

Minutes of the Site Council
Sycamore Elementary School
September 3, 2014

Present:

Ken Graff (KG), Principal (non-voting member)

Erica Irby (EI), Assistant to the Principal (non-voting member)

Mary Fosdick (MF), member

Melanie Stewart (MS), member

Melissa Verbridge (MV), member

Rajka Corder (RC), member

Site Council Meeting of the Sycamore Elementary School

1. **Call to order** – Mary Fosdick called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.
 - a. **Pledge of Allegiance** at 4:39 p.m.
 - b. **Approval of minutes:** The meeting notes were reviewed and few minor changes were requested. MV moved to accept the minutes and MS seconded.
 - c. **Administrative & Member Reports**
 - i. **Member Report:**
 - (KG) Most of the clubs and activities started last week and all of them are running. It is great to see that lots of kids are on campus after school. Stinger Stats is a new club started by PE teacher, Matthew Kremer. He wanted to incorporate math into sports. The students are asked to track teams, number of passes, scores, etc. to bring in the math. He will also try to do physical activities in that club. The club is for the fourth and fifth grades; he has twelve kids.
 - (KG) Update from the PTA: the bike rodeo was the first event, huge success with participation of 121 students. The biggest fund raiser is Read-a-throne that starts on October 17th. Additional upcoming events are: mother-son sports activities on October 17th, and Spooky run on October 25th. Family movie night is next Friday, September 12th showing “Rio 2”. Parent teacher conferences are on September 11th and 12th, and the dinner for teachers is on Thursday (11th). Box tops are doing great, the next check is for ~\$2,100. We will be doing “box tops” competitions on grade level. The funding will be used to buy library books. Funds from Read-a-throne will be used to buy another mobile computer/laptop lab.

ii. **Administrative Report:**

- (KG) We had a busy start: parent-teacher conferences, family movie night, this week is benchmark testing (we will share the data next time). The benchmark testing scores will help us with the development of school goals. Intersection classes for grades 3-5 will be held in the first week. After school tutoring is going on for last three weeks. We need to manage the money that school has to support these after session tutoring. We can open it for the second grade students, as well. Reading and writing tutoring will be connected during the intersession tutoring. The students will read a passage and writing will be in response to that passage (narrative, argumentative, expository or informative response). In intersession the teachers will emphasize reading and responding in writing. Math and reading, combined, is still the emphasis.
- (MS) In fifth grade, the students are asked to do literature type of response, where they need to understand the text complexity, provide evidence, prove it or justify it. For example, if they read a passage and it is the end of the book, they could be asked to write different ending or the next chapter of the story. That is the current teaching direction and it is K-12 effort. (KG) This approach is a part of college preparedness (Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards), which was needed because it was found that, in the first year of college, students could not read the material with clear comprehension. This approach is filling the gap between high school and college. Everything is integrated and connected. The standards are going into the math as well. The students will need to justify why something is wrong or correct. Writing is graded and scored by teachers and checked by the other ("buddy") teachers for benchmark testing. The teachers have some rubric type rules for grading to know how to score. Last year the teachers had training on close reading, meaning the students can read, find information in the text and then find the explanations.
- (KG) Curriculum night is next Wednesday (September 10th). The previous one was a pretty good success. During the next site council meeting we can invite teachers to talk about curriculum.
- (KG) The first music performance is on September 18th – fifth grade.

d. **Call to the public:** None

e. **Recognitions**

- i. (EI) Lauren Praitier and Elisabeth Anderson for organizing Student Council elections. (KG) Major of Tucson was here in Sycamore to support elections. Kids elected the student body government, and filled in many other positions.
- ii. (EI) Mrs. Johnson for organizing small group testing.
- iii. (MS) Recognized having teachers paired up as writing buddies, so they grade each other's tests. Fourth and fifth grade teachers are addressing reading, writing and getting on board with expectations. The teachers are doing great collaboration.
- iv. (EI) Susan Robertson, a kitchen manager, for doing a great service for Sycamore. She is keeping lines moving, and all her workers working hard.

2. Consent Agenda N/A

3. Old Business

- a. **Enrollment update:** (KG) Sycamore has 962 students, one over January's projection. Pressure point is the second grade, which has 28 students per class. Kindergarten classrooms are close to the projection.
- b. **Staff Update:** (KG) Sycamore added a new classified staff member, special need paraprofessional. Sycamore has lots of new students with special needs and district is closely watching cost associated with this. Some students need one on one instruction, but if a student needs a partial support, we'll share paraprofessional with two students. One teacher goes on maternity leave in the third quarter.
- c. **Facilities Update:** (KG) Traffic flow and parking lot are doing good. Traffic clears fast. Traffic cones were placed in the illegal parking areas. Facilities will paint some of the curbs red. Additional signs for traffic flow were placed by county. The illegally parked cars will not get tickets on the school's private property, but will get tickets for parking illegally along the road. Baptist church was nice to let parents park. Another spaces are available at Corona Foothills parking.

4. New business:

a. Clubs and Activities:

- i. (KG) New school label is **A**, school score is 167. Magic score to get label A is 140. The presented documentation shows 2013 scores versus 2014 for the students that were attending for full academic year. If the students join Sycamore after just ten days, their attendance is not considered as "full academic year". There is a significant jump in score for the 3rd grade math. 4th grade reading had a dip but overall they had a really good score. Median percentile rank, takes a look at students' growth and has convoluted formula. We want kids to show growth and move up in their performance. We would like to be above 50% and our overall growth is 55%. Average growth in reading was 65%, 71% in math, and bottom 25% had a growth of 72%. That is the highest level of growth in the district. AIMS A is taken individually with their teachers. There are different levels of these test and we need to re-classify the students; and if we do, we get bonus points. This time we got 3 bonus points. In the state of Arizona, we are the top 12th school, if you take out nontraditional type schools. Growth is a key. Everyone has to grow. That is how we got a school label. Every student in the school was tested, in general, schools need to test at least 95% of students. A+ label falls under different process that reflects much broader considerations and takes teachers', students' and parents' inputs. To apply for A+ label, the process is different and we will have various committees and all teachers will participate in those committees.

b. Bond Election:

- i. (KG) The main efforts are directed towards educating people. The bond election is just for Vail, all money stays in Vail. (MV) Melissa suggested to have a fact sheet at parent teacher conferences. (MF) Mary suggested that our tech can do a fact video to run on the screen. (KG) We can do video on PTA and bond facts. We can have parents passing out the bond facts. PTA can have a "bond election" booth during the family movie night. COVE will do meeting for employees and will come back with ideas to rally the troops. Mr. Baker is coming to Sycamore for a meeting and we will ask him if we can have a flyer

in the office. Maybe, we can organize have town hall meetings. Melanie suggested to have meetings in other than school places, like community clubs at Del Lago, etc.

c. School Goals:

i. (KG) Mr. Graff suggested two goals:

- reading goal for all students is to meet 80% standard on grade level, and
- beyond text book goal stating that each K-5 teacher and special education teacher will create and post seven keynotes, lesson plans or support materials aligned with ACCRS.
- (MS) Melanie had concerns if we can reach the reading goal level. Last data were used from formatives. (KG) We can choose the goals that are real, attainable, want to make them achievable so that our teachers get compensated. These are goals that meet district goals. (MS) Melanie had some data on reading, reading level is high, and her data are based on fifth grade formative. (KG) We need to address how we grade formatives, how to give a credit for students that do partial answer. Extended response versus multiple choice question might need to have different grading methods. If we look at benchmark data and look at formatives, we might come up with better data. There are several reading formatives we can use. Benchmark scores might be collected by Friday (September 5th).

ii. VUSD goals are:

- All schools will receive A rating and increase growth score from 60% to 62% (need to get the AIMS data first to see if this is attainable).
- Beyond text books goal is to post 3,000 instructional resources.
 - a. (MS) Some of them can be social studies and science. Teachers are adding a lot to the curriculum, beyond books presentations.

5. **Next Meeting:** Thursday, October 16th at 4:30 pm.

6. **Adjournment:** MV had a motion to adjourn. MS seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 pm.