Newcastle Elementary Site Council Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2014

The meeting was held on Monday, May 5, 2014 from 8:00 am to 9:07 am in the Newcastle library. Present: Marla Newton, Jacqueline Park, Danielle Dixon, Sarah McKenzie, Eileen Rubenstein, Kim Plowman, Edana Peacock, Richard Crispo and Laura Berry. Absent: Terry Vanpelt and Kristin Cakarnis. Donna Wood attends meetings to take notes.

Agenda:

1. **PTSA Report**
   The new executive committee has been elected: Julianne Diesch-President; VP of Volunteers-open (Alison Sweeny to be voted in during the June meeting); Co VP of Outreach-Danielle Dixon & Stina Fluegge; Secretary-Eileen Rubenstein; Treasurer-open (Angela Orsino to be voted in during the June meeting); VP Ways & Means-Georgia Furchuk and VP Programs-Michelle Riley. They will begin transitioning Julianne next week. PTSA is very excited to have a full slate.

   This week is staff appreciation week. The following have been planned to help celebrate the staff: Monday-staff luncheon; Tuesday-breakfast; Wednesday-Thanks A Latte; Thursday-Movie Treat bag and Friday-staff car wash.

   Fourth grade has started a jamba juice fundraiser to begin raising money for their 5th grade camp next year.

   PTSA food drive is underway. UW Book Fair is scheduled from May 12th-16th. May 16th is also the PTSA family fitness night.

   The financial goal of the Orange Ruler fundraiser we just finished was readjusted from $55,000 to $50,000. As of this morning we had raised $51,481. Families have until May 21st to donate online. Classes still have until the 21st to reach 100% participation and be invited to the Kona Ice party. It was felt that the fundraiser was not overly impactful on class rooms and that it provided good team building amongst the students. The kids drove the fundraiser and not the parents. The auction is a good fundraiser but aside from the class room projects the students aren’t involved. Feedback was given that it would have been helpful to have either a nurse or first aid station outside vs. kids having to come into the building to get a bandaid. By the time kids got back outside they had missed quite a bit of their race. Orange Ruler can’t provide first aid to students. Thirty-five percent goes to Orange Ruler. Even with that PTSA raised twice as much with this fundraiser than with wrapping paper and entertainment books. The plan is to do the fun run on the off auction years and do away with other fundraisers altogether. Orange Ruler is putting together a video for Newcastle.
2. **Community Report**

The mutual material project has been held off until early next year. The developer, Avalon Bay, is considering adding more retail than was originally planned. Avalon Bay only develops high end rentals which their organization maintains. There will be two entrances into this development, one off Coal Creek Parkway and one off Newcastle Golf Club Road.

Renton Academy is being knocked down this summer to make room for the new middle school being built by the Renton School District. Construction will begin soon after that. The City continues to talk with the School District regarding their concerns on potential traffic flow problems.

Puget Sound Energy is considering running an alternator through part of Olympus in an effort to connect the sound end into the eastside. This would mean that 200,000 volts of energy could be flowing through these lines.

Rich reported that the Renton Schools Foundation recently raised $190,000 which is down from last time. Rich has noticed that there appears to be a trend that more and more math and science degrees are going to students that are from outside of the Country and are only here for schooling. We need to get our kids focused more on math and science. He asked if we have any plans on doing another science fair.

3. **Building Report**

*Parent Input Letters:* These were due to the office on May 2\textsuperscript{nd}.

*Student Placement:* Marla will start working on class room placement with the focus being on balance.

*Portable Policy:* Staff have come up with a policy on which class rooms will be in the portables and what the rotation schedule will be. Marla will review their proposal and share out with staff for a final decision. Once the policy is finalized we will share it out with the community via e-news.

4. **Follow-up on Community Position Starting 2014–2015**

Position was advertised but no one applied for it. Possible scenarios would be to leave the position open or let Rich decide if he wants to continue in this role. Question was asked if Rich would share out this opportunity to the City of Newcastle council. He can do that but he feels that probably the only person that may be interested is Lisa Jensen (she has served here before) and she is pretty busy with other things right now.

5. **Newcastle Site Council By Laws–Changes for 2014–2015**

Marla looked at both the Newcastle and ISD guidelines regarding the recommended size of site council. We have the ability to modify this. Our current membership is 10 members but with the
growth at Newcastle it’s a good time to relook at this. It was suggested to add more parent reps. so that there would be a rep. from each grade level. This would help with parent representation if not everyone can be present. Several scenarios for how this could work were discussed: 3 on 3 off, staggered so that there would be consistency. Positions would still be for 2 years. The 5th grade rep. would change every year as would the kindergarten rep. We could advertise for the kindergarten position at the February Kindergarten Parent Orientation meeting. Position would begin the following fall. Another membership scenario mentioned would be to have positions be a one year commitment with the first right of refusal the following year. People could choose their grade level they want to represent.

6. **Reflection of Site Council for the 2013-2014 School Year**

Several people voiced that they are feeling unclear as to their role on site council. They feel that there are a lot of things discussed with not a lot of changes. Marla was asked if members could be empowered to make task forces. The advantage of having more members would be more perspective on things. It was suggested that we create work flow task sheets. These would be used to track items from the meetings that require action. Task sheet would be used for setting up meetings, documentation and to document decisions. Each task sheet would include a schedule with a deadline. People feel it’s hard to get anything done with just a committee. An example of frustration was that multiple suggestions have been made regarding our parking lot, i.e., adding sidewalks to the bottom of the hill and middle of the parking lot and people feeling as though nothing has been done. A task sheet would help to clearly show a plan. Not having a publicized plan in place causes frustration and misunderstandings.

Clarification was asked as to what can be communicated with other parents. They don’t know what they could/should be communicating in order to solicit input. If a topic is a closed topic they need to know that so that they don’t share out information. Suggestion was made to broadcast the agenda via e-news to the community and direct them to contact their site council rep. if they have input they want to share. Give parents a point of contact early on. It would also be nice to direct the community as to where the site council meeting minutes are kept.

Question was asked if site council meetings are supposed to be closed meetings or are guests allowed. One guest per rep. is allowed.

Further reflection and discussion will happen at the June meeting.

7. **Other**

Kim and Edana shared some of the suggestions they have come up with to help with the parking lot issues: move buses to the front of the school and parent drop-off/pick-up to the back. Part of the front parking lot would need to be widened to allow for a wider turn radius for the buses. It was suggested that District come out and participate in being part of the drop-off/pick-up procedure rather than just observing.
Question was asked if students can line up in the commons on rainy days vs. waiting in their classroom lines so they don’t get wet. The students generally don’t mind standing in the rain and school staff often have to ask them to get out of puddles and away from drain spouts.

It was asked if the Bell time could change to ring a few minutes earlier to allow more time for students to get into the building. Bell time was changed a few years ago because contractually it was ringing too early and staff pushed to have the bell time changed. Kim wondered about having parents contact the IEA union to fight for a change in Bell times. Possible ideas were shared to help with drop off and one was to have teachers with Cathy out front in the mornings helping kids get out of cars and Sarah shared that it’s pretty hard for all teachers to be able to help outside in the morning as they are busy prepping for the day or attending a meeting. Another thought would be to have PTSA provide extra money to pay EA’s to help out.