Parent Leadership Council
Meeting Minutes: 1/8/25

Attendees
Amanda Henderson, DVE
Audrey Welch, DEE
Kyle Dillon, DEE
Paula Hemminger, VFE
Leilani Howland, LRE
Jenn Dery, EHE
Jenny Serrato Paredes, EHE
Patricia Tamisiea EHE and VP for SHS Theater Booster
Lauren Beach, EHE
Heather Forbis, EHE
Janelle Hizzey, MMS
Sara O'Donnell, Executive Director of Student Services
Allison Hollingsworth, District Communications
Ashli Austin, DVE
Kylie Fossum, BLE VP and non-region director of state PTA
Bree Hampton, EHE
Laurie Dent, Superintendent
Thu Ament, Deputy Superintendent
Guest: Coach Henderson from Princeton recruiting SBLSD athletes
Elle Warmuth, District Communications

Superintendent remarks

We believe in kids with whatever their path after high school. Referring to athletic recruiter from Prinston attending as a guest.

Question for the group: In March we're planning a visit to the Skills Center. They can accommodate from 9-11, but not at 10. On March 12. Does this work? Meeting at the SC at 9? Jen: It's difficult for those who drop off at 8:45 at school.

Thumbs up: Pick a different date/time to meet at the Skills Center. Stay tuned for options.

Thank you for making sure kids had what they needed for the holidays. Festive, fun, books in vending machines, etc.

Sara O'Donnell, Executive Director of Student Services
Presentation on Attendance Initiative

Connects with Strategic Plan Goal 2: Nurtured, Engaged and Empowered

When do absences become a problem?
Satisfactory: 9 or fewer absence
Warning: 10-17 days
Chronic: 18 or more

Start noticing when students are "at risk" missing about 9 days a year. Why is that? What can we do to support chronic and severely chronically absent students?

Chronic absenteeism vs Truancy
Difference:
Chronic = excused absences, focus on reason for missing
Truancy = only unexcused absences and may require legal action based on law for attendance (last thing we want to do)

If doctor or counseling appointments are ongoing, it's OK. It's still marked as an absence, but it's not bad. We ask what's the support you need? Does a kid need a 504 plan (medical condition with access to education)? Reality is that it's difficult to get appointments outside of the school day. Start with your teacher, then school counselor or nurse if there's some ongoing issues.

It could also be a bullying issue if absent -- in that case, contact the principal or assistant principal.

Bree: Feedback for admin team who is writing back on excuse forms. They'll say it's going to put them on the chronic list. Rubs parents the wrong way. It'd be best if staff came across as more caring. Example, gone for a wedding. Comes back as cold.

Prior to the pandemic we had 92% attending school. Post pandemic, it's gone down to 64% (21-22) and 69% (22-23). OSPI hasn't listed the average for last school year.

Why we're focusing on attendance is because we need it to improve it. We know there are struggles post pandemic. Goal is to keep increasing these numbers. If a kid isn't sick or not on a trip, get them to school.

We ask what supports are needed? How do we help families connect with supports if they can't do it on their own?

Question: What are experts saying the reason for the drop after the pandemic?
A: More illness -- Flu, COVID, RSV. Some are mental health absences. Physical and mental health absences are excused.

Laurie: Some research says that coming to school is a routine/habit. And kids got out of the routines (pandemic). They got out of the habit, it was easy to stay home. There's a social side.

Marilee: Some kids might be pushing back on their parents.

Attendance is a predictor of drop-out/graduation rates.

District efforts: welcoming, positive, definitions/impact, celebrations/recognitions, communication, identify barriers to good attendance when we notice concerning trends

Supports: Understand the problem/barrier -- physical, mental, housing, HIB, clothing, behavior, alternative setting need? Help with referrals -- wrap-around services.

Question: What do you do as a parent of a child you know to be absent, but don't want to butt in, but want to help. She's willing to go pick up a child and bring them to school. How do I do that? It may not be well received. How can we help the district in this sense?

A: Offer to help the family. With a neighborly feel. We can't set anything up. Notice it in your neighborhood and be friendly.

A: Leilani, LRE -- we're a military family. Would it be possible at a building level to create something like a meal train -- we have designated x, y, z. Community, being neighborly. Maybe not feasible. Use people who are vetted and background checked.

Marilee: Are there some school-based parent charges who are doing this - check nationwide. Would have to be a parent group, not the district.

Questions to PLC from Sara:

Has the district communicated the importance of regular attendance?
How can the district collaborate better with families to improve attendance?

Patricia: If you go to a medical doctor, they try to work with the school schedule.
If it's the dentist or driver's training, they won't. It's a culture here. Not like this in California.

Patricia: Yes, we've communicated, but the message is getting to those who are already getting their kid there. They then feel pressure to get 100% attendance even when kids are sick. How do we get the communication to those who need to hear it?

Patricia: Look into how many of these issues are because of anxiety. Not dig deep on the phone, but find another way to find out the why.

Jenn: How do our kids hear about this? We open our teacher email first before the school or district. Maybe the teachers say something and do celebrations. Celebrate in smaller increments and only within the classroom.

Jenny: We have to be careful. Her kid is anxious if she picks up 5 minutes before the bell. We have to let our children know that if they're sick, it's OK, not their fault.

Amanda: DVE does monthly awards for attendance and they award a class. It takes a while before you call the shots and are confident on when your kid needs to stay home. It's impossible to find an appointment. Husband works in construction and can't take vacations in summer and doesn't want to go to Disneyland during spring break when everyone else is. Do we lose funding when attendance changes? No. Who decides on days of week of school and hours of school. A: We have to meet a certain amount of minutes in a school year. We have to meet basic ed minutes required by the state.

Kylie: Important that the comms coming from school or admin when we reach out is personal to the situation to the family. If we know the student has been sick for 10 days, we're contacting them trying to work through the problem directly. Having the communication be more personal than a blanket comms that goes to everyone. Otherwise, parents can become defensive rather than how to be better. Be more personable. She knows it's difficult, but important for partnership with families.

Sara: There are state requirements for attendance and the letters we need to send out. We'll do compliance, but we want to really understand what's going on with kids and what supports can we offer.

Elle Warmuth, SBLSD Communications Director
Scoop 320: What is your honest feedback on Scoop 320? How can we communicate more about Scoop 320? What would you like to see?

Elle: Do you remember getting this in the mail?
Generally people said yes, they remembered getting this in the mail.

Kylie: Do not remember maybe because of the time of year it was sent out. Suggested changing the timing to be pre-Thanksgiving so that more parents are able to focus on it. There is a lot of communication during the holidays that could be missed.

Jenny: Mentioned other people pick up their mail so they didn't see it but they remember seeing it in our district newsletter (the e-version).

Leilani: Many people, including older neighbors, like how the magazine is tangible.

Amanda: Link to the high school sports is great.

Jenn: Having the bond information on the back cover is great because people are asking about when they will start building the new middle school. Elle says this will be a main communication tool about the bond.

One member mentioned that for people that don't have children, this is going to be very helpful to stay up to date on what the school district is doing.

Patricia: Suggestion: A little spotlight about why it's important to educate everyone who is not involved in the school district would be great. Even if it's just a little fact. Example: "If our schools are doing well, everyone does well." In every edition (maybe on the front), make the connection." You make them feel like part of the community with something like this to go to everyone.

Marilee: A bigger QR code on the back (if you need this in an alternative format). For visually impaired families (senior citizens homes)

Suggestion: Go to senior citizens luncheon to share Scoop

School report-outs

DVE - Amanda: Read a thon. Did our own, $9,000. REad over 51,000 minutes. Successful book fair. Did a penguin patch. Starting to get an art docent program kicked off. Chick fil a spirit night in February.

DEE - Audrey: Winder Funderland, PTA partnered to buy supplies for winter activities; Movie night rented Chalet theater in Enumclaw, rented Despicable Me; getting ready for annual dance in Feb; art docent program planning for art walk in May; plan ahead for district art fair.

VFE - Paula: Busy fall, successful walk a thon; purchasing a bike program, purchase a class set of 30 balance bikes, mainly for kinders to teach to ride bikes; book fair; family holiday craft night with about 400 people; looking ahead to donut event with kids in morning with modern band performance; getting art docent for district art show and Community Cultural Celebration, and art family night. Fundraiser in March.

LRE - Leilani: Met with board to sit down with them. Kicked off ornament night, holiday shop with holiday pals, donated money for kids; book fair; lunch with loved one coming soon.

Leilani personal: They chose to move to be in LRE based on what someone/teacher wrote on social media. Maybe implementing a snack pantry. Started purchasing snacks for third graders

and family has helped out. She hopes that maybe this can be a budget line for LRE. Eager and excited to focus more on community engagement and what are they looking for.

EHE - Jen: 10 days of spirit days before winter break. Kids loved it. Winter Wonderland was great; did BINGO with prizes. Mr Dave (custodian) called the BINGO numbers and kids loved it. Craft area, choir performed, super jump came with obstacle. Dine out nights, Thunderbirds, ball pit coming, staff appreciation week, book fair, yearbook, spring fundraiser, 5th grade party; pushing to help with PTA for next year as mass exodus of 5th grade parents.

EHE - Patricia: Spring book fair trying to raise funds for book vending machine.
SHS Theater: Performing the Outsiders in February.

MMS - Janelle: Plugging away with staff appreciation stuff. Staff lunch in December; getting more promo out for staff grants, money set aside for different staff projects; put couple thousand dollars to field day. Gives money to the counseling office for snacks for kids who come in.

Leilani question: Can nurse apply for a grant -- maybe make period packs.

BLE - Kylie: Working closely with the Title 1 team and partnered to make our Title 1 nights even bigger. Brings in more families. Working on starting planning for the end of year carnival and jog a thon.

Announcements

Marilee will email info about:
- Community Unsung Hero Awards
- Send reminders about STEM Fair and Community Cultural Celebration

Laurie will follow up with possible dates for the Skills Center.

Marilee: Looking for alternative venue for the next couple of meetings. Would the group have any interest in meeting at the Family Center? Yes.

Aubrey: Library space may be available if not being used for testing.
BLE library might have availability.