

An Update for Whitefield Residents about Whitefield School

In late November, RSU 12 provided **an initial report** of immediate actions and longer range plans in response to the “Educational Forum” held at the school. The district’s Board of Directors then heard sixteen Whitefield residents offer almost **two hours of public comment** at a subsequent meeting. Based on this collective input, a number of positive steps have been taken, work continues, and new initiatives that will impact Whitefield and other schools in the district are planned. Here are more details.

Beginning in mid-February, Whitefield School will have **a new full-time principal**. The previous arrangement of providing interim coverage from the Central Office will end, however, assistance as needed in special circumstances, will be provided. The presence of a full time administrator, heading the school, will set a positive tone for the school’s students, faculty, and staff.

Adding staff acting as **bus monitors** was quickly done in December and has been found to provide a good result. It will be continued through the balance of the school year. The district is committed to assure the safety of students as they start the ride to school and then return home.

There have been some initial **small group meetings** with faculty, staff, and students, but with the arrival of a new full-time principal, this effort can now gain the needed traction to be effective. While waiting for the new principal, the faculty has “doubled down” on encouraging **positive student behavior**. These collective techniques, effectively applied at other district schools, produce encouraging results.

Whitefield School has started the **Community-based Collaborative Problem Solving Project** involving twenty-two members to discuss and agree on steps going forward using a commonly agreed upon list of school-related “Issues.” The composition includes community members, district and school administrators, and school faculty. The group operates apart from the district’s Board and reports interim meeting results on the Whitefield School website at <http://www.svrsu.org/o/whes/page/whitefield-collaborative-problem-solving-project>. Options covering many issues are considered and discussed before a final result is adopted by group consensus.

Apart from all that’s happening this year, the **coming year’s district budget** will propose items accenting student safety and academic performance.

Finally, concerns have been expressed about the alleged **diminishing school population** in Whitefield. The Department of Education annually reports Subsidizable Student Counts by town. For Whitefield, the town’s percentage of the RSU 12 total count over the last ten years, ranged from 19.1- to 21.6-percent. Student numbers are higher now than in 2016 and have been stable over the last three years.

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