

**Sunnyvale Middle School PTSA
Final Minutes of the February 6, 2007 Meeting**

(Note: There are errors in the following attendee list, but we don't know how to be sure of corrections)

Adult Attendees: Jill Biagent, Brian Brown, Joshua Callman, Jane Chen, Yu Chen, Marti Coppage, Shirley Franz, Char Goldrig, Ruth Helfinstien, Anita Herrmann, Niru Kamar, Ivy Kerr, Rebecca Kim, Susan Lamarche, Kristine Lawrence, Tricia Lawrence, Erica Leung, Meara Manhali, Gregg Martinez, Jane Markey, Naomi Nakane-Matsumoto, Namvender Raghav, Kathy Ramirez, Phil Ryan, Ray Schney, Virginia Shea, Linda Savich, Valerie Spierling, Nina Swendig, Rajkumar Thirumaloenambe, Dianne Todd

Student Attendees: Ariel Callman, Will Frantz, Yumou Gao, Jay Kamat, Ellen Lawrence, Abishek R?, Nikhil Raghav, Caitlyn Slavich, Ashlyn Spierling

Call to Order: Susan Lamarche 7:05

Leadership: Ashlyn Spierling, 8th grade Student Body President

- Recent/upcoming activities include:
 - Willy Wonka themed 6th grade dance
 - Pirate themed Spartan Citizen
 - Lunchtime basketball tournament
 - Valentine Day message-grams
 - 7th-8th Grade Dance with Valentine Theme
 - March 9th, Renaissance
 - March 30th, spring dance
 - Elections recently held

Guest Speakers: Tiffany Vaccarezza, Char Goldring, Rebecca Kim, Jane Chen

- The 6th grade team has recently been discussing the possibility of adopting a new organization promoted by Rick DeFore called Learning Communities or Team Teaching. Currently, each 6th grader has one core teacher for 3 periods until lunch where grammar, writing, spelling, social studies and reading are taught. Some students leave the core class for math depending on their needs. In a Learning Community, the core curriculum would be split between two or three teachers, so that the teachers could specialize in fewer subjects for greater expertise and depth. Following is the 6th grade team's assessment of the advantages and concerns about adopting a Learning Community organization. The 6th grade team plans to continue to explore this option.

Advantages of LEARNING COMMUNITIES (aka Team Teaching)

Academic

- Collaboration in the specialized subjects
 - Provides for greater consistency in curricula
 - Efficiency in preparing materials
 - Create more innovative lesson plans
 - Plan to incorporate technology
- Allows more time to differentiate instruction
- Able to cover all standards in greater depth

- Experts can research educational opportunities that supplement the curricula (ex: field trips, speakers)
- More curriculum displayed per subject

Students

- Establish consistent behavior plans in teams
- Closer monitoring students, including at-risk students
- Assess success of differentiated instruction across curricula
- Conference with parents in teams to get an overall view of the student
- Helps bridge the gap between 6th and 7th grade

Professional & Personal Development

- Attend more trainings/seminars per specialized subject allowing us to further develop our knowledge with lower training costs
- Develop relationships and make connections with more students
- Better able to balance all aspects of our job

Concerns We Are Addressing / Possible Solutions

- Math scheduling: continue providing pre-algebra, 6th grade math and lower math
 - Have 7th grade math teachers teach 6th grade pre-algebra students and all 6th grade teachers focus on 6th grade math
- Types of learning communities: 3 teachers (math, core 1, core 1) vs. 2 teachers (core 1, core 2)
 - Depends on math scheduling. Our goal is to place the students where they will be most successful.
- Organization and storage of materials in the classroom (ex: books, desks)
 - With only 2 subjects to focus on, there will be more room to store materials and textbooks on counter and in cabinets and closets
- Overlapping homework/projects in each subject (taking multiple books home on one night)
 - Teachers will collaborate in core teams to balance the schedule with regards to projects, quizzes and tests.
- Continuing growth in state testing results
 - Standards based report cards (SBRC) will help teachers ensure all students are meeting all standards
- Finding time for all teacher sin a team to meet with parents
 - Teachers will collaborate in core teams
- Teachers are responsible for understanding the educational needs of more students
 - Teachers will collaborate in core teams to brainstorm strategies for behavioral and academic success
- Change can be difficult for teacher and students
 - Will allow teachers to spend more time collaborating in subject areas and about students. It will also help bridge the gap between 6th and 7th grade.

Guest Speaker: Rachel Gaydosh, English Department

- The English Department has recently adopted a new writing program called “Step Up To Writing” to provide explicit instruction on good writing techniques for a variety of writing needs. Tools include adding color via organization and ideas

- and quick, flexible outlines to guide work. The writing process includes prewriting and planning, then drafting, revising and editing, and finally proofreading and sharing of the final copy.
- Samples of analysis of a story were shared, showing how the techniques were applied by two very different students.
 - Principal Dampier is supporting this program for all students. Following is the information and examples shared by Ms. Gaydosh:

Step Up To Writing:

Content Goal: To provide students with models, direct instruction, and practice for including rich content in their writing.

Organization Goal: To provide students with samples and direct instruction for writing: Paragraphs, Summaries, Reports, Essays, Literature responses, Speeches, Research, Content for all subjects

Paragraph Flow: this is the model for used for writing a paragraph

GO – Write a topic sentence

SLOW DOWN – Give a reason, a detail, or a fact. Use a transition!

STOP – Explain. Give an example.

SLOW DOWN – Give a reason, a detail, or a fact. Use a transition!

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SLOW DOWN – Give a reason, a detail, or a fact. Use a transition!

STOP – Explain. Give an example.

GO BACK – Remind the reader of your topic.

Occasional/Position Statements: used to add color and variety to sentence structure after, as soon as, although, because, if, though, where, as, before, in order that, unless, wherever, as if, even, in order to, until, whether, as long as, since, even if, when, while

Common Transitions: used to provide a variety of paragraph structures

First – second – third, one – another – next, first of all – also, first – then, a good – a better – the best, to begin – then – consequently, first of all – besides – in addition, initially – then – after that, to start – furthermore – additionally – last, first – along with – likewise

Principal's Report: Mrs. Dampier

- **Block Schedule:** The advantages of a block schedule include more time with students, better schedule flexibility and more time to integrate subjects. Disadvantages include possible issues with grouping ill matched students for longer periods, and loss of class time due to advisory. Moving the advisory schedule to the end of 2nd period could alleviate the latter issue.
- **AVID:** (Advancement Via Individual Determination)
 - Advantages:
 - Helps meet the needs of underserved students
 - Not standards based
 - Uses powerful tutorial tools
 - Promotes sharing and understanding of cultures
 - High school students participating in this program will come share their experiences and successes with the middle school students
 - Disadvantages:

- Finding funding and tutors
 - Means giving up elective to take AVID
 - Grouping students can result in fewer opportunities for other socialization.
- **Honors English:**
 - Advantages:
 - Junior Great Books provides lots of excellent classical literature
 - Sharing, listening, and writing stressed
 - Self-led discovery activities
 - Faster acceleration of students
 - Disadvantages:
 - Students can't take other 6th period electives
 - These role model students are missing from other classes
 - If this program is continued, how students are chosen for the program may be an issue
- **Power Reading:**
 - Advantages:
 - Uses Reading Upgrade (www.readingupgrade.com) with an engaging format including music, video and games
 - Instant visual feedback and healthy competition keeps students motivated to improve with few discipline problems
 - Disadvantages:
 - Requires expensive program and laptop
- **Power Math**
 - Advantages:
 - Smaller groups and individual attention
 - Disadvantages:
 - Using math score which is dry; students want Math Upgrade which is expensive (same company as Reading Upgrade)
 - In lieu of elective
- **Advisory Period:** Intended for in-depth study, 12 minutes is insufficient. However, it is functioning as a homeroom with students and teachers connecting.
- **SADAI:** (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) Classes in math, language arts, social studies and science for students with no or limited English using GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition by Design).
 - Advantages: Small classes use manipulatives and visuals with extra differentiation and assessment.
 - Disadvantages: Students grouped for five periods/day creates lack of English speaking role models.

Teacher's Report: Marti Coppage

- After such extensive reports, there is little to add but "We love your kids!"

Review and Approval of Minutes: Anita Herrmann

- Minutes accepted with no changes.

Treasurer's Report: Susan Lamarche

- No checks were written in January; therefore no checks to approve

- The Wells Fargo account that had been used for paper scrip has been closed, as we no longer carry an inventory of paper scrip.
- There is a science department request which will be considered by the PTSA executive board.

Scrip Update: Dianne Cressler

- E-scrip and scrip income is tracking the budget with an income of about \$6,400 already on the books and \$4,000 to be logged next month. Between 500 to 600 parents are enrolled in e-scrip. Paper scrip forms are available on the website: http://www.sesd.org/schools/sunnyvale_middle/smshome.htm click on PTSA, Website, Scrip Info, then scroll down to Paper scrip and click on Order Forms. Orders are due on February 26 and can be turning into the office.

New Business:

- **8th Grade Graduation:** The kick off meeting held Monday, February 5th was quite successful; all nine sub-committees are staffed with chairpersons. The BBQ chairman is even a chef! Choosing a theme is targeted for the next meeting, Monday, March 5. Meetings will be held the first Monday of each month, with sub-committees meeting additionally as required. How much of the \$2,000 allocated for the 8th grade team will be available for the PTSA graduation committee was discussed. Diane Todd will follow up to get breakdown from previous years if available.
- **Stage Sound System:** Mr. Realini is working on upgrading the sound system.

Old Business:

- **Officers for Next Year:** Forming a nominating committee was briefly discussed.

Meeting adjourned: 8:31 pm

- Next PTSA meeting: Tuesday, March 6, 2007 in the **Staff Room**

http://www.sesd.org/Schools/Sunnyvale_Middle/ptsa/ptsahome.html

Minutes by Anita Herrmann, PTSA Secretary 06-07