

District Council Minutes

June 3, 2014; 3:30-4:40 at Hagan

Next Meeting: **September 29**, 2014. 3:30 at **Nassau**.

Attendees: Sharon Ciccone (elementary teacher rep), John Farrell (elementary school rep), Jennifer Kaufman (HS parent rep), Steve Malkischer (secondary school principal rep), Lois Powell (superintendent), Cathy Porco (Nassau parent rep), Erin Ruppert (Hagan parent rep), and Mark Van Horne (secondary school teacher rep)

Satisfaction Survey Results (Parents):

Areas for improvement (from parent survey):

- “I regularly check my child’s information (such as grades or attendance) using an online resource.” Parent portal – parents want access to real-time grades and find it helpful in cases where teachers are using the Gradebook. One teacher indicated he thought he was posting the grades so they could be viewed but discovered the parents couldn’t see them. One parent indicated that despite meeting system prereqs she couldn’t view the grades when teachers put them in aspx format. It was suggested attempts be made on a Smartphone and talk to Brett.
Action: Jennifer to follow-up.
- “My child’s school offers him/her opportunities to explore areas of interest outside the core content areas.” Elementary: Enrichment is still evolving but seem to do well offering RTI, Math help, etc. HS: More students are participating in CTI. Can students take classes at DCC for example if the class isn’t offered at Spackenkill and still get HS credit? Concern was raised what enrollment / class size would be as a result.
Action: Lois Powell will check into this.
- “I am involved in the decisions that affect my child’s education.”
“I am satisfied with the parent/guardian participation opportunities the school has to offer.” Common Core makes some feel like parents don’t have any say (not just at Spackenkill but across the state); there’s a level of frustration – difficult to assist with homework. It was pointed out that there’s a lot of research on homework and there is best practice model. In some districts coordinators focus on homework – limit the Common Core stuff that goes home and do more Common Core in the classroom.

Some felt that parents could be as involved as they choose to be. It was noted that participation in parent coffees and PTA was down. Perhaps the new format for PTA could be the reason for the reduced participation. Sharpe volunteerism is down and this program will have to be approached differently next year. Some noted how more involved parents were in the past compared to parents now – not just Spackenkill elementary; appears to be with pre-school parents as well.

With demands/less time, less is being done from what we offered in prior years. HS has open enrollment for Site-Based Team to encourage any parents to participate that want to.

- “My child enjoys going to school.”
Sad but true. Site-Based Teams will be discussing this specific to their school.

Surveys:

General discussion on participation: teachers and students are captive audience; perhaps parent surveys could be built into Parent/Teacher night schedule. The surveys that recently went home only received about 10 so far. Develop master survey plan.

Satisfaction Survey Results (Staff):

Areas for improvement (from staff survey):

- “I have time available during the school/work day to collaborate with my peers regarding curriculum and instruction/best practice.” Although staff also feels they have too many meetings. We discussed common planning time at each of the schools and that some teachers don’t necessarily want planned agenda. Model at the HS isn’t great although having the curriculum coordinators is a step in right direction and collaborating with Todd is another step in the right direction. Tried to set up curriculum time after school: Math department agreed to this. Special ed and co-teachers can meet up during the day. It is believed that the curriculum mapping by department work will be helpful.
- “Many parents volunteer time to assist in the school.” [See bullet 3 under “Areas for improvement (from parent survey)”].
- “School wide/department meetings are a good use of my time.” This question was bundled and belief was staff probably feels that it’s less good use of their time to be in school-wide meetings but better use to be in department meetings. We discussed frustrating sense of being lost in the weeds and trying to find direction.
- “I am involved in the decisions that affect my work.” Site-Based Teams will be discussing this specific to their school.
- “School/department leadership acts consistently; they do as they say.” Site-Based Teams will be discussing this specific to their school.

Satisfaction Survey Results (Students):

Areas for improvement (from student survey):

- Students, across the grade levels, want hands on learning; feel disengaged.

Technology vision: Lois met with leadership groups and students want technology they can use, not just the teacher; want to be able to use their own technology devices. Brett is working on creating remote desktop so students can more easily access their accounts and files from home and see what they would see on Spackenkill computers. Would be nice if students could access the notes they saw on the Smartboards in class on a given day – less of a technology issue, depends on where each teacher chooses to store the information.

- We will continue to work on bullying. Even though it’s not listed as an area where we need improvement, it’s important enough to keep addressing.

Marketing of Spackenkill:

A comment was made at a Board of Education requesting that our district encourage people to buy houses in our district. The part-time PR person is working on marketing materials for the realtors. We’re also looking for district success stories of alumni to spotlight. Letters to the editor, radio spots, and social media pose opportunities. Free is good.

Cablevision and Time Warner Cable to spotlight Spackenkill: filming to start on Tuesday, June 10: Teamwork Counts at Nassau, Odyssey of the Mind at Hagan, Orchestra at Todd, and Basketball at HS (champions and sportsmanship).

We discussed District Signage: billboard in front of HS – maybe raise funds to have a digital sign. Cars often stuck in traffic in front of Martha Lawrence too, so there's another opportunity to use a captive audience to our communication advantage.

Baldrige Status:

First draft is written for all categories. Karen Vitek has been helpful with graphs and Mary Forsell doing a lot of work on this. Now work is being done combining it all into the one application, formatting the information, aligning it with the requirements, editing for consistency (labels, headings, abbreviations, glossary, etc.), and verifying the information. It will then be reviewed again before printed and sent. Application due date is in August, and then it enters the review process and they'll arrange site visits mid-November. Awards announced in January.

This application is nice item to give to someone new to the district because it documents what we do. The application will be made available to the District Council and placed on the Spackenkill District website.

Action Plans:

The Board approved, in April, the Strategic Plan with District Goals. Think and ponder over the summer, especially the financial and community piece. Any ideas you have that align to the goals, feel free to forward them and we can discuss them in the fall.

Next Meeting Date/Agenda:

Next Meeting: September 29 at 3:30 at Nassau.

Agenda Items: 1) Budget Exit Survey Results, 2) Revenue Generation

We will also issue the shared decision making survey – feel it's a good idea to self-evaluate.

Action: If you have any additional items to add to this agenda, contact Lois Powell.

Action: If anyone wants to chair next year, let Lois know. She promised she would still attend even if she were not running the meetings.