

Sand Springs Community Council

Nov. 4, 2015

MINUTES

Those present: Heather Dustin, Sara Gorham, Kerri Kingston, Melanie Smith, John Speth, Nancy Watkins, Maren Zimmerman, Melissa Skousen, RaeAnn Shelley, Sherice Whitesides

Absent: Meggan Nicholes

Visitor: Amy Madsen (Parent in Wild Horse Springs area)

We welcomed Sherice Whitesides. She wasn't aware of our previous meeting and represents the South side of Gentile Alpine neighborhood. This is her second year on the council in this capacity.

The minutes from our Sept. 9, 2015 meeting were read and approved by all. (Sara Gorham motioned to approve and RaeAnn Shelley seconded to approve the minutes.)

Maren Zimmerman did share the good news that after reviewing our numbers, we have been awarded monies for TWO new teachers in January by the district! This is a great boost, but a little too late because with the track system, classes are at different points in the curriculum and it's much more difficult to form a new class. The administration is getting creative in the solution and is still working out the details which will involve a redistribution of the current aids. More details at our next meeting.

Community Issues and Concerns:

- A. Amy Madsen addressed the council as a teacher of 18 years and a parent of students at Sand Springs. She sees both sides of the issue because of her unique situation as a current teacher at Ellison Elementary and a parent. She expressed appreciation for our administration for all they do to balance out the class sizes, recognizing that their "hands are tied" with limited resources. She discussed the unfair balance of student to teacher ratios (FTE), especially in 4th and 5th grade this year. She cited Davis School District's mission statement which states that ALL students will have equitable education and that learning comes first. She feels that the regular classes of students are at a disadvantage because they are so large (36-38 students). This is unequitable.

The unbalanced class sizes of Spanish Immersion vs. regular classes is an issue because all the kids are grouped together to figure out how many teachers our school gets. She stressed that the Spanish immersion class is guaranteed a teacher, even if the class is small, thus causing larger class sizes among the regular classes.

Mrs. Madesen is concerned that we may lose good teachers who can go to surrounding schools with smaller class sizes. Also, year round school throws the numbers out of whack. She proposed keeping the Spanish Immersion population separate from the regular classes when counting students for FTE. She said it would need to be driven by our Sand Springs Community and that as families, we need to draft a proposal to the district. We as parents need to voice our concerns and desires for our school.

In moving forward, Maren Zimmerman agreed to address this issue at her District Spanish Immersion meeting next month to see if funding can be secured, as this is a problem with other immersion programs in the district as well. She will plant seeds for change. She will also report at our next meeting. We also would like to have John Sheffield (supervisor to our school) address our council.

Amy is also willing to draft a proposal, or petition and head up our community's drive to make change. It was stressed that we as parents need to fight for this!

- B. We discussed why our school does not do Halloween costumes or a Halloween parade. Dr. Zimmerman just kept the tradition of what has been done in the past. This is not a district policy, but is decided by each school. It was brought up that parents have more of an issue about the parade than the kids. Many don't even realize other schools have parades. Ideas were discussed of allowing kids to do the parade first thing in the morning and then changing out of costumes after. Also, idea was brought up to allow costumes (no masks etc.) for the day and keep class parties or dressing up according to a character in a book. Some of the teachers don't want the distraction of costumes, recognizing that students have several opportunities now days to dress up for other community events surrounding Halloween.

It was decided to send out a survey in the spring to see what parents would rather do. Also, the council suggested that the faculty vote and that the teachers' vote would be weighted more heavily than parents' opinions in this instance.

The Davis School District Bond DID pass! With that, our school is among the 24 schools that will see some of that funding sometime in the next five years.

We discussed that we will be using Robert's Rules of Conduct in our council meetings. The link from the State website is <http://www.schoollandtrust.org/home/parents-and-councils/>

Sara, Nancy and Melanie are planning on going to the state community council training, which is tonight, Nov. 4. At North Davis Jr. High. They will report on what they learned in our next meeting.

Adjourned until January 6, 2016 at 4:00 unless meeting is needed prior to that date.