

Sky Mountain Charter School Minutes

SMCS Charter Parent Council Meeting

Webex Teleconference or Lucerne Valley School District
8560 Aliento Road
Lucerne Valley, CA. 92356

October 19, 2011, 2:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. INTRODUCTIONS/WELCOME/ROLE CALL

Shana Fisk, Sky Mountain Charter School Director: Welcome and thank you to the Parent Council members.

Attendees: Rocio Murillo, Joelle Stout, Karen Christopher, Josephine Holbach, Judith Claudi-Magnussen, Margaret Kurtz, Abigail Hanson, Melissa Jenkins, Jennifer Felton, Debbie Mashburn, Christina Shearhold, Heidi Lynch, Danyale Dumont, Krista Williamson, Sonia Giordani-Johnston, Lora Way, Shana Fisk, Sarah Cohan, Susan Clark, Eric Schoffstall, Sandy Barela, Erin Havrilesky, Jamee Block, Steve Askin

4. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

Members of the public may be heard on any item. A person addressing the Council will be limited to 3 minutes, unless the Site Administrator grants a longer period of time. Comments by members of the public on an item on the agenda will only be allowed during consideration of the item by the Council.

-No Comments-

5. PRESENTATION ITEMS

A. Erin Havrilesky, Curriculum/Guidance: Erin's presentation included an emphasis on the high school aspect of the WASC renewal process.

-Excited for some great improvements to come as part of the WASC renewal process

-A primary goal is to improve communication especially with high school matters:

-Resources to help with communication include:

High School manual on guidance page of the website
http://www.skymountaincs.org/guidance/a_b_high_school_manual_revised.htm

Parent Q&A listserv emails; one went out last week and another will go out in the next couple of weeks. Parents can give question to their ES who will forward

them to Erin Havrilesky, at which point the questions and answers will be compiled and sent out to everyone via the listserv. This will be helpful because if another parent had the same question or had not thought of that question they will have the answer; this should be very helpful to for many families with students in high school or nearing high school.

New vendors that offer A-G courses; Advanced Academics is highly recommended by Erin Havrilesky.

UC approved lab courses to be offered starting in the 2012/2013 school year.

Communication with parents and students of this year's graduating class.

-Last year's graduation ceremony was lovely; we will be working hard towards putting together another beautiful and memorable graduation ceremony for this year's graduating class. Erin Havrilesky looks forward to working closely with the graduation subcommittee for planning the 2011/2012 graduation. The graduation this school year will be held on May 23, 2012 at 1:00pm, in Rancho Cucamonga.

B. Sandy Barela, GEAs & Assessment

GEAs:

-This year's GEAs are well under way with 1200 students signed up and 4 GEAs planned for first semester. The fair was last month, which was a great time; Disneyland is coming up this week, which we are really excited about.

-Second semester GEAs will be announced in early November.

-WASC renewal year; we want to be able to show the WASC committee our students in action at the GEAs and are seeking pictures of students at the GEAs. We are encouraging anyone who has pictures from SMCS GEAs to share them with your ES so we can get them to the WASC committee.

Assessment:

-5 mega-test sites this year; last year we had 5 test sites, 4 of those were mega-test sites. This year we added a test site in El Monte to split up Los Angeles County, East to West, because of traffic issues and because LA is such a large county; the other LA test site will be in Burbank. We believe this will be beneficial to families in LA County.

-Last year the mega-test sites were well received, we had a lot of great feedback. The mega-sites will have speakers and vendors; this gives the parents an opportunity to stay at the site with their students and have opportunities to have some fun, hands on access to what some vendors have available, and learn some great things from the speakers.

-We will have three site coordinators at each site this year; there will be a special education coordinator, a high school coordinator, and a lead/logistic coordinator. The coordinators will help the proctors, students, and parents.

-We are excited to announce that our API this year has grown 23 points which is excellent; our students have worked really hard and we are excited to see that reflected on our API. One of SMs critical needs with WASC is for our test scores in math to go up. We have been looking at ways to raise our math scores in STAR testing, including test prep and ES training.

-Question from Margaret Kurtz- Will there be vendors in the mountain area?

-Answer from Sandy Barela- This year all the San Bernadino students will be testing at the S.B. site; a site will **not** be set up specifically in the Crestline/Mountain area. This is so all families in San Bernadino can have access to the vendor fair and speakers.

C. Shana Fisk, SMCS Update

-Year of WASC and Charter renewal; presenters will be discussing these in more detail.

-WASC came and visited us in our first year and we were given a three year accreditation, now is the time for the WASC team to come back and review the suggestions they gave us, our critical areas of need, what we were doing well, etc. (Jamee Block's presentation covers this in more detail)

-ESs, school administration, parents, and students have all worked really hard toward the WASC renewal.

-This is our fifth year as a school; our ES are extremely committed in continuing to learn and grow in their jobs and their relationships with the families. Our educators are committed to our school mission and toward continuing to improve, learn, and grow as a school and individually. Shana is honored to be part of such an amazing team and school.

D. Jamee Block, WASC Update

-WASC process this year includes a self study; this has really given us an opportunity to take a close and in depth look at our school. We are looking at our strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth; the study groups have had a large emphasis on junior high and specifically high school areas of growth for the school.

-We have completed several WASC focus group meetings that included ESs, administrators, district board members, district staff, the superintendant, IEM staff, parents, and students. Each group focused on in depth aspects of the school ranging from school culture and curriculum to instruction and finance; we are happy to say that those meetings have been finished and the rough drafts of the reports are completed.

-We have completed two of the three ES home group meetings, and we have completed our parent and student home group meetings. In these meetings we looked at areas of critical need and discussed ways to improve as a school. We have already implemented some suggestions like the Q&A listserv emails.

-Jamee Block would like to give a huge thank you to all the parents and students who participated in the WASC focus group meetings. We could not go through the WASC

renewal process and the self study without them; we are greatly appreciative to them for their time and effort.

-We have met with our WASC chairperson, she was really impressed with our school and the information we presented to her. We are looking forward to working with her and the WASC visiting team when they visit us in February.

-The self study final draft documents and reports is a huge project that is still being worked on. This includes five chapters with hundreds of pages. We have completed a rough draft of chapters one, two, three, and four; we are preparing to focus on chapter five, which includes our action plans. This is where we create a plan to address the areas that our team has determined as areas needed for growth and how to address our goals.

-We are in the final stretch, things are looking good. We have learned so much from the focus group process; it has given us as a school the opportunity to look at so many aspects and again focus on strengths of the school and work toward action plans for meeting our goals.

E. Susan Clark, SMCS Charter Renewal

-Thank you from Susan Clark to the council members for participating in the SMCS Parent Council.

-Beginning in 2006, IEM began working with Lucerne Valley School District to open a Charter in the district. On May 16, 2007 the district approved that charter and it was Sky Mountain Charter. On July 12, 2007 the Charter was accepted and numbered by the California Department of Education; SMCSs charter number was and is 905. September 4, 2007 was the first day of school for SMCS. Charters generally have up to a five year term; our first term for SM will end in July of 2012. Through these last five years IEM and Sky Mountain School leadership has developed a good relationship with the district and we are hopeful for a smooth charter renewal. At this point, we are at the stage of working on the document language with the district. This is where the original documents of a new charter are cleaned up to reflect the language of a school that has been in operation for five years rather than the language of a new school. This is where we discuss any revisions that the district would like or that we would like. When these documents are in a form that we all agree with, the charter will be submitted to the district board. Once we submit that to the school board they have 30 days to make a renewal decision. Our hope is to submit and finalize these documents no later than December of this year. Once they have been submitted and we have been approved; which is what Susan Clark anticipates they will do, they will then send our charter to the California Department of Education for the final stamp of approval. At that point, we continue on the next term of our charter, another five year term. We are positive that all will go well.

-Question from Steve Askin: Why does the school pay an administrative or oversight fee of 3% to the district for facilities if they are not providing facilities for the school? Normally, under California state rules "if I understand it correctly" this should be limited to 1% if facilities are not provided. Steve would like this to be corrected in the renewal of the charter to free up more funding for the students.

-Answer from Susan Clark: The district does provide facilities for us; we have onsite facilities and we also use storage space within their warehouse facilities. That is why we do pay the 3%.

-Steve Askin asked for more information about the onsite facilities.

-Susan Clark clarified that we have office space and room for storage; from the beginning we have had those facilities available to us.

-Steve Askin suggested for the interest of the school we still request to have that 3% dropped to 1% as he believes this should be for school facility buildings.

-Susie Clark thanked Steve Askin for his suggestion and will look into that with our legal team involved.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Selecting of the Subcommittees, Sarah Coyan

-The six subcommittees are:

1. Fundraising
2. Graduation
3. Group Educational Activities
4. Yearbook
5. STAR volunteer coordinator
6. WASC focus groups

-Sarah Coyan has pre-assigned each member to a committee; some people have requested a committee to serve on and those requests have been granted.

-Ideally, we would like the members on a committee that he or she can contribute specific individual talents and interests.

-Please feel free to contact Sarah Coyan if you would like to be assigned to a different committee and she will be happy to make that change.

-The contact roster will be sent via email early next week to all members of the parent council. This roster includes contact and subcommittee information. If you would like to know what subcommittee you have been assigned to sooner, please email Sarah Coyan and she will be happy to give you that information.

-Members of the Parent Council can use this roster to connect with others members on their committee to discuss and work on projects. We recommend each subcommittee having a leader who corresponds with the school through Sarah Coyan, keeps communication flowing within the committee, and follows up with committee ideas and projects.

-The subcommittees are designed and developed by the members who serve on them; there are not specific or exact duties or obligations. Although, we highly encourage members to communicate and implement committee ideas and projects.

-A brief description of each subcommittee:

-Fundraising: member of this committee will research possible fundraising ideas for the school; currently we have the Target Red Card, Fresh & Easy, and Box Tops fundraising already implemented by previous year fundraising subcommittee members. These fundraising activities will continue this year; we are excited for more prospects to come from this year's committee members. The monies earned by fundraising are deposited in a petty cash account that the Parent Council votes on at the second meeting in the Spring on to how to use those funds. Currently, we have \$2,465 in this account.

-Graduation: members of this committee help with planning for and decorating for graduation. This committee will work closely with Erin Havrilesky who heads up our guidance department. In previous years, some of the fundraising money is typically voted on to go toward graduation needs and expenses. We do have some decorations saved from previous years. The graduation committee leader will present to the parent council at the next meeting in the Spring what the needs are for graduation, at this point a vote by the council members will determine if some of the funds will be approved for the graduation ceremony.

-Group Educational Activities; this committee will work with Sandy Barela who is the GEA coordinator for Sky Mountain. The GEA subcommittee can research vendors and make recommendations for possible GEAs that could be set up for SM students. Another fun thing with this committee is to spread the word and help with getting pictures from the GEAs that can be shared with the yearbook subcommittee.

-Yearbook; we have not had a yearbook in the past few years because we have not had anyone to lead the committee. The members on this committee will work together to gather pictures from families, ESs, and GEA coordinators for putting together a school yearbook. We are hopeful that this year the Parent Council can put together a yearbook for the students. Again, this might require asking at the Spring meeting to have some of the fundraising funds go toward the production of the yearbook. This committee especially may require special talents for developing a yearbook so please let me know if you are interested in being involved with or heading up the production of a yearbook.

-STAR: members on this committee will help to coordinate volunteers at each site to assist as floaters if an adult is needed; for instance to walk a child to the restroom.

-WASC; this subcommittee is very important this year as this is SM's WASC renewal year. Members on this committee will coordinate with parents who attended WASC focus group meetings and will need to be available to the WASC team in person or via phone on February 27th in Rancho Cucamonga.

-We encourage subcommittee members to work together and be proactive in efforts to develop the committees. Please be sure your committee has a leader; if you are leading a committee please touch base with the other members somewhat frequently to keep communications flowing.

-If you have questions or would like to run ideas by the school please contact Sarah Coyan, SMCS Parent Support and school secretary scoyan@ieminc.org or 800-979-4436. We are excited to see what our Parent Council members do with these committees this year.

7. ACTION ITEMS

A. To Elect Parent Council Officers

-Shana gave a brief description of each position; the president works closely with the all of the subcommittees, the treasurer works closely with the fundraising committee, and the secretary handles Parent Council correspondences and meeting minutes.

-President: Sonia Giordani-Johnston by unanimous vote

-Treasurer: Melissa Jenkins by unanimous vote

-Secretary: Danyale Dumont by unanimous vote

-Thank you so much to Sonia, Melissa, and Danyale, who volunteered to hold a place in SMCSs Parent Council officer roles. Sarah Coyan will be in touch with you within the next couple of weeks to discuss these roles in more detail.

B. To approve the 2011-2012 budget, Eric Schoffstall

-Thank you to Parent Council members from Eric Schoffstall for their participation.

-In reference to the cash flow document that was sent to all Parent Council members; the 2011 most current projection of revenue and expenditures for the 2012 school year. Eric Schoffstall directed the council's attention to line 2 columns d, e, f, & g pointing out that those are projected revenue figures based on school services of California with an additional \$358.00 added to that recommended from the CDE back in August, based on an anticipated increase in revenue to the state of California tax return. In January we can potentially prepare for midyear cuts, hopefully not; however, this is important to point out to the Parent Council the projections. The bottom of the document on line 80 shows a surplus of \$251,658.00 in projected expenditures v. projected revenue. In addition, these numbers that are used for the number of students which is line 5 columns d, e, f, & g, which are representative of P2revise which is the average daily attendance numbers of our students in those specific grade levels from last year. We build our budget based on last year's ADA because we are funded on last year's ADA up until December and then an adjustment is made and we catch up. Eric Schoffstall pointed out that we have not finished the final audit of our books, but when we do we will be able to identify what our carryover is in terms of our reserve. We are, along with everybody else in the state,

dealing with cash flow issues. Fortunately, we have enough reserve that we are able to meet our cash flow expectations without borrowing to date. We hope to continue in that mode so the school does not have to borrow with interest. The cash flow issue is a direct result of the state's cash flow problems, and the state has passed that problem on to the schools. We are currently receiving 75% of our entitlement from the state for the fiscal year; the state is deferring the other 25% to the following fiscal year. This causes a challenge from a finance department prospective to keep up with all these numbers, but to date we have been able to avoid borrowing any money.

-This is an updated version of the version that went to the district, a ratification of the adopted budget.

-Eric Schoffstall and Sonia Giordani-Johnston had a discussion about how to understand line 6 of the budget for determining the actual ADA funding per student for elementary age and how one could compare funding and expenditures with other public schools in the district. This discussion clarified that line 79 shows total expected expenditure. This discussion helped to better understand the layout of the cash flow budget.

-Eric Schoffstall pointed out that we are fiscally conservative as an effort to not have to borrow money. Again, the state has put schools in a tough situation with the 25% deferral. We are thankful for Randy Gaschler and DD Klein who oversee the financial aspects of the school.

-Parent Council voted on the approval of the 2011/2012 district approved budget

-Budget approved by unanimous vote

-There was a lot of information presented today, if there are any questions please feel free to contact Sarah Coyan by email scoyan@ieminc.org or phone 800-979-4436 and we will get the answers to you.

-Shana Fisk adjourned the meeting at 3:01pm