

Parent Advisory Meeting
Belforest Elementary School

Date: February 14, 2023

Time: 8:05-9:05

Location: Cafe

1. Sign-in Sheet passed around. 12 parents in attendance.
2. Purpose of the meeting – What’s going well, what do you see as a need, answer questions about certain things we do at Belforest. Let’s start with the positive.
3. Parent – Fifth grade hall, will there be two classes added to sixth grade next year?
Answer- It’s been an unusual year with breaking units. There is a state divisor for suggested numbers in class. We do not anticipate having to break units next year. We would not have gained those 4 units until next year, but the district provided us the 4 units to help with the continued growth this year. This is the first year we self-contained fourth grade. We are not sure where we will be with fifth grade next year. We do not anticipate a unit being added, but we will find out more at the beginning of summer. We have had so much growth this year.
4. Parent – You have done great with having so much growth in the number of kids added. We started at around 650 and have grown to under 1,100.
5. Parent – What do you see for us next year? Discussed that district has growth plans in development to address growth. Discussed new housing developments in the area.
6. Jonathan discussed 3 mil vote and how it will benefit the Daphne schools. It takes a year to gather tax funding. Admin in discussion about how to utilize the funding: Possibilities include STEAM lab; part-time instructors. We are enrolling from not only all areas of the country but from all over the world. Daphne principals are working to get 3 mill expenditure proposals to district and advisory committees.
7. Parent – We have loved the archery club this year. Kudos goes to the teachers for the willingness to lead the club. Mathletes have also developed. These require teachers to volunteer their time on weekends and after school. We have opened up more student jobs: flag team, AM carline team. Thankful for Mrs. Brooks, Mrs, Burman, Mrs. White, Mrs. Nolte for building these programs.
8. Parent – One positive is communication. I appreciate that the counselor called me as a parent when the substitute had a medical emergency. I didn’t have to find out about it from a rumor mill. Ellis explained the Alert System and the new badges that faculty and staff have to call for help.
9. Parent – The new playground is looking great. I’ve seen them working in the rain. Ellis shared that the playground has been built from fundraisers and the PreK playground is district funded. We have next steps out there as well.
10. Ellis – Going back to expansion, there has been a study done for what we do in the short term while long term plans are made. No decision has been provided on how to add more space. We currently have one classroom still available. The west side land is being used for Belforest Water Systems to add a 3rd pump. The back of that field is a retaining pond. Our biggest need is parking. The water system will have an attractive fence, and we will have a voice on the visual of the fence.

11. Parent – There is really not a lot of land. Jonathan explained that there could be a small wing off the back if that was determined in future plans.
12. Parent – I don't hear any talk of expansion for the middle and high schools. Is there anything we can do to express our concerns to the district. Ellis explained that he can talk to district administration about having communication about the expansion plan within the community.
13. Parent – We have looked at private schools for middle school because it is so packed out. Ellis discussed that he is aware of elementary and secondary school in Daphne having spacing issues.
14. Parent – Do you think that if they built, would it be just the high? Ellis shared that he can only speculate but would think that the district would address both middle and high school numbers.
15. Parent – Rockwell and Stonebridge have low class sizes. Will they rezone to address that? Ellis shared that those schools may be experiencing low class size in the same way when we were opened in the fall of 2020.
16. Parent – Where do we voice our concerns about the overgrowth? Jonathan shared that he thinks the county commission and board members are the primary contacts to voice concerns and that they appreciate that feedback. April Bradley is our new board member and represents Belforest Elementary. Ellis displayed how to contact their school-board representative.
17. Parent – The merging of all Daphne schools to DMS and DHS is overwhelming and eye opening. Parents discussed that some parents in the area choosing to sell because of the overcrowding at the middle school.
18. Parent – How are you doing with subs? Ellis shared that we have not experienced the shortage like we have the first two years. Last year in shortage cases, we were splitting classes and doing double runs when a bus driver was out. We are much better than where we were last year as our substitute pool has been healthier.
19. Parent – Is language learning another point of discussion with STEAM?. We are discussing the spaces we have available to house the extra units. Parent expressed her surprise that our school was not built with labs. Ellis explained that he thinks that there has been a lot of movement to allow for students to explore this at the secondary school level, such as the aeronautics program and the creation of the new technical high school. Our footprint is smaller and is harder to allow for the space for labs.
20. Parent – Why do they not build two story elementary school? The point was noted that this was an interesting idea.
21. Parent – How does testing work? She was testing at the 90th percentile. Now she is testing much lower. I thought she was doing fine. Another parent said she experienced the same with her first grader. How can I be more prepared as a parent for this? Ellis explained the STAR Early Lit and STAR Reading are two different tests. The tests are designed to be progressively more difficult. For weekly, routine tests in 1st Grade, at the beginning of the year, the teachers read the entire assessment to them. At the middle of the year, the teacher only read the questions, and then at the end of the year, students are reading on their own. With STAR, they move from reading with support and then move to reading on their own, which explains the dip in data. This year, we made the

decision to give the STAR Reading at mid-year to 1st graders to give us more information on skills they need. STAR Reading had not been given in 1st, but 2nd grade in prior years. Ellis agreed that we could do more frontloading with parents and provide more options for resources. Freckle is a resource that gives students an individualized path to work on the skills they need to master to prepare for the next grade level.

22. Parent – Is there a way for admin and teachers to let parents know when there is a need for parents to be worried? Students will receive interventions when they are below the 40th percentile. There are also other sources of data that can be used to validate this.
Parent – We are teaching kids how to take the tests, but we aren't teaching the parents how to interpret the test results. Discussed the Literacy Act and ensuring the school is addressing needs before a student gets to 3rd grade. Ellis agreed to look at providing a data interpretation piece to go home regarding STAR.
23. Parent – I feel like everything is done on the computer. Are they holding books and reading? We are pushing for more circulation in the library. The stress is to have students read text with paper in hand. Are we getting away from students using handwriting? Student handwriting books are purchased for kinder, first, and third.
24. Parent – Social media has discussed the need for a traffic guard. Parents on 54 have a lot of stress with turning left. Ellis explained that this would be a concern for county commission. The church schools pay for crossing guards. We are in the county, unlike the other Daphne schools. There are no crosswalks around our school because we have no bikes or walkers. Crossing 64 or 54 is too dangerous for children. Parents concerned about the accident risk when turning out of the school on 54. A widening of 64 may help address traffic needs and concerns.
25. Jonathan thanked the parents for their input and feedback.