

Douglas County School District
Lake Schools' Study Group Board Advisory Committee
Whittell High School
Tuesday, October 21, 2014
4:30 p.m.

Minutes
Approved
December 15, 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Facilitator:
Dr. McMillan

Committee Members:
Greg Felton
Cathy Johnson
Kathy Kixmiller
Stacy Noyes (Not Present)
Brian Rippet
Phil Sorensen
Konnie Susich

Committee Support:
Ross Chichester (Not Present)
Cindy Trigg
Nancy Cauley
Rommy Cronin
Crespin Esquivel

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. McMillan called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
Ms. Susich moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mr. Felton.
Motion carried 6/0.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2014

Mr. Felton moved to adopt the minutes, seconded by Mr. Sorensen.
Motion carried 6/0.

MINUTES OF MEETING ON OCTOBER 7, 2014

Mr. Felton moved to adopt the minutes, seconded by Mr. Sorensen.
Motion carried 6/0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Simon Norton gave two observations: 1. The Committee adopted a meeting structure that seems extremely formal, rigid, bureaucratic, and parliamentary. He encouraged the Committee to think about whether that structure inhibits the free flow of ideas, conversation, and interplay among members of the Committee and perhaps the public. He is not suggesting the Committee change it, but to look for opportunities to let conversations flow. 2. There seemed to be some tension and negativity expressed in some comments last time. When this tone is expressed, he would encourage the facilitator to call people on it and address it. It doesn't seem to be in the spirit of creating a positive brainstorming approach to finding some solutions.

WORK SESSION REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

Mr. Felton: Why DCSD families choose other schools:

Some families are back in DCSD because a local school closed. We are trying to take advantage of those. There are more people to talk with, so we will have something more conclusive next meeting.

Some observations so far:

- People have expressed this is a very personal decision, so there is no formula or pattern yet.
- There is limited information out there so now is a good opportunity to correct bad impressions.
- Individuals involved in the schools have a huge impact on the decisions of families. We need to make sure we are firing on all cylinders and everybody realizes they are representing the schools we have here.
- There is an opportunity for us to have a structured approach to welcoming families when they walk into either school. The opportunity can be fulfilled potentially by a group of students and parents.
- We need to recognize that whatever we put into place formally, there is still an informal network that goes on. We need to take care of both channels, making sure accurate information is getting out there.

Mr. Felton reporting for Ms. Noyes: Why DCSD families are choosing other schools:

Ms. Noyes talked to Directors and Assistant Directors at 4 preschools and asked the following questions: What are your impressions of Zephyr Cove Elementary School? Do you recommend Zephyr Cove to the parents of the graduating Kindergarteners? If Zephyr Cove could make immediate improvements what would they be? Would they be open to Zephyr Cove marketing to the parents of pre-Kindergarteners?

The directors' comments were:

- The small size of ZCES is a clear advantage. It feels intimate and private.
- Stay away from over-theming like LTUSD elementary schools. If you pursue a theme too exclusively and too thoroughly, you end up with cliques of parents, which is not necessarily healthy.
- ZCES does a better job of integrating different ethnicities than the California side does.
- Recognition of individual students and focusing on individual needs are other benefits of a small school.
- The first impression is not always friendly when people walk in the door.
- Learning needs to emulate play more frequently.
- It is hard to promote ZCES over CA schools due to existing perceptions and glad we are working on it.
- They would like to see better communication on how to prepare students to integrate into our schools.
- The feedback on middle school is that 7-12 structure scares some parents away, but Ms. Noyes has had positive feedback and thinks this may just be a marketing issue.
- All the preschools are very open to marketing to the parents, and we need to take advantage of it.
- There is a large group of 3 year olds living in DCSD, which would potentially increase our enrollment.
- There is an effort to pull some grant funding into Nevada. We need to find out how we can further it.
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Ms. Noyes recommends that we market our schools to the preschools and have an orientation process for each school. She also suggested looking into grant writing, continuing to monitor state funding, and communicating to parents on the plan that we have.

The Committee discussed the number of students in ZCES Kindergarten class this year compared to the Nevada law on 25 students. Ms. Cronin stated when the cap exceeded 25, guidance was sought from the Department of Education. In consultation with Dale Erquiaga the Nevada Superintendent, the plan of corrective action for ZCES was to ask for this year only a waiver to provide an instructional aide. It will be re-evaluated in the future as we look at enrollment. For this year, the waiver was granted from Dale Erquiaga's office.

Ms. Kixmiller: 21st century learners, 1:1, and Community based learning:

21st century teaching and learning is a curriculum direction to create graduates who have skills to be successful in the 21st century workforce. Since we are already in the 21st century and we are a bit behind. Nevada in general is behind, not just Douglas County. 21st century learning focuses on reading, writing, and arithmetic. We also want to incorporate life and career skills, information media, and the 4 C's of critical thinking, collaboration, communication and creativity.

UNR has a 21st pathways program fusing the 3 R's with the 4 C's. The UNR movement is attempting to mesh our core standards, along with the 21st century learning skills and themes such as global awareness, financial, economic, business, entrepreneurship, civic literacy and health literacy. It is preparing students to become well informed and productive citizens in a global economy.

WCSD has a few schools beginning the process but no full school implementation yet. If we choose to go in this direction, Whittell would be setting the standards for Northern Nevada.

Similarities found among exemplar schools across the country included the 4 C's in their mission with global connections. Many included technology especially the 1:1 programs, career pathways, community involvement and a senior project which included internship and collaboration within the community.

1:1 learning is a component of 21st century learning; it's a change in delivery, not just \$300 pencils. 1:1 doesn't mean that everybody has to do 100% on the computer. The goal is 35% use of technology blended with other activities.

The 21st century learning skills, the 1:1 program and **Community based learning** all are meshed together. They go hand in hand. Community based learning helps our students acquire 21st century skills by involving the community in their education, mainly through career explorations. The community based learning schools focused on career pathways, did job shadowing, internships, capstone community connections related to senior projects, career days, company tours and community service. The 4-day week at Whittell lends itself to developing these relationships within the community, doing internships and job shadowing.

Dr. McMillan: 4-day week and consolidation of Kingsbury MS:

The 4-day school week and the consolidation of Kingsbury Middle School information was emailed to the committee and will be made available to the public if requested. This is just background information.

Mr. Rippet contacted the former administrator of KMS about the #1 ranking for the middle school. The #1 ranking for the middle school in 2006-2007 for Kingsbury was based on attendance data and CRT scores.

Ms. Johnson: Global Opportunities for GWHS students:

Relevant to the technology grant is how to use the technology. E-learning is not simply online courses or online programs. E-learning is using multimedia technology and the internet to improve the quality of

education using all resources, exchanging ideas and collaborating among students and teachers. It can include online courses and programs blended with classroom activities. Flipped classrooms is one concept where students see a lecture class on their own time at home then come to class engaging in discussions with the teacher and other students. Other concepts are video based classes, virtual field trips, and interactive textbooks.

STHS recently started offering extensive online programs to take such as Chinese. Students can take full time programs available online which are self-paced. They receive dual credit from CA universities based on the A-G requirements. Students have global connections to others in the world. They are very pro device and encourage students to use them in class as part of the curriculum. Whittell students could be involved in single global opportunities via annual events or trips and leadership days to broaden the students' horizons.

Surveying the students re: course offerings:

Mr. Sorensen stated Whittell has a student issues committee who could explain to students what we are doing, have them ask questions to determine the questionnaire that would be presented to the student body.

Ms. Kixmiller: Dual Credit at Whittell and Community Colleges:

The jumpstart program was talked about at GWHS last year but several issues came into play.

- The closest community college is in California but students can only earn 6 credits from an out of state college per Nevada legislation. Douglas HS students can leave school and go to WNC and get back for the rest of their day. More dual credits earned in CA would greatly help the Whittell students.
- Teachers at Whittell who have a master's degree in the content area could teach the WNC courses on the Whittell campus. A master's in Education does not qualify them.
- Additional issues were a financial question with PERS and who would pay the teachers.
- A master schedule issue of offering courses within the school day would take that teacher out of the 9-12 mix. Before and after school is not an option due to transportation issues.
- Calendar scheduling was also an issue due to WNC starting three weeks later than our school.

Mr. Sorensen: Peer Teaching

Peer teaching is for students who are interested in exploring teaching as a possible career. There is a difference between peer teaching and peer learning. Peer learning is students working in a group setting also known as cooperative learning where students help each other. In peer teaching a junior or senior would be coupled with a teacher and do research, put together lessons and go to the elementary school and teach lessons there. It encourages a deeper understanding of our academic standards. Benefits include:

- It does not require a huge increase in the number of teaching sections on the master schedule.
- Students get more one on one interaction with both the high school and elementary teachers.
- We may be underutilizing resources and assets in our own classrooms.
- The Diamond Peer Teacher (Temple University) talks about the skills peer teachers acquire.
- When you look at standards, the peer teaching model involves students in higher level learning.
- It is community building between the two schools.

Accreditation Purpose and Direction:

Whittell administration, staff and students are almost done with this section of the accreditation process and

will be reporting to the Committee in December.

Ms. Kixmiller: Successful 7-12 schools

A sampling of Nevada 7-12 schools' ratings from the 2013-2014 school year was used. Whittell was a 4 star high school and a 5 star middle school. Three stars mean average and 2 stars mean the state will be getting involved to improve the school. Wells, Carlin and Jackpot [all K-12 combined schools] had 3 star rankings. It is an observation, without data to confirm, that K-12 schools did not rank higher than average.

The Bev Ducey report researched successful schools throughout the country. Telluride (a 7-12 Colorado school) was referenced as ranking 158 in the nation with 215 students, comparable to Whittell's 206 students. They have 20 full time and 7 part-time teachers with an 11:1 student/teacher ratio. Whittell has 14 full time and 3 part-time teachers for about 13:1 student/teacher ratio. When looking at our future, we are at a good staffing number right now. But if cuts are made, the programs do not work anymore and new programs cannot be developed.

Scope of our work

Mr. Rippet stated the enrollment for grades at the lake are listed and do not show Whittell dropping below 180 students in the next 6-7 years, assuming all of those students stay. With the economic development going on, planning for a smaller school should not be a big part of the Committee's work. We should define what a larger school would mean. If we get to AAA level athletic-wise (600 students), that is a different program. On the smaller side, if we go below 100, half of our current size, then we need to look at different options. We could not afford 14 full time plus part time teachers. As Ms. Kixmiller stated, we need to make plans with the students we have, but projections were fewer than that. The way the District works is staff is based on projections, rather than actuality. He suggests a range be looked at that would determine our staffing needs vs. a staffing formula. We need to know our staffing numbers to determine what programs we can have to promote them to the preschools, especially when the three year old bubble gets here.

Empowerment School

Empowerment School status for Whittell HS was a critical piece for getting waivers for some state/district regulations that did not work for a small, rural school like Whittell. Dr. McMillan will research the status.

Open Meeting Format for the Study Group:

The Committee feels the open meeting format is getting in the way of the process and would like the format to be re-visited. The Committee feels the Board is bound by Nevada open meeting laws, but the Committee is just an advisory group. Dr. McMillan addressed that the Committee even as advisory must follow the open meeting laws of Nevada. Ms. Cronin agreed. Ms. Trigg confirmed that when the Board designates a subcommittee, it has to be an open meeting, even if there are three members and not a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carol Chaplin, a parent, recommends time for public comment after each report. Empowerment status is important, it does give waivers, and it doesn't have to do with financial reasons and disagreed with Mr. Esquivel that from a parent standpoint it was positive and from the teachers' perspective, it gave them tools. Ms. Chaplin expressed she was sorry that the Superintendent was not in attendance. The committee was thanked for talking about quick wins. Graduated students need to be talked to about gaps in their college preparation to help current students. College prep needs to be talked about. SAT and ACT scores are really important. Ms. Chaplin thanked the Committee for the amount of work they are doing.

Stella Roper, a parent, stated that she was disappointed that a waiver for ZCES Kindergarten was asked for instead of more staff. Comments have been made that California has leadership at the top, and a Board that supports their leadership by looking at how they do the best. That is not felt here. A suggestion was made to look at the class size as a huge factor to drawing people, getting students to test higher and to enjoy education more. Also consider how to feel supported by the District and the Board.

Kelly Krolicki, a parent, relayed that Whittell's Empowerment status is a great tool that addresses many issues. It allowed the waiver for the Four Day Week, which addressed the problem of student athletes missing an average of 36 class periods per year due to events and travel. She stated over 80% of our students participate in 1 sport, 60% participate in 2 sports and 45% participate in 3 sports. Activities are part of GWHS's culture. It has the motto that everyone who wants to play, can play. We believe that it enhances a student's experience in high school; it builds confidence and creates great leaders and team players. She feels there is no correlation between academics and the 4-day week; it does not increase nor decrease academic scores. Being an Empowered school in Nevada is critical for Whittell. The Site Accountability Committee made up of many stakeholders can monitor the plan so it does not get lost with a change in administration.

PLANNING FOR NEXT MEETING

The Committee was asked to start thinking about the pros and cons of each topic, for example, the MOU with LTUSD and the IB program. By doing the pros and cons of each issue, they should fall into the three scenarios the Board has asked the Committee to study.

Ms. Susich stated that when public comment is called for, the comment does not make sense because too much time has passed. A suggestion was made that there be public comment after each presentation. Mr. Felton stated his concern that we are not tapping the public's knowledge.

Mr. Sorensen stated he was curious about the Telluride middle and high school and would like to know what classes they offer and how does the part time staffing work. He offered to work on the topic.

One of the tasks for next time is to start thinking about what is the optimal class size. What would be too high and at what point is it too low, knowing that some critical, higher level courses must be offered.

The facilities report to be reviewed does not have the valley school information because it is not relevant to the discussion. This is a 2010 report by a Board-hired company that has projections on enrollment of the schools

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. McMillan called for a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Susich moved to adjourn along with Mr. Sorensen, seconded by Mr. Felton at 6:35pm.

Motion carried 6/0.

Submitted by,



Dr. Nancy McMillan, Facilitator
Lake Schools' Study Group