

Hilltop Elementary School Council

September 10, 2024

The Hilltop Elementary School Council met in regular session on September 10, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. in the data room at the school.

School Council Members Present:

Dr. Ovedia Glover, Principal

Dara Seamans, Assistant Principal of Instruction

Kristin Moroz, Counselor

Shannon Grieshop, Teacher

Amber Aldridge, Teacher

Pamela Clark, Teacher

Leah Aiken, Parent

Mandy Cobb, Parent

Call to Order

Shannon Grieshop made a motion to call the meeting to order at 8:00 am. Amber Aldridge seconded the motion.

Welcome & Celebrations

Dr. Glover welcomed everyone to our first meeting of the year. We are excited that we can still meet together as a team. Parents thanks for sticking it out with me – especially when you have kids to get ready. Thank you to our teachers and counselor for joining us. We appreciate Mrs. Moroz for stopping in this morning. She is a wealth of knowledge.

School Data

We had 584 students and 38 homerooms to start the year. Pre-K has 2 teachers with 40 students. The maximum number of students in a Pre-K class was reduced this year from 22. Kindergarten was awarded 1 slot so they have 5 teachers. First grade has 5 teachers. Second grade has 4 teachers. Third grade has 5 teachers. Fourth grade has 4 teachers. Fifth grade has 4 teachers. There are a total of 9 support services (EIP, EB, SID/PID, Sped) for instruction.

C.E. Program

We are offering free breakfast and lunch. There may be questions and concerns from parents. We qualified not based on school average, but district average of homeless students, families receiving TANF, Foster students and things like that under the government window. The goal is 95% participation in breakfast and lunch.

12 non-Title 1 schools are participating to see if we can hold 95% participation rate. Great for school community and parents. It saves on expenses and parents don't have to worry about it. We are at 80% now and getting better every day.

Mrs. Aiken asked why it is so low. Ms. Aldridge said some are picky eaters and some haven't been exposed to school lunch. It looks different – uncrustable vs homemade PB&J. Another reason is allergies. Parents filled out the digital package which included student allergies. When students go through the lunch line and put in their lunch number, the computer flags student allergies. There is a separate lunch for those students with allergies that are severe – just for them on that day. For those with severe peanut allergies, there will be a peanut free table. Parents can come to school and see Ms. Hisel if they have any questions. Mrs. Aiken suggested that if parents were exposed to school lunch by eating with their child it may help to increase participation. Dr. Glover said we do a grade level lunch. She is thinking of other ways that getting parents in the building. Students can also go through the line in the morning. Last Wednesday we started a breakfast cart or bar. Kids can get snacks if they already ate breakfast and want to keep it in the backpack. Breakfast gets the day started and the brain going. Some parents don't want their kids getting free breakfast or lunch. Ms. Cobb likes the idea of letting parents in to see what lunch is like now. It isn't the same as parents had when they were in school. It is well rounded - not just carbs. Invite parents in and post pictures of plates on Facebook for parents to see.

High top tables are being used for students of different grade levels and classes on a schedule. A student came in with an idea to Dr. Glover. He said he wanted to be able to sit wherever in the lunchroom – with different classes; but then leave with his class. Lunch and recess are the only times that they can see their friends. So on Fridays higher grades are allowed to sit wherever even with other classes. When their teacher or lunch monitors call for the class, they line up.

We started a share and care cart for lunch items that students do not want. Kids love it when they can get extra food from the cart to eat for snacks or additional lunch. It is empty by the end of the day.

School Safety

When it becomes personal. It is so personal. We constantly have fire and safety drills. We can't say we will move without fear but we will know what to do. Warnock said we must do more than tell them to hide. We have had people saying maintenance at the end of the hall. You never open door because you never know. Chairs must be on the floor when kids are in the classroom. Students should not be roaming halls. Door must be locked.

Safety for our students is pushed by the district. Administration was called together because all title 1 schools in the GA Department of Education were shared on social media in a 50 page document which indicated a threat to Title 1 schools. District let all principals know this was on social media. We will err on the side of safety for the kids. Hilltop was not on the list. Parents and teachers want to be comfortable; and both want to protect our kids.

A lot of people in one area is a safety issue. We are inviting more parents in, but it has to be more controlled. Everyone has a station with eyes and radios on. They must be very visible to be sure we are protecting the kids. 3rd, 4th, and 5th Honor Roll and Honorable Mention ceremony would have to be separate times because you have to control the crowd.

Hilltop's PTO is going to have HES Hoedown / Fall Festival on November 15th. We do want to keep good things going and control the crowd. Grandparents wanted to walk kids to class after breakfast, but for safety reasons, we kept the door closed to those halls.

School Council Guidelines

The handout with the new School Council Guidelines were passed out. This is our team. We are missing Sandy Sawyer. We will meet 4 times a year from 8 – 8:30. We will post the meeting notes, agenda, and sign in sheet to Hilltop's page. That will be evidence we are still meeting. We like having a partnership. It is at principal's discretion. We need help and feedback. All were in favor. It must be equitable and right for all kids as our numbers continue to grow.

School Activities and Events

Camp Learn-a-Lot was a great time and a huge success. Camaraderie was great and all were excited. PreK and K had a Kayak. Need a pool of water next time. We had 140 marked in attendance. Parents already talking to child with writing, reading, and phonics strategies. Thanks to PTO for the free Smores and food trucks. It was very successful. It takes everybody. Teachers do the work, instructional materials were ready. We appreciate everyone.

GMAS

April/May timeframe – they moved it up this year. 3rd – 5th all take it on the same days. Retest in May before summer break.

We will have an Assessment Parent night on November 7th. All assessments MAP and GMAS. The Instructional team will meet again in a few weeks to plan further. We want to be able to show parents the mountain chart graph for MAP assessment and what teachers are doing. GMAS information now instead of waiting, so parents can get on GA Experience online and practice so students will be more familiar with the test. GMAS is all new to 3rd grade. More exposure for students and parents will make them feel more comfortable with assessment. The Instructional Team is working to keep focus on what will benefit parents, teachers, and students. ELA is changing next year, we want to ensure students success. Mrs. Cobb loves that it is in November instead of later in the year. Mrs. Aiken said that Mrs. Lawrence sends home study guides and worksheets after first progress report. Her son says lets work on homework every night. Mrs. Clark already put things on DOJO about GA Experience online.

In MAP testing, there are a lot of master instruction plans and a test assessment bank specific for topic available. It is about the process to get the answer not just the answer. This is the same with math and ELA. Rigor and depth of knowledge goes from 1 to 4. GMAS goes deeper. Students must know what the question is asking. Teachers make sure intentional instruction is going on in the classrooms. What does each child need must be known.

Glover suggested that the Instructional Team consider a Lunch and Learn for parents in grades 3 to 5 by grade levels providing 2 sessions 11 – 12 or 12 – 1. Parents could come in and see what assessments are really about. Instructional team could provide 2 or 3 dates with 3-5 on different weeks in the computer lab. Board of Education likes open session to learn or RSVP.

Dr. Glover is asking for 1 more step. Sometimes students freeze on the computer. The test is one hour long. Dr. Glover wants no movement for 45 minutes no matter who finishes first.

Mrs. Aldridge said students made so much progress but froze on test. More practice on computer so they are not so anxious.

Ms. Clark said students also need to learn time management skills – the more you practice the better you become.

Counselor Services

Mrs. Moroz is our counselor. She does not provide full therapy. She can do 15 – 20 minute check ins, small groups, social skill groups, and one on one. She tries not to take away from instructional time Drama doesn't seem as bad during recess time. She checks with the kids, and they usually just want to be heard. She helps any way that she can.

Closing

Dr. Glover thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. If you know any parents that would like to join, please have them attend 2nd or 3rd meeting. The waivers for School Council this year was a surprise. WE still want to move with fidelity. If you need anything, please let us know.

Amber Aldridge made the motion to close the meeting. Leah Aiken seconded the motion at 9:05 a.m.