

# **Sky Mountain Charter School Parent Council Meeting Minutes**

By GoTo Teleconference

1423 W. State Street Suite A, Redlands, CA 92373

Thursday, October 15, 2015 at 6:00pm

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Jennifer Felton, SMCS Parent Council President, called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

## **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Jennifer Felton led all meeting attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **3. INTRODUCTIONS/WELCOME/ROLL CALL**

Jennifer Felton welcomed everybody to the meeting.

**Parent Council Member Attendees: Jennifer Felton, Alison Ujueta, Rebecca Sanchez, Sarah Bjorklund, Christine Cole, Gregg Spector, Christy Harker, Na'Comi Berman, Danielle Kuhns, Christina Thompson, Deanna Munroe**

Jennifer Felton introduced meeting presenters:

- Susan Clark; IEM Executive Director and Director of Student Enrollment
- Burke Wallace; Director of Teacher Support Services
- Jami-Lynn Riley; Guidance Coordinator
- Stefanie Lamar; Curriculum Coordinator
- Melissa Valdez; Assessment Director
- Argi Sayari; SMCS Educational Liaison
- Jennifer Felton; Parent Council President

Jennifer Felton noted that also in attendance was:

- Dr. Jason Jones; Chief Administrative Officer
- Cynthia Rachel; Director of Education Support Services
- Argi Sayari; Sky Mountain Educational Liaison
- John Wilberger; Director of Vendor and Purchasing Services
- Sarah Coyan; Sky Mountain Parent Support and Parent Council Secretary

#### 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 Members of the public spoke

#### 5. REPORTS

##### A. IEM Report: Susan Clark

Susan Clark welcomed the parent council members and thanked them for coming out to the meeting. Susan addressed the question “what does it mean to be part of an IEM school?”

- IEM Schools follow the same focus and vision of IEM; which is parent choice and giving the maximum decision making we can within the law and for each student to have an individualized learning plan.
- The total current enrollment for all IEM schools is **5,725** students; **1,650** of those students are currently enrolled with Sky Mountain.
- Being a part of the IEM community gives us a voice to promote what we have in our schools and it gives us a voice in the political arena to protect what we have.

Susan addressed the question “what goes on at the IEM office?”

- IEM is like a remote district office; what you might see if you were to visit the IEM office...
- Vendor Relations department (numbers reflect so far this year):
  - Processing **6,500+** Sky Mountain purchase orders
  - Setting up and managing **1,300** online managed course licenses
  - Setting up **23** Contract Program courses
  - Checking on orders and signing up new vendors
- Accounts Payable department
  - Sending invoices; each PO generates one or more invoices
  - Check runs, payroll, arranging employee benefits
- You would also see:

- Interactions with the school district that sponsors Sky Mountain
- Building and managing of budgets
- Front office staff answering calls and getting those callers connected with the department they need to speak with
- State reporting; CALPADS
- Entering of applications; **445** applications have been entered so far this year
- Student agreements being entered
- Household forms being entered; deadline for those is October 31st
- Chromebooks getting ready to be distributed for assessments
- In August you would see auditors in the office; our audit was clean and good
- These are all functions to ensure that Sky Mountain is in compliance, financially sound, and will be around for a long time
- We are happy to be partnering with **1,650** actively enrolled Sky Mountain students and their families, with the **50** students/families currently in the enrollment process, and all future students and families

#### B. Teacher Services Report; Burke Wallace

Burke expressed his excitement to see many Sky Mountain and IEM staff attending the meeting; he feels this is a testament to growing a strong Sky Mountain and to allow parents and students to have the best possible experiences. Things are continuing to go well in the Teacher Services department; there have been no drastic changes since the teacher service report at the August meeting.

Numbers and behind the scenes report:

- Over the summer Sky Mountain hired **53** new ESs
- We have developed a more enhanced, weekly, beyond our typical training, devotion to training new ESs
- Positive feedback from new ESs on how much they are learning and enjoying working with families to provide the maximum amount of parent choice
- We currently have **97** ESs employed at Sky Mountain Charter School

- We have room to grow; this is a healthy place to be
- We encourage parent council members, as representatives to the parents of our school, to share in our promotion of what we do and offer at Sky Mountain; one of the most powerful ways to promote our school is by word of mouth
- We are currently looking at officially marketing for the first time; Google adwords and different platforms of social media to grow our presence for more families to experience and enjoy this parent driven philosophy and choice of education
- We offer something so unique at Sky Mountain in terms of maximum parent choice, the most instructional funding in the area, one of the most extensive vendor lists in the area; advertising our school is not so much about the increasingly competitive charter environment but to share and get our name out there so people know we exist
- IEM schools are focusing on a re-emphasis of professional development; ESs have requirements to meet each month to grow and best serve families
- Argi has been working on setting up GEAs; in the past there was not a lot of oversight on GEAs, this year there is already twice as many GEAs than last year

### C. Guidance Report: Jami-Lynn Riley

#### Update on guidance:

- Lab vendors for high school program; high school students taking a-g chemistry, biology or physics must be enrolled in an outside wet lab, which means they have to go to a wet lab, not in the home
- Last year we only had a couple of lab vendors, we have over doubled that this year and are still looking into more new lab vendors
- Moving forward for next year we are looking at mobile science labs, this is very exciting
- Sky Mountain is widely spread geographically, we are trying to get science labs locally for each area but this can be a challenge; the mobile labs will travel to different areas to provide local lab options

- We welcome parent ideas for science lab vendors; suggestions can be emailed to Jami-Lynn [jriley@ieminc.org](mailto:jriley@ieminc.org) who can look at those vendors and bring those ideas/suggestions to the science chairs
- a-g courses are moving along, we are looking for input and feedback on experiences with these courses
- We are working on our non a-g course catalogue and will be making that available to families on the website soon
- High school counselor meetings; these meetings are currently happening - Jami-Lynn has been meeting with 10th, 11th, and 12th graders last month and this month, will be meeting with 9th graders in second half of November and into December, and will meet with 8th graders after winter break
- Counselor meetings are setup using Signup Genius

#### D. Curriculum Report; Stefanie Lamar

Highlights for curriculum department:

- Intervention program; this year using state allocated LCAP funding, Sky Mountain was again able to offer a variety of supplemental math and English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum to students who scored two or more grade levels or below on any one sub-skill from their i-Ready diagnostic report
- While the funding lasts this opportunity is being offered at no cost
- Each particular supplemental math and ELA curriculum has an ES curriculum expert assigned to it
- The curriculum experts are an excellent resource and are available to ESs and families
- Sky Mountain is offering, with allocated LCAP funds, both web-based and in-person tutoring for students who scored two or more grade levels below, overall, on their i-Ready diagnostic reports
- *Webwise, Home Tutoring Plus, and A+ In Home Tutors* are our vendors this year for LCAP funds tutoring options

- The curriculum department feels strongly that these resources available for our struggling students will provide opportunities for academic growth and success
- The curriculum department will be showcasing one particular curriculum each month, there will be listserv announcements and website displays of the highlighted curriculum each month
- This month the showcase curriculum was Picture Perfect Science Lessons
- The curriculum department is focusing efforts on awareness of next generation science standards in preparation for full implementation of the standards next year
- Mobile science labs will assist with the hands on aspect of these next generation standards
- Sky Mountain is offering a new program called ESi (ES instruction); this program gives ESs a chance to use their skills and knowledge to better serve students through one-on-one, small group, or large group instruction
- ESs will have an opportunity to enroll their own students in their courses and tutoring sessions; parents are encourage to further discuss these opportunities with their ES

\*Christine Cole gave feedback on the Picture Perfect Science Lesson - She used this curriculum with her 3rd grader and her family very much enjoyed this curriculum option

#### E. Assessment Report; Melissa Valdez

Melissa shared a [Powerpoint Presentation](#) with assessment update information:

- CAHSEE update
- CAASPP results for Sky Mountain
- i-Ready Fall Diagnostic Results
- Instructional components of i-Ready

\*Danielle Kuhns asked about the lessons offered after the i-Ready; she thought the lessons were supposed to be tailored to the weaknesses and she felt the lessons don't necessarily always do this.

**Melissa answered** that sometimes the ES needs to go into the account and manually open a specific domain; there has been additional training for ESs to learn about managing i-Ready

accounts and domains; the assessment department is also available if there is any issues or concerns with i-Ready resources.

\*Jennifer Felton attended an i-Ready parent training and learned of worksheets available as a resource; can those worksheets be easier accessible to parents without going through the ES?

**Melissa answered** that we have made the request for parent access but that Curriculum Associates (maker of i-Ready) don't have a lot of schools like ours that use their product so they do not have a parent portal. We will continue to ask for this, we do bring up parent requests when we meet with them. Typically, only administrators and teachers have access to the instructional materials. We do have a unique situation and we would like for parents to have access to the mini lessons, it's just not possible at this point.

\*Gregg Spector asked why we use i-Ready, what is the rationale?

**Melissa answered** that i-Ready has fully integrated the new California standards, tests to a sub-skill level and breakdown by domain to find gaps, parent reports are user friendly, gives a more specific view of strengths and weaknesses, offers the instructional component, provides detailed diagnostics, and we have received a great deal of positive feedback about i-Ready.

#### F. Treasury Report; Dina Adham

Argi gave an update on the parent council bank account on behalf of Dina Adham:

- We opened a parent council bank account at Wells Fargo
- Argi and Dina are the primary and secondary account holders
- Both Argi and Dina have a bank card for the account
- The account currently has **\$2,337.00**
- Argi will be talking with fundraising committee for possibly raising more funds for this account

#### G. Parent Council Report; Jennifer Felton

Jennifer Felton introduced this new part of the agenda as a way for parent council members to communicate with IEM staff, Sky Mountain staff and one another on topics such as:

- Vendors or curriculum suggestions

- Things that are going well or could be improved
- Issues, concerns, positive feedback, suggestions, etc. from other parents that we can bring to these meetings on their behalf to be addressed

Jennifer had brought topics to the table for discussion:

- Vendor suggestions:
  - Ice Town, ice skating vendor - opportunity for socialization and PE
  - California Science Center - hands on science activities, opportunity to meet science standards and provide a work sample
- If a member of the parent council ever has something they would like brought to a meeting for the parent council report please contact Jennifer Felton (her contact info is on the contact roster) she will be sure the item is addressed and is happy to present on the parent council behalf and Sky Mountain parent's behalf; any member of the parent council can coordinate with Jennifer prior to meetings to speak during this section of the agenda as well
- Can Sky Mountain look into approving hockey instruction? Not playing the game, simply instruction? Many other charters offer hockey instruction and we wish Sky Mountain would offer this as well.
- Can Sky Mountain look at their vendor approval process? Can we make it easier on vendors to become approved?

**John Wilberger, director of Vendor Relations, addressed the vendor process** and asked for more specifics on how we can improve that process. \*Jennifer mentioned that it seems one of the main issues is the fingerprinting process. **John clarified** that the Department of Justice (DOJ) clearance is only needed for instructors who will be working with Sky Mountain students. \*Danielle Kuhns asked if there is a different process for adding a product vendor or a service vendor? **John answered** that yes, the process is much different and easier because we do not need DOJ clearance for a product vendor.

## 6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

### A. Group Educational Activities (GEAs)



Argi Sayari discussed GEA parameters:

- GEAs must be in a county that we serve
- No GEAs can be over water, no overnights, and all GEAs must be educational
- We try to choose GEAs that rotate around the counties and provide a wide grade range so that the GEA opportunities can accommodate as many families as possible

With these parameters established, Argi opened up a GEA discussion:

- Na'Comi Berman expressed concerns on behalf of some families of not being able to bring younger children to the GEAs
  - Is it possible to plan GEAs at the same place on different levels for different grades?
- Na'Comi Berman asked when the GEA subcommittee members would receive communication or correspondence in regard to how they can play a role as members of the GEA committee?
  - Argi commented that he will setup a Google chat or some type of platform for discussion about GEAs with that committee
  - The concerns from above can also be discussed during the specific GEA subcommittee meeting discussion

#### B. Student social interaction opportunities/park days

Argi opened up a park days/socialization discussion:

- Na'comi Berman has invited people to set up park days on her Facebook group; those dates keep getting moved because nobody has been showing up
- Gregg Spector suggested for parents to have an option to make their information available for creating a direct link between parents - phone tree perhaps
- Sarah Coyan suggested starting a park days subcommittee and having some GEA subcommittee members switch to the park days subcommittee; we have a lot of members on the GEA subcommittee, if a member of the parent council would like to change to a park days subcommittee please email Sarah Coyan [scoyan@ieminc.org](mailto:scoyan@ieminc.org) and the contact roster will be updated with that information

- Jennifer Felton suggested for AFs to host park days in their geographic areas; this would give parents an opportunity to start to meet one another and establish connections
- Cynthia Rachel suggested that Argi could send out a listserv to parents asking what types of park days they are already participating in with perhaps homeschooling groups or co-ops and create a list with general dates/times/locations/contacts for those already existing park days
- Cynthia Rachel expressed that it would be a very large and sensitive undertaking to have a parent information system
- Cynthia Rachel asked Na'Comi Berman to email her when she is planning park days on the Facebook group if she would like to and we can help with getting that information out to a larger Sky Mountain community audience
- Gregg Spector would really like to see community and friendship connections with the common bond of Sky Mountain be easily available and would like to further discuss parent direct links during a park days subcommittee meeting in the near future
- Cynthia suggested that families can also talk to their ES and ask if there are families getting together in the area and see if the ES can help to build those local connections; however, sometimes ESs don't always live in the areas they service, or they service families from many geographic areas, or might not have other families looking for this type of connection so there is no guarantee that the ESs will be able to support these local connections
- Cynthia Rachel recognized that we do have parent interest in these types of socialization opportunities and that once this park days committee is established, we as a school, are happy to help communicate park day opportunities to families via the listserv and spreading the word through the ESs
- Gregg Spector is looking for more than park days, he would like to see ways for parents to have outlets for direct communication with other Sky Mountain families
- Cynthia Rachel suggested that the park days could be a launching point for meeting other Sky Mountain families and making those connections to have direct contact

- There are Sky Mountain Facebook groups out there, these groups are not sponsored by the school but they are out there and they are run by and have members who are Sky Mountain families; this is another way to build connections in the Sky Mountain family community
- Na'Comi Berman shared a link to one of the Sky Mountain facebook groups that she hosts: [Sky Mountain Charter School Families](#); this group has over 300 members, Na'Comi suggested for Gregg to look into this platform for arranging events or communicating with other families (Na'Comi pointed out that the RSVPs are not for sure and oftentimes families might not be able to make it to the event)
- If people prefer to not use Facebook there is also the option of Yahoo or Google groups or another listserv type of non school affiliated family communication platform
- Gregg Spector and the parent council agreed that logistically it would be a good idea to get this subcommittee going and further discuss these ideas and suggestions but he reiterated he is not looking so much for park days as direct links and communication platforms to build community, make connections, and enhance socialization opportunities for students
- Cynthia Rachel suggested the new subcommittee could be titled "Student Social Interactions" subcommittee or something like that rather than using the title "Park Days" subcommittee
- Sarah Coyan tabled this discussion for this meeting; the new social interaction subcommittee can resume during a subcommittee meeting.

### C. Science camp for 5th/6th graders

Argi opened up a science camp discussion:

- Christina Thompson suggested that since Sky Mountain is not offering overnight GEAs, she would like to look at a program that will take us for one day
- Christina will look into options for one day science camps because she believes these types of science camp opportunities offer a great deal of educational value, specifically for students in 5th and 6th grades

#### D. Vendor database

Argi opened up a vendor database discussion:

- John Wilberger addressed the approved vendor list on the Sky Mountain webpage. He has heard parent requests to make the vendor list more user friendly in regard to searching and navigating through the extensive vendor list
- John is working with the IT department and Maren, IEM website and technical training coordinator, to enhance the vendor list
- In the interim we are working on a training video for parents on how to use the search function and better navigate the approved vendor list
- John expressed that during the development of the enhanced vendor list we will be seeking parent involvement and input
- If there are any parents who would like to be involved with beta testing please email John [jwilberger@ieminc.org](mailto:jwilberger@ieminc.org)
- We may eventually look into hiring a web developer and working with vendors as we work toward making the vendor list the best we can

#### E. Resource Center

Argi opened up a resource center discussion:

- Na'Comi Berman suggested the agenda be more detailed with reminders about what, specifically, the parent council mentioned wanting to discuss when the requests were made at the previous meeting to add these topics to the future agenda as discussion items
- Na'Comi Berman mentioned that based on Facebook chatter, families would like to see more people in the resource center, more access to the center, and online access to see what is available at the center
- Na'Comi Berman stated that sometimes it feels like it can be a gamble to go because families don't know what will be there and available to check out
- Cynthia Rachel spoke to the resource center availability:

- We are currently finishing the hiring process for another employee to be at the resource center so it can be open 40 hours a week
- We hope to eventually be able to offer sooner appointments and an option to check ahead of time to see what resources are there
- We are hoping to get the Surpass online database program up and running by next year, it does take time to barcode everything and get the items up on the online database
- Once we have this feature setup there will be options to go online and reserve resources before visiting the resource center
- Currently, the resource center staff is catching up with materials coming in from the summer and taking appointments with parents to checkout resources that are currently there and available
- Na'Comi Berman mentioned that there was plenty of room in the resource center, when she was there, for more families to be there and wonders if this will be an option once there is more staff onsite at the resource center
- Na'Comi Berman also asked about shipping materials from the resource center to families and taking the shipping costs from instructional funds
- Cynthia Rachel will look into these suggestions
- Jennifer Felton asked if parents or parent council members can help speed things along
- Cynthia Rachel will look into volunteer requirements; another option might be to hire temps during that time
- Christine Cole offered to help as she is familiar with barcoding

#### F. Parent/Student handbook

Argi opened up a parent/student handbook discussion:

- Na'Comi Berman mentioned that parents would like to know what the procedures are in regard to things like a vendor becoming a vendor, the process of a purchase order, and things of that nature
- Cynthia suggested reviewing the existing [Parent Manual](#) on the Sky Mountain website

- Note from Sarah; if you have suggestions for the parent manual please email Sarah Coyan [scoyan@ieminc.org](mailto:scoyan@ieminc.org) and she can work with the parent manual collaboration team to see about having that information added
- Na'Comi Berman mentioned that one concern is when one family can order something that another family can't order, paper and ink for instance
- Parents would like to see the guidelines on that type of issue
- Susan Clark mentioned that this can be about a certain families course and individualized learning path and what resources are necessary for each family's circumstance; orders need to make educational sense and support the learning of that individual student
- There are general guidelines and then there is ES discretion within those guidelines
- Na'Comi Berman is wondering if new ESs are following a guideline book and are maybe scared to make a mistake or order something they shouldn't
- Susan Clark responded that ESs do have advisors and that could be the case sometimes that a new ES might not be sure; families can always follow up with advisors or ask the ES to please double check with their advisor
- Cynthia Rachel suggested to be sure to let the ESs know specifically what an item is needed for, if the item/order is for something that might need further explanation for the person reviewing and approving the order (a specific project maybe)
- If something is ever denied, families can seek further understanding
- Danielle Kuhns received confirmation last year when a PO went through and that is not happening this year with her new ES and she would like to know why
  - That is something that is not required of the ESs, some might do this; if this is something you would like to receive, you can let your ES know

#### G.Communication board resource

Argi opened up a communication board discussion:

- Suggestion for a Facebook page with IEM involvement
- We are in the process of developing school specific Facebook groups

- The main source of information should always be the ES
- Cynthia Rachel reminded the board of things to keep in mind in regard to communication:
  - At any time if there is a majority of board members talking to one another or having discussions, that is considered a serial meeting and is not allowed
  - These types of conversations can't happen outside of the public meeting; there can't be any dialogue about school business between board members outside of the public meetings
  - Parent Council is a public board, conversations between board members related to Sky Mountain have to be available to the public
  - So, it is important to be careful and cautious in regard to communication within the board by members of the council
- Parent council question and concern about how parents are added to the listserv because some parents do not receive those email
- Cynthia Rachel advised for families to let their ESs or Sarah Coyan [scoyan@ieminc.org](mailto:scoyan@ieminc.org) know if they are not receiving listserv emails and they will be added to the group
- If a family does not use email, the ES needs to know that so they can relay information to them
- Parent council concern about parents maybe not understanding of being fully aware of the importance of information that comes out on the listserv
- Cynthia Rachel suggested adding the importance of listserv announcements as part of the intake call
  - Note from Sarah; this has been added to the intake call template and will be discussed with parents during the enrollment process moving forward

## **7. ACTION ITEMS**

Cynthia Rachel reviewed the correct protocol and proper verbiage for moving to approve action items, per a parent council member request from the previous meeting.

A. Motion to approve August 27, 2015 Meeting Minutes

**\*\*Na'Comi Berman moved to approve the August 27, 2015 Meeting Minutes, Allison Ujueta seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.\*\***

B. Motion to approve archive of obsolete instructional materials pursuant to Education Code 60510-60511

**\*\*Christina Thompson moved to approve the archive of obsolete instructional materials pursuant to Education Code 60510-60511, Na'Comi Berman seconded the motion. Following discussion as noted below, motion approved by majority vote.\*\***

- Danielle Kuhns does not understand why some of these items are being archived
- Cynthia Rachel gave some background information on these items:
  - Damaged
  - Mostly consumed
  - Surplus amount in resource center
  - No longer available resources to support the item
  - Not useable by families
- What happens to the archived materials?
  - This batch is going to goodwill
  - We will be developing a way to have a freebie table at resource center for future archive materials; this will be based on a policy
- Jennifer Felton asked, Is there a timeframe of when this might happen; we would rather see Sky Mountain families have access to archive materials first
  - Cynthia Rachel noted that archive of obsolete materials is allowed by Education code
  - In regard to timeline, for SM, probably December or January
  - This list is a list of individual copies that are not effectively useable as are

C. Motion to approve the updated Independent Study Policy

**\*\*Christina Thompson moved to approve the updated Independent Study Policy, Na'Comi Berman seconded the motion. Following discussion as noted below, motion approved by unanimous vote.\*\***

Cynthia Rachel addressed revised policy:



- The biggest change on this revised policy is that the ed. code changed the length of time a student agreement can be good for - previously it was one semester, now it is one year
- Also, page one item F use to say “after one missed assignment...” now says “after one missed meeting...” we wanted to be sure it was clear that a missed meeting would start a truancy discussion process, not a missed assignment - this clarifies the policy to be more in line with what it really means
- Item L, the Special Education department reviewed this part of the policy to be sure the information was clear
- Independent study roles - making sure parents are keeping track daily of student learning - the state of CA expects to see enrolled students with contemporaneous attendance being taken
  - In our school this is the paper role sheet, an “x” on a school calendar day means your student was engaged in learning
  - The auditors look for this type of daily attendance tracking

## **8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No future agenda items suggested during the meeting. Parent council members can email Sarah Coyan [scoyan@ieminc.org](mailto:scoyan@ieminc.org) or Argi Sayari [asayari@ieminc.org](mailto:asayari@ieminc.org) if they would like to add a discussion item to the December 17, 2015 meeting agenda.

Sarah will send out a reminder email when the next agenda is being built to see if there are any discussion items to add.

## **9. ADJOURN**

Jennifer Felton thanked the parent council members, IEM staff, and Sky Mountain staff and adjourned the meeting at 8:18pm.