



Arts Learning Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 • 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Twin Oaks Elementary School, 240 Smithville Road North, Leesburg, GA 31763

Lee County High School, 1 Trojan Way, Leesburg, GA 31763

ATTENDEES: Amy Duke, Karen Hallacy, Atiba Mbiwan, Woody Leonard, Barry Schrenk, Karen Paty, Allen Bell, John Strickland, Kristy Graham, Jason Miller, Sylvia Vann, Larry Walters, Kevin Dowling, Dotty Davis, Robby Davis

MINUTES

10:30 am Welcome and Tour of Twin Oaks Elementary School and Drama Program

Mrs. Sylvia Vann, Board Chair, Lee County School System

Dr. Larry Walters, Superintendent, Lee County School System

Jason Miller, Principal, Twin Oaks Elementary School

Principal Miller welcomed the Arts Learning Task Force. He talked briefly about Twin Oaks Elementary School and the Leesburg community.

Mrs. Vann also welcomed the Task Force members. She talked about the success of the elementary and high school theatre programs in the Lee County School System.

Superintendent Walters welcomed the Task Force. He talked about the commitment of the Lee County School System to provide arts learning opportunities for their students.

The Task Force members and guests discussed the theatre programs in Lee County, including the need for a middle school theatre program, student access to arts classes, the Twin Oaks Elementary drama program, and access to art and music.

11:00 am Shrek Jr. Production by Twin Oaks Elementary Drama Club

Wendy Edwards, Director, Twin Oaks Elementary School Drama Program

Task Force members observed an abbreviated performance of "Shrek Jr." by Twin Oaks Elementary students.

During a break in the performance, Wendy Edwards talked about the production and the details of the drama program at Twin Oaks.

Following the performance, Principal Miller took the Task Force members on a tour of the backstage area.

The Task Force and guests discussed the need for funding to provide access to the arts in schools.

11:35 am Working Lunch: Panel Discussion with Elementary School Principals

Amy Duke, Principal, Northwest Laurens Elementary School

Kristy Graham, Principal, Vineville Academy of the Arts

Jason Miller, Principal, Twin Oaks Elementary School

John Strickland, Principal, Saxon Heights Talented Arts & Gifted Elementary

Each principal briefly introduced themselves and described their schools.

The Task Force members and principals discussed:

- Commitment to providing arts learning opportunities to their students
- Obstacles and barriers to providing arts learning opportunities
 - o Funding
 - o Time in the school day
 - o Lack of personnel
 - o Transportation for afterschool programs and field trips
 - o Restrictions from mandates
 - o Limits created by the evaluation process
 - o Testing
- Suggestions for replicating model arts learning programs
 - o Training for teachers and administration
 - o Funding for teachers, equipment, supplies, field trips, and transportation
 - o Arts classes
 - o Before and after school opportunities
- Funding sources for arts learning programs and arts instructors
 - o PTO
 - o Fund raisers
 - o Concessions and merchandise sales
 - o Parents
 - o Title I
 - o Event admissions
 - o Participation fees
- The structure of arts learning programs within their schools
 - o Classes and frequency
 - o Before and after school
 - o Showcases
- The benefits of providing arts learning for their students
 - o Engaged students
 - o Engaged parents and communities
 - o Improved behavior
 - o Improved test scores
- Leadership for providing arts learning
 - o The district
 - o Principals
 - o Teachers
 - o Parents
 - o Volunteers

1:10 pm Travel to Lee County High School

1:25 pm Welcome and Tour of Lee County High School and Theatre Arts Program

Kevin Dowling, Principal, Lee County High School

Dotty Davis, Theatre Director and Dance Instructor, Lee County High School

Robby Davis, Technical Director and Theatre Manager, Lee County High School

Principal Dowling welcomed the Task Force members. He talked about Lee County High School and their arts programs.

The Task Force and guests visited the band room and discussed the band and choral programs.

The Task Force and guests visited the high school auditorium. Mr. Davis talked about the auditorium space, equipment, programming, program funding, and community engagement.

The Task Force and guests visited the drama class taught by Mrs. Davis. The class is in rehearsal for "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

2:00 pm Discussion of LCHS Drama Program and Obstacles to Arts Learning

The Task Force and guests met on the stage of the auditorium for the discussion.

Principal Dowling discussed the commitment of LCHS to their theatre program and the important role their theatre teachers play in the program and at the school. He also discussed the challenges their teachers face, including their teaching load, limited planning time, the school day schedule, and need for funding.

Principal Dowling and Mr. Davis explained the benefits of the theatre program to their students, including preparation for life, career readiness, student engagement, academic improvement, and student confidence.

Mr. Davis discussed the importance of quality instructors for successful theatre programs. He discussed career success stories from students who have participated in the school's theatre program. He also talked about the opportunities they provide through the theatre program for students with learning disabilities.

The Task Force and guests discussed the importance of the arts for recruiting businesses and residents, the need for arts funding, and policy recommendations, including the need to see the arts as part of a standard academic course for students.

Mr. Davis explained that arts teachers are a resource for other teachers and other subject areas.

The Task Force and guests discussed the need to compensate arts teachers for their work hours outside of the school day and to structure the school day to facilitate arts learning opportunities.

Principal Dowling discussed the need for additional teachers.

Mrs. Davis discussed the obstacles to arts programs because teachers are only evaluated based on what is taught in a formal class; therefore, fewer afterschool arts programs are offered and fewer students participate in the arts. She also discussed the challenges for arts teachers with demanding class schedules and the need to compensate arts teachers for the additional time they commit after school.

2:30 pm Adjourn