



OCEAN AIR SCHOOL

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Mr. Ryan Stanley, Principal

SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL MINUTES
April 23, 2012

Members Present: Mike Davis, Minnie DeVico, Karen Holty, Ryan Stanley, Courtney Campbell, Mario Manzano, Matthew Marlowe, Sajani Patel

I. Call to Order 2:50pm

II. Review & Approval of Minutes of 4/23/12

Move to approve: Mario Manzano Second: Courtney Campbell All in favor, with a mention from Matt Marlowe to post the council minutes on the website. Karen will post.

III. New & Views

Open House – Many thanks to all from Ryan, for a very successful Open House! This year we showcased the ESC classes more and it was very meaningful for the families. We received lots of great feedback from the families, staff and students. Mario – This was the best Open House he has ever seen at any school! Sajani – It was very much a “WOW” Open House. Minnie – Yes, it was a “WOW” and all the students really loved seeing all the artwork in the MUR. Courtney – It was amazing to see artwork from each and every student on display, so that every child knew they had something in the MUR. Mario – The MUR display was amazing; like a museum! Ryan – The addition of the MUR display and other events going on in other ESC rooms and on campus made the flow of the evening better; teachers liked it because families had other things to look at and didn’t crowd into the classrooms for the entire night. The food trucks were a great addition, we just need more next time.

DMSEF – Ryan shared that the Foundation has raised \$860,000 to date; last year we raised \$1.2 million at this time of year. Ryan explained how the funds are distributed between the 8 schools in our district. The school district will pay for 3.5 ESC positions and the Foundation raises funds for the rest. Filling these ESC positions at the schools allow the teachers to have common release time for professional development, so it is important time for them. This year our school has 5.6 ESC positions. The Superintendent and school board asked each school to put out an ESC survey at each site, to get feedback from the families as to what order of importance they place on the various ESC classes. Ocean Air’s survey will go out in this Wednesday’s folder, along with another letter from Mr. Stanley explaining the importance of supporting our ESC programs by donating to the Foundation.

Sajani mentioned that we should continue to educate our parents about what exactly our ESC losses may look like at Ocean Air if we do not raise all of the funding. She also mentioned that perhaps we should put out a FAQ sheet on the website. Ryan explained that this would be included in the Foundation letter that is going out in this week's Wednesday folder.

Matt asked when the final decision will be made regarding which ESC programs we would have at Ocean Air next year, and who makes the final decision. Ryan explained that he is the final decision maker and he should know by mid May, which we could discuss at our next and final School Site Council meeting.

Portables – Ryan told the council that the portables have been approved by the DMUSD Board, and that we will have custom made portables on our campus, paid for out of the district CFD fund, not the general fund. The buildings will be sound-proofed, since they will be on the back playground area. We will have two 6th grade classrooms in the portables next year.

Option areas – Matt asked how the response has been to the new enrollment Option areas. Karen explained that the response has been fine, and that a few families had chosen to attend schools other than Ocean Air for their children. We also had the lowest amount of Kindergarten registrations come in this year, compared to this time of the year in all previous years at Ocean Air, so odds of all the Kindergarten registrants getting into Ocean Air are greater than they have been historically. Ryan explained that we are hoping to have 5 Kindergarten classes for next year at Ocean Air. He also explained that various other conversations are ongoing, as we roll our enrollment numbers up for next year, and look at possible changes in number of classrooms per grade, and whether staffing will change at certain grade levels; these are conversations and decisions that Ryan deals with each year at this time. Most final decisions are set by the end of this school year.

Discussion of Homework as it was a topic that came out of the online parent survey.

Ryan opened the discussion on homework, as it relates to the results of our online parent survey, where half of our parents (would took the survey) said there is too much homework and half said there is not enough homework. Ryan had the council read the homework article, "Five characteristics of quality homework", and then he opened the discussion regarding various attributes of homework. Ryan wanted us to look at what parameters we need as a staff here at school, for the parents, and for the students.

Mario said there were many great ideas presented in the article about how to analyze the students' needs regarding homework and what each student might need, but do our teachers have the time to track each student this way when they have 20-28 students in their class?

The items that stood out to Karen in the article were 1) Make homework more specific, not general, 2) Teach kids how to self-assess in relation to their homework, i.e. teach them how to time themselves doing a problem, and then they will have a better idea how much time they would need to do their 10 problems of homework, and 3) how homework looks aesthetically is important, especially in the younger grades.

Ryan liked the four ways that homework typically supports learning – pre-learning, checking for understanding, practice and processing. He wanted to discuss what is working at Ocean Air within these four categories, and where do we need to re-shape what we do at Ocean Air, to better meet the needs of our students?

Sajani noted the topic of reading and trying to figure out and communicate to the student and parents what the goal of various reading assignments is/are. She likes how the process of comprehension is taught in the older grades, and believes it should be pushed down and taught at the younger grades, rather than just a “read for 20 minutes” homework assignment.

Ryan noted that on page 6 it mentions homework that is time-based vs. task-based. What do we think about that method of differentiation? Karen and Mario mentioned that it would be challenging to do because kids are so different – how would you know if they are blowing homework off vs. really trying? We would need parent feedback, and get that feedback from parents to teachers. This could be difficult to do. Sajani mentioned that parents are sometimes getting feedback only at conference times, and that it would help to have it more often since we only have 2 conferences in one year. Minnie mentioned that the 1st grade team does team homework and they all send out the same homework. They tell the parents that if the homework is too hard, the student does not have to do it, and then the teacher adjust it for that student. With reading, they rely on parent input to tell them how each student is progressing, which can be difficult if it is hard to reach parents and get feedback. When they see students who need help in their classroom, they pull them into smaller groups and help them throughout the day.

Matt shared how his child’s teacher does frequent tests and gives a number grade at the top and then hand-written corrections and suggestions on the test that his child brings home. Matt likes this type of feedback since he can then see the number grade and decide if this is a test that he needs to review with his child, and then he looks at the specific feedback to know what help his child needs. Matt believes this really helps him as a parent, and he sees the positive feedback and ownership that his child gains by using this tool to improve his learning, test grades, and self esteem. Matt shared that if students are not learning to take ownership of their homework, what are they really learning, and how is that helping them feel successful on their own?

Sajani shared that homework does create structure for our children, and it is often easier for them to take direction from their teacher as an authority on homework than their parent.

Ryan shared that we need to keep homework differentiated enough to challenge each student at their level; we don’t want to “dumb down” homework because that leads to rote, busywork which our students don’t need or benefit from. Are we assigning thinking for homework?

Mario mentioned how a past teacher (now retired) at Ocean Air had a great way of making learning creative and if she saw that the students were not “getting it” in the traditional way, she would stop everything and do something creative to make it fun = these were the days and lessons that his child remembered most of all.

Matt mentioned that perhaps they could offer “optional” problems on homework – this way the student could take ownership of doing more or not.

Mario mentioned that perhaps students could be helped at the beginning of the year to determine a framework for their homework. How many problems can they get done in 30 minutes in class? Tell the parents the results, so they are aware. We have to create motivation to get results from our kids.

Sajani agreed that we have to keep kids excited about learning (via homework), especially at early ages.

Ryan said we need to find tasks that we can give students to do that would foster creativity in them – fostering that love for learning.

Sajani mentioned that perhaps we have older students at Ocean Air speak to younger students about what is coming as they get older – like they do when middle school students come to talk to our students about what is coming in middle school.

IV. Adjournment

Move to adjourn: Mario Manzano Second: Courtney Campbell All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 3:50pm

Next/final School Site Council meeting is May 14, 2012