

**REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL
BERKELEY LAKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL COUNSELING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Submitted by Frank Lombardi & Debbie Guthrie
January 14, 2008**

Last October, the BLES Counseling staff extended invitations to the City of Berkeley Lake's Mayor, City Councilmembers and Councilmembers-Elect to serve on the school's first Counseling Advisory Committee. Frank Lombardi & Debbie Guthrie accepted the invitation and attended the first meeting held on October 25, 2007.

The Committee has been formed as an implementation requirement of the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) Recognized Model Program (RAMP), and its purpose is primarily to:

- Make recommendations regarding student and community needs
- Advise school counseling staff on how to meet those needs.

The Committee members include School Counselors Karen Griffith and Laura Marantz; Principal Leigh Westcott; several Teachers and Staff; several Parents; and two Berkeley Lake Councilmembers.

The second meeting was held on January 10, 2008 and was attended by Frank Lombardi and Debbie Guthrie. At this meeting, the Committee was asked to identify specific concerns or needs for the school, students and the community and to make suggestions for how these needs could be addressed through the school counseling program. Many of the suggestions were related to communication on various levels, such as communication between:

- BLES and current students' parents
- BLES and future students' parents
- BLES and the City of Berkeley Lake
- BLES and communities outside of the City of Berkeley Lake

Reasons for improved communication included:

- Increased understanding and awareness about the school and its activities
- Encouragement of community involvement
- Sharing of special alerts
- Mitigation of rumors and inaccurate information

Regarding communication between BLES and the City of Berkeley Lake, it was suggested that it would be beneficial to setup a routine method of communication between the school and the city so that school accomplishments, needs, events, fundraisers, etc. could be shared with the community at-large. It was also identified that the school would greatly appreciate the city advising it of special alerts or concerns. (An example given was the recent AJC article reporting an unclothed man spotted near the school. The school had no knowledge of this incident until concerned parents started calling the school after the AJC article was published.)

In order to address the suggestion of increased communication between BLES and the City, we would like to recommend the following:

1. Designate contact people for the City and the School. Our suggestion would be the Mayor and City Administrator for the City; the Principal and the two School Counselors for BLES.

2. Add Principal Westcott and Counselors Karen Griffith and Laura Marantz to the Mayor's Message mailing list, and have the school add the Mayor and City Administrator to its newsletter distribution list.
3. Setup a system whereby BLES and the City alert each other of any security/suspicious activity alerts that may be of concern to the other.
4. Promote school needs and activities open to the community via the Mayor's Newsletter. Regarding school needs, we suggested to the school that they be very specific in what they need (i.e. tell the City how many reading volunteers they need along with information such as time commitment versus asking for volunteers in general).

The next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2008; however, we would like to report back to the school as soon as possible with a plan and implementation for increased communication between the City and BLES.