Parent Advisory Meeting 10/10/24

This is an opportunity to keep lines of communication open as outlined in our Continuous Improvement Plan. Today's meeting includes parents of students in various grade levels here at Belforest Elementary.

What are we doing well?

1. Praises for Mrs. Bean with learning the alphabet for a child whose first language is Spanish. Mrs. Bean has ignited the child's love for spelling and school as a whole. Genuine & authentic love for school.
2. All teachers are doing a great job communicating well with parents. Quick response time from teachers when parents have questions.
3. Carline is going great. It flows smoothly & parents are impressed.
4. Teachers are passionate about their jobs & seem to have fun. Praises for all staff.
5. It's nice to see the consistency of the same smiling faces every day. It shows parents that staff enjoy where they're at.
6. Kids are loving the Strings program offered here at school. Mr. Jose is great.
7. Clubs are going well and parents like seeing the assortment of choices offered. Parents appreciate other community members volunteering to pour into our children.
8. Chicken coop is great! Club takes care of the chickens. The kids love having them around.
9. The Band program is thriving and kids love Mrs. White. We have some new instruments coming and the program is growing. Kids are having fun!

What can we do better?

1. Keeping communication consistent with all teachers and all grade levels. Use the same forms of communication such as Remind. This would help parents streamline their assistance to their children to prepare for tests & assignments. Remind is the district's preferred method of communication.
2. Parents want PowerSchool to show the grade average so parents can help follow up with their children. This seems to be something that has fixed itself, possibly with a recent PowerSchool update.
3. Provide information for PowerSchool to parents the summer before school starts so parents can prepare.
4. We want to see Administrators more. There has been a slight disconnect this year. Parents want a little more enthusiasm & engagement. It provides more comfort for parents when they see Mr. Ellis more.
5. We are not within city limits so it is difficult to have traffic guards. The regulations of county highways and the general poor structure of the roads with lights, etc. make traffic very difficult.
6. School sign isn't blinking northbound on 54E. The county road department has been notified already but we will contact them again.
7. ACAP testing is stressful for children. Can this be presented to the kids in another way so that kids aren't as overwhelmed with the idea of testing? Perhaps celebrate kids afterwards who have done well. Kids are feeling a lot of pressure and anxiety regarding these tests. There is admittedly a lot riding on the progress for 2nd and 3rd graders, which kids are picking up on and carrying forward to older grades.  Suggestion was made to create a school-wide celebration for all kids after testing.

\*Note not discussed- Last year our math coach coordinated grade-level math activities after testing as a positive for each grade level. These included “G movie days, popcorn days, etc.)

Comments/Discussion

1. Ground has broken on the new school in Daphne. It is a minimum 2 year build. This is meant to alleviate the population at both Belforest & Daphne East Elementary. We don't yet know the zoning for this.
2. Discussion regarding the extreme growth in our area and how the district can keep up. Roads, police departments, parking, etc.
3. Are there plans to expand our school? No. Water runoff and space is an issue here. That's why there is a plan for a new school in Daphne, to alleviate population.
4. Questions about parking. Due to additional buses and loss of grass parking, all staff parking has moved to the East side of the school. Safety concerns are high when parents choose to park along 64. In lieu of Fall Festival, we are trying to be creative and add other issues like Halloween Hop after school and Carnival Days during the school day.
5. The Halloween Hop is meant to be a social event for the older grades only. Nothing planned as of now for younger grades for Halloween so that kids can look forward to the Hop as they get older.
6. Questions about the gifted program. When do assessments begin? PJ teachers begin assessing during 2nd grade. Later in the 2nd grade year, all children are tested. Based on those assessments, recommendations are made for Project Jubilee. PJ is 4 hours per week at the elementary level.
7. Are teachers teaching kids general test-taking skills? Yes, kids learn from a young age different test taking skills.
8. Are there foreign language opportunities here? No, however we do have some clubs available from time to time for different foreign languages. We have German as club right now, but have also had Spanish several times.