have further discipline infractions are taken to panel. When discussing the school's handling of discipline issues, Mr. Patterson said his policy is to show no tolerance.

Meeting adjourned.

The next School Council meeting will be Thursday, March 13 at 7:00 am in the Family and Consumer Science room.