

FALL CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTSA 2.18.15

General Meeting Minutes

March 13th, 2013

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes from January 15th, 2013 General PTSA Meeting

Stephanie Potter moved to approve. Joanne Haberman seconded. Minutes approved.

President's Report: Kirsten Patterson

Election of Officers for 2013-14 school year:

Karen Nieman, Secretary, read from section 6 of the WSPTA Bylaws; Officers and Their Election. Michelle Ingalls, chair of the nominating committee, read the nominating committee report and handed it to Kirsten Patterson, President. The nominating committee placed a nomination for Lori Kissick as Co-Treasurer. There were no other nominations from the floor and the nominations for Co-Treasurer were declared closed. The nominating committee did not have any nominations for VP Membership. This position was therefore declared vacant and will be filled by the executive committee until the next general membership meeting. At that meeting, nominations will be taken at the consent of the nominee.

The following 2012-13 officers have agreed to another 1 year term:

Kirsten Patterson, for President
Julie Luttinen for Vice President
Joanne Haberman for Vice President
Chris Williams for Treasurer
Karen Nieman for Secretary

Nominations were taken from the floor for each of the positions named above. None were received and were therefore declared closed.

The WSPTA Bylaws state that where there is only one nominee for an office, the ballot may be dispensed with and the election held by voice vote. The following officers were presented for the 2013-2014 Executive Committee and a voice vote was taken:

Kirsten Patterson, for President
Julie Luttinen for Vice President
Joanne Haberman for Vice President
Lori Kissick for Co-Treasurer
Chris Williams for Treasurer
Karen Nieman for Secretary

The "ayes" won and the above named officers were elected for the 2013-2014 Executive Committee.

Principal's Report: Dan Schlotfeldt

Common Core Standards:

Dan showed a short 3 minute video on the OSPI website explaining the common core standards. The website address to view this video is <http://www.k12.wa.us/Corestandards/default.aspx>. Dan also handed out an article published by Education Northwest "What Parents Need to Know". This handout can be downloaded from the PTSA website.

Why The Core?

Every state has had its own state standards which makes it difficult for students. The common core standards were formed to establish clear goals and consistent benchmarks across the states and to match up to international standards in order to adequately prepare students for future careers. The common core was also designed to ensure every kid is learning what they need to know to graduate. With the same rules all students can compete on the same level.

What Is The Reality?:

Students who are currently first graders will be measured on the new common core standards as incoming third graders. The state standards are very rigorous and the gap between half day Kindergarten and full day Kindergarten will have to be addressed.

Teachers are now required to explain the how, what, and why at an earlier level when the students have had no teaching from a prior level. Bridging this gap is a challenge for both teachers and students! Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, incoming first graders will have a curriculum that is aligned with the common core standards. The benchmark is 65-70% of the students since every child learns at different paces. The curriculum's will be stronger and will improve greatly in a couple of years.

Currently teachers have to build the resources to fit for the students that need extra help. Frequent changes in the standards have been a challenge. Implementation of the common core standards should bring more consistency. Mrs. Jones, a 4th grade teacher at Fall City, provided a good example of a change with the new common core standards. The 4th graders have previously only been tested in two writing areas: expository and narrative. With the implementation of the common core standards, this will change to three areas of writing –adding persuasive. This is a big change for both teachers and students and requires two full day writes. (Three times in the year all day long). This change is very rigorous and at a much higher level than what has been expected in the past.

The common core standards really spell it out so teachers know where each grade has to be at by the next grade. Teachers will no longer have to do this on their own. The common core standards clearly articulate what is expected. Currently the grade curriculums do not match the new common core standards so the teachers are having to fill in the gaps.

The FCES 5th grade classes were scientifically selected to pilot the smarter balanced assessment which will eventually take the place of the MSP. The results of this testing will not be given to FCES and the school is required to do it, there is no choice. This is a challenge for both teachers and students. Make ups will not be done like they are for the MSP.

How Can Parents Help?

There are some things that are going to be a challenge for students with the change to common core standards and teachers will not always have the time to do what is suggested. Parents can help their children and the teachers by getting to know the new common core standards and the documents available. There is a lot of information available on the OSPI website <http://www.k12.wa.us/>. There are also a lot of applications parents can download to their phones, Ipads, etc... on the common core standards. Parents can also help by correcting their children when they make a mistake. A good example of this is with reading. When a parent listens to their child read out loud and the child pronounces a word incorrectly, correct them. The common core standards will level the playing field and the tools that the teachers have to use. Parents are encouraged to read through the standards and help their children know what they need to know. A parent also added that it is important to be creative at home so your children are having fun with learning since the bar keeps being set higher and higher.

Questions:

Is there currently a reading and writing curriculum at FCES?

Mrs. VanOeveren, a third grade teacher at FCES, said that although there isn't a writing curriculum, there is writer's workshop. This workshop teaches the students the writing process and all the FCES students are getting taught this from Kindergarten through 5th grade. Mrs. Jones, a 4th grade teacher at FCES, said that the students get exposure to writing beginning in Kindergarten and in 4th grade they fine tune the skills they have learned from Kindergarten to 3rd grade. As a FCES staff, the teachers have agreed on a set reading and writing process and program to teach it.

How are teacher's made accountable to teach to the standard?

Dan said as the Principal, he can look at a class and see how the students are doing. One of the questions on the teacher evaluation sheet is "How does this lesson teach the standard?" Teachers constantly have to be asking themselves this question when they are teaching a class.

Are you confident the standards will stay static for a while?

No, educational benchmarks are constantly changing.

How are curriculums developed?

Companies write curriculums and the district adopts the curriculums. An example of this is with the new Envision math program this year. This curriculum involved many different teachers in the SVSD and it was piloted for a year. The pilot team meets and gives feedback on the program. During the pilot, the program is compared to the common core standards. The reason for the common core is so that the curriculums are not missing big chunks of information needed. Some districts have more resources to do this. The SVSD has less resources to do this. The positive side of having less resources is that teachers are immersed in the data. The drawback to this is that it takes away from their teaching time.

How do you know the 1st graders are getting there if they aren't tested until 3rd grade? Assessments, formative checks, star math a computer based assessment. With star math, the computer keeps challenging them and the teacher gets a report by student which shows the teacher where they need more help.

What are 3 things parents can do to help?

Mrs. Jones responded, help your children with their foundational skills!:

1. Read with your children at home. Correct them when they make a mistake. Stop them to sound out a word they cannot pronounce. Ask them questions about what they read to reinforce comprehension.
2. Practice math facts with your children where ever you are or whatever you are doing (in the car, making dinner, shopping etc...). Use real world experiences and practice all the time. Consistency and repetition are important to building the core foundational skills.

How important is spelling?

Dan responded that there isn't a spelling standard. The emphasis in the common core is on the exposure to words using sight words. Mrs. VanOeveren added that students aren't expected to spell correctly in their draft in the writing process. It is not until the final write where the students are expected to spell correctly. In the past, there has not been a big emphasis on spelling in the curriculum. Mrs. Jones said that the students are expected to know the conventions and sight words and to know if something doesn't look right.

Are there computer and typing standards in the common core?

Dan responded not to his knowledge. There are keyboard skills required in 3rd grade at FCES. In the past, the state standards have not been very specific in this area since it depends on the technology

available to each school. The SVSD is doing very well with the technology that we have available for our students.

Committee Reports:

Golden Acorn Award Nominations: Kirsten Patterson

Kirsten handed out the Golden Acorn nomination forms and explained that the award is a WSPTA award for an outstanding volunteer. Forms are also available on the PTSA website and bulletin board. Forms must be turned in to the PTSA mailbox by April 19th. Joanne Haberman asked if a volunteer can be nominated for a Golden Acorn award more than once. Sophie Harris responded "Yes". Joanne also asked what volunteers have been prior award winners. Dan said that the names of the past golden acorn winners are hanging on a plaque in the front entry of the school.

2013-14 Committee Recruitment: "What is Your Passion?": Joanne Haberman

Joanne handed out hearts and asked all attendees to write down their passion and interests. A list of open committee and board positions were also handed out. Attendees were asked to contact the executive committee if they are interested or know of anyone interested in one of these positions.

New PTSA Website Walk-thru: Karen Nieman

Karen reviewed the website and demonstrated how to join with a parent volunteer. Karen was thanked for her work on the creation of the new website and received positive feedback.

Treasurer's Report: Chris Williams

The current checking account bank balance is \$45,741. Almost all the matching donations are in for Walk-A-Thon. A matching check from Microsoft was received today for approximately \$12k. Walk-A-Thon donations total approximately \$65k including the Microsoft check received today. No Effort Fundraising has also done very well this year; Amazon.com has brought in about \$600, Box Tops \$1200, and the Turkey Trot \$900. Currently we are approximately \$1000 over budget with No Effort Fundraising and there is 3 months left in the fiscal year.

Upcoming Events:

March 13th and 14th: Class Photos

March 14th: SVSD Board Meeting, 6:30pm

March 18th and 19th: Kindergarten Conferences-No Kindergarten classes

March 19th: 4th and 5th Grade Chorus Concert, 6:30pm

March 22nd: Parent Play Day

March 28th: SVSD Board Meeting, 6:30pm

April 2nd: PTSA Board Meeting, 10:00am, MPR

April 8th-April 12th: Spring Break, No School

April 18th: SVSD Board Meeting, 6:30pm

April 19th: Parent Play Day

April 22-26th: Staff Appreciation Week

April 23rd: 1st Grade Music Concert, 6:30pm

May 2nd: Raffle Night

May 6th-10th: Teacher Appreciation Week

May 9th: SVSD Board Meeting, 6:30pm

May 14th: PTSA General Meeting

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.