

JSSVPA - November 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Board Attendees: Eleanor Hussman, Julia Peterson, Kathy Ambrosino, Nora Jewett, Caitlin Davis, Beth Ottsen, Robin Stone, Valerie Gaines, Stephanie Joyce, Amy Hannus, Jennifer Dixon, Lisa Metzger-Mugg

Regular Attendees: Kate Tarbert, Betsy Kilroy, Stephanie Helfand, Kate Donegan

1. Approve October 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes: Robin motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Valerie Gaines and Amy Hannus. Minutes were approved.

2. Principal/Superintendent Report:

At the last Board meeting on November 8th, Dr Helfand reviewed the Fall Data Assessment and the MTSS. The focus of the District's educational services is to maximize the learning potential of every student. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a federal and state-mandated educational initiative that consistently and effectively enables the District to reach that goal. Her presentation is available on the school website and it reviewed the academic portion of our instructional program and the process of problem-solving for intervention and enrichment. There are 3 levels of support, within MTSS:

Tier 1 - or Core, which is designed to meet all student's needs, and it fluctuates in style and content. More than 80% of Sears students are within Core 1. If students are not responding to Core as expected, then we identify which areas need further development and work on that skill or area. This is a progression.

Tier 2 - it meets the needs of students who are not challenged sufficiently or are not progressing as expected in Tier 1. A support plan is developed, with input from teachers, administration and specialists.

Tier 3 - includes more specific instruction that focuses on a specific skill need, whether that is an accelerated need or a remedial need. Parent communication will be formal at this level.

Tools to monitor student mastery:

Formative Assessments - in class, during the school year (assignments, quizzes, class work, teacher observations)

Summarize Assessments - include quizzes, tests or projects that provide evidence of learning at the end of the unit of study.

Universal Benchmark Assessments - given 3 times a year and these results are sent home to families and key is to look for growth.

Similar information will be presented on behavior (December 13) and student services (February 14). March will cover technology programming and digital citizenship.

Next month: behavior management is next Multi Tiered systems of Support: respond to behavior

Feb - Student Services - special education and what those services look like and how parents can get more information

March - Technology programming - digital citizenship

From 2020-21 - we saw an impact on growth. Students are less mature, compromised skills and social interactions are areas of struggle, after Covid.

Link is in the Board briefs to the presentation.

School Board Update (Lisa) -

At the most recent October 8th meeting, teachers and community members expressed how they've been feeling, about ongoing contract negotiations, the culture of the school, and what they need to be successful. An agreement has not been reached yet. This is not good for teachers, kids, parents or administration. Please listen to the recorded Board Meeting, so that you can understand in more detail. Specifically, at the 20min mark: from Bill Gordon: "if confidence, belief and praise and support can work in my classroom, it can work for teachers at Sears". We've had 22 administrators in 8 years. What is going on? - the toxic culture is the driving reason. We need to think about our 4 cornerstones - responsibility, kindness, honest and respect toward our administration, our teachers and our parents and our kids. These cornerstones are not mutually exclusive.

Some of the questions that Lisa has been receiving are around timeline issues. Here is a summary:

There is much preparation that goes into contract negotiations proposals on both sides of the table. There are specific laws in place to ensure fair labor laws are practiced, to protect faculty and staff, and that all involved are acting in good faith. Both groups put together a team to review trends, surveys, examine peers, benchmark, set guiding principles, and prioritize key issues. There are five members, plus a lawyer and observers on each side. The guiding principles for negotiations as an admin/board group included the need to invest in teachers and be equitable. But most importantly, it was to be student centered in all decisions.

The existing culture and trust issues are key drivers in making this such a very different negotiation process, from others.

The administrative/board group started meeting weekly last Dec. The teachers' union (KEA) and the admin/board teams started meeting in March. Each meeting lasted a minimum of three hours.

The first group meeting with was March 10th, to discuss ground rules and civility, but an agreement was not reached.

March 22nd – Negotiations teams were scheduled to meet to go over first KEA proposal, but that meeting was cancelled by the union.

April 14th – The union presented their proposal. It expanded the current contract of 43 pages to 91 pages in their proposal. There are a lot of issues the union wants to try to work out in this contract.

May 12th – The next set of meetings was listening to teachers – hearing their experience, opinions and what they need to succeed.

May 26th – the admin/board team submitted their counter proposal and handful of key priorities.

June 2nd – the union resubmitted their proposal and reduced to it 77 pages.

June 16th – Groups met to try to hear and understand KEA key priorities

July 7th – Groups met to understand KEA financial proposal. It was the same as the original submitted in April. At this point, it was jointly decided to seek a federal mediator to have a neutral party to get both sides to compromise and make progress. All were hopeful that this would move the process along faster.

July 30th – The groups had their first joint session with the federal mediator.

In August, the KEA group had two more meetings with the federal mediator to get a list of priorities and make movement on their proposal.

August 19 – The groups were supposed to meet to review of KEA proposal, but they needed more time so it was postponed.

From August 19 to Sept 29th – the federal mediator and KEA met 3 more times so that the key priorities could be understood, and a counter proposal developed.

Sept 29th - At this meeting, the KEA proposal was presented and it went up to 84 pages. This was a surprise to all, but the Board respectfully listened.

Oct 18th – The admin/Board group submitted their counter proposal.

Movement on key priorities and concessions were made.

Currently waiting for counter proposal from KEA.

A lot of the length of this cycle was dedicated to the administrative/board group listening to the KEA and their proposals and hearing them. This is why the Board and administration found many of the comments shared at the Monday Board meeting surprising. They needed extra time to refine their priorities and proposal.

We need to work together to resist the cycle of negativity, and resist pushing out of the administration team.

There were some questions on who makes up the board and administrators. The school board is comprised of 7 parent volunteers.

The composition of administration in the building has varied over time but currently includes: Superintendent, Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Student Services, Business Manager, and Director Technology (only two of them serve on the negotiations committee).

The KEA or Kenilworth Education Association is the teachers' union and it is comprised of everyone who is required to have a teaching license.

It is still open negotiations, so the negotiating points they would prefer that the points not be made public at this point in the hope that an agreement can be reached.

This community has worked together before, very successfully - look at COVID. Keeping the school open was a Herculean effort on behalf of the administration, teachers, parents and kids, all working together. No other school in the area was able to accomplish that.

We need to be Team Sears - not us vs them. Parents are a critical part of the team.

3. President's Report (Robin):

- A) Vote on Special Project for 2021-22: We need to spend the money we donated to the Village House Project that has been returned to us, in as similar manner as possible (improving the school). Robin and Beth spoke with the Administration and asked what they needed/wanted. The students had already proposed outdoor improvements to Jr High court yard area (outside the Link) to provide a hang out area for lunchtime - more seating, decorative walkway, green wall, etc. Another site that needs improvement is the big kids' playground - Administration's wish list includes getting rid of wood chips and replace with a rubberized surface, adding to existing equipment. Robin motioned to vote on pursuing this project; the motion was seconded by Nora Jewett and Beth Ottsen. All approved.
- B) The Heritage Tree fundraiser raised enough money to dedicate one tree for each grade (10), as well as 4 extra trees. Vote on dedicating the 4 additional trees in honor of former teachers (Caryn Friedman, Elisabeth LeBris, Elizabeth Moerschel, Gail Rodin). Robin motioned to vote, seconded by Eleanor Hussman and Cailin Davis. All approved.

4. Treasurer's Report: (Valerie): budget is looking fine. Amazon Smile began in May 2015. \$679 came to us in last August, previous quarter was \$353. The instructions from last year will be modified and added to the newsletter and communicated through class parents. Cumulative since 2015 - \$1900 from Amazon Smile

5. Vice Presidents Sub Committees: (Beth)

Book fair sold \$10,500, with revenue to us being \$2,300.

Veterans Day - Mindy Kelly - a bit more limited, due to Covid, some classroom teachers are having kids make drawings and letters for veterans. Also we are replacing the flag at school - Scouts will be involved to retire the old, and present the new. Veterans could be invited to the Flag dedication.

Bernie's Books - there are donation boxes in the library to drop off donations. Bernie's is also collecting on Nov. 16th at the Kenilworth Club, as part of the Neighbors of Kenilworth. They will be opening for volunteers in January, for 12 years and older.

6. Benefit Chairs: (Calin) April 29th is the benefit at Westmoreland Country Club - looking for donation items for the auction. Some ideas: hosting a theme party (cooking, etc); kids party; tailgate party. Benefit theme is 'A Grand Affair'. Teachers are invited to the Benefit; tickets are donated for them.

7. VP of Inclusion: (Robin provided update) Common threads is in the 2nd round, with good feedback from the teachers and kids. Polar Plunge will be in February and the next Table of 8 will be after the holidays.

8. VP of Green: (Julia) \$4762 has been raised for tree heritage and we are donating 14 trees to the Village. Currently discussing placement - 4 additional trees to represent retired staff that did not receive recognition, as they retired during the shut down, and 4th tree to a past staff member, currently in hospice.

9. VP Community Relations: (Jennifer)
Dec. 4th tree lighting and holiday bazaar
Village - budget has been approved, working on improving business session
Scamper: Jan 28th
NT - placement testing is Nov. 13t

10. Booster: (Kathy and Amy): Food pantry runs until Nov. 24th. with a prize for the winning grade. Turkey Trot will run during PE, Joey the Panther will be there, with grade level prize of 'most laps'.

Food bank: NT pantry - no Mac and cheese, no beans, please! Laundry soap, diapers, toilet paper, fruit, cereal, tuna, granola bars, crackers, canned veggies,
Principal's Council will go and take count of donations by grade. Money donations are also accepted - pay to JSSVPA

Turkey Trot volunteers - after drop off on November 19th, please let Kathy or Amy know

11. Adjourn: Robin motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Amy and Julia. Motion to adjourn approved.

NEXT MEETING: December 15th @8:20am

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Stone', written over a horizontal line.

Robin Stone, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Janet Scholl', written over a horizontal line.

Janet Scholl, Secretary