

MINUTES
9/29/14 SITE COUNCIL MEETING

In attendance: Ray Aponte, Lauren Lewis, Sharon Rush, Joan Pearson, Colleen Aho, Teto Wilson, Isaiah Brown, Cynthia Simmons, Sharon White, Sherri Boone, Jocelyn Cruz-Mestizo, Brandon Castro, and Karen Holly.

Introductions – several new members.

Reviewed agenda: Would like to know how Site Council is formed (By-Laws attached).
 Would like to discuss parking lot again in future meeting.

Welcome (Ray Aponte):

He's all about building relationships. Need to get those in place to make curriculum move forward. That's his theme for 1st month.

Has a theme for every month. October is anti-bullying month so that will be our theme. We have a production of "Stars & Stripes" performance by Mixed Blood Theater coming to South for our 2nd and 3rd hour social studies classes on October 9th. It's an anti-bullying performance sponsored by the Hennepin County Attorney's office so it's at no cost to us.

November will be a different theme and so on.

Ray continues to drop into classrooms. 99.9% of our students are getting to class on time. Learning is taking place.

Goal: What is our focus? Ray wants students, staff and parents all to be able to respond to that question.

Our enrollment is at 1,793. Our enrollment number is up to he's asked for more support in chemistry (some classes are at 38 students), bi-lingual aides (Spanish and Somali so they don't continue to be called out of classes to interpret), and some special ed help because those numbers are up as well (we need to stay in compliance). He has asked that the district close down enrollment unless a student is in our attendance area.

It was asked how other class size numbers compare. Only honors geometry is a little higher but that lowers the other class sizes where those students need the more focused support. It was also mentioned that pre-cal numbers are high but a full class load is 35 and those classes are within that range.

Ray discussed how class numbers vary because we've chosen to use our teaching staff in different ways (i.e. writing center, math lab, etc) and that changes classroom numbers.

The math lab opened this past Monday. It was asked why we don't have a science lab or language lab since we have math and writing. Mr. Aponte is working the our world language teachers and the South High Foundation to secure funding for computers for on-line web based support for languages.

The district is working on a new financial formula for next year's budget figures. That could help South since we have such diversity. This new formula would attach funding per students' services.

The new weight room is coming along and looks great. We may have a little too much furniture but we can work with that. Ray will be up there Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 until 8 to support girls sports.

Our new band teacher started Monday – Eric Sayre. He has a history here and he does a lot with underprivileged kids throughout the world. He'll be a good fit for South.

It was mentioned the soccer practice fields are at Lake Nokomis for girls and Bossen for boys. Can we look at renting the space at Bossen for both teams next year?

We are working on a grand plan for athletics and our stadium space. Our ultimate goal would be to shut down 31st and take over the space currently occupied by homes just south of Lake Street and expand the entire area for sports. The Foundation is currently selling bricks as a fundraiser and we have been working with those parties involved to try and make this happen. If we can't get the entire plan, we are hoping to at least update our current football field/track and get lights.

It was asked what ever happened to the School Board and coming out last year to look at the music space. We believe that was part of a district-wide review to expand an arts school. At this point, we are confined to the space we have. We are trying to increase the size of the theater work space behind the stage though.

The main office move to the front of the building that was proposed during the 2013/2014 school year is tabled. It is a capital expense and low priority on the district's budget line. Would still be a nice idea though to increase security and better serve families.

We still would like better signage. It is \$1,300.00 to put paws on the floor directing visitors to different locations. May be a good grant request from the Foundation to cover the cost. Nothing can be done until next summer anyhow since the floors are already sealed for the year.

It was asked if it would be helpful to hand out floor plans or laminate individual floor plans to direct people to specific areas (i.e. main office, media center). Maybe directions to specific areas could be put up on the bulletin board by the welcome desk to make it easier for visitors. Ray is concerned about safety. Let him think about this one.

Student Council Update:

Goal this year – raise funds, get students involved, and get a variety of students.

The sold 200+ tickets for Homecoming.

Community Service Project – their Blood Drives (had one in August and have another coming up in October).

They want more people applying to be on the student council but have made the application process harder to get quality representatives (application attached). Now need to do a 500 word essay.

They have already had a city-wide student council meeting where they met with other MPS student councils. They discussed the racial gap and grad requirements (Phy Ed and Health). They had a couple guest speakers (Michael Walker – leader from Black Male Success and Mike Lynch – teaching and learning). They have three reps on the city-wide council and one on the Hennepin County Division.

Our blood drives ranked #1 last year, which earned us t-shirts. As long as we stay #1, we'll continue to get shirts.

We received recognition last year for Outstanding Student Council of the Year and last year's student council president received a \$2,000.00 scholarship.

Upcoming events: Winter Olympics, Sweetheart Dance and selling of carnations.

They currently have 17 members but would like to see that grow to around 60. They are restructuring (used to have committees for dances, P/R and community but no longer feel they need a dance committee).

SIP/FIP Updates:

We are working on updating the SIP right now. Ray has asked math and English department for updates. Karen has already updated dates and names. It needs to be submitted in October.

Sharon passed out the FIP (Family Involvement Plan – copy attached). She asked for updates from the parents at the Site council meeting. Will put the version attached up on the website.

PUSH: They held their first meeting September 15th. Had about 80 people in attendance. It was a meet and greet with Ray. He spoke to them about his plan and vision (his monthly themes).

They handed out a survey about PUSH and the topics they discuss. They've had about 20 returned at this point and hope for more.

They are actively recruiting for board/leadership team.

There will be no October meeting since there are so many other events and meetings taking place that second week of October.

Colleen Aho is the secretary and feels they've gotten good feedback so far from the survey (see attached). She feels parents aren't as informed as we thought. PUSH serves as a place to get basic information. They have a diverse group but feel there may be some translation issues. Would like to discuss ways to get communication for all – maybe have students translate for community service hours.

They would like to have an anti-bullying discussion again this year. Was well received last year.

They would like some good, solid topics and will then promote them.

They feel some believe PUSH's focus is fundraising, which it is not.

It was discussed about all the groups the school has to offer and how parents don't know about all these different student groups. Maybe if UNIDOS, Link Crew or student council students could help interpret during PUSH meetings, that might help promote these groups and let parents know what's out there.

Other options to promote student groups would be to connect them with the athletic open house at the beginning of the school year. It could showcase ALL activities, not just sports.

Equity: Ray's taken on equity, as an educator, is "Equity by design". The example he used was how several years ago, only students classified as lower income were offered breakfast in the morning. Students wouldn't participate because they didn't want that label put on them. Now the district offers breakfast to all students.

As Ray looks at programs, he used data to create equity by design. "How does it affect children?" is what drives our work.

Future Agenda Items:

- Parking lot

- By-laws

- Work around equity (is there an equity committee?)