



Date	Time	Location
March 4, 2026	5:15 pm-6:00 pm	Zoom
Organizer	Facilitator/Chair	Meeting Type
Strategy & School Governance	Tauheedah Uthman	Informational
Meeting Objective & Scope		
Review and provide feedback on initiatives that impact or involve the cluster. • ESPLOST: Discuss and provide feedback. • Strategic Plans: Share and discuss for cross-collaboration.		

Discussion Items

1) ESPLOST

- a) **Capital Improvement Projects**-As we plan for E-SPLOST 2027, which **capital improvement projects** do you think have the greatest impact on our students (i.e. construction, renovation, infrastructure improvements, athletics, safety, security, technology, transportation, nutrition) and why?
- i) **Safety and Security**-The group ultimately ranked this as their number one priority.
- (1) Why: The consensus was that "students learn better when they feel safe." Principal Gomillion argued that if there is no safety, technology cannot have the impact it should.
 - (2) Specific Impacts mentioned:
 - (a) Emotional Well-being: High safety leads to higher "production" and better learning.
 - (3) Specific Needs: The team cited the need for metal detectors to keep out "outsiders" or prohibited items, gates to prevent stray dogs from accessing students, and walkie-talkies for better supervision and communication.
- ii) **Technology**-This was ranked as the number two priority, with some members initially arguing it should be first.
- (1) Why: It has a "direct impact on teaching and learning" because it is how students engage with education today.
 - (2) Specific Impacts mentioned:
 - (a) Academic Alignment: It aligns directly with academic goals.
 - (b) Evolution: The team noted that technology has evolved since current devices were issued, and students need newer programs and software to keep up.
 - (c) Access: They emphasized that the impact is greatest when "hotspots" are provided so students can access their work at home.
- b) **Program Areas**-Out of the following **6 E-SPLOST Program Areas**, prioritize your top three areas:
- i) **Safety and Security**
 - ii) **Technology**
 - iii) **Transportation**
 - iv) *Facilities Infrastructure*





v) Nutrition

vi) Athletics

c) **E-SPLOST Success**-Looking ahead to 2032 (which would be the final year of SPLOST 27), what are **1 to 2 physical changes/capital projects** that would make you feel E-SPLOST was a success?

i) **Reliable Home Connectivity (Hotspots):** The group emphasized that for technology to be successful, students must have the physical means to use it outside of school. Success would be defined by ensuring every family in need is "hotspotted" at home so they can actually access the digital curriculum and programs the district provides.

ii) **Enhanced Communication Tools (Walkie-Talkies):** For the safety category, the team specifically highlighted the need for a comprehensive "walkie-talkie" system. Success would mean that instead of only a few administrators having them, there would be enough devices to ensure better supervision and instant communication across the building and grounds (such as the playground) at all school levels.

2) SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN

In discussing your strategic plans, highlight areas where collaboration, shared resources, or best-practice exchange would be valuable. The goal is to strengthen cluster-wide alignment, reduce duplication, and intentionally leverage collective expertise and resources.

a) Where/how can the schools in this feeder pattern **collaborate**?

i) **Quarterly Virtual Meetings:** The group suggested establishing a consistent "meeting cadence," specifically meeting quarterly via Zoom. While they felt monthly meetings might be too frequent due to existing "Go Team" commitments, a quarterly schedule would ensure they stay connected.

ii) **Cluster Advisory Meetings:** The team highlighted the value of the existing Cluster Advisory meetings. They noted that these meetings are "beneficial" because they allow leaders to "ping pong" ideas off one another and discuss needs that impact the entire cluster rather than just individual schools.

iii) **Community Events:** A specific proposal was made to collaborate on a "Cluster Community Day" or a "Back to School Bash." This would involve all schools in the feeder pattern coming together to showcase student performances (like band/music) and provide a fun, family-oriented day to build community awareness and excitement for the new school year.

b) Where/how can the schools in this feeder pattern **share resources**?

i) **Shared Digital Drive:** To facilitate the sharing of resources, the team proposed creating a shared drive. This would allow schools to exchange information and best practices, particularly during critical times like the beginning of the school year when they are navigating school openings.

c) What valuable **best practices** exist in this feeder pattern?

i) **Cluster Advisory Meetings:** These are viewed as a high-value resource. Members enjoy the ability to "ping pong" ideas off one another, allowing them to address needs across the entire cluster rather than in isolation.

ii) **Open Professional Communication:** Participants noted that the current environment is "conducive and open" to reaching out for help or advice. There is an informal culture of sharing what works at one school with leaders at others.

iii) **Cluster Showcases:** The group highlighted the annual Therrell Cluster Showcase held in December (typically at Greenbrier Mall). This event is considered a best practice because it brings all elementary schools together to perform and builds a sense of unity.





- iv) **Collaborative Innovation:** The team values hearing about different policies or procedures—such as attendance strategies—that another school has tried, then adapting those changes to see if they can replicate that success.
 - v) **Resource Advocacy:** A key practice mentioned was "meeting students where they are," specifically through existing APS programs like the specialized door-to-door transportation for students in transition (homeless families).
- 3) **Other-Is there anything else your team would like us to know?**
- a) **Clear Communication with Parents:** The team urged the district to be honest when plans change. They noted that "the people really be in need" and rely on promised resources to take a "burden" off their lives. If a resource cannot be provided, that should be communicated directly rather than letting the request "disappear."
 - b) **Unified Support for Music and Extracurriculars:** The team wants to highlight the importance of extracurricular activities, particularly music. They expressed concern that some areas are cutting these programs and believe the district should support cluster-wide initiatives (like the proposed Community Day) to keep students involved and excited about school.
 - c) **Safety Personnel Needs:** While they acknowledged that resource officers exist, they want to emphasize that a "live body" (an officer or security guard) is essential at every school entrance because metal detectors alone are not sufficient to regulate school safety.
-

Submitted By: Benita Grant

Position: Principal, Fickett Elementary School

