**School Council Meeting 9/9/21**

In attendance- Gina Bassford, Laura Irwin, Chris Melcher, Angela Sneed, Tiffany Tatem, DH Zhong

1. Minutes from 11-4-20 meeting via Zoom were approved.

2. School Council Officers. The President and Vice-President will no longer be parents of DFA students in the 22/23 school year. Current Council Members were encouraged to start considering who might step in to these positions next year. Discussion occurred around having a position of Immediate Past Chair for a 1 year term to help transition leadership.

4. New Council Members were discussed. A suggestion was for School Council Members and the Administration to think about past DFA graduates in the community to serve as Business Members on the School Council. There is a FaceBook DFA Grads page, which might be helpful in recruiting. Members were to think about this and report back at the next meeting. Some possible local businesses include CommuniGraphics in North Augusta. Gina Bassford stated she will think about how to increase parent’s involvement at DFA, including serving on School Council.

Another area includes finding 10 or so Businesses in the area willing to mentor 1-2 students. Council members were encouraged to think about this.

5. Mandatory Training for School Council Members was discussed. RCBOE has put the training into several videos on their web site, so it is not necessary to attend in person. Laura Irwin went through the videos and found one video was repeated several times instead of the correct video for that topic. Angela Sneed mentioned reaching out to the IT person at RCBOE to correct this.

[https://www.rcboe.org//cms/module/selectsurvey/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=400](https://www.rcboe.org/cms/module/selectsurvey/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=400)

6. Val and Sal determinations were discussed. In the past, students were allowed unlimited Dual Enrollment grades to help boost their GPA during all 4 years of high school. Gina Bassford informed the Council that last year, allowance of Dual Enrollment grades was capped at 30 hours, and cannot start until the summer before junior year. In addition, some students skip a lunch period at DFA to take additional AP classes, simply for the AP designation, not because it holds interest to the student.

Much discussion occurred around the fairness of this system, as all students may not have the same access to time, money for textbooks, transportation or high speed wifi, and some students may not be able to skip lunch for various reasons. This puts some students (those with good home wifi and computer equipment, those with transportation, those who do not have to work, those without medical conditions that require not skipping meals) at an unfair advantage. In GA, every Val and Sal is offered automatic admission to UGA and GA Tech. For many students, attending an instate school may be their only financial option for college, so class designation becomes overly important.

Laura Irwin and Chris Melcher shared the stressors their seniors experienced over trying to boost their GPA. As the cap of Dual Enrollment hours did not take effect until last year, one student in their class took an inordinate amount of extra classes outside of DFA to ensure Valedictorian ranking. This stress of vying for class rank may be overshadowing the educational experience. Laura Irwin spoke about how her son had to drop fine arts classes he wanted to take so he could overfill his schedule with classes to boost his rank. That feels counterintuitive to what DFA is about.

Anglea Sneed and Gina Bassford mentioned the e-core textbooks where students could get free textbooks, and that RCBOE would provide hotspot mobile wifi buses to neighborhoods. Comcast has a program where students can obtain wifi access for $10 a month. They also suggested students could take online classes rather than in person dual enrollment classes to help their GPA. They mentioned DFA has free SAT and ACT prep courses to help students do their best on standardized exams.

Some discussion occurred around considering DFA not counting classes in Summer School towards class rank. This might eliminate the gap between students who need to work (or travel or live elsewhere in the summer) and those who do not. Students also benefit from downtime. Gina Bassford mentioned students could have the ability to work fulltime in the summer and still take 2 classes.

7. Yearbook ad mistake. Laura Irwin reached out to Carey Mogianesi, but has not yet heard from her. Discussion occurred around the School Council being offered a free ad specifically thanking Victor Yu for his years of service to the School Council. Laura Irwin will continue to try and reach the graphics teacher.

8. Angela Sneed provided an update on construction. No move in date has been set. The Fire Marshall has been in, and RCBOE needs to do their walk-through. Hopefully the new wing will be open later this fall.

9. Discussion occurred around supporting teachers. It was reiterated that even small things such as emails are helpful. Some items that might be helpful include paper towels, hand sanitizer, and snacks such as Chick-fil-A. Angela Sneed with check with Renee Kelly to see if there are any other things the School Council can do.

10. Covid-19 at DFA update. The administration stated there has been good mask wearing by the students with little complaint. Actual infection numbers so far have been low at DFA.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.