



# Potomac Elementary School

## School Board Minutes

for

February 13, 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.”*

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### 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, Victoria Richardson 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

Jim moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Jeff seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

### Fundraising and Facilities Planning Ideas

Nick Salmon, an educational facility planner, was asked for some input on how to make the school library a better place to be. When he found out the library was in the basement, he asked if that was where the school wanted to leave it or if there was any plan to relocate it. During the discussion, he brought up some of the possibilities for how to ask the right questions of interested parties to get the best results for future planning for the school and community. That information is what he came to present at the meeting tonight.

Nick is a member of the Council of Educational Facility Planners International, or CEFPI. He said that the last week of April is ‘School Building Week’. During this week educational planners hold one day facility planning workshops with teachers, administrators, students, seniors, and community members from interested communities. The all day workshop is led by volunteers from the Montana Chapter of CEFPI. During these sessions, they help coordinate discussions on existing ideas, as well as showing other ideas that have been used in similar situations. The topics of the workshop are tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities of the community, but typically include the following small and whole group exercises:

- *Local Facts & Figures*
- *21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Places*
- *Any Century Skills*
- *Project Based Learning*
- *School Transformation and Development Map Assessment tool*
- *Facility Implications*

They can answer questions on renovating current facilities as well as costs for new facilities. They also have knowledge on grants for schools.

Their process generates information and input that is very useful for future planning. The CEFPI asks participants to join their organization to participate in this process, as well as feed those attending the process from their school and community. The cost to join their organization is \$99.

He also presented some of the current grants that can be applied for. One of the current grant is through the Montana Dept of Commerce for facilities. Target and Dolly Parton offer grants for libraries. And a school oriented website called

'Donors Choose' is a site that posts requests that people from around the world can go to and choose to give money to needs they wish to help with.

If the school chooses to participate in the CEFPI workshop, the next step after that is to apply for a planning grant. The typical cost range for facilities planning for a school of our size is from \$12,000 to \$14,000.

This information is presented to begin a preliminary discussion. The issue will again be on the March school board agenda.

**Inter-District Agreement – Sunset School**

The last legislative session opened up the possibility of multi-school board cooperation. This cooperation could be on such things as Field Trips, Standardized Testing, Supplies and Photography contracts. By combining purchasing power, costs could possibly come down for both schools. The state also offered financial compensation for any districts that develop a Multi-District Agreement by April 1, 2012.

At the last board meeting, Gary and Jim were nominated to be on a subcommittee along with Tim to represent the school board for discussions with Sunset School on an Inter-district agreement. They met with Sunset on January 24 and developed an agreement to share the expense of selected field trips that require contracted busing. Since that agreement, Lance Melton from the Montana School Boards Association contacted the school with a warning regarding transfers from fund to fund through multidistrict agreements. The multidistrict agreement plan approved by the legislature allowed transfer of funds into an interlocal cooperative fund to support the activities or purchases the schools agreed upon. and to use funds from the general fund or any other budgeted fund of the district. The warning had to do with using only funds from the General Fund, and not using any other funds. So the board decided to strike the line that specified 'any other budgeted fund of the district'.

Jim suggested this agreement with Sunset School be approved by the board with that revision. Victoria moved to approve the Potomac Sunset Multidistrict Agreement with the words 'or any other budgeted fund of the district' removed. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

**Principals Report**

*Community*

- Grading input from the community will be sought February 29<sup>th</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup> in open forum info gathering sessions.
- Race to Nowhere movie presented in the Community Center: 25 attended and there were good conversations on the topic. A focus group meeting is scheduled for Feb 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the Pizza Hut on East Broadway in Missoula.
- The Centennial Celebration Steering committee meeting will be held Feb 21<sup>st</sup>. A University of Montana history professor, Prof Egland, is offering to coordinate graduate students to prepare the history of the Potomac area with a focus on the school.
- The State of Potomac Address was held January 26<sup>th</sup>.
- An Internet Safety presentation will be provided by MCSD Deputy Jason Johnson Feb 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. It is a presentation intended for parents only.

*School*

- Grant writers: An independent contractor will be contracted for 2 days a month to find ways to ease some of the schools financial pressure. They will coordinate, evaluate, prioritize and submit grants to augment our funding, materials, and staffing shortfalls.
- The Athletic field will be updated through the principal's report. An offer for trucking materials has been initiated through a grant. The first goal will be phase one.
- The Office of Civic Engagement (OCE) will visit to see how our music program can achieve even higher standards – over and above the basic requirements we fulfill. This process would be started with music school undergraduates through independent study.
- 4 day School week: (will be presented during Old Business)
  - Focus: affect on academics, motivation, family schedule and attendance issues.

- Tim visited Lincoln school and had a conversation with their superintendent. Other conversations were held over the phone with the Alberton superintendent and the Helmville principal. (future conversations will include SIMS, Victor and Ovando)
- Survey results to date will be presented under old business through the spreadsheet distributed with the community.
- MAP/AIMSweb testing was completed. The staff poured over the data compiled from these tests and saw:
  - Significant gains in accelerated students
  - Gains for most students
  - Some students showed a drop, however overall trajectory is good.
  - Students that show a drop are part of our PLC discussions and planning. This data allows direct intervention in these cases. Learning plans are developed to help the students progress.
- Geography bee
- Spelling bee

*Activities*

- Girls Volleyball beginning February 16<sup>th</sup>

*Vision Impact*

- The principal considers the vision statement when focusing on alternate funding, reporting/grades, and school day schedule.

**Clerks Report**

After our spring student count, the Montana Office of Public Instruction prepares preliminary budget limits for the next school year. Based on our student numbers, the budget projection for the 2012-2013 school year is a loss of \$25,500. Increases in costs to the school for that year will bring that number closer to minus \$37,500.

**School Goals – with Timelines**

The Goals Committee members were:

- Bob O’Boyle - Chairman of Trustees
- Jim Wrobel - Trustee
- Nancy Linnell - Teacher
- Terri Klein - Teacher
- Jason Johnson - Parent
- Amy Vann - Parent
- Tim Johnson - Principal

Through six meetings in a two month span, the Goal Setting Committee recommended the goals in the following chart.

The goal setting process utilized Potomac’s vision statement, the strengths of our district and the known expectations now and in the future. The goals are primarily focused on the education and empowerment of our students. We also recognize the importance of including staff, parents and surrounding community members in this endeavor.

These goals were approved by the board on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2011. The following chart has added the timelines necessary to achieve our district’s goals.

Goal	Initiation	Tactics/Strategies	Completion date; product(s)
1. Provide the latest technology hardware and training to our staff and students.	Immediate	Laptop; tech levy; contracting with Diane Woodard for further tech training	<b>Spring 2012</b> - contract for staff development
2. Address bullying.	Immediate	Counselor; Handbook; Discipline form; Monthly staff discussion; Student council; Student interviews by principal	<b>Spring 2012</b> - counselor will have presented anti-bullying curriculum <b>June 2012</b> - Comprehensive survey will inquire student perspectives
3. Enhance our outdoor sports programs and community participation through the completion of the Potomac Athletic Complex	Immediate	Grant writing committee; grant writer	<b>August 2012</b> - Phase 1 completed
4. Celebrate the Centennial of Potomac School (1913)	On-going	Steering committee; summer celebration (grant writing committee); Facebook	<b>March 2012</b> - Summer 2012; Immediate
5. Improve the capacity for and increase the use of outside funding/resources to our school.	Immediate	Grant writing committee; grant writer	<b>Spring 2012</b> - Two part time independent grant writers
6. **Improve student communication skills (written)	Spring	Implementation Fall 2012; <i>Comm Arts is in Curriculum Review process through spring 2012.</i> ; <i>MCCS implementation</i>	<b>Spring 2013</b> - school wide writing curriculum; integration into all cores
7. **Improve student communication skills (verbal, nonverbal)	Spring	Implementation Fall 2012; <i>Comm Arts is in Curriculum Review process through spring 2012</i> ; <i>MCCS implementation</i>	<b>Spring 2013</b> - school wide integration into all pacing guides for all core subj
8. **Establish min typing fluency benchmarks: 4th (20WPM), 6th (30WPM), 8th (40 WPM).	Immediate	<a href="http://www.typingweb.com">www.typingweb.com</a> ; gr 3-8; according to OPI standards; 30 WPM on a one minute timed writing (40 WPM by 8th gr H.S. standard, old); touch typing	<b>Spring 2013</b> - one modification...Grade 8 attains 30WPM
9. **Exceed state proficiency standards (Math, Science, Reading).	On-going	CLARIFICATION NEEDED; All students exceed state proficiency standards, does "proficiency" equal growth? Need a trajectory of growth for individual students	
10. Determine the factors of an effective math program	Spring; on-going	Parent and student surveys; Growth comparisons (prior yrs); AIMSweb, Placement % in HS courses; SPED placement; Individual Growth v. expected growth	<b>August 2012</b> - Framework outlining short and long term growth; in light of MCCS

Goal	Initiation	Tactics/Strategies	Completion date; product(s)
11. Communicate the factors of an effective math program.	Spring; on-going	Webpage; State of Potomac, Newsletter, New Media; (MontCAS scores; MAP; AIMSweb; classroom grades; High school feedback on placements); surveys	<b>August 2012</b> - a detailed publication of our math program will be sent to all Potomac residents/families
12. Increase student participation in all areas related to "their future."	Immediate	School-wide survey ("My Voice"); Empower Student Council (report to school, suggestion box ie Google Form); Lunch menu	<b>June 2012</b> - A comprehensive survey will be completed by students (academics, safety, belonging, etc.); monthly meal planned by Student Council (SC); Suggestion Box setup by SC
13. **Enhance our extracurricular programs.	Spring	Bussing; YMCA soccer; Summer camps (baseball, soccer, basketball, football); Will summer camps affect lease w/ Comm Center; Liability?; Academic: chess, robotics, lego, math, poetry outloud	<b>Summer 2012</b> - Two summer camps available combining to cover K-8 <b>Fall 2012</b> - Busing for all sporting activities budgeted
14. **Integrate critical thinking (CT) into all academic and behavioral settings.	Spring; on-going	Staff observation goal ('11/'12); MCSS; PBIS; Discipline w/ Dignity; Professional Development (classroom techniques); Student self-reflection	<b>Spring 2013</b> - Staff development focus on MCCS and C.T. integration; discipline will demo CT process; Student survey will contain reflective questions re: CT
15. Improve the visibility and communication regarding Potomac School to the broader community.	Spring	Reader sign (Cully's); webpage content; increased webpage usage; parent training; Engrade; Wiki	<b>Spring 2012</b> - Cully's reader sign installed, increased homepage usage (specific page use, frequency), Wiki usability determined <b>Fall 2012</b> - Engrade (contingent on report card/grading outcome)
16. **Enhance our fine arts program.	Spring	Poetry Outloud; Chimes; Performances (Attend and provide); resident artists via Grant Writing; UM and Hellgate partnership	<b>Spring 2013</b> - UM or Hellgate partnership will be formed (music); an additional artist (visual) in residence will be retained

\*\* A 4 day school week would dedicate more resources to complete goal

Jim asked if future information pertaining to these goals be included in the Principals Report.

Bob asked if there was any objection to discussing the principal evaluation form at this time as it references the goals. No objection was made.

**Principal Evaluation Form**

The Principal Evaluation Form follows, with a superscript number at the end of definitions that refers to the goal of that number. The board will review this form until the next monthly board meeting.

**Principal Evaluation**

**Potomac School  
School District #11**

Principal:

Observation Date:

Board Member:

B = Basic (Does not meet expectations)      P = Proficient (Meets expectations)      NR = Not Reported

Domain 1: PLANNING & PREPARATION		Performance Level
<i>Staffing, Day-to-Day Operations</i>		
1a.	Demonstrating Knowledge of Content Pedagogy	See comments
1b.	Demonstrating Knowledge of Community <sup>4</sup>	See comments
1c.	Selecting Financial Goals <sup>5</sup>	See comments
1d.	Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources <sup>3,5</sup>	See comments
1e.	Demonstrating Knowledge of Requisitions <sup>3</sup>	See comments
1f.	Exhibits Knowledge of School Budget, Budget Goals, and Accounting Procedures	See comments
1g.	Demonstrates Effective School Organization	See comments

Comments:

Demonstrated Strengths:

Suggestions/Considerations:

Domain 2: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT / CULTURE		Performance Level	
2a.	Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport <sup>2</sup>	B	P
2b.	Establishing a Culture for Excellence <sup>6, 7, 8, 9?, 10, 12, 14, 16</sup>	B	P
2c.	Establishing Good Relationships Within School-Parent Organizations	B	P
2d.	Managing Financial Outcomes <sup>5</sup>	B	P
2e.	Establishing and Managing Public Relations and Media <sup>1,11</sup>	B	P
2f.	Utilizing Resources Effectively <sup>3</sup>	B	P
2g.	Fostering Relationships Between Staff and Community <sup>4</sup>	B	P

Comments:

Demonstrated Strengths:

Suggestions/Considerations:

Domain 3: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/SCHOOL WIDE INSTRUCTION <i>Building wide instruction, teacher evaluations, curriculum assessment, teaching techniques, follow goals &amp; state standards</i>		Performance Level	
3a.	Communicating Clearly & Accurately <sup>1</sup>	B	P
3b.	Establishing and Maintaining an Effective School Climate	B	P
3c.	Establishing Processes to Ensure Staff Demonstrates Measurable Student Improvement <sup>6, 7, 8, 10</sup>	B	P
3d.	Demonstrating Leadership that Ensures Effective, Measurable Implementation of District-Adopted Curriculum <sup>6, 9?</sup>	B	P
3e.	Demonstrating Flexibility & Responsiveness	B	P
3f.	Facilitating Opportunities for Effective Professional Learning that is Aligned with Curricular, Instructional, and Assessment Need of Class and School <sup>1</sup>	B	P
3g.	Coordinating/Supervising Counseling and Testing Services of Students and Interpretation of Pupil Growth <sup>11</sup>	B	P
3h.	Supervising/Counseling Staff Performance According to District-Adopted Procedures <sup>14</sup>	B	P

Comments:

Demonstrated Strengths:

Suggestions/Considerations:

Domain 4: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES		Performance Level	
4a.	Showing Professionalism	B	P
4b.	Preparing or Supervising the Preparation of Accurate Records, Reports, Other Required Paperwork <sup>11</sup>	B	P
4c.	Communicating with Board, Staff, Community <sup>11, 15</sup>	B	P
4d.	Keeping Abreast of Professional Changes and Developments <sup>14</sup>	B	P
4e.	Contributing to School & District	B	P

Comments:

Demonstrated Strengths:

Suggestions/Considerations:

Board Chair has reviewed this report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal has reviewed this report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Board – Professional Development**

The Race to Nowhere film was well attended by the board. Jeff also has signed up for the Spring MTSBA Budget workshop. Gary is researching school information on the Missoula County Public Schools site. Jim attended Poetry Out Loud presented by 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders. He also enjoyed the meeting with Sunset at their school when discussions were held on the Multidistrict Agreement. Bob taught art to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class and has a line on a couple of presenters that might come to our school. He also went to the MCT play and thought it was a great success.

Bob went on to say he appreciates the school staff for putting in even more of themselves to achieve the ‘excellence’ in our school vision statement. They are being asked to provide more for the students with fewer resources due to reduced school funding. He would like to propose doing something for the staff – like a party with a meal put on by the board. All the board members were in agreement. They will brainstorm to come up with ideas. Bob asked if the board could organize it through Tim.

Jeff also said he thought Tim did an excellent job with his ‘State of Potomac’ address.

**Four Day School Week**

Tim presented some of the research he has been conducting on schools that have gone to a 4 day week. He said the impetus for this research came down to statistics he heard that showed schools that moved to a 4 day schedule have higher attendance, higher motivation, academic improvement and higher moral. He also found that districts who decided to try the 4 day schedule ended up staying with it. To this point, he has not found one that switched back after trying it.

Tim talked to Superintendants and Principals who are on this schedule, and their discussion focused on continuity in the classrooms. Extending class time from 45 to 60 minutes gave the time needed to explain content, work with the content, then follow up with the content, and eliminate homework. Being able to follow up within the same class time, with a teacher available for help, improved the students learning. It also freed up after school time for the family and extracurricular pursuits.

The longer school day in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in particular allowed time for independent study. Independent study is one of the hallmarks of a gifted and talented program.

Tim also talked to students at some of the schools he visited. The first time he asked what a student thought of the longer school day and shorter school week he was amazed at the answer. The student said they ‘get to spend more time with my parents’. Another student said ‘you don’t want to miss a day!’ Motivation and moral showed in student comments.

To summarize his research to this point, Tim said he found the 4 day school week concept is:

1. All about the students-academics and motivation.
2. Provides more family time.
3. Increases Attendance.
4. No Required Homework.

What he found worrisome is the lack of negative information he heard. Tim feels he needs to research more to make sure he is not missing anything.

Victoria asked what a day would be like for the students in the earliest grades of kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Tim said when he asked that question, he was told that for kindergarten in particular students took about 2 weeks to get into the schedule. Then, since kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> require fewer hours of schooling per day, their recess schedule is increased. The adjustment happens with schedules, energy is high throughout the day, extra study time is provided and motivation is high.

Lincoln also set up a 5<sup>th</sup> day program, and after a couple of weeks no one showed up for them.

Another way to increase class time that could provide continuity in the classroom is to schedule in ‘blocks’ of time. This method increases class time for core curriculum, and schedules the classes every other day. This has also been

tried in other schools, but with seemingly less success. Many of the schools revert back to the shorter class time scheduled every day.

Tim feels the success lies in how the time is used – and the attitude we have going into it.

Gary asked if the staff has any concerns. Tim said the staff just wants to know how the schedule would look for the kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. He is getting input from the other districts on how days are scheduled.

Jim said the last he heard about a 4 day school week centered on the cost savings. What he is hearing now doesn't seem to have anything to do with that. He asked if there was academic improvement. Tim said the cost savings are minimal. The main reason is academic improvement, and yes, there is improvement shown. As examples, Drummond stated they have an increase in their honor students arriving from Helmvilles 8<sup>th</sup> grade class, Albertons GPA increased by .5%, and Lincolns superintendant has seen an increase in academic performance.

Jim asked why this was the case. Tim said the consensus is the longer class time helped with completion of tasks, which reduced interruptions in the content and allowed the class to move on to the next item in curriculum. Put in other words, the continuity paired with extended class time increased student academic performance.

Also, Tim said the coming model that the state of Montana is implementing, The Montana Common Core Standards (MCCS), is required of all schools in the United States to maintain the same level of curriculum in each grade. This allows students to move between schools and states without disruption in studies. The MCCS has increased the rigor of the curriculum standards, and as such will benefit from a 4 day week with extended class times.

Jim asked if a 'block' schedule over 5 days also improves academic performance. Tim said he will look into that. He only knew that schools who tried the schedule often did not keep it.

Jim then asked what additional information Tim needed to make a recommendation to the board.

Tim said he wanted more input from the parents and community. The survey he currently has on the website has been tampered with. So he will get a survey up that will not allow the kind of manipulation of data that has been happening with the current survey. He also is not convinced he has heard the challenges to a 4 day school week from those who have implemented it. Everything to this point has been positive - which worries him.

Bob said he felt the parents and community would benefit from the information Tim has presented here. Bob would especially like to see the information gotten out to the public about how the 4 day school week showed an increase in honor students and GPA.

Another question Bob posed was how the 4 day week would affect special needs students.

Tim said that at this point, he plans to increase the advertisement of the Parent and Community forum (PAC) that will be held this month on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, add more information in the Newsletter, and send out additional letters. He will be prepared to make a recommendation at the next monthly board meeting.

Tim feels that whatever is decided, nothing is perfect. Any schedule has shortfalls. He feels the information he has received to date on the 4 day school week offers more benefits for the academic needs of Potomac students. The school just needs to keep striving towards that 'excellence' in education.

**Call for Election**

Jim made a motion to call for an election to elect one trustees for a three-year term. Victoria seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

**Contract Negotiation Committee's PACE & PEA**

Jim and Victoria volunteer to be the board representatives for contract negotiation with PACE & PEA.

**Board of Trustees.....**

**10**

Gary moved to nominate Jim and Victoria to be the board representatives for contract negotiation with PACE & PEA. Jeff seconded the motion. **Passed 5-0.**

Jim suggested that the board wait to begin negotiations until the school receives final information on next years budget.

**School Policy Manual**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Policy Series 1000

- Policy 1105 lines 14 & 15, remove the line added for consideration by MTSBA. It does not pertain to our school.
- Policy 1111 pg 1, line 13, what is a second-class and third-class qualified elector?
- Policy 1210 lines 12-16, Take out the italicized section added for consideration by MTSBA.  
Line 22, keep 'Act as spokesperson for the Board' as added for consideration by MTSBA.  
Line 28 & 29, take out these lines
- Policy 1312 lines 13 & 14, Remove the last line in the paragraph.

Victoria needs to leave the meeting.

- Policy 1401 Add on line 18, 'A written copy of Unofficial Board Minutes shall be available to the general public within 5 working days of a board meeting.'
- Policy 1420 pg 1, line 41, change 'Superintendant' to 'Clerk'  
Pg 3, line 12, replace both instances of 'Superintendent' with 'Clerk'  
Pg 3, line 15, replace 'Superintendent' with 'Clerk'

Jim moved to adjourn the meeting and continue the policy review at the next monthly board meeting. Gary seconded the motion. **Passed 4-0.**

**Adjourn**

Chair O'Boyle adjourned the Board meeting at 10:20 pm.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert O'Boyle, Chair Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jill M Thornton, Clerk Date