

Hilltop Elementary School Council

September 12, 2023

The Hilltop Elementary School Council met in regular session on September 12, 2023, at 7:46 a.m. in the computer lab at the school.

School Council Members Present:

Dr. Ovedia Glover, Principal

Dara Seamans, Assistant Principal of Instruction

Sandy Sawyer, Teacher

Shannon Grieshop, Teacher

Amber Aldridge, Teacher

Pamela Clark, Teacher

Christie Baggett, Parent

Mandy Cobb, Parent

Call to Order

Amber Aldridge made a motion to call meeting to order at 7:46 am. Shannon Grieshop seconded the motion.

Welcome/Opening

Dr. Glover welcomed everyone to our first school council meeting of the year and thanked everyone for coming. Dr. Glover said she cannot lead by herself and that she loves this group to lead. There are day to day changes in test dates with common goals in mind. We are all in one accord. Mrs. Clark is serving in place of Mrs. Moody who moved up to Middle School. Mrs. Clark teaches 3rd grade. Please let me know of any parents to bring on board for School Council.

Goal

Hilltop's mission is to produce high-achieving students by establishing high expectations for all students in a safe, consistent community that continuously pursues knowledge creating independent, global citizens.

Hilltop's vision is to create a learning community in which faculty, students, and parents are educating for excellence.

We have a learning community at Hilltop where we are educating for excellence. Covid is here to stay. Pre-Covid we had open doors all the time. Now, our doors are closed to large events that may cause problems. We are looking for at least 3 parents to tutor during the school day and help with small group. We are going to have a math or reading night each year.

Our goals are safety, reading, and math.

- Safety: We are keeping the door of the office locked this year. This is difficult for the office staff. But we can lock the office door and hall door to protect ourselves and the kids. The county system is rekeying every school. They started on August 15th with the high schools, then moved to middle schools, and will then move to elementary. Some people who don't work for the district anymore still have keys. At least 3 or 4 retirees this year. We must make sure that we get keys and badges from them. The ladies in the office must get up and press something to open the door from the foyer. Some paraprofessionals are appointed as point of contact to make sure the doors are locked and secured. If you think of anything else we can do for safety please let us know. We do Code drills with and without the kids.
- Reading: Phonics, comprehension, and fluency goals – All the kids need to be on grade level at the end of the school year. Sometimes that is hard because some students don't have someone to read with them. Working to close the gap. It is not a large gap. We can overcome. Some lower functioning students and those with an IEP, we do not ask if they are reading on grade level; but if they are meeting IEP goals. The homeroom teacher is teaching on grade level. Sawyer, Farr, and Haslett are closing the IEP gap from IReady, HCLI, and MAP data.
- Math: 3rd grade now 4th grade is ready for the challenge. 3rd grade test scores last year are higher than we thought they would be. As a district, 4th grade scores don't always match. Mrs. Sawyer is our math go to person. There are changes every day to the new standards and curriculum until the state finalizes it. Teachers have all they need to do and teach. It is going great so far.

Student Data:

In PreK we have 2 teachers and 44 students. In Kindergarten we have 4 teachers and about 86 students. These two grades are not mandatory.

1st grade has 4 teachers and 82 students. 2nd grade has 5 teachers and 92 students. 3rd grade has 5 teachers and 81 students. 4th grade has 4 teachers and 81 students. 5th grade has 4 teacher and 96 students. We have about 586 students currently enrolled.

We received a new student yesterday from Matt Arthur Elementary School. We are continuing to grow. We will have dips and growth from summertime moves. We want to be the school parents want their kids to attend. A kindergarten parent came and said they want their kid here.

Parent Teacher Organization

Mrs. Adams is taking over as PTO president. WE are thankful and grateful for that team. They have provided chicken biscuits for the staff. They are here and working. We are happy to have them on board. They work for the entire school and every family. All of their activities / events are approved by administration. They had a \$4,000 check from the old PTO (Simmons, Wendy Wood, Jason Wood) for their starting budget. Since Covid there have not been a lot of meetings. They are ready for great meetings.

HES Activities and Events: Student Calendar

We will email letters to parents, call outs, communication for all events in September. The more parents know the better. Parents prefer email over call outs. The information parents as for the most is the days of field day. May 9th and 10th will be our field day. 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade GA Milestones are gate grades for reading. I feel confident they will do this. It is our goal. We couldn't schedule field day until after GMAS dates. We can't keep kids from field day for a test. One test shouldn't determine if a child pass/fail. Committee and admin will look at what a child does in classroom, etc. to determine best for child. Research shows that retention only helps with maturity not academics.

MAPS, IReady, & More

1st – 5th grades: MAPS

K – 5th grades: IReady diagnostics

Mrs. Seamans said beginning of year seeing where students are. Assessments are not an I gotcha. It is see where they are and where we need them to be.

MAP Norm assessment shows growth. Winter is a great picture of where we need to work to be at end of year. The graph looks like mountain. We want to sees continues climb.

IReady Diagnostics whole as school shows where students are. When they take the IReady it provides a path for each student for math and reading.

Mrs. Seamans reviewed the Map report by grade level for Math and Reading. Kindergarten doesn't take the MAP at the beginning of the year. They aren't ready with the computers. They are still learning to do school.

Teachers are encouraged to look at the data as a team to determine domain strength and weaknesses. Teachers can see the standards that students need help with. The math standards have been revised this year. Some things have changed. But what hasn't changed is best practices. Teachers are going through the learning plans that the district provided. The district did a great job creating these. Teachers can see what their student needs. You cannot just throw a dart. This platform shows the specific needs of our students. Family reports for Winter will be going home after we take MAP again.

IReady data is broken down into colors representing the score. This will show what areas need to be focusing on. Kindergarten does take IReady. Some really strong, and some we need to work on. The yellow scores are on the bubble. We have to move them up the colors.

We are starting tutoring as early as next week. We have 9 teachers. They will be tutoring in math and reading. We are starting earlier this year which is preventative instead of reactive.

Our teachers are working hard. All schools have work to do.

Mrs. Baggett asked about the summer slide? IReady diagnostic has several factors. Did student take the test seriously. Mrs. Aldridge explained that although some students may not have taken it as seriously. They are conferencing with those students to set goals and make a plan with both IReady and MAP.

In IReady, teachers can go in and assign lessons on what they need if they feel students need something extra.

These are great programs but nothing replaces the teacher. This gives great information which the teacher can pull lesson that IReady provided to use in small group.

Closing

Dr. Glover thanked Cobb and Baggett. The more details we can paint better picture for small group and A/O time. Mrs. White is coming to work with 2nd graders. Safety and student learning is a lot. We are continuing to encourage teachers. It is easy to get overwhelmed. We have a lot of wonderful resources and we use some of all the tools we have available.

Mrs. Baggett asked about the 4th and 5th graders that are consistently late to school everyday. Some parents weren't aware that the bus was getting here late. Dr. Glover explained that she is now monitoring the bus. 8:35 – 8:40 drop off then 10 minutes for breakfast causes them to miss instruction. Some have A/O time early in the morning so they miss it. Coach Burgess saw a student that was getting here at 8:37 then going to class to drop off backpack and then going to eat. She stopped and corrected that. Red Triangle is a late bus. There is a driver shortage. Dr. Glover is going to get 3 names for small group tutoring off late buss for Mrs. Seamans. Some parents bring their baby to school. We have working parents that want to drop off their child at 7:30. But this is not the policy. Some parents sleep late. We have backpack buddies for students who may need extra help.

Mrs. Baggett asked how many of those late bus riders fall below average? At least 4 in 5th grade. Teachers are pulling during small group for reading and math. Whie higher students are doing self directed enrichment. There are different strategies to help.

Surrounding counties also have bus shortages. Mr. Parsons was our employee that was certified to drive a bus. We don't have anyone certified to drive one at our school anymore.

Mrs. Baggett asked if all homework is computer based now. The technology is monitored in her home and her children have no cell phones. She is in the kitchen while they are doing homework. Google Docs allows students to communicate with other students in the class on a thread. It is easy for this to be mean or petty and have someone's feelings hurt. Dr. Glover said that not all parents are as careful. Parents are so busy. Some parents aren't there. Some parents feel intimidated by homework. The technology is the language speaking to the kids. Dr. Glover is going to make an announcement to remind students that the technology is only for school use. Mrs. Aldridge explained that they are learning to be a digital citizen with the CIPA lessons. It is important to remind students that collaboration is ok but just talking about other things is not.

Dr. Glover is receiving training about Chat GPT which is a new AI that a lot of districts are using. You still have to check things and read them to make sure they are okay. This is just another tool to help teachers to know what's going on.

Dr. Glover thanked everyone for coming. If you need anything let us know.

Mrs. Aldridge made the motion to close the meeting. Mrs. Cobb seconded the motion at 8:49 a.m.