

Jackson Middle School
Site Council Minutes
January 14, 2009

Attendees:

John Ferraro, (Principal)
Jill Sage (Asst. Principal)
Liz Kobs (8th grade rep)
Christi Lossner (7th grade rep)
Donald Rose (6th grade 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)
Melinda Murdock (Electives rep)

Minutes were approved as corrected. Last item – Site Council Announcements - The community meeting regarding the fire station was to take place on December 16th not March 16th. Due to snow the meeting was cancelled and will be rescheduled.

Site Council Bylaws

Yearly the bylaws are to be discussed and edited as needed. There were some minor changes made to the Jackson School Site Council By-laws. 1) On page 2, second paragraph, the sentence will read “Teacher representatives to the council will be elected by a process determined by teachers no later than September 10th.” 2) On page 2, third paragraph, the sentence will read “Classified employee representation to the council will be elected by staff no later than September 10th. 3) Page 2, under section Officers and Duties – Chair – a typo will be corrected to read The CHAIR will seek (not seep). 4) Page 2, last paragraph the date will be changed from April 1st to May 1st. See corrected Bylaws attached.

School Improvement Plan – Reading

John Ferraro suggested that we look at our reading goals the same way that we dissected writing in the previous site council meeting. We are to look at the strategies currently in our improvement plan and our target scores. From there we will develop a list of strategies in the next meeting to take to the staff meeting for the teachers to discuss and decide a few top strategies for Jackson Middle School to pursue. The list of strategies that the staff choose as priorities will then come back to site council. Site council will then update those strategies into our school improvement plan. The goal of this process is to create a school improvement plan that reflects the communities priorities and goals and also is a useful living document for educators in the Jackson Community. The target reading scores are 90% meeting or exceeding. The actual scores for the past three years have been 91.4%, 89.3%, and 89.5%. Although these scores are strong in comparison to PPS and State averages, they are not necessarily a true picture of our students. Some of the challenges that we face in our dissection of reading instruction at Jackson, are that the state testing data does not identify the specific difficulties a student is having, the state test is limited given it is a multiple choice test, the state results are not always a true assessment of abilities but rather test-taking skills, and the test focuses on literature/comprehension/content when some of our students are still struggling with phonics and basic reading skill work.

Jackson has adopted new curriculum materials 2 years ago however, the current curriculum does not come with assessments. There are a few teachers working with a pilot program called Easy CBM (Content Based Measurement) in pursuit of finding a good assessment tool for Jackson. This assessment measures fluency in 30 seconds and comprehension with computer testing. It is a tool for K-8th grade. The value of CBM is that it not only helps the teacher diagnose the reading skill needs of the student but can also stretch those students that are quite advanced in their reading skills. There was discussion that teaching and assessing reading skills is important but that there needs to be a balance so that we are sensitive to nurturing the “joy of reading.” Reading is not something to keep drilling but also an enjoyable life-skill. With this in mind, staff will decide how frequently Jackson will assess reading. Teachers will take this discussion back to their teams for further input.

Family Involvement Plan

John Mashek has reviewed the Somali Film project and is very favorable to pursuing this project. Phil Walker and his students could create a film called “A Day in the Life of a Jackson Student,” like the film created at Glencoe using the previous footage from a Jackson electives film. John Mashek is interested also in working with Barb Mutnick to put together another informative night targeting the Muslim population with the goal of opening communication with the parents of our Muslim students. Donald Rose suggested that we include our Muslim students in our film “A Day in the Life of at Jackson Student,” if that is culturally appropriate.

We looked again at the Parent Survey. There was a lot of discussion regarding the specific goal of the survey this year. It was decided that the focus topic would be communication. (Options: School climate, communication, collaboration, volunteer participation, and parents as decision makers). We decided that since it is later in the year it would be prudent to send a short survey now with plans for a longer survey at conferences next fall. We discussed that most parents may not take the time to write in answers so we should give them options of the most effective ways to get communications to them (e-mail, student delivered, events). It was also discussed that it would be great to find out what parents want to hear about from Jackson – how their student is doing in school, school events, school issues, testing results, etc.? We discussed that we should focus on getting feedback the most effectively. Then as a site council we will talk about the results and whether or not the school can meet the needs of the parents. Finally, John offered to write in the Jackson Journal the results of the surveys and Jackson’s ability to meet the needs of the families regarding communication. Jenny Owen and Jill Sage will work on the specifics of the survey and will email the site council their final draft for approval. The survey will be sent home with students with a small incentive for the students to make sure the survey is completed by their parents and returned.

Site Council Announcements:

Jackson has been awarded one of the two grants that we submitted to the neighborhood associations. The Cultural Day Grant was awarded \$1,500. Unfortunately the JagZine was declined. Mr. Rose said that he has been able to secure many of the needs (Scanner and Lap top computer) but will let us know as needs arise. Poetry stands have been made by Mr. Starr and will be used to post student writing submissions along the lunch line.

Art Auction is February 28th.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 11, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Chesnutt
Site Council Secretary