

Jackson Middle School
Site Council Minutes
September 10th, 2008

Attendees:

John Ferraro, (Principal)
Jill Sage (Asst. Principal)
Liz Kobs (8th grade rep)
Jan Coolman (7th grade rep)
David Wierth (6th grade rep)
Melinda Murdock (Electives rep),
Nancy Hand (Community rep)
Jenny Owen (Site Council Chair and Parent rep)
Maggie Daly (Parent rep)
Karin Chesnutt (Secretary and Parent Rep)
John Mashek (SUN Coordinator)
Janine Blatt (Guest)

The meeting was called to order by our new Site Council Chair, Jenny Owen. Minutes were approved as amended (with the addition of Melinda Murdock's report).

Principal's Report

School Report

John Ferraro (our new principal) reported that school was off to a great start. The ground rules for behavior have been established (Respectful, Responsible, Safe) and will be addressed for assembly behavior this next week.

SUN Report: John Mashek (SUN Coordinator) reported that SUN will be kicking off classes soon and running from Oct 6th-mid Dec. Parent volunteers are needed to work with SUN classes. Nancy Hand offered that she had spoken with the Pastor of the neighborhood church Antioch Christian Church who was interested in creating an after school program. John Mashek will contact the Pastor to see if they can collaborate with the SUN program. SUN will be offering some communication courses for parents in Nov/Dec. The class catalog will be coming out next week. CHIF (Children's Investment Fund) funding status: John said that our funding is stable for this year but the Nov election will determine the funding in the future. There will be community meetings to discuss the funding priorities Sept 15th, Oct 13th, and Oct 23rd. The concern for our school is that there is a perception that our community in SW does not have needs for CHIF funding Therefore, it is important for us to educate CHIF board members and others that we do indeed have a need in our community for support of our ELL students and those students that are high risk.

Team Reports

David Wierth, the 6th grade representative, reported that the focus of the team has been transitions to Jackson. They have been focusing on building community. The team also is implementing new curriculum.

Jan Coolman, the 7th grade representative, reported that the team has decided to split the 7th grade field trips into two: St. Helens and the Gorge for Oct 8th. In the spring the classes will switch field trips. October 16th is the cluster meeting for TAG.

Liz Kobs, the 8th grade representative, reported that the 8th grade team (by recommendation of the science team) has decided to not have the Newport Field trip this year due to travel cost and time lost in regular science curriculum but will instead have 3-4 small field trips. The team is implementing new social studies curriculum. New changes also include pulling out the literature piece of block, providing 2 separate literature classes per day and beginning Peopling the Nation sooner this year, starting in January and finishing by Spring Break.

Melinda Murdock, the “specials” representative, reported that Band is off to a great start with a seasoned and strong new band teacher Paul Jolstead (Wilson Band director as well). The fall play will be “Cheaper by the Dozen”. The Art classes have high numbers and Ann will be doing the murals a bit differently this year with 2-3 different students working murals each quarter. Spanish is for 7th and 8th graders. Choir has a student teacher working with Mrs. Murdock. Ensemble is beginning preparation for their trip to NYC – an invitation only choir festival (third invitation for our outstanding ensemble!) Strings: There are 4 students that are cross-enrolled in the new Wilson String program held in the mornings before school.

Maggie Daly, parent representative, reported that QSP, the major PTA fundraiser would begin next week.

Nancy Hand, the community representative, reported that the SW Neighborhoods, Public Safety Committee will be sponsoring a workshop for the bicycle commuter on Sat. Sept 20th @ 2:00 PM as well as the 3rd Annual Community Policing Reception to thank our local officers.

Assistant Principal’s Report

School Improvement Plan

Jill reported that the new District template for the School improvement has not yet been created (not until next year) so the district has asked that the school roll over the current school improvement plan with updated school scores and dates in the meantime. The bridging document has our interim goals and our strategies for addressing our goals.

Writing will be an area of great attention as well as the academic achievement of students of color as compared to the other students and providing equity in our classrooms. It should be noted that the writing scores are subjective since there is a different panel of judges each year. Although Jackson experienced a 13% drop, many of the other schools in our district received 20-30 % drops. In addition, it is not possible to compare the writing scores from year to year as they are dependent upon a different set of kids. It would be better to compare this year’s scores with the same population’s 4th grade scores. At this point there did not seem to be a need to pursue PTA and parent supplemental help although parents are always welcomed to sign up to teach SUN writing courses. Dave Wierth also suggested that another factor that could contribute to the lower scores could be that last year was the first year to adopt the new anchor assignment and the teachers are getting familiar with the new language adoption. Liz Kobs shared that the 7th grade team works very hard to prepare their students for this test.

John Ferraro recommended that we take the school improvement plan and dissect a portion each site council meeting.

Old Business:

Family Involvement Plan:

Jenny Owen reported that the 1st draft of the Family Involvement Plan is done and she will work with the administration to complete. She has used the Glencoe Family Involvement Plan as a template. This is a new requirement from the district to improve achievement. Jenny will forward her copy to the Site Council Team and submit next meeting.

School Fundraising Calendar:

Karin Chesnutt reported that she will coordinate the fund raising calendar for Jackson to include PTA, Bernstein Art, Foundation, Student Council, Ensemble, Choir, Band, Drama, Art, Girls Night Out, 8th Grade promotion, and Run for the Arts. Please email Karin with 2008-2009 fundraising goals and plans.

New Business

Janine Blatt, a parent of both a 7th and an 8th grader, visited site council to discuss her concern regarding the class size of the 7th grade accelerated math course taught by Mrs. Maloney. Jenny Owen, as site council chair, has received numerous emails from concerned parents. There are 41 students in the class. Class size in general is around 30 students. Jill reported that the teacher Mrs. Maloney is comfortable with the size and ability of the students to manage in this large class. She also reported that teacher Gary Starr and another highly qualified volunteer would be available to support this class and that the 7th grade teachers had given Mrs. Maloney first rights on the use of the Pod area as needed. It was decided that parent's concerns in this matter are to be directed to the administration directly. There was discussion in Site Council about the delicate balance of staff allocation of FTE for core classes as well as elective classes.

There was discussion about the 6th grade team sharing the site council responsibility instead of one person from their team. David Wierth reported that with the smaller 6th grade class there were fewer teachers to cover all of their responsibilities and therefore it made sense for them to tag team for Site Council. He said that the current 6th grade rep would pass on the binder and fully review the minutes before each switch. The council moved and approved this method for the 6th grade team. All emails will go to Mrs. Kelly.

John Ferraro proposed that we consider reformatting our Site council agendas to remove monthly reports and to focus more intentionally upon our school improvement plan. There was discussion and Jenny Owen asked for us to think about this and to readdress this next meeting.

Items tabled for discussion next month: Testing Methods for State Assessments and further discussion about site council meeting format.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 8th @ 4pm in the community room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karin Chesnutt