

## SCOTTSDALE PARENT COUNCIL

### GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 14, 2011

### DESERT MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

Meeting called to order by President, Heather Heroldt at 9:40

#### **Welcome and announcements –**

January SPC Meeting - The January General meeting is scheduled for January 18 at 9:30. It will be a Legislative Field Trip meeting at the Capitol to meet our legislators and we may do a Capitol tour. The SPC Board will also do a drive to sign people up for ALIS, the Arizona Legislative Information System. This system allows you to make comments online which will be part of the public record and read in session. The ability to do this is a very powerful tool. Comments can be simple as a “like” click. This system creates a tally for Legislators to know how constituents feel about things. Legislators often do not hear from their constituents on issues. You must sign up at a computer down at the Capitol.

Proxies - If you are unable to make it that day, proxies will be available on the SPC website by Jan 1. One of our board members will do the data entry from the proxies. Please have a designated person bring any proxies along on January 18. District employees are also allowed to do this, but it would be better to use a personal email address rather than SUSD email

SPC Board Positions for 2011/2012 - Francesca Thomas is the Nominating Committee Chair and is looking to fill openings on the SPC Executive Board for next year. Please contact Francesca if you are interested or if you have recommendations. Her goal is to have a board slate by March.

Resignation; VP – Legislation Our VP of Legislation, Sherri Smith Dodgeson has had to resign from her position. Francesca Thomas has consented to fill in for the rest of the year in an informal capacity. She is not a registered lobbyist but will relay information to the board.

#### **Ask Dr. Dana**

Shelly Mowrey of Drug Free AZ presented in Dr. Dana’s absence today. The Arizona Youth Survey shows use of marijuana is increased in middle schools. Alcohol consumption is decreasing but marijuana is increasing. AYS will again be distributed to 8<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders in March or April. Marijuana use is increasing and Prop 203 has passed. Prescription drugs are also a problem, and now kids are seeing Marijuana as a drug since doctors can legally prescribe it. We will see some new numbers on this in the survey. 90% of addicted adults started in their teens.

*Q to Dr. Milissa Sackos – There are many campaigns for alcohol use/abuse. Should we shift our focus to marijuana? What are we doing/not doing as a district? What will they do in PE to counter misconceptions on the part of students?*

School assemblies are powerful tools, but a 1 time assembly does not have the strongest impact in terms of student decision making. Guiding Good Choices is a preventative program and is hosted by middle schools for parents and students to teach how to say “no” and the dangers substance use presents. This program, targeted to parents and students in grades 4-8, has an impact 10 years after attending and covers drugs, alcohol and stress management. These programs are 5 weeks in duration, 2 hours per week. Future sessions begin:

January 10 – Cocopah – 6-8pm

February 21 – Desert Canyon Middle School

*Q: Parents aren't coming.*

Mojave had a great turnout but Ingleside was not well attended. The program may have not been communicated well and also needed a parent champion.

*Q: Are you incorporating this into professional development for teachers?*

Yes – there is a grant that will provide training at any school for in- service day or parent nights. They can focus on either parents or teachers –whatever your need is. They look at what is triggering use in children and how parents and teachers can identify these triggers.

*Q: How often does this happen in our district?*

SUSD has not dedicated an in service day for this purpose in recent years. The in-service day in December, 2012 for all staff will be on the topics of student support and safety. There is yearly training for Principals, Assistant Principals, Psychologists and Social Workers who receive training and then pass information learned on to their staff.

Drug Free AZ is preparing a Principal's packet on what to do when a parent is called for a child's drug use on campus. They will also be holding a webinar.

## **Dr. Dave McNeil – Understanding School Labelling Part 2**

We are 5 months into the new system of labelling schools and we are still trying to understand the complicated formula. Some history:

In 2002 the Arizona Department of Education created AZ Learns. All states were held accountable to grade and ranking. The labels were Excelling, Highly Performing, Performing Plus, Performing, Underperforming, and Failing. These labels satisfied No Child Left Behind.

When State Superintendent John Huppenthal came in, he liked the Florida plan which graded schools. There was also a lot of documentation and literature on the success of the Tennessee and Colorado plans which also graded schools. John Huppenthal merged these 3 state plans and came up with the AZ plans, but the old labels still lingered on. John Huppenthal agreed he should have

eliminated the labels immediately since this caused confusion along with the letter grades. For example, a school that was previously deemed Excelling may now also equal to a Grade B. This made no sense to people.

We now see 2 state accountability standards, however this should be the last year of labels. We will move straight to letter grades according to the state Dept of Ed. Schools are reacting to state legislation. Although adherence to 1 plan is forthcoming, we are currently still accountable to 3 areas:

1. Federal - NCLB –Previously called the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, includes AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). This is the Federal Arm which holds schools accountable and says that 100% of schools must pass by NCLB standards by 2014.

Last week President Obama said NCLB needs to go away and AYP is bad for kids since so many (60% in AZ) do not pass. It is not good for schools, teachers or kids. The formula increases every year and sets higher and higher standards. There are about 300 different ways you can't make AYP.

In April, John Huppenthal will submit a waiver asking to be exempt from AYP. 9 states have done this and have been granted exemption.

2. State – Labels –This is the last year of labels, but rumours exist that they want to get rid of them now to diminish confusion. Formulas to determine labels are very different than formulas to determine letter grades.
3. State – Letter Grades – 50% of this formula is based on how kids compete against like kids across the state.

-1/2 of the school letter grade is based on the percent of kids that meet/exceed AIMS standards. Schools receive points on this.

-1/2 is based on student growth (Student Growth Model) - This looks at how each child competes and ranks against similarly ranked students across the state. This number changes constantly depending on how each specific child tests.

-Lower ranked kids are counted twice – in the top half because they do not meet/exceed AIMS, and also counted in the Student Growth Model.

The State Department of Education decided to limit the number of possible A grades, along the lines with the number of Excelling schools from the previous year.

*Q: Heather had read an article that said Huppenthal wants to redo AIMS. The movement will be toward common curriculum. A new test will come in but there will be a gap on things AIMS covered that the new test does not cover.*

*Q: Why are we doing all this and changing standards? Originally this was part of Arizona's attempt to receive Federal Race to the Top funds. We did not get that, but the ADE decided to go with the new plan anyway. Florida did receive Race to the Top funds, but they succeeded because they fund full day kindergarten and preschool and their student preparation is stronger.*

## **Dr. Milissa Sackos – Making College Happen**

The Making College Happen Team has prepared a program targeted to middle school parents to cover academic and financial challenges early on. The team includes Chris Carter, John Lifton, Dr. Mitch Simmons – Director of CTE and Mark Bunker from EVIT (not in attendance today). They gave an overview of the topics they discuss in their presentation.

Chris Carter – Accountant and Financial Planner. His discussions focus on college costs, why to start planning for college now, and what criteria to look at in selecting a college. He discusses how colleges accept students and what they look at when giving out financial aid. There is \$155 billion in available financial aid and 21 million students. That is an average of \$783 per student in financial aid. He can help structure your assets so you can qualify for financial aid.

*Q: What is your advice to parents about filling out FASFA financial aid forms?* It is a free form and he encourages everyone to fill it out to see what you are eligible for. Only 60% of parents fill this out. Most do not fill it out because it is very complicated. Chris can meet with parents and can help walk them through this form.

*Q: Can you fill out FASFA before your child's senior year?* Schools use financial information from child's junior year. You can complete this form in January of your child's junior year. You can also adjust the form later if you put estimated information.

*Q: How do schools look at retired parents?* Schools look at both parent and student assets. Parental assets are only assessed at 5.6% compared to students whose assets are assessed at 25%. Also equity in your primary residence is not counted in financial aid eligibility.

The misnomer is that you need to be on free lunch to get financial aid. The truth is schools want to be considered generous with aid giving in order to attract more students.

John Lifton – SCC Director of ESL and Honors Program – He is trying to get information out to parents on the benefits of the SCC Honors program and he is available to come to parent nights. Phone or email him – 480-423-6447. The Honors program is open to anyone in top 15% or who tests in to that level. They will get a full ride on tuition for first 2 years at SCC aside from fees. There is also an honors achievement award. There are 1100 students on campus entitled to this scholarship but not all are taking advantage. This program is also available in Maricopa community college system.

Dual enrolment between high school/college – Taking these classes is a good preparation piece for kids going into college.

Dr Mitch Simmons – Career and Technical Education – Programs are developed by state labor needs. They offer dual enrolment and also require multiple exit points to attain certificate, associates or bachelors degree. This has been expanded and you can almost leave high school with an associates degree.

*Q: Where can you learn which high schools offer which programs?* Go to CTE website at

www.cte.susd.org

*Q: The State cut funding for 9<sup>th</sup> graders for CTE last year. How was it adapted?* Most programs were set up for grades 10-12 anyway. They had previously included 9<sup>th</sup> grade because they felt that many 9<sup>th</sup> graders were ready.

His Goal is to help middle school parents and students to start thinking about it. They need to look at what trajectory of courses to take and also financial preparedness.

*Q: How can we get middle school teachers/staff to know more about high school requirements?* There will be a more coordinated effort with Milissa's approach.

*Q: Could we do Making college Happen presentation at 8<sup>th</sup> grade High School night?* Yes

Beginning in mid-January we will provide transportation for all 8<sup>th</sup> graders to go to high schools during the day for classes.

**Dr David Peterson** – We have a \$59 million bond for middle school and we are seeing interest rate of 3.5%. Construction at the various schools is going well. The Mohave Annex is complete and gives a lot of flexibility for Special Education, Title Program, Career Education, Curriculum, Student Services and Homebound. They are now all in one location. There are also training rooms. The Yavapai multipurpose room/kitchen is complete and in use.

Academics – First Lego League competition was held at ASU.

Challenges – They have quickly hired the former coach at Pepperdine for Chaparral Basketball.

*Q: Could a booster club pay for a coach or on the side?* No. After 1<sup>st</sup> of year Dr. Peterson will meet with booster clubs to discuss what guidelines they have.

*Q:* Most booster clubs are technically sub groups of PTOs as they use the PTO 501C3 numbers and require a PTO board member and treasurer to be part of their activities.

Online classes – Dr. Peterson is doing a presentation on this and has 900 students in online classes. Outside vendors cause concern with rigor and quality.

*Q: Do you have goals as new Superintendent?* – Yes.

1. First is the strategic plan and getting it implemented this year.
2. Annual teacher and administration evaluations.
3. Online education and BYOT.
4. Making sure the High School graduation rate is higher than rest of state.
5. Balanced budget.
6. Employees and salaries since they have had no raises for 4 years.

7. Adopting Common Core standards. Kindergarten has begun this and the teachers following t have completed all things taught in entire year last year. Next year 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers will have to ramp up curriculum.

8. Reorganization at the Ed Center. Dr. Peterson will not backfill his old position. He will keep people in same roles and he will do adjustments for Middle School and High School as there are 2 different directors. That should be one person. He is also realigning some reporting.

*Q: Is there a possibility of arranging parent training for School Fusion, possibly by learning community? Tom Clark will come to the February SPC meeting. Yes – Also we are changing Fusion to MYSUSD where you will have one sign on and have access to all your kids.*

*Q: Follow up on the bullying prevention program? Where does it stand? The new policy mirrors the district substance abuse policy where parents have to attend training sessions along with the students. That will be implemented.*

Dr. Dana held her first Parent Prevention Committee Meeting at the end of November. She will hold another one in January and SPC will communicate that date/location.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Dorsch, Recording Secretary