

Jackson Middle School
Site Council Minutes
December 10th, 2008

Attendees:

John Ferraro, (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)
Maggie Daly (Parent Rep)
Amanda Brown (Classified Rep)

Absent:

John Mashek (SUN Coordinator)
Jill Sage (Asst. Principal)

Minutes were approved as sent by email. Jenny suggested that updates from teachers and community members that are not included in the meeting due to time constraints be attached to the next Agenda. If there are things that members want included please send them by email to Jenny. Any team reports that are ready to go out should go to Monica Chanocua in the office (mchanocu@pps.k12.or.us) for the Jackson monthly newsletter.

School Improvement Plan - Writing

A. Jagzine:

Donald Rose reported that the Jagzine is off and running. The student staff was chosen on Friday December 5th. Eighteen students were accepted from 50 applicants– three 6th graders, seven 7th graders, and eight 8th graders. There were many qualified candidates that were turned away. This process is always difficult and there was discussion about the announcement of select groups like this. Suggestions were posting of new members on the wall (like ensemble, plays and musicals), emailing students, and the Friday news.

The first meeting will be tomorrow, Thursday, December 11th. The student staff will decide the year calendar for the Jagzine, their goals, and discuss how to get the message out about the collection of writings from students, teachers, and community members (maybe a presentation to the Neighborhood Association- Nancy Hand suggested the SWNI Board meeting at the Multnomah center in January – call ahead to Silvia Bogart to get on the agenda (503) 823-4592). The goal is two editions of the Jagzine each year. Donald will continue to urge staff to hold exemplary student papers for this publication and to encourage their students to submit art work, photography, illustrated stories and writings. Submissions from the adults in the community are great for demonstrating the life long art and enjoyment from creating and writing. Donald felt that the editions could be as big as it can be with no limitations. There will be a need for parent volunteers. Nancy Hand offered to help. Meetings will be held in the extra 6th grade pod room. Submissions will be kept on one laptop. Donald and Dave Wierth submitted an application in November to Southwest Neighborhood Inc., for a small grant to help jumpstart this program; results will be announced in January 2009.

David Weirth is offering to take 10 of the JAGZINE students to a special Linus Pauling Speaker series lecture about creativity- at this time. Linus Pauling Speaker series is at the Schnitzer auditorium about every 3 months. If you are a teacher in the Portland Public Schools and wish to request complimentary tickets for you and your students, you may contact James Rishky by email at jamesrishky@yahoo.com or by phone at 503-232-2300

B. Writing Instruction at Jackson:

At Jackson Middle School 78 % of our 7th graders are meeting the benchmark for writing. The Portland Leadership Collaboration took a careful look at the writing scores for schools and decided that from the data available it was not possible to determine the weaknesses and strengths of each school. So John Ferraro would like the staff to administer a writing prompt for each class that the staff could use to start analyzing and scoring. As a site council we made a list of Instructional Strategies that John Ferraro will be taking back to the staff meetings where they will choose which 3-4 strategies they will pursue for the year and place in our school improvement plan.

Suggestions:

- 1) Continue to support punctuation expectations that are in the student planner
- 2) Use analysis of six trait writing scores to guide instruction
- 3) Emphasize the continuum of writing skills from 5th-8th grade with dialogue with our feeder schools and our own staff regarding writing and our expectations
- 4) Supporting and running true writers workshops working with specific groups with specific writing issues
- 5) Confer with students about their own personal writing goals
- 6) Discuss and develop tools for writing (sentence strip)
- 7) Develop in students their creative voice (storytelling)
- 8) Create a SUN program for writing support (with writing tutors)
- 9) Invite Author visits
- 10) Support and establish the Jagzine to give students an authentic place to present writing
- 11) Encourage consistent writing expectations in across curriculum writing (6th grade integrated structure lends well to this)

After the winter break John will bring this to the staff and will bring back results to the February Site Council Meeting.

Some challenges that Jackson faces regarding writing is that some grade levels have a split Language Arts and Literature. Also class size makes a significant difference with the time consumption that careful writing scoring requires.

Family Involvement Plan

Jenny Owen has secured a parent volunteer, Leslie Starker, to oversee the creation of signage in our school for Somali and Hispanic families. There are no funds available for this project. PTA is short on their fundraising goals this year. There was discussion that maybe Gary Starr and his shop students could help to make signs. Another suggestion was to ask the 8th grade legacy committee to consider sponsoring this project. It could be as simple as laminated signs.

Jenny Owen also sent the Parent involvement survey to Site Council last week for input and approval. Knowing that involved parents make better students we want to encourage opportunities to reach out to parents. The survey would be available in various languages. It was discussed that the survey was too long and should be no more than front/back. There was discussion regarding parent and student incentives to completing the survey. It was also discussed that maybe we focus each year on a different aspect of parental involvement. Jenny has incorporated the suggestions that she has received regarding the survey. We will come back to this topic at the next site council meeting in January.

Site Council Announcements:

Nancy Hand reported that there are still openings for the free CPR training on December 20th. Also she reported that December 16th there will be a community discussion regarding the building (or not) of the new fire station.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 14th, 2009. There will be focus on reading at this site council meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Chesnutt
Site Council Secretary