

Jackson Middle School
Site Council Minutes
October 8th, 2008

Attendees:

John Ferraro, (Principal)
Jill Sage (Asst. Principal)
Liz Kobs (8th grade rep)
Christi Lossner (7th grade rep)
Donald Rose (6th grade rep)
Melinda Murdock (Electives rep),
Nancy Hand (Community rep)
Jenny Owen (Site Council Chair and Parent rep)
Karin Chesnutt (Secretary and Parent Rep)
John Mashek (SUN Coordinator)
Amanda Brown (Classified Rep)
Absent:
Maggie Daly (Parent Rep)

The meeting was called to order by Site Council Chair, Jenny Owen. Minutes were approved as read. New site council members Christi Lossner and Amanda Brown were introduced.

Principal's Report

School Report

John Ferraro reported that the state of the school address was given at the PTA meeting Monday night (assessment score review). There was discussion at the PTA meeting regarding ways that parents can better support their children in their writing development at home. John said that he would discuss this with his staff and get back to the parents. Student enrollment is presently at 714.

SUN Report: John Mashek presented the SUN annual plan to the site council – the official SUN advisory board. He distributed the report and told the site council that there were just a few changes from last year including different partners in funding (from OCHA – Oregon Coalition of Hispanic Association to Catholic Charities) and student numbers. Funding is settled for this year from CHIF (Children's Investment Fund) but will expire in July of 2009. Last year there were 235 students involved in SUN classes with 89 of those who were served by SUN for at least 30 days. The goal this year is for 100 students involved for at least 30 days. SUN programs have shown to be effective in increasing test scores and grade improvement in math and reading. There was a motion, seconded, and favorable voice vote to accept this year's SUN annual plan. See Appendix A Secondly, John asked that we be aware of the levy on the November ballot as CHIF is asking for continued funding. October 18-20th there will be phone banks and on site canvassing to help keep SUN resources in our community. The levy is 26-94 and can be found at Childrenslevy.com.

Team Reports

Donald Rose, the 6th grade representative, reported that the month has been busy with field trips to Bonneville Dam and the Salmon unit. The team is also looking at the math program in depth this month.

Christi Lossner, the 7th grade representative, reported that she is Jan Coolman's replacement in the classroom and on site council. The 7th grade had a field trip to St. Helens. She reported that the team is discussing weekly the educational needs of a couple of special needs students.

Liz Kobs, the 8th grade representative, reported that the 8th grade students will be taking a field trip to Mission Mill Museum and the State Capitol in Salem the end of October.

Melinda Murdock, the "specials" representative, reported that Grandparents Day is November 21st. Guys and Dolls is the spring musical. The Band concert has been set for December 9th & the Choir concert for December 11th

There was no parent representative report.

There was no classified report but we welcomed Amanda Brown to the board. She told us that there are approximately 11 classified employees in the building including the secretaries

Nancy Hand, the community representative, 1) reminded us of the October 28th Police reception. 2) reported that the superintendent has authorized the funding of defibrillators in all PPS schools. PPS is working to develop the policy that will accompany those defibrillators. 3) Nancy reminded us of the funds available through the neighborhood associations in the form of grants (from \$200-\$2,000) with the intent to build community. Arnold Creek has been awarded a small grant to help Stephenson with a wellness health fair in November and potentially a CPR class to follow.

Assistant Principal's Report

School Improvement Plan

Jill presented the writing portion of the school improvement plan. The emphasis for the teachers will be on conventions since this is double weighted in the assessments and the students seem to need the most help in this area.

Donald Rose commented that in his class he is emphasizing "personal writing rules". All of the students begin with the same two rules: 1) capitalize at the beginning of every sentence & 2) punctuation at the end of every sentence. In the back of each student's composition book is a label that has these two rules and then Donald works with each student to create his/her own personalized list of rules. His goal is to have 12-18 rules per student by the end of the year that the student is concentrating on. If those rules are not followed then the student's work has to be reworked and resubmitted to him.

Liz Kobs offered that the direct writing assessment is much more difficult than submitting work samples for the student because there tends to be less personal investment for the students in the assessments and the hand writing portion is difficult for many students who are accustomed to spell check on computers. John Ferraro suggested that the teachers increase the number of writing opportunities for students so that this on demand writing assessment is more familiar. Also, John noted that writing development is an issue of K-7th, and not just for prep in 7th grade and that he and Jill Sage will work with the feeder elementary schools on writing. He said that the 7th grade teachers are working with their students now to prepare them for the writing test. Donald Rose also added that looking down the road to the 10th grade assessment, what the Wilson teachers' need from Jackson students is better command of conventions. John Ferraro commented and it was echoed by many, that although we do have to teach the students to perform their best on the writing assessment test, that our real goal was to help them develop as writers.

The discussion became focused on how to ignite student writers at Jackson. As a community we need to help parents to encourage their children to write according to Jill Sage (journals, letters to family members, etc.) Liz Kobs said that she has used TAG money to bring in authors to work with TAG students in the past. We discussed that although after school writing opportunities and TAG programs are great for those students who are interested and probably quite competent in writing we need to also encourage those students that are challenged by writing. Donald Rose suggested that we create a school wide anthology or a Zine each quarter that would publish students' work throughout the school. The teachers will bring this idea to their teams and Donald will come back next site council with a plan to move forward with this idea. We could also encourage community involvement with this project – with parent and community members supporting this project from coordination to actual publication. Nancy Hand reminded us of the neighborhood association grants that could be used for this project. The grant deadline is November 3rd and Nancy offered to help John Ferraro and Donald Rose write a grant proposal for this project.

Jill Sage mentioned that a handful of Jackson staff will participate in the Portland Leadership Collaboration (funded through Nike). The training will include a treat and subsequent training with 22 other schools in the area and will focus on writing. The team will bring back what they learn to the building.

Old Business:

Family Involvement Plan:

Jenny Owen presented the final copy of the Family Involvement Plan. There was discussion regarding whether or not we could approve today. Jenny reminded us that the proposal has gone to everyone on site council prior to the meeting and that she has asked for input from PTA and administration. This document is required by the district and is for the purpose of setting a standard. It is also a living document that can be modified as needed. It was decided to vote on approval of the plan with the one additional improvement (i.e., improve liaison with families of immigrant children to support field trips). It was moved that the proposal be accepted and reviewed at each site council meeting, seconded, and favorable voice vote was taken. See Appendix B.

There was discussion regarding communication. The Jackson Journal, the monthly publication, was published for the first time in English and Spanish. The PTA website and SUN website are up and running and excellent tools for communication. There was discussion regarding communication with the Somalia population especially for special events such as Outdoor school and field trips. Students in our ESL program are not participating in these events due to communication and cultural issues. John Mashek offered that if the teams want to get together and have a parent info night that he can help with transportation issues and bring in an interpreter. For outdoor school – this in combination with ODS reps and slide show (created by Mr. Coates) could be an effective communication tool.

Meeting Format:

John Ferraro readdressed that we modify our meeting format to focus more on school improvement plan and family involvement plan so that our attention and energy go to the most important task of the site council: Student achievement. There was discussion regarding the need for any “reports”. It was suggested that the brief team reports, community report, and SUN report would be more effective in the monthly Jackson Journal so that the whole community would be updated to the happenings in the school and community than in our meetings. Nancy Hand suggested reorganization of the agenda so that the most important items are first. The new format will look something like this.

Chair:	Opening meeting, review & approve minutes.
Principal/rotating responsibility:	School Improvement Plan/Family Involvement

PlanAll:

Brief reports, as needed:

The School Improvement and Family Involvement Plans' goals for each meeting will be identified prior to each meeting so the members can prepare for effective discussion and a lead can be assigned.

This new meeting format was proposed and adopted by the committee.

School Fundraising Calendar:

Karin Chesnutt reported that the calendar is a working document that will be distributed to PTA, Foundation, Site Council and staff in the next month.

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 12th @ 4pm in the community room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karin Chesnutt