

Henry Elementary School Site Council

Meeting minutes, Tuesday, January 5, 2010

Attendance:

Members Present/Classification:

Jonathan Ben-Asher, Principal
Brianna Woolen, Certified
Kim Bachenheimer, Certified
Diane Holzman, Certified
Christy Canovas, ESP
Lorrie Baker, ESP
Michelle Ward, Parent
Gary Fowler, Parent
Kim MacAllister, Parent
B.J. Cordova, Community Member

Guests:

Eleanor C. Fowler

Absent:

Jacob Landcaster, ESP (Resigned)

1. Meeting called to order by Facilitator, Christy Canovas, at 3:24 p.m.
2. Minutes of December 1, 2009 meeting were distributed at the meeting. A few corrections were noted, including filling in “Relationships” in Item 3, Discussion items; School accountability plan, delete “...and are still being worked out”; under item 4 reports, Principal, counselor – insert “started in November”. Consensus that the minutes were correct as presented, except
3. Discussion items:
 - Art Mobile – funding has been worked out through a different source, so no longer needs to be presented to site council.
 - Math program Recommendations from Faculty – teachers had a chance to review several options, recommended EnVisions 2010? - community has ability to input as well, call Marshall Elementary School to review the curriculum options for K-5. Estimated to be curriculum decision for about 7 years. Need input by January 29th.
 - Music Update – Henry has \$500 for a music program, could be guests or an all-school assembly, which may be the better option at this point. There may be an option for a 45-minute performance from a drum group, for March-April. Could potentially involve teaching for 4th-5th graders, more information to come but
 - Renovation update – fences are still up to let concrete cure, but should be coming down soon. Meeting every two weeks with Principal/office manager, seeing more

progress with library. New blinds in rooms, office is coming along – more to come soon. Things are moving along a few weeks behind schedule.

- Membership Number for Site Council Representation – must have an equal number of teacher as parent representative positions, with less people on campus harder to fill this position. Now need another ESP representative. Could change numbers to have one less representative by amending the bylaws (potentially to have only two ESP representatives instead of three?). Doesn't make any sense to have an invalid council just because someone resigns or there is one vacancy. The various constituent groups are still represented and a quorum is available. Need to have a committee review the bylaws and also get interpretation to determine what is a valid council.
- Optional Merger Incentive for TUSD Schools – District proposed this concept to address financial challenges. At the state level, education and law enforcement are considered optional/discretionary funding. District is potentially looking at a 5% cut. There may be ways to use the district's large size to our advantage, schools can consider merging; if a school brings in another school, that school's resources would come with it. (Handout distributed); school closures were looked at in the past, this is not the direction they want to go, however the district needs to be able to respond to changing demographics & economics. This incentive was developed as a way for sites to decide for themselves whether they would like to merge with another site. Henry staff felt that it was something that should be explored, though some wanted to maintain the status quo. Some wanted to explore Wrightstown merging with Henry; or Van Horne. Some want more information; no one said yes or no right off the bat. Henry community meeting being held next Wednesday night January 13, 2010. It is a decision between site council, faculty and community. A draft of a possible budget next year was provided; factoring in a full-time administrator since the dual principalship has been difficult. Substitute budget was over this year, so that is reflected. This has been done for Wrightstown as well, though there could be many other scenarios. Would gain 35% of utility costs at the new site. Henry is at 69% of building utilization capacity (275 students, capacity of 390 not including portables; currently 4 empty classrooms), where Wrightstown is at 51% (which funds 6 classroom teachers, ½ time counselor, 4 TAs for 133 students) and Van Horne is at 59%. Wrightstown staff are open to exploring this, and Van Horne was not really interested. Bloom is under capacity by 105 kids, with 265 students (Henry could not absorb that number readily). Potentially could have up to 16 classroom teachers if Henry/Wrightstown merged (right now it is 17, but budget cuts take care of the last little bit). Henry's projection was about the same. Henry's class size is smaller because we sacrificed administration and music. Average is about 25 per classroom. Henry could technically absorb Wrightstown right now according to our capacity, including combination classes. Class sizes may inevitably increase with budget cuts. How can we be sure that all Wrightstown students would come here, there is no guarantee that they would but would work hard to find out how many. District makes a projection and some schools gain or lose teachers based on projected enrollment. Transportation cost doesn't need to be considered. We also cut our materials budget to add to teachers at Henry. Could potentially lose

Henry teachers if Wrightstown's teachers with seniority come in. Henry's current staff is outstanding; staff retention has not been determined if this moves forward, but Henry may lose two teachers anyway in the current budget. Both Wrightstown and Henry have full loads of special education so combining would still qualify for additional assistance. Larger class sizes will happen, and may result in people pulling their kids. Ultimately the merger with Wrightstown should save one teacher. District/public schools were not well-supported at the polls, and because of the proximity of Wrightstown and Tucson Country Day School we may not gain as many students, particularly in light of past potential closure of Wrightstown. Students are funded nearly last or last in the nation. Could the district make this mandatory in the future? Merger has a slight advantage, over outright closure – though may only amount to one more teacher, counselor, fine arts and the like. Need about 60 day calendar to close a school (so need to know either way by February). Does the state have limits for class size and when does it trigger an aide? (Current agreement is between the district and teachers' union). 29 students at most grades/27 in K, anything more triggers the need for an aide. If you plan class sizes over the caps, you have to plan for TAs. The district may cover any unplanned overages. Tucson Country Day may not have any more capacity currently, but new construction underway there too. Question regarding neighborhood stability/district maintenance responsibilities – an empty school cannot have a zero budget. Continued maintenance, and potential future site use considerations need to be addressed as part of this, rather than an empty school becoming an eyesore and actually detracting from neighborhood value. Hard decisions do need to be made about what under-capacity sites/under-utilized resources would be no longer used – could be sold with voter approval, swapped, used in another manner and get rid of portables, etc. Principal at Van Horne is half-time, and only at that school. Dual principal role is difficult. Half-time principal role is also more difficult. How would site councils be involved in deciding who is retained/cut? (That question is being asked – combine site councils/facilitators?) – this is uncharted territory, so current site councils would need to work together. Something is going to give either way, we will take a hit in-house, or combining resources. These questions will be asked of the district; state level new law eliminates tenure when determining RIF due to budget reductions. How do we make this fair at the site council level – everyone applies for their jobs, only the grades affected, or ??? East side neighborhoods are also unique with a school in every mile block. Many Henry teachers have taught multiple grades, so would want consideration that they could teach another grade. It is not likely that Henry could go in to Wrightstown, due to space considerations. Nothing is guaranteed, but potentially sites that merged may be left alone for awhile. People at the district are having to make difficult decisions with declining enrollment, declining revenues per student and other demographics across a very large area and are not just out to close schools. Combined site tax credits would be available with two schools. Could be a half-day kindergarten but we value full day; could include options for enhanced arts & more with combined school resources. Final decision will need to be considered at site council in the near future. May want to put the poll out to the community. Would not do justice

to the community if we did not at least consider this. Potentially send one ballot/poll per address. If we get an overwhelming direction one way or the other that will give us some direction. Need to know if site council will be determining hiring or not, before making a decision. Could staff of other schools be also available for hiring into potentially merged school? Probably most fair to give priority to those at merged sites. For other custodial/health & other positions, there may be other positions available elsewhere in the district. Teachers will be affected, and class sizes will be affected regardless. But we would like to keep class sizes as small as we can, for as long as we can. Polls need to go out Wednesday night at open forum, with a deadline on Friday.///

- Strength Building Partners (to be discussed at a later date)
4. Reports:
 - Facilitator:
 - Principal:
 - Tax Credit:
 5. Study/Action Items:
 -
 6. Announcements
 7. Call to the Audience:
 8. Set Next Agenda
 9. Adjournment: 4:54 p.m.