

# CITY OF GREENBELT

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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Tuesday, January 26, 2010

### **ACE meeting with the school principals, January 26, 2010.**

Present:

GMS Principal Judy Austin  
GMS VP John Lapolla  
GES Principal Kim Seidel  
GES VP Denise Bush  
Turning Point Principal Kenneth Jones  
Magnolia Principal Phyllis Gillens  
ERHS Principal Reginald McNeil  
SHL Principal Natasha Jenkins  
SHL VP Nicole Scott  
City Council Member Ed Putens  
City Council Member Silke Pope  
City Council Member Emmett Jordan  
Greenbelt CARES representative Liz Park  
Dave Whiteman  
Don Rich  
Alla Lake  
Lauretta Baugh  
Theresa Bugg  
Sudhanshu Sinha  
Jon Gardner

Introductions

Jon Gardner gave description of ACE activities and handed out the ACE grant forms.

Roundtable discussion:

ERHS, Principal McNeil:

- There is a budget meeting at BOE going on this week. ERHS will lose their Media Aid Asst (assistant librarian). Alla volunteered to advertise for volunteers to fill in this role. They are needed primarily over the lunch period: 10am to 2pm.

- Boundaries. ERHS boundaries have been added to the BOE discussion. The idea is to create “clusters” within which different schools have different programs: SciTech, IB, Languages, etc. Jon pointed out that the plan doesn’t make sense unless they allow students to transfer to the school of their choice, but that hasn’t been mentioned. There exists an agreement between the Greenbelt City Council and the BOE that all Greenbelt residents will be allowed to go to ERHS. ACE will try to get a copy of this agreement – maybe Leta has it? The City Council has asked Dr. Hite to plan a community input meeting in the Greenbelt area.
- Working well: Science Café run by the PTSA. Starting the Robotics team for the year.

SHL: Principal Jenkins

- Facing big problems at Empirian Village. Still have 5 families who have been made homeless by the electrical problems. The city had been told that all families were back in their apartments, so Liz Park will look into this. Greenbelt CARES has a Grief and Loss program which might help.
- Had a big MLK day event: 75 people participated in beautifying the school, murals, repainting, etc.
- Won an ACE grant to start a dance program. Also have after-school art classes organized through the City Rec Dept.
- Running Saturday help sessions for the STEM fair
- NBA program = never been absent. Students get ice cream served by Principal.
- Emphasizing fitness, aerobics and nutrition
- Will start MSA information nights soon.
- PTA has 50 paid members, 7 or 8 are very active.
- Haiti fund raised \$1100.

GES: Principal Seidel

- Having a good year.
- PBIS is working well. PBIS is a positive behavior program which rewards good behavior rather than punishing bad behavior. Students earn points they can spend at the school store. They are always looking for donations to the school store.
- Want recycling bins. This is in the works.
- One program that works well is the GES – GMS faculty basketball game. GMS Principal Austin said that they have lost their tall men, but GES has always fielded women, so maybe it will be a closer game this year. Principal Austin suggested volleyball instead.
- GES has a volunteer position of “volunteer coordinator” done by David Lange. Organizes about 125 volunteers, mostly tutors. Arranges the fingerprinting/background checks.
- GES is becoming an Arts Integration School. PTA has gotten more than \$10,000 in grants this year. 5 teachers + principal went to MATI training last summer. MATI is Maryland Arts Teachers Institute. You have to pay \$500 for your team, but you get that back if you attend the summer program. You lose the money if you don’t show up. MATI training was a very good experience. Now the teachers are incorporating the arts into the curriculum.

MES: Principal Gillens

- Good year. Emphasizing cultural arts and field trips.
- Ran a movie night as a fundraiser.
- Walk for education.
- Still have 3 busses of homeless kids, coming from DC, Laurel.
- PTO funds programs at the school. Raises money through spirit wear, which qualifies as the uniform, so the kids like to wear it.
- Wants to revive the Lego Robotics team, but need a volunteer to run it. Could be a high school student.
- Also want to revive the Chess team, but need a volunteer.

TP: Principal Jones

- Everything is always new at TPA.
- Big staff turnover this year.
- Now have a music teacher, and so may want to participate in the ACE music festival.
- Got renewal as a charter school, so will move to K-8. Need more room.
- Parent weekend: programs, games, etc.

## **ACE Regular Monthly Meeting following Principal's Meeting:**

**PRESENT:** ACE Members: Laretta Baugh, Theresa Bugg, Jon Gardner, Alla Lake, Don Rich, Sudhanshu Sinha, Dave Whiteman and Liz Park substituting for Staff Liaison Wendy Wexler.

Minutes of Meeting of November 17, 2009 approved as is.

Meeting commenced at 8:00 PM.

Jon Gardner's notes:

ACE meeting, January 26, 2010

Present: Dave, Don, Alla, Laretta, Theresa, Jon, Liz Park.  
(Sudhanshu was at the Principal's meeting, but had to leave).

This short meeting followed the annual meeting with the School principals.

Welcome to Don Rich, our newest member. We discussed the school liaison assignments. We decided to wait a few months before giving Don an assignment. It was noted that when Saint Hugh's school closes, then we will have 9 members and 6 schools. Dave suggested that we double both ERHS and GMS. Jon said that since he will have a child at GMS next year, maybe he could be the second GMS liaison. No decisions were made at this meeting.

Saint Hugh's school closing. ACE recognizes the significant and important role that Saint Hugh's school has played in education in Greenbelt over many years. We recognize that our charter is to support education for all Greenbelt residents regardless of which school they attend. We recognize, however, that our charter indicates the "core schools" that we support include private schools only within the Greenbelt city limits. Lauretta will draft the text for a report to Council acknowledging the contributions that Saint Hugh's has made, and recognizing that they will no longer be an ACE core school after the facility in Greenbelt closes.

Music festival. Good expressions of interest at the Principal's meeting. We expect a full program. Dave will send out another email asking for group commitments by March 15.

National Board Certification. In addition to the two teachers from GES that were written up in the Gazette, there are two teachers from SHL and two from GMS. Don will get the names from SHL; Dave will contact GMS. After discussion, we decided to recommend that Council issue proclamations honoring the 6 teachers. We decided that the ACE Educator Award ceremony was already too full to recognize these teachers at that ceremony, so we would recommend that Council present the proclamations at a different Council meeting.

ERHS Boundaries. The issue is that if the number of students goes down, then the resources and staff go down and programs will get cut. Currently the boundaries are the city of Greenbelt plus the magnet SciTech and Quest programs. Duval is under-crowded, so if the boundaries change, then some of Greenbelt East will move to Duval. This would be very, very unpopular with the parents and homeowners. ERHS is an excellent school not just because of the SciTech program, but also because of the high-quality staff: there is benefit to all of the students who attend. There is an agreement that Greenbelt residents will always go to ERHS, but this agreement needs to be defended. We will ask if Leta has a copy of the agreement. Don and Veronica, plus Wendy if she is available, will talk to Principal McNeil to see what kind of advocacy he wants from ACE and Council.

ACE Educator Awards, March 8. Jon won't be able to attend, so we need one or two other ACE members to do the announcing. Alla volunteered; Dave will also do it if he is able to attend, but may have a conflict. Additional planning will be done at the February meeting.

ACE members agreed to sign up for the Science and Reading club meetings in the Spring. We need one member at each meeting. It works out to about 3 meetings per member per year.

Meeting adjourned.