

**Valencia Elementary School Site Council
Minutes**

February 10, 2009

Members Present: Dianna Higginbotham, TJ Miller, Nancy Casterson, Kim De Serpa, Susan Perez, Renee Roberts, Dawn Binder, and Robin Elliot

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairperson Kim De Serpa.

2. Introductions/Additions to Agenda

No introductions were necessary, and there were no additions to the agenda.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were reviewed. Susan made a motion to approve the minutes, and Dian seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Discussion Agenda

Kim asked about if there was something happening with the GATE program. Dian reported that she had a meeting with Karin Kerber-Smith to try to put together an enhancement program for GATE kids, something like a chess or robotics club. Dawn mentioned that she knows a teacher that might do a robotics class and that she will give the teacher's name to Dian.

A. Power Standards and Grade Level Teams

Dian reported that the staff spent a day working with Landmark Elementary on Power Standards, and that they seemed to enjoy it. Jennifer, the principal at Landmark, invited Valencia and paid for the event. There was a great speaker from the Lead and Learn organization who showed the staff how to get the most bang for the buck in order to teach all that you have to teach to meet the state standards. The staff was able to narrow it down to about a page per grade level in reading, for example. TJ commented that it was very limited having only one day there, but it was very helpful to have teachers that have gone through it a whole year. It would be a good thing to tap into their experience.

Susan asked a question about how the Power Standards were selected. The Power Standards are the ones that you really want all of the kids to know, the ones that are the most powerful and you concentrate on. Nancy mentioned that the teachers went through the standards and that it was interesting to see that our teachers selected the same ones that the Landmark teachers did. Dian commented that the event was a valuable experience to go through along with having those conversations with your colleagues. The staff is going to look at math and writing standards at two other staff meetings.

B. School Plan

Pages 7 and 8 of the School Plan were reviewed. Dian reported that the staff is doing a lot of data-driven decision-making and partnering. The Cotsen training has been very valuable, and Susan Murphy is doing some great stuff. There are no funds to do some of the items in the School Plan, such as the school scan.

C. Budget – School and District

Susan reported on the budget and the North Zone Advisory meeting. At the North Zone Advisory meeting, Dorma shared basically what we are seeing in the newspaper – that we have to cut 17 million from the budget. Any federal dollars that we get aren't going to help with these cuts. The district has put out a survey (that is also posted online) designed to assess what parents feel is near and dear to them, and also what to bring back if money becomes available. The survey has a 5-point scale, and

the items are broad-based because they want as broad-based feedback as possible. The items on the survey are all site-level support, and the list is geared for parents to find out what they value at their site. The district is trying hard to get this survey out to school sites and home and school clubs. The message from the Board was that everybody is going to be impacted this time around because the cuts are too deep. There was a group discussion of the survey, the items on the list, and how cutting specific items would affect Valencia, such as transportation, food services, technology, and the zone structure. There was also a discussion of items that should be considered for cuts that are not included on the survey. Susan commented that we have to make cuts because 17 million is a huge number, so given that, what is absolutely essential. Susan went through the items on the survey list one by one. Dian asked the group what she should take back regarding this list, and if the site council members would like to give a group opinion or take the survey online individually. After further discussion, the group came up with the statement that rather than eliminating programs entirely, we prefer that ratios be increased in order to keep as many programs intact as possible. Dian asked that we encourage all parents to fill out the survey.

D. Anti-Bullying Efforts

Dian reported that there was an anti-bullying assembly the other day, and that the school is trying its best to address this issue.

E. District/Home & School Survey

Dian reported that the survey results are overwhelmingly positive from what she has seen so far.

F. Traffic Report

Dawn explained that she had a meeting and lengthy conversation with Ellen Pirie regarding maintenance and safety along the road leading to Valencia, but nothing has happened yet from that meeting. Dawn said that a plan was made and she wanted to know what the status of this plan was. Dian reported that she called Ellen Pirie's office, but she hasn't heard back from her.

5. Reports

A. Staff

TJ reported that the upper grades are involved in the SPECTRA program now, which is a theatrical performance. The instructor is the same one that the primary students had in the fall. TJ reported that the anti-bullying assembly was a "rules" assembly, and he thought that it was a little over the top. Jeremy Ertl's presentation of Valencia's rules was beneficial, however, and TJ suggested that it would be good to do this at the beginning of the school year. It would be helpful for the staff to come up with rules that they all agree are important, so that the same rules are presented to all students. Finally, TJ reported that the Science Fair is this week and Thursday night is the parents' night. Renee expressed concern for students that do not have computers or do not get help with their Science Fair projects. Susan mentioned that hand-written projects often place in the Science Fair, since it is the content and the understanding of the project that matters. The Science Fair project is a very self-directed project, and the kids need to pace themselves and work independently.

Nancy reported that the primary teachers attended a "Math Facts in a Flash" program. It is an exciting program that plugs into the computer and can be done at home.

B. Principal

Dian did not have anything further to report.

C. Home & School Club

There was no Home and School Club report.

D. North Zone Advisory

The North Zone Advisory report was already covered by Susan in the budget discussion.

E. Grants – Playground Update

Kim reported that a parent group will have to put the cuts in the ground for the playground because the District grounds department won't do it due to budget cuts. Kim stated that we may have to beautify the Boundless sight ourselves due to these cuts. If everything on the plan doesn't get done, then there may be some extra money left over that could go back to the Home and School Club. Finally, Kim reported that she hasn't written any new grants lately.

6. Plusses/Deltas

Plusses: Thank you to Nancy for the use of her heated room for the meeting. It was great to hear about all of the staff development. Valencia is a great school, with great parents and wonderful teachers.

Deltas: None stated.

7. March Items/Burning Issues

A. Student Survey

B. Teacher Survey

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Submitted by: Robin Elliot