

Minutes

Shadow Valley Elementary Community Council

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Time 3:45pm

Agenda – As Time Permits

1. Attendance

Members in Attendance: Chris Andrus, Randa Bruce, Michelle Darrington, Marnie Favero, Rachel Florence, Phil Jiricko, Stephen P. Lister, Leanne Rich.

Members not in Attendance: Judy Gault, Danette Pulley, Arienne Winzeler

Guests in Attendance: Christina Cotter, Katie Lymon, Sheila Moesinger, Cami Sharp, Dix Wright

2. Amend the minutes of last meeting to reflect the change in UPass data.

Strike 5d 1&2 from last month's minutes. Given incorrect data. State came out with results and then 3 weeks later realized it was incorrect. So redid scoring on every child's language assessment – and all scores changed. Positive change for us. Our students' scores were higher. Based on this data change hiring ESL staff assistant no longer necessary. Will publish on website based on these changes. Motion to amend – Michelle Darrington? Second: Phil Jiriko. All in favor.

3. Budget Report (monthly)

Waiting to hear “official word” from District Auditors on exactly what our carry over from last year is. So, budget is exactly as it was last month. Only changes are from Staff Assistant earnings coming out as they have worked this past month.

4. Update on the “Walk to Learn” program (Differentiating math instruction in 4th-6th grade based on pacing and learning.)

Mrs. Cotter 4th grade – Not calling it “ability grouped” – calling it “pacing grouped”. Gave preassessment in the form of a block test based on what would be teaching first. 3 groups formed – slower with revision and review, grade level with some enrichment and high with a lot of enrichment. Have been finding that students' needs are being met and there has been increased student engagement and decreased behavior issues, as a general rule. Felt it has been positive that there are two teachers telling students what they need to be doing and following up on their progress. There was not a uniform contact with parents informing of which group child was in. At Parent Teacher Conf. there was discussion and if they weren't there – it indicates on their grade sheet who their math teacher is. Struggling to find a way to make groups “fluid” when need to be changed within the quarter because of restrictions of SIS. Need seen for more flexibility. Final block test showed significant improvement – esp. in lowest group. There have not been any noticeable problems with students caring about which group they are in. Mrs. Malan – Enriched – 28 students, Mr. Ley – middle – 28 students, Mrs. Cotter – slow paced group – 24 students.

Miss. Sharp 5th grade – Star Math, 5th grade inventory, block test and teacher observation used to place students in groups. Mrs. Costley is over the enriched group and offered to take more students (30) so other 2 groups could have less students, esp. the low group. Miss. Sharp middle group with 26 and Mrs. Jolley low group has 21. 3 students in low group receive resource support for math, so for 1st ½ hour Mrs. McFarland is also in there with her. Better job of meeting needs of students at

their level. Feel more responsible for all students in their grade level, know everybody, etc. More comfortable stepping in if there is a problem in hall, etc. Teaching students responsibility and organization – getting ready for 6th grade and Jr. High. Cons – Mrs. Jolley struggling to meet their needs to review addition and subtraction and still cover 5th grade curriculum. So, she has gone to center based teaching with Mrs. McFarland – teach mini lesson and then rotate to also get 5th grade curriculum. Parents could help. Behavior is an issue in low group – all challenging kids together. Mrs. Cotter says this group is exceptionally hard – from experience. After Mrs. McFarland leaves – Mr. Patrick is in helping Mrs. Jolley. Another con – worried not enough cooperative learning going on. Low and middle students only hearing from teacher – not higher students. Also, by grouping are they inadvertently grouped by race and socio-economic status? They have found that they are. Are we comfortable with that? Block test hasn't been taken yet because they waited a couple of weeks to start their groups. Daily observations show high group going high above, middle growing, too – and low group working on multiplication, etc and getting a glimpse at 5th grade curriculum. Did send home note to parents. Have heard from about 15 – responses ranging from extremely against to being thankful their low student is getting extra attention. How much do we let parents determine their child's group? Very competitive.

Mrs. Lymon 6th grade – Miss Wight – high group, 31 students, Miss Lundgren – middle, 30 students, Mrs. Lymon – low, 29 students. Rapid improvement in each group, all teaching same curriculum at the same time – but all different speeds. Low group is at a snail pace compared to other 2 groups. Grouped by looking at end of level 5th grade inventory. Cons – some parents not happy with grouping – told during PT Conferences. 6th rotates for everything except for Language Arts. Just started Common Core in 6th grade. Low group is still doing stuff to get ready to start Common Core. Will hopefully start in a couple of weeks. Other groups have been incorporating it. Not too many behavior issues – mostly talking. Low group will be starting centers soon and has Mr. Patrick in to help most of the math time. Using any technology? (Miss Sharp – not really an option. Plato takes too long to get going. Mrs. Costly had a parent donate the money for Accelerated Math – so, she is using that and Miss Sharp, as well.)

What do you need from Council? Extra teachers in the rooms – someone with formal training would be nice. Tutors? Tried 2 years for after school and didn't work. Most that need help – ride the bus. They really need someone in the classroom.

What are projections for the low groups to up to grade level? Are we just widening the gap? Steve -- As long as everyone is going up in scores – we are serving our purpose. If scores remain the same – then we haven't served anybody. Dix – his kids went through a program where the grades intermingled to meet everybody's needs. Should we continue? Miss Sharp concerned about fluidity. Is there really a way to move between groups? All at different levels. Can they just jump from one group to another? Dix – can students help each other? Sharp – That's what happens normally in a classroom. Steve – high group instruction needs to include depth – not just acceleration. Sharp – That's what happens in the normal classroom. Miss Favero – Mentoring student to student doesn't work. Kids feel dumb, parents complain that their high kid is being held back. In the normal classroom it is easier to camouflage it. Lymon – High students in each group can mentor those within their group. There is a huge gap even within the groups. Rich – How about Cooperative Learning? (Group of students with varying abilities working together and contributing on a concept.) Sharp – How we group them in the classroom naturally. Phil – Would more frequent assessment be an answer to helping students move between groups? Mrs. Rich – Students should not be accelerated. All should be doing Common Core. Common Core makes kids dive deeper into a topic. 5th grade will be implementing it soon. Star Math scores are inflated. Star Reading is inflated as well. Fluidity should be happening. 6th grade go around SIS problem by creating new class lists. It isn't hard. Students moved are not accountable for what they have missed and there should be more frequent assessments. Block is a good one – but there should be weekly or every other weekly. If

Common Core is used it will be easier for kids to move groups and not be “behind”. Set “cap” of how high can go at the grade level Core.

Mrs. Rich – Miss Sharp’s concern about socio-economic grouping is consistent with what is seen in SES data. Our SES subgroup does not score as low as other school’s groups. Many of ours are large families with a single breadwinner. We have many caucasion children on free/reduced lunch – which is unusual. Our percentage has actually gone down from last year.

Achievement should be based on a pre and a post test. 10-15 repetitions needed for mastery. Our school is unique – if you don’t learn at a fast pace you look like a candidate for special ed – when really just average children. It takes 52 weeks of targeted instruction to see grade level increase. We may not see anything noticeable – but it will be interesting to observe these children learning at their own pace. And then we could truly identify students with disabilities. 52 weeks is almost 2 school years.

Is any one group benefitting more? No – Miss Sharp feels they are all benefitting equally. Mrs. Rich – Looking at grouping research – if everyone teaches the same, nobody really increases. But if differentiate within the groups – the lowest group makes the most increase. Drop in self-esteem in highest group – because no longer the “smartest” one in the group. But it’s marginal. Moderate increase in lowest group self-esteem.

Teachers benefitting – but need to “tweek” lower group. Task completion is an issue. Do we need to take away recess for these kids? Recess is instructional time – not PE or a teacher break. Maybe keep them in for recess if you know won’t be completed at home. And then concessions need to be made to help them get their wiggles out.

Would like to see an update with formative data in a couple of months. Also, follow-up for discussion on issues raised today. We would like to see monthly reports. Mrs. Rich and the teachers will work it out.

5. Form a sub-committee to create and review data models

Spent a ton of time last year reviewing data that nobody understands. So, we would like 4 people to review data (UPASS) with Leanne and be prepared to present it every month to make it easier. Find out where performance is changing and compare it to where we are spending the Land Trust money. Make sure we are doing the right things. Would like to look long term for our spending. Would be nice to track Kindergarten after all money we spent on the take-home library this year. Phil and Miss Favero are willing. Steve will ask those that aren’t here if they are interested.

6. Review any data that is currently available

None for today.

7. Comments/Questions/Suggestions/Concerns

Mrs. Rich will meet with teachers about testing and fluidity of groups. Chris is concerned they did not all use same methods to place students. Mrs. Rich not concerned – she wanted them to have ownership of what they were doing after we told them we wanted them to do the grouping. She feels they have done some very creative things. Miss Favero – they don’t have the same curriculum – how can they have the same benchmarks? Each grade does their assessments differently – outside of the standards, like Dibels, etc. Chris mentioned an “A” 5th grade student she knew of was placed in the lowest 6th grade group – realized she didn’t belong there, talked to the teacher and was moved. She was judged based on one assessment – for whatever reason she must have performed poorly. Mrs. Rich said 6th grade has done the most moving around since they started based on their own observations. Sheila – have the teachers asked for parental help? They all seem overwhelmed. Do

we need to hire more staff assistants? Sheila would be happy to help and be tutored to be an “educated helper”. Miss Favero – it would be difficult to plan parent lessons and her own lessons. Parents may be more helpful for behavior issues. Mrs. Bruce – We need to give the teachers latitude to know where we are heading and to know where to ask for help. Dix – could we get Weber students to help?

8. Next meeting, second Wednesday of the month: November 19, 2011 at 3:45 p.m.