

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



## ***SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES***

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Meeting Date: April 17, 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  
Michele Custer-Topai  
Kathleen Helleskov  
Stacey Murray  
Devin Daly  
Lara Daly  
Jenny Bachelder  
Teresa Giovannoni  
Vicki Russo  
Krystin Beaver  
Kevin McGee  
Katee Pendergast-McGee  
Raafia Mazhar  
Andrea Faivre

## **2 MEETING START**

Meeting Schedule Start: 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting Actual Start: 6:08 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**

K. Helleskov made a motion to approve and C. Spita seconded.  
Unanimous approval.

## **5 PUBLIC COMMENT**

A concern was voiced regarding recess time for the 2013-2014 school

year. The parent has observed recess this year and feels that the play times for the older children should be staggered from the younger children. There was particular concern about the lack of supervision when children visit the restroom between the kindergarten and TK rooms. It was suggested that the concern would be even greater next year with the addition of two more kindergarten classes. There was additional concern expressed about the jump from two to four kindergarten classes next year, with regard to academics. A parent suggested that the children leaving TK stay together for their kindergarten year so they are able to continue learning at their level rather than essentially waiting for the new arrivals to “catch up.” Another parent asked whether it was feasible to stagger the recess times considering that there will be approximately 100 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. P. Stricher announced that there is a new agreement for a bell schedule that, while not officially approved, will allow totally separate recess periods for the K and TK classes. P. Stricher said that the lunch program will be in two shifts and there will be a minimum of 30 or 35 minutes per shift. There is an upcoming meeting with the Foundation’s Nutrition Committee to discuss how the lunch is actually served. J. Schwinn said that there is potential for funds to be raised through the Foundation to help with lunchtime supervisors.

A parent asked about the school policy for allowing transfers without experience with the French language. P. Stricher detailed the school policy, which is unique to immersion schools.

A parent echoed the comments of another and said that she would like the children to be grouped in similar language levels. P. Stricher said that it will be up to the kindergarten teachers to differentiate.

Another parent who is also a high school French teacher said that in his experience, split-level classes are a difficult challenge for teachers. He spoke regarding a movement to group these students to take advantage of the skills that they already have. “Heritage speakers” are grouped to respect their level of language acquisition. A point was made that children who are not challenged in the classroom can begin to misbehave or digress in other ways.

Another TK parent said that she brought her child to SRFACS for the challenge and she is concerned that that will not be achieved if her child, who has some behavioral issue, becomes bored. She expressed concern that if this were to happen, his issues may return.

Another TK parent suggested that the children who already have a year worth of experience would have to mix with children who enter school for the first time in kindergarten, not to mention the issues related to understanding and learning a new language.

P. Stricher spoke regarding all of the other elements that can be learned while the new language learners are becoming comfortable with their new language.

It was mentioned that dispersing the TK students will present a serious challenge for the teachers faced with classrooms with vastly different levels of French.

There was additional conversation about the bathroom supervision and how best to resolve a known safety concern. P. Stricher said that he would pursue funding an additional teacher to supervise morning and afternoon recesses.

P. Stricher spoke regarding the possibility of forming “breakout groups” for students with greater French fluency. This could be achieved at multiple grade levels. He noted that it would be easy to organize.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### SAB election process

There was a review of the School Advisory Board bylaws outlined in the charter. There was discussion about which positions would be retained and which would be up for election. According to the charter, the principal and three founding members retain their positions in part to ensure a smooth transition. P. Stricher said that he would include details about the election process in an upcoming letter to the parents. It was suggested that J. Custer-Topai write a draft asking for interested parents to speak up in advance of the election on May 9 at the Spring Open House.

### Campus Cleanliness

It was reported that there have been an increasing number of complaints regarding odors coming from hallway bathrooms. The lack of blue recycle bins and garbage cans in the breezeways is also an issue. It was also mentioned that the cafeteria tables are not clean for the second service. P. Stricher noted that the custodian only has five minutes in between services and there is frequently not adequate time to clean all of the tables. There was additional discussion about the general cleanliness of the classrooms. There were different examples described of rooms that are routinely not cleaned to a reasonable standard. P. Stricher said that he has an upcoming meeting with Jennie Bruneman and he will relay these concerns.

### Update on Uniform Process

P. Stricher spoke regarding the school uniform meeting that was held

recently. By the first week of May, the specifics will be announced. The early decisions were to have navy blue bottoms and white or navy blue tops. There were considerations made for families who will need financial assistance. The committee will meet again in May to discuss this in greater detail. This uniform will have to be presented to the school board for approval on Wednesday, May 8. There was a suggestion that the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders be involved in the process so as to maximize their “buy-in.”

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Follow-up

K. Helleskov spoke regarding the establishment of curriculum partners from other successful district schools. At the beginning of the year, she took this step after meeting with the district. There was a feeling that further action in this regard may not be appropriate. She suggested that the teachers themselves be part of the conversation. S. Craig spoke regarding the concerns raised by the parent who spoke at the last SAB meeting and suggested that steps be taken to avoid attrition going into 7<sup>th</sup> grade. It was suggested that a 6<sup>th</sup> grade parent meeting be held as was agreed upon in the March meeting. P. Stricher said that there is a general parent “coffee meeting” in early May and he suggested that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade parent meeting be held the evening of the open house. P. Stricher will schedule this meeting. K. Helleskov suggested (2:39) that Ms. Williams from the Accelerated Charter, either come to the school to help with an English language arts assessment to prepare students for the fall, or have Mrs. Henicle visit the Accelerated Charter. The goal being to determine what can be done to maximize productivity in the remaining weeks of the school year.

#### Sixth Grade Assessment

There was discussion about how to assess students to help them prepare, during the summer months, for an accelerated path in the fall. J. Custer-Topai is going to be forwarding some resources to S. Craig for review. It was also mentioned that Kahn Academy works well for motivated students. iXL is another tool that works well for some students. J. Schwinn will forward information to P. Stricher for review.

#### Tracking Volunteer Hours

There was discussion about SAB’s role in this process. The charter document was reviewed and it is clearly this board’s responsibility to establish and monitor volunteer hours. It was suggested that we use the Charter School for the Arts as a model. B. Benefield will research and provide an update in the May meeting.

Handwashing stations

P. Stricher will be meeting with Jennie Bruneman on Friday and he will raise this question. He will also be asking about the options for outdoor lunch seating.

District Resources for Grade Specific Training

J. Schwinn spoke regarding the particular needs of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades teachers. There is a particular dynamic at this grade level and it can be a great benefit to have resources available for these teachers.

## **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: May 15, 2013

Next Meeting Time: 6:00 p.m.