Newcastle Elementary Site Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held on Monday, April 14, 2014 from 8:15 am to 9:00 am in the Newcastle library.


Agenda:

1. **PTSA Report**
   The kick off assembly for the fun run is on April 16. The final donation date is April 30th. School wide run is Friday, May 2nd. A bulletin board will be going up advertising this as well as a kick-off letter with donation information will go home on April 16th. Along with the fun run there have been two days designated as 'Walk to School' days. These are Friday, April 18th and Friday April 25th. Suggestion was made to notify Newcastle Police of these dates since there was a recent attempted child luring in one of the neighborhoods behind the school. There was another recent incident where a parent notified police about a suspicious vehicle in the area. There was no attempted child luring in that case. Apollo is doing Orange Ruler during the same time frame as Newcastle. It might be interesting to compare notes when the events are over.

2. **Community Report**
   Rich was unable to attend so no community report.

3. **Building Report**
   *Kindergarten Enrollment*: There are currently 93 students registered for next year which will increase our kindergarten section by one. We will continue to have 3 full day classes, 1 am class and will add 1 pm class for next year.

   *Preliminary Staffing 2014/2015*: We have been allocated one additional section of kindergarten next year, making us 3 FDKs and AM/PM sessions. All other classrooms are status quo. Marla continues to work with District and watch our enrollment numbers. First grade projections are tricky because we get Newcastle families that didn’t come here for kindergarten but then want to start here for 1st grade. Our goal is to not end up with 1st grade classrooms as large as they are this year. If that were to happen again Marla will make sure and advocate for support.

   Question was asked as to how overload affects specialists. This is a contractual issue that Marla will relook at. If we have more overload sections again next year it could possibly change the schedule. If we are on overload teachers are given the option of receiving a stipend or having an EA work in their classroom a few hours a week. Newcastle has always had an A week and B week schedule.
It was asked if Liza Rickey would be looping up with her students. This information will be coming out soon.

**Portable**: We are scheduled to receive another 2 room portable this summer. We have been working on furniture issues with the District. There is a 'portable committee' made up of staff members that will determine which grades/classrooms will move out to the portable along with a rotation schedule. Marla has stipulated that no kindergarten-1st grade classrooms or special education programs will be in a portable.

**Parent Input Letters**: These letters will be available starting on April 21st. Letters won’t be sent home with students, parents will need to physically come into the office and request a letter. This will be advertised in e-news. Classroom placement for next year will start in May. Marla will send out clarification to parents on how this whole process works. She will remind families that teachers are not involved at all in deciding classroom placement. They have no input as to what student goes where. We have had parents confront teachers upset that they didn’t choose to have their student in their class. We have also had feedback that there is a perception out there that teachers can barter with other teachers for students they want. Question was asked if teacher to student personalities are considered. As classroom placement is a blind process, this is not one of the factors that staff works with unless parents have listed something specific on their parent input form.

4. **Site Council Positions for 2014-2015**

   We have the following positions opening, community rep and PTSA. We will check to see if Rich is interested in continuing. The PTSA rep will be next year’s PTSA president. The parent-at-large position was for this year only and will not be filled. Jacqueline announced that her students will be attending private school next year so they will no longer be at Newcastle. Eileen will move into the intermediate parent rep position (currently held by Jacqueline) beginning next year. We also need to fill the specialist and classified positions. Marla will put a request out to staff in the fall to see if they are interested in these. Site council application was in last week’s e-news. Deadline to turn in an application is April 28. Question was asked if the size of site council is supposed to be based on the percentage of students. This is from the District guidelines which Marla will relook at.
**Other**

**Lunchroom:** Question was asked if it would work better to switch to recess after lunch vs. recess before lunch. This used to be the old District lunch schedule but the entire District switched several years ago to recess before lunch. Decision was based on lots of research showing that students are more ready to come from lunch ready to settle down and learn if they come from the lunchroom vs. the playground. Studies also showed that kids would rush through lunch in order to get out to recess faster. As we continue to grow we may need to add a 4th lunch to our daily schedule. It was decided awhile back to play music the last 5 minutes of lunch as a warning to students that lunch would soon be ending. Marla isn't sure why this hasn't started yet.

First and third grade teachers pick up their students directly from the lunchroom which helps the transition go more smoothly. Question was asked if it would work better if all teachers picked up from the lunchroom. This is a contractual issue—Marla can’t mandate teachers do this as it would mean they would need to head to the lunchroom during their break time which is supposed to be uninterrupted time.

Kristin shared that a friend of hers who teaches in Oregon has a 'lunch bunch' program at their school. Parents volunteer in the lunchroom and spend time teaching students how to eat in a large group and touching base with students that may appear to not have a friend sitting with them. Parents wouldn’t be in there to eat as there is no room for them to sit anywhere. It is felt that there are a lot of negative reprimands in our lunchroom and no teaching students on how to behave or eat in a large group. This caused quite a bit of backlash last fall. Are there items that PTSA could donate that would help the EAs in the lunchroom? Would it help to have older students volunteer to help the younger ones? This is already done sometimes. Need to be careful who you pick to do this, sometimes the older students get the younger ones riled up.

Suggestion was made to post basic manners in the lunchroom. Maybe have a manners of the month.