

ACE Meeting Minutes

The purpose of the Advisory Council for Education is to provide a systematic representative public involvement in educational decisions under consideration by the Board of Directors.

**Monday, April 11, 2017
6:00-7:30 p.m.**

Members Present

Ed Aylesworth, Maggie Bagwell, Cathy Clark Smith, Eric DeJong, Jen Fuller, Ursula Ghirardo (board member), Kari Henderson-Burke, Mike Johnson, Mary Levesque, Brian Lewis, Kimberly Meno, Will Nelson, Hanna Novy, Gary Sabol, Chrys Sweeting, Jenny Taylor, Marcy Taylor

Members Absent

Ryan Barci, Linda Bollinger, Lisa Coghill, Kathy Ehman, Yvonne Gallardo, Pedro Gonzales, Sheri Kelly, Dave McKeller, Casey Miller, Mike Ray, Nikki Starup, Matt Washburn

Guests Present

Shari Campbell

Call to Order

Jenny Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Cathy Clark Smith made a motion to approve the Jan. 10, 2017 meeting minutes. Kari Henderson-Burke seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Hanna Novy made a motion to approve the Feb. 15, 2017 meeting minutes. Cathy Clark Smith seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Hanna Novy made a motion to approve the March 6, 2017 meeting minutes. Mary Levesque seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

Elections

Jenny Taylor said that the annual elections will be held in May. She also indicated that she has served for a number of years and believes it is time to step away from her role in ACE. She has enjoyed serving on the committee. She asked committee members to contact Dr. Chrys Sweeting or Gary Sabol if they would like to be considered a nominee for the chair position. Cathy Clark Smith said that she would like to continue serving as vice chair.

Survey Results

Shari Campbell showed the survey results to the committee. There were 353 surveys completed.

- Areas of Focus

The top area of focus was Safe and Caring Environment, followed by Readiness for College.

- Top Priorities in the Strategic Plan

Survey respondents said the top priorities for the strategic plan should be Safe and Caring Environment, Reading for College and Student Achievement.

- Top Strengths

The top strengths of the district included Quality of Teachers, Quality of Education and Welcoming Environment.

- Top Challenges

The top challenges facing the district were Preparing Students for College, Impacts of Growth, Meeting the Diverse Needs of Students and Lack of State Funding.

- Unique Opportunities

For unique opportunities the district should consider as they develop the strategic plan, one opportunity focused on parent participation. Committee members discussed the difference between elementary and secondary parent participation. It seems that parents find it easier to participate at the elementary level. At the secondary level, it's unclear to some parents how they can help in the middle and high schools. It also may be hard for parents when their students transition to the secondary level. Unlike elementary schools where parents can help in the classroom, at middle schools parents can support their child by supporting the school (chaperoning at dances, etc.) Hanna Novy said at the high school, parents get involved with individual programs at the school.

- Suggestions to the Board

Top suggestions to the board included: Involve parents more; hire and retain quality teachers; raise expectations; focus on learning; and reduce class size.

- Communications and impressions

The committee talked about Safe and Caring Environment being an area of focus for the district. Students need to feel safe before they can learn. Parents feel like their kids are learning in a safe environment. This is more than just physical safety. The district has a policy on intimidation, bullying and harassment.

- Top source for learning about our schools

The top ways respondents learned about our schools included school websites, teachers or other district staff, school newsletters and Facebook posts.

Logos

Shair Campbell shared four different logo designs with the committee. Deb Borgens shared that the old logo was created when Linda Byrnes was superintendent. They worked with a consultant to develop this logo. The theme was reaching for the stars.

- 1) Rainbow Circle Logo

Shows safe and caring environment. The rainbow appeals to the elementary level. They liked that it showed people. They asked what would it look like if the graduate was inside the circle? Maybe if we had fewer people in the circle?

2) Mountain Logo

Shows safe and caring environment. The grad cap appeals to the middle and high school level. Like the mountain but not necessarily for a school district. The cap looks like a tipped-over cabin. Would like to see a person below the mountain but it might be too busy.

3) Graduate Logo

Geared toward achievement. Grad appeals to middle and high school level. They liked that it showed a person since it's about the kids. The tagline underneath is nice. They would like to see a different person represented.

4) Abstract Arrow Logo

Geared toward achievement. This reminded them of a fractured house. Not what they want conveyed.

The committee liked the tagline – “Educate, Prepare & Inspire” – in the logos.

Goals and Actions

1- Student learning and achievement

- Continually assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, instructional strategies and facilities.
- Monitor and assess student mastery of standard objectives.
- Ensure staff professional development is aligned with identified needs based on student performance and staff need.
- Effectively engage students in the learning process through differentiating instruction based on learning needs.

2- Safe and caring environment

- Continually assess current facility needs for improvement and safety.
- Establish a positive school structure that addresses non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional and health needs.
- Make sure the areas identified in the Affirmative Action Plan encompass diversity.
- Implement proactive measures to bolster security such as entrances, access, emergency procedures, protocol training, etc.

3- Resource stewardship

- Address future growth and consider property purchase.
- Determine what to do with Weston High School and bus/transportation fleet.
- Review utility usage via audit and adopt energy-saving measures.
- Audit staff resources.
- Develop plan for facility replacement, maintenance and improvements.

4- Continuous improvement

- Build the capacity for research-based best practices.
- Use research for decision-making, and identify areas of improvement based on data.
- Maximize the use of available resources for improvement and growth.

5- Family and community partnerships

- Improve communication to current families, communicating more ways, more often.
- Increase volunteer opportunities (PTA, classrooms, etc.)
- Encourage involvement within schools outside of classroom or schools, such as ACE Committee.

- Outreach to non-school public.
- Enhance partnerships with local community, business groups, city officials, etc.
- Communicate with all residents.
- Create easy pathway to volunteer, so every classroom/teacher will have a volunteer representative.
- Increase access for all families; eliminate barriers such as language.
- Recruit more volunteers intentionally via personal asks.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 1, 2017 at 6 p.m.