

Santa Rosa French-American Charter School – School Advisory Board (SAB)



SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: March 28, 2013

Meeting Location: SRFACS Library

Recorded By: Emmanuelle Benefield

1 ATTENDANCE

Brian Benefield
Emmanuelle Benefield
Jennifer Schwinn
Pascal Stricher
Clemence Spita
Marina Bertrand
Steve Craig
Jon Custer-Topai
Kathleen Helleskov
Najine Shariat
Karen Leung
Patti Sullivan
Andrea Faivre

2 MEETING START

Meeting Schedule Start: 6:00 p.m.
Meeting Actual Start: 6:04 p.m.
Meeting Scribe: Emmanuelle Benefield

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

E. Benefield made a motion to approve and S. Craig seconded.
Unanimous approval.

4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. Spita made a motion to approve and E. Benefield seconded.
Unanimous approval.

5 PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Faivre raised the topic of addressing the needs of French speakers in kindergarten in 2013-2014. She asked if one of the classes will have a concentration of French speakers. P. Stricher remarked that the French speakers will be dispersed between the four classes and that it will be up to the individual teachers to differentiate and meet all of the students' needs. He noted that 19 students will progress from TK and five students will move to kindergarten from Ma Petite Ecole. His thinking is that each class will benefit from having French speakers and the teachers will challenge all of the students, regardless of their level.

There were some concerns that some cases of lack of differentiation experienced this year may be relived again next year. There was feedback from the teacher perspective that there is a desire from the staff to attend workshops to continue their professional growth. Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Induction (BTSA) is one of these valued resources. It was noted that the teachers' current rotation schedule creates stress. Making adjustments to this schedule would benefit all involved. There was general agreement that the key to success in the classroom is differentiation. A comment was made that there are good practices, such as challenge groups, already in place in some classes and that the whole school could benefit from collaboration and sharing techniques such as these. P. Stricher remarked that some new, very strong teachers have already been hired and that they hold great promise for the coming year and beyond. It was suggested that the new hires be presented with a summary about the charter at the earliest opportunity so they are familiar with what attracted our community to the school.

ACTION ITEMS

Seventh Grade Schedule -

The curriculum will be taught 50% French and 50% English. This will include five hours of language arts, five hours of math, and four hours of science.

French – seven hours of French, two hours of PE, three hours of history and geography, one hour of art, and one hour of music. There will be a specialist hired for science. It was suggested that this specialist assess current sixth grade students at the earliest opportunity and prepare them for an accelerated path in the fall.

K. Leung remarked that some of the discipline issues distract from learning. She made it clear that she is frustrated and lacking confidence in the direction the sixth grade class is going. There was a comment that there is an absence of healthy academic competition in the classroom at this grade level. There was a thought that there may be resources within the district in terms of providing tools to the teachers to better prepare them for dealing with their particular grade level. There was discussion about raising the general expectation for discipline in the school. A comment was made that there is an opportunity to make a statement on the subject at the state of the school event in May. There was general agreement that there are significant advantages to raising the expectation level now to prepare for a better beginning to the next

school year. The feeling is that there will be multiple benefits if the decorum level is raised uniformly throughout the school.

There was a question about the opportunity for sixth grade students to take the UC Berkeley math test. This test is usually given in the spring and used as a placement tool for the fall. It was said that at Hidden Valley Elementary the teachers prepare their students for the test all year long.

Furniture for upper grades – P. Stricher met with J. Bruneman and new furniture will be ordered and arrive before the end of the school year.

Meeting with 6th grade parents – P. Stricher said that he will host a morning coffee for sixth grade parents in early May. He likes the idea of improving communication by hosting this type of meeting. In the future, there may be regular “Coffee with the Principal” meetings for all parents.

There was a comment that there are textbook gaps that need to be filled for the sixth grade. J. Schwinn noted that there is a legal obligation to provide the proper texts for each subject. P. Stricher said that the needed books will be ordered. Science will be taught in English next year and that will be considered when placing the order.

It was noted that while all of the pacing guides were created, there is more to do on this front. It will be addressed at a coming meeting.

Update on French lunch – There was a recent meeting with Bryan Nyberg, the director of child nutritional services for the District and the person responsible for creating the lunch program described in the charter. B. Nyberg met with Doug Bower, assistant superintendent, this morning to discuss this subject. Next week there is a meeting with the school district, including M. Click, G. Eagan, A. Guzman to prepare a proposal for making the lunch program a reality. N. Shariat spoke on behalf of the Foundation’s Nutrition Committee and said that with only 50% participation, the program can be profitable. A proposal has been submitted to D. Bower for his consideration. The program has been broken down into different segments, including some of the physical requirements for the cafeteria, the food itself, etc. in order to better meet the challenges. It was noted that if the nutrition program is carried out as desired, there may be an opportunity to treat a portion of that period as instruction time.

There were comments about the lack of decorum in the cafeteria during lunch. It was noted that this is an ongoing safety issue despite the heroic efforts of Betty Malfati, the lunchtime supervisor. Even with help from volunteers, the environment is far from the goal outlined in the charter. Among the problems in the room is volume, which is nearly

unbearable. P. Stricher said that recent communication to teachers regarding behavior in the cafeteria is already paying dividends. It was suggested that bringing in paraeducators to help supervise recess and lunch would be beneficial, and that the Foundation may be able to help in this effort. There was some discussion regarding the teachers' schedule and ensuring that they are getting their required lunch break. P. Stricher explained the schedule in detail and ensured that the requirements are indeed being met. The teacher representatives were in agreement. It was suggested that teachers walk their students directly to their lunch tables – this has proven effective in other schools. It was also suggested that having long hand washing stations outside the cafeteria would be beneficial.

Special Survey Follow-up – It was noted that the summary of the special survey was not shared with SAB members prior to distribution, as had been planned. There was general agreement that the board will work to avoid this in the future.

Spring Survey – There was discussion about the prospect of conducting the “regular” spring survey after recently doing the special parent survey. There was general agreement that it would not be best to move forward with a new survey at this point. There was also general agreement that having a regular, annual survey has many benefits. It was suggested that we may want to consider outsourcing but cost would be a factor. It was agreed that we should revisit the survey in the fall, with the idea of releasing a survey to the parents in March 2014.

School Uniforms – As of today, we have reached the 88% participation requirement. Tomorrow we will know if we have reached the 61% requirement of support to move forward with uniforms. If uniforms receive the support of parents, P. Stricher stated that the next step would be to create a uniform committee with representatives from teachers, front office, parents, etc. It was suggested that ShoSho Urfer, a Foundation board member, be on the committee to lend her expertise. Elif's documents researching the subject should be given to the committee for their consideration. Those results showed that the white and blue colors are most accessible in terms of cost and availability. E. Benefield agreed to be at the front office tomorrow to open the results box and serve as a notary. By Monday, there will be a broadcast message containing the count, and should the vote be in favor, it will include an invitation to attend the first meeting to create a uniform committee. That first meeting is likely to be held on Wednesday, April

10. The invitation will make clear that joining the committee will require attending a minimum of three meetings.

Earthquake Preparedness – S. Craig reported that he has created a draft of a letter that will be forwarded to P. Stricher. He reviewed some of the points and there was general agreement that the points would be well received by the district. The letter will be sent to J. Bruneman in approximately four weeks. It was suggested that school board members be copied on the letter.

Vacation study packets – There is plan in place. If a student is going to be out of the office for at least five days, and they notify the school at least one week in advance, they qualify for the plan. This plan retains ADA dollars for the school. It was also noted that excellent record-keeping is critical because auditors check for accuracy.

Other Business:

There was a question about the process of electing SAB members for the next school year. We will be discussing this at the next meeting by reviewing the bylaws outlined in the charter.

6 MEETING END

Meeting Schedule End: 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Actual End: 9:32 p.m.

7 NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting Location: SRFACS Library

Next Meeting Date: April, 17, 2013

Next Meeting Time: 6:00 p.m.