



Potomac Elementary School

School Board Minutes

for

June 11, 2012

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*"Potomac School equips each student for his/her future
within a culture of excellence that values the small community experience."*

Call to Order

Board Chair Robert O'Boyle called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM by leading all in the Pledge of Allegiance. Those trustees present were: Jeff Hahn, Gary Long and Jim Wrobel. Tim Johnson, principal and Jill Thornton, clerk, were also in attendance.

Public Input (for issues not on the agenda) None.

Consent Agenda

Jeff moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0.**

Principals Report

Community

- The Pioneer Festival will be August 4th with fun runs, a parade, a barn dance and other activities.

School

- See the *Progress Report for District Goals: 2011-2012* that follows this Principals report.
- As of June 1st, grant writing has raised \$50,000 with a guaranteed match possible that could bring the total to \$75,000 by May 2013. Foci of the grant writing is programming, the athletic field, and off-setting general fund expenditures.

Alicia Vanderheiden, one of our grant writers, said that additional grants written to date are a \$10,000 grant for the 5th day enrichment program and a Breakfast Grant for the 2012-2013 school year. Research is now being conducted to find funding partners to help offset General Fund expenses. Some grants in this area are for innovative education, arts and business curricula. One of the places to start with this is Planning Grants to complete the research, and then Implementing Grants.

Jim asked if we receive the grant for implementation, how do we maintain the program? Are the grants ongoing?

Alicia stated that we are not trying to grow where it cannot be sustained.

Gary asked what grant reporting requirements are.

Alicia said that is an important point of research into any grant. If the reporting requirements are too extensive, the grant would probably not be pursued.

Tim said that if the grant is a good fit for the school, sometimes extra reporting is fine. The grants being researched are types that provide for short term fixes that help with a long term goal. They do not provide an ongoing resource.

Vision Impact

- Race to Nowhere Outreach director Chelsea Doctors visited Potomac School and interviewed staff, students and parents for an upcoming sequel to the Race to Nowhere.

Progress Report for District Goals: 2011-2012

1. Provide the latest technology hardware and training to our staff and students.

Diane Woodard provided 2 staff trainings regarding Google. Diane met with principal regarding consolidating forms used to track information (Special Education, SAT, PLC, Discipline, etc). Diane provided a technology night to residents regarding the iPad and its uses.

We received 15 refurbished CPU and flat screen monitors from OPI to update our computer lab.

2. Address bullying.

Evelyn Widhelm provided an anti-bullying curriculum to our students for SY 2011-2012.

Potomac students have not been surveyed regarding bullying. Resources available for survey will be utilized in 2012-2013. What has been determined from this year's data is that when we target a few students that are either the targets of bullying or those that are bullying, we know that conversations with those students can dramatically reduce the incidences. From data pulled from our online discipline referral form, approximately 5% of reported incidences were categorized as bullying. Many other incidences that were isolated (bullying has a repetitive component) involved communication breakdowns that then included unsafe contact, pushing, etc. Although this has a bullying feel, because it's not repetitive it doesn't necessarily qualify¹ as bullying (Montana OPI, 2005). More data and resources will be organized for 2012-2013 to address the perception and real bullying occurrences at Potomac School.

PTC is looking into providing a challenge ropes course for students that would facilitate team building and reduce bullying incidences.

3. Enhance our outdoor sports programs and community participation through the completion of the Potomac Athletic Complex

To date we have received \$50,000 in grant support. We have a scheduled week in July to have a well installed on the Potomac Community Recreation Complex (PCRC). We have a match grant commitment for an additional \$25,000 available for match within the next 11 months. August 4th is our inaugural Pioneer Festival designed to raise funds for the maintenance of the field. Growing support for participation at this festival is evident in the number of volunteers and expressed interest.

4. Celebrate the Centennial of Potomac School (1913)

The Potomac School building centennial has been getting growing attention as we organize some activities to celebrate the school building 100 years in existence. The Pioneer Festival is the prelude to next year's Centennial focus. We will be utilizing the building centennial during our upcoming school year's curriculum, Facebook page, webpage, historical documents that may culminate in the creation of a book or display area. A steering committee has a couple members (principal, Julie Hacker, Jody Wills, Bob Hall, Loretta Hayes). The committee is in place to guide the efforts and product(s) that are created culminating in the Pioneer Festival in 2013.

5. Improve the capacity for and increase the use of outside funding/resources to our school.

Our grant writers have raised \$50,000 with a continued focus on displacing general funds with grants, improving in and after school programming, and the Potomac Community Recreation Complex.

6. Improve student communication skills (written)

7. Improve student communication skills (verbal, nonverbal)

Common Core implementation compels our school to revisit our ELA curricula. This summer, we are meeting to create a scope and sequence of instruction based upon the Montana Common Core Standards (MCCS) and materials we currently have at Potomac. This fall, all grades will experience an Independent Study of varying difficulty based upon age and readiness. The integrated nature of this program will allow students to integrate writing more practically in courses not expressly labeled as writing courses.

8. Establish minimum typing fluency benchmarks: 4th grade (20WPM), 6th grade (30WPM), 8th grade (40 WPM).

We piloted a typing program “typing web” to increase our student’s typing skills. As a pilot program we noticed that this program is adequate and allows us to track performance. An estimate of our 8th grader’s typing fluency is 25-30 wpm.

9. Meet and/or exceed individual proficiency standards (Math, Science, Reading).

Recent MAP and AIMSweb scores show a deeper deficiency in our reading, writing, and math performance. With our ability based grouping, we noticed an increase in the conceptual and application performance for our students while also seeing a below expected growth in math scores with ability based grouping. While the numbers (the sample size also presents significant outliers) show deficiencies with students placed in courses below typical age/grade courses, a higher correlation was found with motivation prior to and after being placed in ability math courses. There has been to date a significantly higher level of satisfaction among students and parents while participating in the ability based placements. The opportunity for students to be included in the placement process and to be able to move at a faster rate has produced an even higher level of motivation among above average performing math students.

More data will be kept to monitor progress in our second year of ability based placement for math. Our focus for 12-13 will be to monitor perseverance characteristics and skills. We also found that some students that were repeating a course or in a course below their age/grade need closer monitoring for motivation opportunities that may allow them to move vertically into the next course.

10. Determine the factors of an effective math program

11. Communicate the factors of an effective math program.

The timeline for these goals is summer 2012. Significant data exists and will be distributed to parents before beginning SY 12-13.

12. Increase student participation in all areas related to “their future.”

Student council has been and will become more involved in the decisions available to students. Surveys of student preferences and conclusions will become more common with our increased training with Google. All upper school students have Google accounts. This upcoming year will be the first complete year in which upper school students will have access to Google tools. An increased effort for staff and students to utilize these tools will be a focus for professional development in SY 2012-2013.

13. Enhance our extracurricular programs.

Potomac Explorers has been formed to address the needs for 5th day supervision. We are utilizing this program to enhance the 5th day programming so that it complements the efforts of the 4-day school week. A separate webpage will be dedicated to the rationale and programming options available to students and parents through the Explorers program.

14. Integrate critical thinking (CT) into all academic and behavioral settings.

SY 2012-2013 will provide a dedicated time to Independent Study (IS) for upper school with our primary grades practicing the principals of independent study. Critical thinking skills are a part of the IS projects requiring personalized experiences and learning opportunities. M CCS has added more structure and designated core content areas that focus CT learning opportunities. Critical thinking will continue to be a focus within teacher evaluations.

15. Improve the visibility and communication regarding Potomac School to the broader community.

Cully’s has a footing ready to place an e-reader board support post. The construction is supposed be completed prior to the Pioneer Festival August 4th. Efforts to promote Potomac through social media options, media and presentations will continue. Methods to increase interest in our school’s webpage will be made through

promotional options, utilize information delivery options, increased training for parents and community and increasing required use of website for optional activities/events.

References:

1 General Definition: Simply put, bullying is when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose. Bullying, intimidation and harassment are aggressive behaviors – words, actions or social exclusions –that intentionally hurt or harm another person. **The aggressive behaviors occur repetitively and there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim.** The bully is physically, verbally or socially stronger than the victim. Bullying may be perpetrated by one person or by a group. Although both genders use physical and non-physical tactics, boys tend to bully physically while girls tend to use social exclusion and gossip as weapons. (R2)

"Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment Prevention School Policy." *Safe Schools*. Montana OPI, June 2005. Web. 11 Jun 2012. <<http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/safeschools/BullyingPolicy.pdf>>.

School Board – Professional Development

Jeff attended the CEFA presentation coordinated by Nick Salmon. He is looking forward to a summary of the results.

Gary is reading the Daily Dispatch sent to board members from the MTSBA (The Montana School Board Assoc.) and also volunteered to chaperone the all night senior graduation party for the Missoula high schools.

Jim attended a legal presentation by the MTSBA relating to school issues. He is also still involved in negotiations with the PEA, and has met with Dale Hinkle on the Athletic Field as he will be involved in some of its development.

Bob chaperoned the middle school dance with Virginia. He was glad to see the eighth graders getting other students involved in the dance by bringing them in from the sidelines. He also is part of the grant writing committee. In a meeting he had with Brad Hall, he heard that Brad feels Tim has made a difference in getting the community informed and involved with the school. Everyone agreed with that evaluation.

Contract Negotiation Committee Report

Jim said his attendance at the MTSBA legal primer was very helpful. He has felt the need for more direction in negotiating with the staff, and Debra Silk made a statement at the legal primer that hit the core of his frustration. She said “in order to develop a contract, the board needs a strategic plan” ...that can then be used to analyze how the negotiated contract fits with that plan. With the substantial budget constraints the school faces next year, he feels we need a strategic plan to develop a contract compatible with where we want to go.

A Preliminary Strategic Planning Meeting will be held on Friday, June 22nd at 4:00pm.

Majestic Bus Contract

Gary moved to approve the Majestic Bus Contract for 2012 through 2017. Jim seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0.**

Bus Routes

Jim moved to approve the Bus Routes for 2012-2013. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0.**

July Board Meeting

Jim moved to cancel the July board meeting and replace it with the meeting on June 28th. Bob seconded the motion.

Jeff restated the plan to have the summer meetings held to work through the policies.

Bob asked for a vote. **Failed 0-4.**

