

Sky Mountain Charter School Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Webex Teleconference or Lucerne Valley School District
8560 Aliento Road Lucerne Valley, CA. 92356
April, 12, 2012 1:00pm

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. INTRODUCTIONS/WELCOME/ROLE CALL

Shana Fisk; Sky Mountain Charter School Director: Welcomed and thanked the Sky Mountain Parent Council Members for taking the time to attend the meeting.

Attendees: Rocio Murillo, Karen Christopher, Trish Welham, Josephine Holbach, Margaret Kurtz, Abigail Hanson, Christina Shearholdt, Heidi Lynch, Danyale Dumont, Krista Williamson, Juliet Pailes, Sonia Giordani-Johnston, Lora Way, Shana Fisk, Susan Clark, Eric Schoffstall, Jamee Block, Sandra Barela, Erin Havrilesky, Sarah Coyan

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.

-Sonia Giordani-Johnston asked about the Charter renewal through Lucerne Valley School District; she was concerned about the financial state of that district. What would happen to our Charter in the instance that something happened with the Lucerne Valley District?

This will be addressed in the IEM report during presentation item 5C

5. PRESENTATION ITEMS

A. Jamee Block, WASC Report:

-It has been a rigorous past year working on WASC; SMCS team, students, and parents have all worked hard on the WASC renewal process.

-The WASC visiting committee came to visit at the end of February; the visit was a 4 day event.

-The WASC visiting committee met with various IEM staff, ESs, administrative team, parents, and students.

-During that visit the WASC visiting committee got to know our school as a whole, even more specifically our high school program.

-The WASC visiting committee focused on several aspects of the high school program like curriculum, organization, instruction, assessment and got to know our school inside and out.

-The WASC visiting committee has compiled a report based on their finding and they are submitting it to the Accreditation WASC board.

-The WASC visiting committee's recommendation for how long our renewal should be is included in that report; we should hear back in June in regard to what our accreditation renewal length is.

-During their visit, the WASC visiting committee, created a Power Point presentation that summarized their finding including areas to celebrate and areas to focus on for our school.

*** (The Power Point presentation, an 18 page document, was provided in hard copy via US postal mail and via email attachment for the Parent Council to view) ***

-The WASC visiting committee mentioned to the leadership team how impressed they were with our families; we really appreciate and want to thank the parents and students who took time to be involved with and participate in the WASC process so that the WASC visiting committee could really see what SMCS is about, which always comes back to the families, and it gave them the opportunity to interact with SMCS families.

-Notes on the discussion about the Power Point Presentation:

- The Power Point Presentation gives a brief overview of areas to celebrate and areas to focus on for Sky Mountain Charter School.
- Categories: organization, curriculum, instruction, assessment, accountability, and the school culture and support for student academic growth.
- The overview from the WASC visiting team is on par with what we as a school already knew and were working on.
- The WASC visiting team praised that all SMCS ESs go through a rigorous screening and training before being assigned to students. This is something that SMCS has worked hard on to get set up and constantly keep updated. We were excited that the WASC visiting team noticed that and praised us for it.
- An area for focus was to have more support and tutor options for math and science. This too was on par with what the SMCS WASC self study team had planned on focusing and improving on.
- It was nice to see that they saw the same type of growth and focus areas that that we saw as well.
- Focusing on the instruction section one of the things they wanted to celebrate with us was that we have made technology available to be used by our ESs and our students to enhance the instructional program (computers, iPads, and technology available through instructional funds).
- One area to focus on in the instruction category is to increase access for high school students to wet lab and to expand lab science resources. It was perfect that the WASC

visiting team saw that because that is one of the goals we had established during our self-study. We will be working on this over the next few years.

- A lot of the areas to celebrate are areas that we have worked on since our previous WASC visit; they could see that we have worked toward the goals and addressed those focus points.
- Based on the Power Point and based on their formal recommendation we have created an action plan, which depending on the length of our renewal will be a 3-5 year action plan to meet the needs on the areas of focus.
- All and all the WASC visit was a huge learning experience for all involved it was a great opportunity to share about our school, what we are proud of what we have accomplished in the five years we have been a school, and we really left the three day visit feeling like we are on the right track, and we are doing a great job. The WASC visiting committee had good feedback and good suggestions that we look forward to working toward.

B. Sandy Barela, Assessment Update

-This year we completed our STAR writing assessment in March; it went really well and we had a lot of positive feedback.

-We have had 2 sessions of our CAHSEE exam, our main session is always in February; this is when our 10th grade students are required to take the CAHSEE.

-In February we had 42 students take the CAHSEE, and 35 of those students passed; 26 of our 10th graders took the CAHSEE for the first time and 18 of those 26 students passed. This is very exciting.

-This year we secured Buckledown and Bridges test prep for our students; these resources give students the opportunity to experience test preparation and be prepared for testing.

-Buckledown has online prep tests to help students prepare for STAR testing.

-Bridges is for high school students and covers CAHSEE exam prep as well as STAR prep.

-STAR Testing starts on 4/17/12; we have 5 testing sites: 2 in LA County (one in El Monte and one in Burbank), 1 in Orange County, 1 in Riverside County, and 1 in San Bernardino County. The dates, times, exact locations, and directions can be found on the SMCS website on the assessment page <http://www.skymountaincs.org/assessment/index1.htm>.

-We will have speakers on the first day of testing, and a vendor fair on the second day of testing.

-In El Monte we have a speaker who is a classical historian and he will talk about using games to teach history and critical thinking skills, tools to become a historian, why historians are important, and how to use some of these philosophies to expand other subjects rather than just history.

-At the other sites we will have a representative from The Pina Reading Academy as the guest speaker. She will discuss strategies on how to improve reading comprehension, how to improve spelling, she will touching on dyslexia and how to recognize and help students who have dyslexia.

-These speakers will give parents tools for helping students with their schooling and we are really excited to have them visiting us at the testing sites.

-Several vendors have signed up for the vendor fair; this is very exciting and gives parents an opportunity to look at and experience curriculum while their students are testing.

***Rocio Murillo asked- can parents can know ahead of time what vendors will be there?**

Sandy Barela answered- The vendors will vary site to site; unfortunately, we do not have a list. There will be several vendors at each site. Also, we are in the process of securing vendors.

-We are looking forward to testing this year and the SMCS assessment coordinators have worked hard to provide a positive and safe environment for all the students and for the parents.

C. Susan Clark, IEM Report

-Charter Renewal; the renewal was truly amazing. We submitted our charter and our memos of understanding to the district. In a formal meeting it was a unanimous vote by the Lucerne Valley School District Board to approve our Charter and the supporting documents.

-The main thing the district wanted to say to us was that we are doing a great job and they are glad we are with them; it was a very positive moment for SMCS and the district.

-Susan Clark addressed the question about Lucerne Valley District's finances (from agenda section 4 Hearing of the Public): The district has struggled financially but we have no indication at all that something is going to happen to that district or that they won't be around to support our school. If in the event that did happen, which we do not foresee in the future at all, then we would become under San Bernardino County. Eric Schoffstall added that if in the event the district finds themselves in financial woes to the degree that the state would have to step in and take control of the district (this is called receivership), the district would not go away. The district would be under control of the state; at that point we would still be authorized by that unified school district and would remain under our term with the district for the remainder of the current renewal. Again, we do not foresee this happening.

-Alumni Survey; IEM sponsored an alumni survey for all graduates. This is a longitudinal study. The vision is to follow graduates in their years following graduation. A process to make the Alumni Survey the most valuable tool it can be is for us to obtain contact information for students; ESs will be asking 12th grade students for their personal email addresses, cell phone numbers, etc. so that we will have alumni contact information. The Alumni Survey is an important tool for the school to show alumni success. The state looks at STAR results and those are important but there are other measurements of success as well. The Alumni Survey

measures success after graduation; it shows that our alumni students become valued members of society, and happy people. This survey will be a strong support for a more rounded evaluation of our school. We want to spread the word about how important the survey is and encourage all SMCS students to be willing to participate in the Alumni Survey in the years to come. The results from last year's study will be posted to the school website soon.

-School Budgets; SMCS is publically funded by the state. We have talked before about deferrals by the state and how that creates a cash flow problem for schools all over California. This is the time of year that we budget for next year; we budget conservatively. As we budget and look forward at this time it looks like SMCS will be able to continue to support instruction funding without making cuts. SMCS is in a lot better financial state than many schools across California. We are pleased that we will be able to continue the instructional funding support to our students.

D. Sarah Coyan, May Parent Council Election Report

-Each member of the Parent Council serves a 2 year term. We have 9 members who are finishing their second term on the Sky Mountain Parent Council; those members are:

Rocio Murillo, Joelle Stout, Karen Christopher, Trish Welham, Josephine Holbach, Judith Claudi-Magnussen, Melissa Licudine, Margaret Kurtz, and Abigail Hanson.

-Thank you all for your time participating with Sky Mountain's parent council.

-We will be sending out a listserv notification on May 1st asking Sky Mountain parents who are interested in serving on the Parent Council to notify Sarah Coyan to have their names placed on the ballot for the 2012/13 school year. We will be sending the ballot out for a vote via One Call on a Google form in mid May. We will send out a listserv announcement welcoming the new members toward the end of May.

-The following members will continue on the Parent Council for next school year serving their second term:

Melissa Jenkins, Jennifer Felton, Debbie Mashburn, Christina Shearholdt, Heidi Lynch, Danyale Dumont, Krista Williamson, Juliet Pailes, Sonia Giordani-Johnston, and Lora Way.

-We look forward to working with you for another year.

***Rocio Morillo asked- When can a parent have his or her name placed back on the ballot to serve again on the Parent Council after finishing a second term? Answered by Sarah Coyan and confirmed by Eric Schoffstall that a parent can have his or her name placed on the ballot to serve another two year term after one year has passed since finishing a second term.*

E. Erin Havrilesky, Graduation Report

-Graduation is on May 23rd at 1:00 in Rancho Cucamonga.

- SMCS has 21 graduates this year.
- We had a phone planning meeting that included Lora Way from the Parent Council who is on the graduation subcommittee.
- This year we will have three student speakers.
- Each graduate will be introduced by their ES at the ceremony.
- Two SM graduates will be performing a song at the graduation ceremony.
- There will be a slideshow with new and old photographs that graduates have sent in to be included in the slideshow; music will be playing in the background.
- The graduation ceremony will be concluded with refreshments and photo opportunities.
- If anyone would like to volunteer to help with or would like to attend the graduation ceremony, please contact Sarah Coyan, who will connect you with Erin Havrilesky for more information.

6. ACTION ITEMS

A. Petty Cash Account-Graduation Needs

-SMCS has a petty cash account with monies earned from school fundraising; this account also includes proceeds from t-shirt sales a couple years ago and from smoothie sales at the test sites last year. We have had this account for about 4 years. The current balance in the petty cash account is \$2569.74; historically we have voted at the Spring parent council meeting to utilize some of those funds for graduation needs. Erin Havrilesky is projecting a need of \$650.00 for graduation; this will include the cost of refreshments, roses, updated decorations, a printed program, and balloons. We would like to request a vote by the council for approval to use \$650.00 from the petty cash account for graduation needs.

***Sonia Johnston asked for clarification purposes- This money will all come out of the petty cash account which has money earned from school fundraising, correct? Shana Fisk answered for clarification that yes, that is correct; the money will come out of the SMCS petty cash account that has monies from school fundraising.*

-SMCS Parent Council members voted yes by unanimous vote; \$650.00 has been approved for graduation needs.

B. Review the newly adopted 2013 Graduation Requirements for 2013 based on CDE changes due to AB1330

-Erin Havrilesky discussed the details of Assembly Bill 1330

-AB 1330 is in regard to career and technical education; it was passed recently and we received notification from CDE regarding the implementation of the provisions of this bill.

- Students will be given the option of replacing the ten required units of Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)/Foreign Language with ten units of Career and Technical Education (CTE) course work.
- Parents and students choosing this option are cautioned that the University of California and CSU system still require a-g VAPA and foreign language. Students choosing to replace VAPA/Foreign Language with a CTE course will not have met the entrance requirements to UC/CSU campuses.
- Sky Mountain ESs will be trained on this new option over the summer

***Questions from Sonia Johnston before voting on approval of AB 1330: What are some examples of what a career and technical education course might look like? Answered by Erin Havrilesky: Computer programming , fashion design, welding, website design, etc. Sonia Johnston clarified that she understands this offers a different genre of electives. Sonia Johnston asked: How will SM communicate this to students? Sonia suggested that SM provide a formal form for the student to review and sign so that a student does not misunderstand; Sonia believes there could be some confusion down the line that could get graduates into trouble. Erin Havrilesky answered: This would be implemented into the graduation requirements agreement which requires a parent signature. Also, this information will be in spring newsletter, and ESs will communicate this with parents and students.*

-SMCS Parent Council voted on the implementation of AB 1330. Yes, by Unanimous vote.

-SMCS will implement this option beginning with the new 2012/13 school year beginning in August.

7. ADJOURN

-Shana Fisk closing statements:

-If anyone on the parent council or if you know any SM parents who are willing to help at graduation please get in touch with Sarah Coyan skyparents@ieminc.org who will get you in touch with Erin H. We would appreciate the help.

-Thank you for calling into the meeting today.

Adjourn 1:43pm