

MINUTES FOR ROBERT E. WILLETT ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL AND POSITIVE CLIMATE  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday January 20, 2010

Public notice having been duly posted as required, the fourth meeting of the 2009-2010 school year was called to order at 4:01 pm in the Staff Room at Robert E. Willett Elementary School.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Heidi Perry, Tracy Kaplan, Christine Firpo, Janna Remes, Leora Gershenzon, Kim Mann, Rick Blacker, Michele Parker and Laura Averett. A quorum was present.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by T. Kaplan at 4:01pm. Roll was taken.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes

R. Blacker moved to approve the minutes. H. Perry seconded. All were in favor.

4. Committee Reports

R. Blacker attended the English Language Learners Committee meeting. Teachers and reading specialists throughout the district are looking into streamlining their programs. EL students must receive 30-45 minutes of instruction daily. They must meet specific standards, expectations and goals. The committee is looking at aligning standards with curriculum by grade level for ELD instruction.

5. Site Update

H. Perry told the committee Dr. Hammond and Clark Bryant had early today presented the 2010-2011 Recommended Budget Plan for the DJUSD. She had shared this information with the teachers. H. Perry went over the District Budget Plan as it stands today, explaining it literally changes every day.

She touched on what cuts are certain and will affect Willett Elementary in the new school year. Class size will increase to 30 for

K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade and to 32 for 4-6<sup>th</sup>. Night Custodial staffing will be decreased, Site Secretary I position would be eliminated, Noon supervision would be eliminated (teachers might have to help cover this, H. Perry explained). Also, Maintenance/Grounds will be cut.

Regarding programs, SLIB, EIA and ELD are areas where funding will be cut from 66 – 80%. H. Perry said our PTA may provide some funding, but we don't have money from DSF currently. L. Gershenson asked what the expected teacher reduction will be at Willett. H. Perry doesn't know yet but thought probably 4 teachers.

T. Kaplan had read about the Race to the Top and asked about its status. H. Perry said the Governor had applied for it, so we will need to see what happens there.

H. Perry next addressed attendance and its effect on school's funding. Willett Elementary has an average attendance of 96-97%. L. Gershenson asked how Willett Elementary compares to other schools in the district regarding attendance. H. Perry answered Willett "is right in there". Compared to other districts Willett has a higher average daily attendance. H. Perry said parents need to plan ahead for Independent Study if students will miss school for 5 consecutive days or more. Teachers need enough notice to prepare assignments. Parents also must ensure their student completes his/her work. We do not get the funding if the work is not completed.

6. Kim Foerster - to speak about K program

K. Foerster provided the committee with information on kindergarten data and standards. She assesses each student to establish their starting point in Language Arts, Math, Science. The students are then assigned a proficiency score. All teachers in the district are given cards to use for this purpose. K. Foerster explained the results are given on Report Cards. Kim assesses each student on what the district requires, and additional topics of her own, which she fine tunes to the population. Instant recognition of shapes is one example. She uses the geometric names of pattern blocks for vocabulary. Familiarizing students with these shapes and their names helps with oral skills as well as math concepts they will use in future grades.

T. Kaplan asked Kim if she asks all the questions she showed us. K. Foerster explained that she does and meets with each

student as time allows during activity times. For an example, K. Foerster explained, she'll give the student a pile of small blocks and ask them to "count these to thirty" to keep the assessment quick.

Also asked, do the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers get the assessment information? She answered what is passed on to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers is information on the student's behavior, social skills, if they are below, at or above grade level. The assessment data is also available for teachers. Placement cards (used district wide) help place students and balance grade 1 classes. K. Foerster explained as far as reporting data on kindergarteners, the end of the school year marks when students must meet K standards. H. Perry said she would find it helpful, in general, to know how many students received 3s, how many received 2s, etc. H. Perry clarified that kindergarten report cards are different from upper grade's. K. Foerster said she can provide that information. R. Blacker added that assessment standards guide teachers in their grading.

K. Foerster was asked if pre-reading is addressed in the kindergarten year, to help in 1<sup>st</sup> grade? Kim answered, kindergarten teachers expose the children to reading. It is not in a formalized manner, "This is reading." H. Perry added that Willett's 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher's like that the kids come in with time with reading. K. Foerster shared that she strives to create a rich learning experience. She wants students to see how to learn and that learning is fun. If they are having fun their vocabulary grows. T. Kaplan asked if Handwriting Without Tears is still being used? K. Foerster said it is not district mandated but she buys it out of the class budget.

## 7. School Climate

### a. School Climate Survey draft

H. Perry, L. Gershenson and R. Blacker had worked on Survey draft questions since the December meeting. The committee was given a few minutes to review them and ask questions.

Q: What grades is this geared towards? A: 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. For K-2, more generalized questions. For example, How do you feel at school? How to you feel in class?

Q: How did the decision to use "how do you feel?" get chosen? L. Gershenson and H. Perry answered that kids who feel strongly about their answer are going to elaborate.

J. Remes would like to change the wording in #1 to "feel" instead of

"think". T. Kaplan felt reducing the number of response options from 5 to 4 would help get kids , who felt unsure of their answer, off the fence. L. Gershenzon thought question #5 was awkward. Does the question mean traveling to and from school? H. Perry explained she is responsible for the students "door to door", from home and back again. K. Mann wondered how that information could be used? A suggestion was made to remove question #5.

J. Remes liked that these questions are direct and are regarding issues we can do something about. J. Remes felt this draft looks good with the changes the committee has made. H. Perry suggested we look at this again and get feedback in February.

#### 8. Adjournment

At 5:04pm R. Blacker moved to adjourn the meeting, L. Gershenzon seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Meeting was adjourned.