

Board Town Hall Meeting Minutes

3/24/16

7:41PM

Board Members present: Nada Diab, Kristina Leidner, Crystal Canaday, Leslie Jensen Link

- I. Board members approved the State of the School Address presentation.
- II. Open floor to questions from community
 - A. Regarding possible addition of high school [pending FCS/GaDOE approval of charter amendment] will the project impact proposed ES facilities upgrades?
 1. No - HS may move in temporarily, but not permanently
 2. Fundraising plan being put into place to accommodate both a HS and upgraded ES wing, but it is a long term plan. Might happen in phases.
 - B. What is involved with starting a HS (with regards to facility planning, etc)?
 1. Build out of remaining retail wing. To complete the master plan (which originally only included the K-8), it would take \$2-3 million.
 - C. Is the HS Charter on hold because of lack of capital?
 1. No - we are still moving forward with amending our current charter to include a HS. This includes engaging with our new charter liaison at FCS (Melissa Ginsberg) to vet the project and determine our chances for approval. The goal is to open the HS in August 2017.
 - D. When will we know for sure if HS is a go?
 1. Planning to submit the amended charter in May, 2016. August/September would yield a verdict from the county, and October/November from the State.
 - E. Are you planning to continue single gender classroom instruction in 4th grade next year?
 1. We've been doing a lot of work around this with the staff - looking at boys achievement and analyzing data in the single gendered classrooms. The data has been inconclusive. Our next step is to survey parents to see the consensus around whether they prefer single or mixed gender
 2. Comments and concerns from parents of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade boys around perceived negative impact of single gender on behavior and academics - different perspectives were expressed.
 3. Comments and concerns around the negative effect on girls if we decide to mix genders next year.
 - F. Discussion around parents speaking and not feeling heard; communication between teachers and parents, administration and parents.
 - G. What steps are we taking to positively impact teacher retention?
 1. Started a new-teacher mentoring program this year. New teachers paired with veteran teacher, meeting regularly as a group.
 2. Professional Learning Communities - staff selected from 4 priority areas to concentrate on for the year: HOWLS, STEM, Boys Achievement, Literacy.
 3. Weekly Wednesday Huddle - opportunity for teachers to provide feedback and address issues.

4. Drop boxes in teacher workrooms for anonymous questions and suggestions
5. Limiting focus to 4 things (see above re: PLCs) - not introducing anything new this year.
6. Being responsive to concerns.

H. Concerns expressed around communication from teachers, especially in grades where students are switching classes. Only hearing from homeroom teacher, not content teachers.

1. We're looking at restructuring conferences next year to include a parent/teacher conference in the fall and student-led conferences in the spring. Parent/teacher conferences would include all content teachers
2. Parents were also encouraged to reach out to content-area teachers to set up meetings if they had questions or concerns.

I. Are you adding any more school buses?

1. No - we're only funded for 1.8 buses, and we provide 3

J. How can we advocate with the school board and state legislature for Amana and Charter Schools?

1. We are working on establishing an ambassador program. We will provide talking points on 3 specific areas of concern that those people can then take to school board meetings, state legislators, etc. We want to be strategic and respectful with our advocacy efforts.

K. What is Amana's brand strategy?

1. We are working on establishing a cohesive brand identity that accurately reflects what we do. Meeting with marketing/communication firms and trying to establish routines around communications. We welcome parent involvement.

L. Will we be installing signage around the school indicating that it's private property?

1. Yes - this summer.

III. Board Business

. Approved Financials

A. At the Executive Committee meeting earlier this week, the Board voted to ban smoking from the school's property and to install signage communicating no smoking campus.

IV. Adjourned at 9:00 PM