Family Advisory Council

Meeting Notes

May 6, 2026

Thank you to the families and community members who joined us for the **Family Advisory Council (FAC) Year in Review Meeting**. Your continued participation, feedback, and partnership have been essential in shaping district practices and strengthening our connection with families across GCPS.

The meeting opened with a welcome from district leadership, including Dr. Tereka Williams, Executive Director of the Department of Federal Programs; Dr. Chisel Valdez, Director of Federal Programs – Family Engagement; and Mrs. Shenee Johnson-Cummings, Coordinator of Federal Programs, Family Engagement. This was followed by remarks from Interim Superintendent Dr. Al Taylor and Interim Chief Engagement Officer Mr. Bernard Watson. Leaders expressed appreciation for family engagement and emphasized the importance of continued feedback in improving district practices and outcomes.

The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Reflect on family voice and feedback gathered throughout the year
- Highlight key themes heard across FAC sessions
- Share how the district responded to that feedback
- Gather input to inform priorities and improvements for the 2026–27 school year

What We Heard (Districtwide Themes)

Across FAC meetings, several consistent themes emerged from family feedback:

- **Communication & Transparency**: Interest in understanding budgeting processes and a desire for consistent communication across schools
- **Student Support Systems**: Requests for more opportunities to learn about special education programs, counseling support, and school discipline policies
- **College and Career Readiness**: Requests for earlier access to career pathway information
- **Technology and Learning**: Feedback on AI use, digital learning, and balancing technology with traditional approaches

How the District Responded

In response to feedback throughout the year, GCPS:

- Provided **topic-specific FAC sessions** aligned to family input
- Increased **transparency around district processes**, including budget and policies
- Shared key resources (e.g., Special Education supports, AI guidance, ParentSquare)
- Facilitated **direct dialogue between families and district leadership**

An example of feedback in action includes structured family input on the **cell phone policy**, where families provided feedback on safety, communication, and implementation consistency.

What We Learned

Through these engagements, the district identified key lessons:

- Families want to be **active partners**, not just recipients of information
- **Early communication** before implementation of initiatives is critical
- **Consistency across schools** is essential for equitable experiences
- Families value transparency, but information must be **clear and accessible**

Family Input Opportunity

During the meeting, families participated in polls and shared the following feedback:

Greatest Impact on Families

Communication and student support systems were identified as the most impactful areas for families this year, reinforcing the importance of clear communication and strong academic/behavioral supports.

Priority Areas for Family Engagement Support

Families overwhelmingly prioritized communication and access to information, followed by student supports, aligning with the major themes heard throughout the year.

Most Valuable FAC Topics for Next Year

Families strongly value opportunities for direct dialogue with district leadership as well as opportunities to learn about district processes and student supports.

Preferred Engagement Format

Families showed a majority preference for hybrid (virtual and in-person) meetings. Evening meetings are slightly preferred, though a significant portion of families also support morning options, suggesting the value of varied scheduling.

Additional Family Feedback Included:

- Requests for clearer communication around policies and changes
- A desire for early input opportunities before district decisions are finalized
- Consistency in communication and implementation across schools
- Interest in revisiting finalized decisions before implementation

Looking Ahead (2026–27 Priorities)

Based on family input, the district identified key focus areas for next year:

- Increasing opportunities for **two-way engagement** between families and the district
- Strengthening communication systems for families
- Expanding early college and career awareness
- Enhancing understanding of student supports

District Takeaways

- Continue expanding **hybrid engagement opportunities** to increase participation
- Early **and proactive communication** prior to implementing major decisions
- Ensure **consistency across schools** in communication, policies, and practices
- Increase opportunities for **family voice before and after decision-making**
- Incorporate feedback from **both in-person and virtual learning communities**
- Review equity considerations across schools (recognition, expectations, supports)
- Continue sharing summaries, updates, and opportunities for engagement through district communication channels

Thank you again to all families for your engagement throughout the 2025–26 school year. Your voice continues to guide and strengthen the work of GCPS and its partnership with families.