

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

By GoTo Teleconference

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

January 21, 2016 at 6:00pm

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Jennifer Felton, SMCS Parent Council President, called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

### **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. Sarah Coyan took role:

**Attendees:** Jennifer Felton, Rebecca Sanchez, Sarah Bjorklund, Dina Adham, Christy Harker, Na'Comi Berman, Kimberly Ireland, Christina Thompson, Deanna Munroe

Jennifer Felton introduced meeting presenters:

- Lisa Voss; Accountability Coordinator
- Cherie Brown; Interdisciplinary Coordinator
- Burke Wallace; Director of Teacher Support Services

School and IEM representatives also in attendance:

- Dr. Jason Jones; Chief Administrative Officer
- Cynthia Rachel; Director of Education Support Services
- Argi Sayari; Sky Mountain Educational Liaison
- Brandy Anderson; Director of Curriculum and Guidance
- Jami-Lynn Riley; Guidance Coordinator
- Stephanie Gonzales; WASC Coordinator/Education Specialist
- Megan Kelly; SMCS Advisor
- Andrea Henderson; SMCS Advisor
- Kristi Henry; SMCS Advisor
- Sarah Gonzales; SMCS Advisor
- Serenity Greeno; SMCS Advisor

- 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. WASC; Lisa Voss

STAR testing and the existing California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) are no longer applicable so our former WASC goals and action plans that had to do with STAR and CAHSEE testing needed to be adjusted. SMCS has all new advisors, this is a fantastic team of advisors who have been involved with the necessary adjustments. The advisor team have worked together to come up with measureable outcomes, tasks, who is responsible for what, and to develop the new action plan that will last for the remainder of this year. There will be another meeting in May with Stephanie Gonzales, WASC Coordinator, and the leadership team to finalize the new action plan. Over the summer the WASC and SMCS Leadership Team will work together to develop the 2016/17 WASC goals and action plan. We had our WASC mid-cycle visit last spring, and we will have our next full WASC self-study two years from now. Everything with WASC is looking great.

Cynthia Rachel announced that Lisa Voss who has been the WASC Accountability Coordinator for the past few years is moving on to a new endeavor; this is her last day in the position. Thank you to Lisa Voss for the work she has done with WASC cycle over the past few years. We will miss Lisa in this capacity, she will be staying on as an ES for one of our schools.

##### B. LCAP; Lisa Voss

Everybody is in full swing of sending the LCAP funds; mostly coming out of the curriculum department and also the teacher services department. We have a lot more money left in tutoring and intervention services that has not been fully utilized yet. The curriculum department will be pushing for more ways that people can use tutoring and intervention services. We still have

money for MiFi devices for EL and low income students. At the end of the month there will be an advisory meeting for stakeholders, parents, ESs, administrators, and students to participate in that will look at how the money has been spent so far, look at funding updates for next year, and ways for the LCAP funds to be spent next year. This is important for Parent Council because we would love for you to be involved with this process. LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) Funding is called “*Local Control*” for a reason; we want input of all stakeholders. We do not want to create programs without a full team effort including parents, teachers, and administrators.

Cynthia Rachel announced that for the SMCS LCAP meeting, a parent listserv went out last week. The meeting will be on February 3, 2016 at 11:30am. If you are able to attend, there is a registration link included on the listserv announcement. We urge parents to attend and be a part of the LCAP meeting.

#### C. Upcoming Parent Night; Cherie Brown

We are planning an in person parent night on March 24, 2016 at 7:00pm at the New Hope Church in El Monte; a save the date parent listserv will be going out soon with all of the information. The theme for the parent night is “Setting Personalized Learning Goals for your Students.” We would love to have parents from our parent council share some ways they set goals for their students. If any parent council members are interested in speaking or presenting at the parent night please contact Cherie Brown [cbrown@ieminc.org](mailto:cbrown@ieminc.org) or Sarah Coyan [scoyan@ieminc.org](mailto:scoyan@ieminc.org).

#### D. Educator Effectiveness Funding Proposal; Burke Wallace

Burke provided some background information on the Educator Effectiveness Funding. The CDE and California state government have passed this Educator Effectiveness Funding as a one time educator effectiveness funding for each school in CA. The document shows the SMCS formula; SMCS will receive a one time lump some of \$142,986.00. The criteria for this is two fold; first, it must be presented to the school's governing board, which we are doing at this meeting. Next, it must be presented to the school's governing board as an action item to be voted on for approval, which will take place at the next meeting in March. We are anxious to get the money approved so we can begin spending it on opportunities to improve teacher performance. The document sent to the parent council has detailed information for the parent council to review on how the money is planned to be spent. The FAQ link shows ways the money is allowed to be spent. Over the past month, Burke has been working with employees to determine what types of services they are interested in and will help them grow as better ESs to serve SMCS students. Burke broke down ESs ideas and suggestions into the amounts seen on the document. The document

shows the different criterias for the money to be spent. Criteria 1 is designated for *Beginning Teacher and Administrative Support* and allotted \$60,000.00; criteria 1 includes CPACE (admin credential) test & prep classes, BTSA (new teacher) induction program, Tier 2 admin credential induction program, and Charter Business Officer Training Program (CSDC). Criteria 2 is designated for *Professional Development/Coaching for Teachers Needing Support/Improvement* and allotted \$10,000.00; criteria 2 includes Learning Record Observers and Instructional Coaching Resources. Criteria 3 is designated for *Professional Development for teachers/admin Aligned to Content Standards* and allotted \$35,000.00; criteria 3 includes Highly Qualified Teacher stipends (VPSS & CSET), Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certification, CSET prep classes/resources, and Conferences related to content/standards. Criteria 4 is designated for *Educator Quality and Effectiveness to Support Learning* and allotted \$37,986.00; criteria 4 includes Google Tech Summit, School-wide professional development book, Administrative retreat, and Conferences. We have 3 years to spend the money, starting this year. Once we have parent council approval we will begin spending this money until the money is gone, at which point we will send a report to CDE on how we spent the money to increase educator effectiveness based on this criteria.

If there are any questions that come about this proposal please feel free to talk to your ES, email Burke Wallace [bwallace@ieminc.org](mailto:bwallace@ieminc.org), or contact Cynthia Rachel [crachel@ieminc.org](mailto:crachel@ieminc.org).

## **6. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### A. High end materials policy

What is the policy on high end materials and why does it exist? Argi Sayari explained that we are not able to pay for more than the "basic" version of a product. For instance, a basic microscope as opposed to a high end, expensive microscope. This has always been an IEM policy and has to do with being good stewards of the public funds and allowing parents to educate their children without getting us into questionable areas with the auditor.

Dina Adham mentioned that there are quite a few moms in chat rooms expressing frustration about this. Dina asked for an explanation as to why, if a higher quality product will improve learning, can't families purchase that product if there is no legal reason that they can't? Dina also mentioned that it seems as though other Charter Schools are more lenient in regard to high end materials. Dina would like to know why SMCS families should be held to the same standard as the public school standard when the point of homeschooling is to not be subject to that standard?

Cynthia Rachel responded; regardless of where our children are educated, we are a public school. As an independent study school we cannot provide a service that a student in a traditional school

couldn't have access to as well. The main thing in this case, is that items of value that might appear as gifted or used to advance something for the entire family or provide something beyond basic instruction, that can be an audit finding. A lot of charter schools have been closed for financial issues and some of those issues are in regard to this type of spending. This is somewhat of a training piece; if there is a specific item that a family would like to purchase that gets kicked back as not allowed, and there is a justification behind that request, the family can work with the ES and advisor for clarification. We need to be sure that the requested item is in align with where the child is at and what he or she needs to complete that academic goal or task. Musical instruments for example, we need to be sure that we purchase a basic quality instrument that the child could learn the skill on. We are not able to buy top of the line materials, we can only purchase materials that the students need to learn and are in line with educational goals. Please stress to parents who have concerns about this that if there is something they feel is valid, they can reach out and ask their ES to work with their advisor to see if it's something that can be approved or to see if we can help find something similar that can be approved.

Dina Adham mentioned one of the big issues seems to be over colored pencils. There is a certain high end brand of colored pencils that keep getting denied.

Cynthia Rachel responded; in regard to colored pencils, for example, an elementary student vs. an advanced high school student taking an art class; there would be a different need and justification for what colored pencils or materials to purchase that would be appropriate and align with the specific learning goals and developmental needs needs of that student.

Brandy Anderson added that we rely on the teachers to be the professional judges on what materials are needed for educational activities students are working on. The next layer is the advisors, beyond that there is also Katrin Bath-Teal who checks POs for all 3 IEM schools, and beyond that Brandy is also available. Families can request a second opinion with justification on a materials or curriculum denial. We do have a lot of new ESs at SMCS and they are still learning what they can and can't order; this is a learning process for all involved. Families can feel free to seek a second opinion; we support you. We are an out of the box school, we know that families are creative but we still need to stay in compliance.

Ed Code in regard to high end materials: No a.d.a. from independent study may be claimed by a district if it has provided any funds or other things of value to the student or his or her parent, guardian, or caregiver that the district does not provide to students who attend regular classes (EC Section 51747.3[a]).

## B. Project based learning groups

Request to discuss implementing parent lead project-based learning groups in which students across grades could meet to learn about, explore, and discuss topics of shared interest while answering a "big question" or solving a relevant problem.

These groups would provide opportunities for parents to share resources, both physical and intellectual. It would create opportunities for students to work together and would be an opportunity for cross-curricular learning around a high interest topic.

For example: Arduino: what is it anyway? This group might work together to learn about Arduino, program, read, share resources, etc. depending on parent interest, cross curricular standards could be documented in a variety of ways. I.e., reading informational texts, writing, math...

Possible topics:

*Presidential Election 2016: How does it work?*

- Mock elections
- Media analysis
- International politics
- History of the electoral college
- What if I ran for president?
- How do other countries do it?
- What is Democratic Republic?

*Global Warming, or Not?*

- What does science say?
- What can we do?
- How does my city recycle?
- What about this drought?

Brandy Anderson commented on this discussion. SMCS is by nature a community based school. SMCS teachers are organized regionally and come together every month for Area Facilitator (AF) collaboration meetings; One of the teachers is the Area Facilitator . These meetings are designed for teachers who live geographically close to each other to meet in person at a mutually agreed upon location. Network support systems are developed in these AF groups. These teachers have email groups as well as in person meetings to share and collaborate on ideas for learning; this helps with community connections to support families. Brandy encourages parents to reach out to ESs for support in making connections with other SMCS families. Park Days for instance; this is a way to build connections within the SMCS community. An entire day was recently dedicated to Goldrush studies within one of the networking communities that Brandy's family is a part of; the idea was born from a park day discussion. Parents can reach out to their ES to help them make these connections with other families.

Cynthia Rachel suggest to let this idea start as a local community building; we can see what this grows into and look at how we can expand it. These type of activities can be local and not opened up to the whole school to begin making these connections.

### C. Honors courses weighting on transcripts

Request to discuss whether or not honors courses are weighted on transcripts.

Jami-Lynn Riley addressed this question. Yes SMCS does offer a weighted GPA for honors and AP courses; this must be reviewed by the ES, advisor, and Jami-Lynn to determine if the rigor of the class meets the requirements for an honors course. It is important to keep in mind that even if we determine the class as an honors class and give that designation on the transcript based on the rigor, that does not mean a college will accept it as such. We weight GPAs on a 5.0 scale vs. a 4.0 scale. The answer gets a little complicated when we look at the individual colleges where the student may be interested in applying. Many colleges will accept the weighted GPA, but when they evaluate students against their peers they strip down the GPA and review using an unweighted scale. The UCOP grants courses a-g and approves honors and AP designations. We can weight a rigorous course as "honors" for our transcript, but if the student is applying to UCLA and the UCOP didn't accept this course as "honors" it won't matter what our transcript says. In addition, the UC GPA doesn't count the freshman year, so honors/AP courses won't affect the GPA in 9th grade. Also the UC limits the number of honor points to 4 courses, with no more than 2 courses from 10th grade. If we are talking about a private college, for example, the parent would need to research the individual school's requirements.

Chat box question: Are any a-g courses AP courses?

Jami-Lynn responded that yes, SMCS does offer quite a few different a-g AP course options. Jami-Lynn shared a link for parents to review: <https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist#/list/details/4093/>

Feel free to email Jami-Lynn if any questions come up [jriley@ieminc.org](mailto:jriley@ieminc.org).

### D. Vendor approval follow up process

Does vendor relations have a process for following up when it's been awhile since the approval packet goes out and the vendor has not yet sent it back? Maybe to see if the prospective vendor has any questions about the packet itself or if they received it?

John Wilberger addressed this question. Yes, ESs can see every step of the process in the database in regard to vendor approval. ESs can see when the vendor agreement is sent out, when it comes back, when there is educational approval. There is an educational side approval and a business side approval; this is all viewable to ESs.

John also shared some exciting news; the largest hangup that we have seen over the years in regard to vendor approvals is the fingerprinting component. We have to make sure that business vendors working with our students are safe; they must clear through Department of Justice (DOJ). There have been some recent changes to DOJ for vendors who are sole proprietors, meaning that have no employees. Single entity or sole proprietor vendors like tutors or music instructors for example, will have a new process beginning in February for DOJ. The fingerprinting for these single entity business vendors will be run internally through the school. Our custodian of records in the HR department will now be able to be involved with those records which should immensely speed up the vendor approval process for these types of single entity business vendors. Vendors in this category who may have waited on the DOJ for maybe up to 4-6 months should now be able to have that clearance with that component of the fingerprinting likely within one week.

Chat Box question; any sole proprietor who has been stuck or held up to this point waiting for the DOJ clearance, will the new process help speed up their approval? Will they need to contact Vendor Relations to find out what to do now, or will Vendor Relations be reaching out to those vendors?

John suggested those vendors reach out to us because we will not know which ones are stuck in that process waiting in the que.

Na'Comi Berman asked if when parents go online to the vendor request link; is there another way parents should do that other than the online link, like a paper form maybe?

John responded; we have been getting a lot of prospective vendors lately that contact us directly to inquire about becoming vendors. We use to have a process in place that vendors could not receive a vendor agreement packet from us unless they had been requested by an active family or ES. There is an online vendor application now; parents really should not be filling out this form because there are questions that the vendors need to answer. Johns shared the link to the Vendor Request Form: Become a Vendor [https://docs.google.com/a/ieminc.org/forms/d/1Z-mFf2McwIjH3hPBkG2XzXpnpIDxGBoVJb0\\_Lv9IAbo/viewform?c=0&w=1](https://docs.google.com/a/ieminc.org/forms/d/1Z-mFf2McwIjH3hPBkG2XzXpnpIDxGBoVJb0_Lv9IAbo/viewform?c=0&w=1) to show the form for prospective vendors to fill out directly; this helps to speed up the process.

Cynthia Rachel added that for parents who want to have a new vendor added, they can share this link with the vendor to fill out for getting the process started.

## **7. ACTION ITEMS**

### A. Motion to approve October 15, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Did not have a quorum for a vote; action item tabled for next meeting.

## **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) **by March 1, 2016** if they would like to add a discussion item to the March 10, 2016 meeting agenda.

## **9. ADJOURN**

Jennifer Felton thanked the parent council members, IEM staff, and Sky Mountain staff and adjourned the meeting at 6:59pm.