

Darby Vassall Upper School

School Council Meeting - September 24, 2025

First meeting of the school year

Updates:

- School Council focus this year will be on the work we can do. In previous years we have focused on getting people involved and to come to meetings.
 - We need to set up and offer Zoom options for the meetings.
 - We will send out a poll for meeting times.

Friends of Darby Vassall:

- FoDVUS is getting started for the school year.
- They usually do fund-raising for school enrichment projects.
- This year they will begin to function as an arm of service/ community engagement apparatus for the School Council.
- Anyone can join.
- Jess Goetz is the treasurer.
- Contact them at friendsofvassalllane@gmail.com
- New email with new school name coming soon.
- Sunday, October 5, event at the playground, 3-5pm, Cider & Donuts, goal to meet and enlist new parents.

New Space:

- With the new space, we can make a new start.
- New space = new mindset for our foundation work of:
 - education
 - family engagement

Family Engagement:

- We are rethinking family engagement at the middle schools.
- Across the district engagement from 5th to 6th grades drops dramatically.
- It drops more every grade after 6th.
- We need to find meaningful ways to connect with families and have families connect with each other.
- Daniel and Obi have attended sessions at the Family Engagement Institute at Harvard to learn more about this.
- This is not about doing more but doing better.
- Make sure parents schedule those listening conferences.
 - What are some things that you as a middle school parent are wondering about?
 - The plan is to create events addressing these issues/concerns.
- Starting next month, you can expect monthly learning previews from each of your child's teachers.

- We also need an opportunity for parents to just get together, no agenda, just being able to socialize.
- Suggestion for coffee hour - have counselors there so parents can meet them.
 - Have this coffee hour tied to a general theme or goal.
- Engagement matters because when kids see their parents connect/engage with their teachers, they do better in school and are more engaged themselves.
- Home and school are equal partners.
- How do we meet families where they are?
 - Some families are burnt out/have multiple kids at multiple schools.
 - Not coming to one or two events is understandable.
 - Make sure families can come to listening conferences and other direct teacher engagement.
 - Make information clear and accessible to families.
 - There's value in positive phone calls to parents. Advisors will make phone calls home all year.
- We need to meet families where they're at and host events at places outside the school that are centrally located and easy to get to.

Flex Time:

- 40 minute block on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.
- Kids still get 20 minutes for lunch, 20 minutes for recess.
- Flex Time is valuable for kids who have pull outs so that they don't get pulled out of core classes for interventions - special ed, counselors - or music pull outs.
- Still doing independent reading during this time.
- For kids who choose to do so, this time can also be used for a deeper dive to math problem solving.
- SEI kids use Youfly online for literacy work.
- The scheduling team - Matt S. & Colleen B. - does an amazing job. They schedule 130 sections of Flex Time on Aspen.

Transportation:

- There are 5 buses in the AM. 80% of these buses get to school on time.
- 4 buses in the afternoon.
- Reminder - the bus company is Eastern Transportation, and the head of Transportation in our School District is Tina Fischer.
- The Hornet has not gotten to school on time once so far this year.
 - Kids miss advisory
 - Chaotic start to the day
 - That sets the tone
- Edulog *crashed* crashed unlike it has ever crashed before.
 - We can't track buses.
 - Bus numbers are all wrong.
- The middle morning start time bus schedule slot affect the routes and schedules.
- We need to make sure there are monitors on all buses.

- Late buses start October 6.
 - Club sign ups haven't started yet. (Edit. As of this writing, they have.)

Action items:

- Look into logistics for a Zoom option to meetings (laptop, connectors, etc.)
- Obi to send out poll for best meeting dates/times.
- Keep an eye out for and sign up for listening conferences.
- Keep an eye out for afterschool club signups.

Important dates for upcoming events:

- Thursday, Oct. 2 - NO SCHOOL (YomKipur)
- Sunday, Oct. 5 - Cider & Donuts in the playground - 3-5pm
- Monday, Oct. 6 - FoDVUS meeting @ Darby Vassall Upper School - 6pm
- Monday, Oct. 13 - NO SCHOOL (Indigenous Peoples Day)
- Saturday, Oct. 18 - School Hard Launch/Grand Opening - 10am-1pm