



Cooper Landing School Parent Advisory Committee

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Cooper Landing School PAC/Site Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 19, 2017

The mission of Cooper Landing School is to provide a positive learning atmosphere, placing the highest emphasis on academic achievement and service to the community, while maintaining a balance between school, family and community activities. This will be accomplished by meaningful communication and collaboration to utilize all available talents and resources.

Meeting Called to Order at 12:31pm

Roll Call

Doug Hayman, Kathy Recken, Heather Harrison, Laura Johnson, Tommy Gossard, Virginia Morgan, Susanna LaRock, Jessica Larsen, Angel Bond

Approval of Agenda

Heather asked to add to the agenda an item to address concessions at the softball tournament, per Carrie Williams' request. It was added to the agenda under new business.

Heather also asked to add discussion of the possibility of a river rafting trip with Drifter's Lodge. It was also added under new business.

The amended agenda was approved.

Review and Approval of Minutes and Action Items

All action items had been addressed, the minutes were approved as written.

Addition of New Members

No potential new members were present.

Principal's Report

Mr. Hayman advised us that the state legislature is reviewing a 5% cut to education, although nothing is final yet. He strongly recommends that we all individually get online and read about

HB 96 and other proposed legislation affecting schools. For our general information, there is a portion of HB 96 (this portion has been tabled for further discussion next session) regarding consolidating schools that are under their enrollment capacity. Our legislators are aware that these are difficult topics and they are expecting input, so he recommends that we do provide feedback. In fact, the proposed legislation about school funding is in constant flux, so he recommends subscribing to updates to stay informed. This can usually be done through the newsletter or website of individual legislators. (Virginia later advised that subscribing to Great Alaska Schools is a great way to stay in touch with what's happening in regards to the state budget and schools. Sign up at www.greatalaskaschools.com.)

Mr. Hayman and Mr. Gossard were both asked to be on the ELA (Language Arts) committee for the district, and he turned it down for both of them. Regardless, he offered on-call availability to the committee from either of them, in order to provide input from small schools, as most of the committee's time is spent on issues for large schools. Although Mr. Gossard is a huge asset on such a committee, the out-of-classroom time commitments (regular day-long meetings) are not worth it. As an on-call advisor, he can provide quality input in just a few minutes when it is specifically needed.

We will be seeing some things from the district about Personalized Learning. Its focus is to create every opportunity for every student, since one size does not fit all. Mr. Gossard is already great at implementing personalized learning strategies, but the district is contracting a company to help organize the approaches and applications that teachers use for personalized learning. Mr. Gossard will be getting some additional professional development on these techniques and strategies to add to his already proficient skills and knowledge. Susanna will be sending us information, shared with her by Mr. Hayman, regarding the Personalized Learning efforts underway in the district.

Mr. Hayman also reported that we got another PolyCom system, thanks to Mr. Gossard continually bringing up the issue and following through. They are currently brainstorming spaces to use it. This will be very helpful as the students age and need more individual PolyCom access.

Teacher's Report

Kasitsna Bay was a great field trip, with sunny weather, quality learning, great people. The facility was very easy and comfortable to use. They utilized lots of small groups and individualized attention, spurring on and encouraging interest shown by students. The students were separated into age groups which worked very well. The chaperones were critical, and there were just enough for good management of students, etc. Two nights was just right, although we did have some extra food left. All the perishable food was eaten and some of the packaged items can be returned - we can go over the receipts and returns at another point.

Marcus Mueller was here yesterday, going over natural resources in our area, such as firewood and tapping birch trees. He was impressed and wants to come back and work on a community project with the students in the fall, something with forestry.

Testing is Thursday (tomorrow), Friday and Monday for grades 3-8. Breakfast will be served to all students at 8:30 on these days. Expecting all to go smoothly.

On April 27th Debbie Harris will do her last art visit.

May 3rd is kindergarten orientation, also an early release day. We fully expect four new kindergarteners, possibly six.

May 10th, Pam Skogstad from Hope School will be bringing a Japanese student to the school for an art project at 1pm.

Mr. Gossard did find an opportunity for swimming lessons as brought up in the last meeting. Moose Pass School has swimming lessons in Seward lined up May 15-19. They still have an opening for ten additional students in their group. Because of our artists in the school May 17-19, only Monday and Tuesday are available for Cooper Landing School to go along on the lessons. The ten students would be chosen based on parental input about who most needs lessons. Mr. Gossard inquired if we are interested in committing to those ten spots for just the two days. After some discussion, it was decided that just two days doesn't accomplish much as far as swimming education, even though some students really need swimming lessons. Because Mr. Gossard would not be going, this would require a lot of parental help with rides and such. It was decided that as a whole, the school will not commit to these lessons. It was noted that individual students may be able to accompany Moose Pass to these lessons with the support and transportation of their parents, if it were desired on an individual level.

TBA Theatre will send three theatre artists to the school May 17-19. Because of the number, accommodations are needed. **AI:** Heather will inquire about providing lodging from Drifter's Lodge. Jessica will also ask the homeowners she works with about complementary lodging. After these resources are exhausted (if they are), we can inquire of The Hutch and Sunrise Inn.

May 22nd is the Author's Tea and Kindergarten Graduation. **AI:** Rumors had earlier agreed to do video. They need follow up.

Mr. Gossard has been up to Senior Housing to assess the community service project for the gardens there. Once the dirt thaws in the existing beds, he will have the students go up and help dig the dirt out so the beds can be repaired. After repairs, they can go back and replace the dirt. This is likely something that will happen from 2pm to 3pm, looking at digging out dirt on Friday, April 28th, pending soil thawing sufficiently. **AI:** Susanna will make up permission slips with a flexible date, in case scheduling fluctuates.

The last day of school picnic is on May 24th with Cooper Landing hosting Moose Pass and Hope Schools. Mr. Gossard needs people to set up tables and chairs for 40+ students, plus adults (if

weather so dictates). He also needs someone to run the grill. Cooper Landing School is responsible for the meat – hot dogs and hamburgers primarily. Moose Pass will likely be bringing cotton candy, Hope and Moose Pass will be asked to bring side dishes. The plan for beverages is water only, in coolers with spigots.

Treasurer's Report

Our account balance is \$6196.27, which does not yet account for the purchase of food for the Kasitsna Bay trip. It does include payment for all the attendees of the trip. Regarding the field trip food, Fred Meyer donated some, some food was intended for testing breakfast also, there is still some nonperishable food that we can return or otherwise use. (It was decided to use it, not go to the hassle of returning it – some for Equinox Run snacks, maybe Snail-a-Thon.) The total cost for food, without returns, is about \$470. **AI:** The kids should do a simple construction paper thank you card to Fred Meyer.

Site Council Parent Letter Report

The letter about our request for a second teacher is completed but is still missing a couple of signatures that were expected and so has not been sent.

Mr. Hayman offered constructive counsel about our letter:

We are organized and articulate in our concerns, and we represent ourselves well. But this is a declining budget year, and the formulas for small schools set a ratio of 17.5 students to one full-time certified teacher. Even with the enrollment numbers we are projecting, we are very far from being able to expect a second teacher. If we had 35 students total, we would be guaranteed a second certified teacher based on this formula. But with about 20 students, we don't even qualify by the numbers for a quarter-time teacher (our number looks to be in the range of 1.14-1.2). Even if we did round up to 1.25, a quarter-time teacher position is improbable and unattractive to fill.

Mr. Hayman agrees of course that it would be great to have two teachers, but it is not probable. His strategy for requesting more staff is different from ours. We are shooting for the moon, and he believes we are overplaying our cards, even though we have a good reputation as a site council. It costs about \$100,000 to hire a certified full-time teacher, when benefits are accounted for. A classified position is much less expensive, and a part-time one even less so. His intention is to get man hours on the floor to help Mr. Gossard. He has been sitting through these district budget meetings, and with the formulas in use, a part-time classified position is all he feels we can expect, and even that is questionable.

Mr. Hayman will support us in whatever we choose to do. As a site council, we have a better feel for our personality and relationship with the district office. To keep a unified front, he will not send a second, different request from the same school as our administrator. The district will inquire of him about the letter and he wants to stand on the same ground we do, and we should have one unified request.

Although he supports us, Mr. Hayman doesn't feel that our strategy will be successful. We have no traction in counter offering. He doesn't want to walk away with nothing, thus his reduced, scale-able request. Even with his smaller request we may still get nothing.

As a site council we expressed that our main goal in this is to be effective and credible, and that we are lacking a good understanding of Mr. Hayman's proposed request and the reasons behind it and the process involved. We don't want to just write a letter of support for his proposals without fully understanding them. Our fear is that in shooting low we may get only half that, so we shoot high in hopes of getting something.

AI: Mr. Hayman will be in Cooper Landing on Tuesday afternoon (April 25th) and is willing to meet with us in the afternoon after 2pm to discuss this further. We set 2:30pm as the time for this meeting.

In the meantime, we once again clarified with Mr. Hayman that a sliding scale position would be based on enrollment not attendance, and we expressed that we would like to see it be more responsive to actual enrollment, not based on a prior month's enrollment. As part of this, we also discussed that when a student is gone for more than ten school days, there must be a written plan for schoolwork in their absence. As a school we need to set a balance between vacation and unenrollment – where is the threshold of absent vacation days that a student should be unenrolled? Is a student on a month-long vacation still considered an enrolled student? If so there is accountability for work they must do, and Mr. Gossard is still responsible for the fulfillment and grading of that work. This is a balance that we must reasonably set. Long “vacations” may require a student to unenroll.

In the end, it was expressed that in making staffing decisions, what is best for the students is not the only consideration, unfortunately. We all wish it were. The site council's letter is tabled indefinitely, to be revisited only after discussion with Mr. Hayman on the 25th.

Equinox Run

The run is scheduled for September 16th this year. The middle of September is consistently a busy time of year for everybody and the bulk of the work falls on Susanna, who is also very busy at the beginning of the school year. Susanna requests that we please consider making this the last year for the Equinox Run. There were fewer runners in 2016 than precedent. The money earned is nice, but not great. The goal originally with establishing the run was to tie in the community, but that has not happened.

As for this year, it is already published on the Runner's Calendar, so we will make the most of it. The big question currently is T-shirts. It is nice to buy from our local screen printers, but the price is double what we can get elsewhere. **AI:** Virginia said she would seek advice from the Walkable Community about their T-shirts from the spring Trail Run, as they seem happy with theirs.

The rest of the discussion about Equinox Run is tabled until the May meeting.

Concessions

Concessions for the softball tournament are being run differently this year, and Carrie Williams has approached us about taking on one or two nights in the concession kitchen for a share of the proceeds. All the money taken in from concessions in 2017 will be pooled and split between all groups who volunteer to operate concessions for the tournament. It takes about four people to operate the concessions. All groups also need to send a person to the big cleanup on Sunday after the tournament.

We decided to accept the night of June 2 for concessions at the tournament, and will bring this up at the May meeting to find volunteer power to make it happen.

Rafting Trip

Heather brought up that Bob at Drifter's is happy to help out the school, and since we used to do a spring rafting trip, she wondered about interest for doing such through Drifter's this year. The PAC members recognized the generosity in this, but since the school now does a fishing trip in the fall, and the last month of school is very booked already, that we would decline that offer. But we did hope that Drifter's Lodge would be able to help accommodate our visiting artists for two nights.

Snail-a-Thon

Snail-a-Thon is on Saturday, May 20th this year. Heather offered to chair the Snail-a-Thon committee again this year. She will pull in other committee members and volunteers from other parents of current and incoming school children as well as community members. Involvement in this event will be addressed further at the May meeting.

There is widespread community support (particularly from the Walkable Community Committee and the Community Club) for making the Snail-a-Thon in 2017 a special event to commemorate the new biking path along Snug Harbor Road. This idea is particularly supported because of the construction and associated road conditions going on further up the road. Mr. Gossard had a report that construction might not begin until June, so this support may change under those circumstances, but the road before Senior Housing is still in bad condition whether it is actively being worked on or not. Regardless, doing a short 1-mile version of the hike seems to set a bad precedence for simplicity rather than quality. In discussing this, the concept of laps or a relay-type event was better received – participants could start at the Catholic Church, walk to the post office, walk back to the Catholic Church, and then end at the Baptist Church. Mile markers and water stations would then still be a part of the event, keeping the spirit of the longer trek without the construction logistics. Walkers and runners only would be permitted under this scenario – no bikes during the event to prevent trail-use conflicts in the limited width.

There is not yet official support from the Baptist Church to use their property for the final picnic, but word was the Charlotte was possibly working on this. This needs to be verified and worked on.

Overall, this single-year change may be acceptable with appropriate modifications to not lose the spirit of the event. In 2018 the event can go back to its regular route, which in itself can be a commemoration of the newly paved section of road once construction is complete. Although Waikiki Beach is a pain to clean up for the event and it always requires working out availability of an outhouse, it is good that we do clean it up each spring, as the location is valuable to the community. We generally expressed a desire that the site be taken under wing.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 3rd at 12:30 pm.

This is the date of Kindergarten Orientation and all parents of new kindergarteners will be specifically invited to attend and participate. We will have an abbreviated agenda and address involvement needed in upcoming events as well as general involvement and membership in the PAC.

Adjournment at 2:31pm