

Seward Schools Site-Based Council
Meeting Minutes - April 11th, 2013 - 6:30 PM
Seward High School, Seward Middle School, Seward Elementary School

Present: Alan Nickell, Jason Bickling, Myla Liljemark, Amy Hankins, Julie Lindquist, Mica Van Buskirk, Stephanie Cronin, Raylynn Zweifel, Maya Moriarity, David Kingsland, Linda Ferkinhoff, Wolfgang Kurtz, Hayden Beard, Emily Brockman, Reuben Miranda, Joe Arness, Trevan Walker, Nickole Lyon, Laura Hensley, R. Brown

Call to Order: 6:30 PM

Approval of Minutes: Approved – with the addition of a summation of the Seward Middle School Debate Team’s presentation, and the pros and cons therein.

Additions to Agenda: None

Public Comments: None

Reports from Student Representatives:

Middle School (no representative) Amy Hankins, asked why there has been no rep for the past three months and she would like to have their perspective. Julie Lindquist agreed, but also mentioned that we did have their perspective after the debate last month.

High School – Hayden Beard and future student council rep. Emily Brockman

- Emily Brockman is introduced as next year’s site based council high school rep
- Track in progress – 1st meet was last week at the “Dome” in Anchorage
- Seniors are getting ready for graduation
- Soccer has started – 1st game is the 19th of April
- Prom is this weekend @ the new community library
- Robin McKnight is the new student council president
- Senior gift may be a bench next to the pool door
- Hayden has been the student school board rep – “It’s been an honor serving”

Old Business

SBC Recommendation to Move 6th Grade (Mica Van Buskirk)

- The recommendation of the Site Based Council, that the principals pursue the option of moving the 6th grade to the middle school is not being retracted but it was revisited with additional insight, discussion and a recount of the votes, with four additional members present. All votes remain the same with the exception of the following:
 - Amy Hankins changed her vote to a - **No**
She was concerned that some teachers did not feel comfortable in voting. They thought they could be identified based on the grade they taught, their children etc. and that it might affect their job. Jason spoke to that issue, and reaffirmed the anonymity of the respondents and said he was sorry they felt that way. Twenty five teachers did vote. The survey was not perfect and someone had to be the key master. It was agreed that in

hindsight we should have had someone neutral do the survey, but it is a new process for us and we are on a learning curve. Lots of discussion on this survey and issue and Jason did volunteer to sit down with Leigh Ray and go over the survey results as a double check. In the future.....

- Trevan Walker **Yes**
Discussion began in September and the principals have been discussing this since last year, and he saw this coming a while back. He is very confident that the middle school staff can provide a quality program for three grades.
 - Maya Moriarty **Yes**
She is very glad to have her daughter in the middle school and is proud of what she has been able to accomplish and be a part of there. She has a 7th and 5th grader. Her son would have more opportunities if the 6th grade moved up and she feels her daughter has been challenged. Mylie, her daughter is very much for it, because of what they would lose without it and she likes the middle school atmosphere.
 - Reuben Miranda **Yes**
What we have now has become our tradition, but times are changing and other schools are adapting to give their students and children the best opportunities and education they can. He believes we should do the same.
 - Hayden Beard & Emily Brockman **Yes**
Many of the high school students would be for it and believe it would provide more opportunities for the middle school students.
- Mica made a general statement that as a whole she feels the majority of the community is in favor of this move. She also asked Jason, if when the kindergartener's reach middle school what happens.
 - Jason – 6th graders if in the middle school, can currently practice, travel and compete in Cross Country, Nordic Skiing and Wrestling.
 - Basketball and Volleyball – 3 week intermural open to all and then it moves to competitive season with an A team and a B team
 - 3 Schools w/ 6th graders – would provide their own 6th grade competitions, instead of being in the back of the bus so to speak.
 - Roberts Rules of Order – discussion as to whether or not they are in our by-laws, we use them or there has been a precedent set. It was agreed upon that we sort of use a loose form of Roberts Rules of Order – or “Bob’s Rules of Order that Maya so succinctly stated. Examples: Motions, Seconds, etc.
 - Linda Ferkinhoff asked if this move was going to happen this year or next year. David Kingsland replied, 1st it has to have approval from the school board and they will decide.
 - Jason shared – Dr. Atwater came and met with the principals and discussed another option for the time being based on the unknowns. If the middle school has to go to 4 teachers next year, Jason would have to teach 2 classes. This poses a problem with him being the principal at Moose Pass, as it would not allow him time to continue in that position. Also, even though Jason would not be at Moose Pass they would still have to keep his pay the same and they would have to find another administrator to cover that position. This creates a financial burden.

So... for next year only Seward Middle School could be given a .5 FTE, which means it would create stability for Moose Pass and Seward Middle School for the school year 2013/14. Essentially things would remain the same.

- It was asked if the site based council recommendation was on the agenda for the next school board meeting on the 6th of May. Joe Arness, the school board president, stated the agenda was not set yet. He and Dr. Atwater will meet next Monday to set the agenda.
- Julie Lindquist stated that she believed it is better to take our time and get it right, than to rush, not do a good job transitioning and have back lash.
- Jason spoke to both of the scenario's stating that yes, it could be done for next year, but this would not allow for more input from the site based council and others as requested. Also, it may not give the 5th graders the initial introduction into the middle school and they would miss out on that. As for waiting until the following year, it would give more time to plan, consider others and make the transition better. We will still have activity issues though.
- Julie Lindquist, Amy Hankins and Mica Van Buskirk felt that if we wait a year there are many people in the community that would be willing to help assure that additional activities and clubs could be brought forth for the middle school students. They are all willing to work on this.
- Joe Arness was there because he came to get background. He also explained the process a bit.

Reconfiguring schools from time to time happens but official action has to be taken at the board level and there are certain steps that need to be followed when possible and they take time.

His concern is that a precedent is not set of turning on a dime.

Realistically he is not keen on the idea of it happening this fall and personally would rather spend the year planning, but he is only 1 of 9.

How does it look 5years down the road? It has to be thought through and this includes many people and entities: HR, Principals, Teachers, School Board, Parents, Community members etc. He doesn't see an emergency.

- It was noted that a couple of years ago the middle school had elective choices, music, art, ceramics, classes with Mr. Hemstock and that with a 6th grade move these would again be available to students.

It was mentioned that vocational classes in the high school are keeping some of the students in school, particularly the boys and shows the importance of having them.

It was suggested that not all people/students realized how much has been lost in the middle school the past few years.

- Amy Hankins asked if the elementary school could give up a .5 to the middle school. The answer was no for many reasons. Amy also asked if they site council recommended it based on what would be best for all of our schools could it be done? The question remains.
- Maya Moriarty asked how much a .5 costs and could monies be reallocated to cover that. Also, could postions such as Judy Odhner's vocational class be offered with those kinds of monies. Trevan stated that we would have to go beyond him.
- Amy Hankins spoke to the possibility of a School Foundation that she has been researching, along with Mica Van Buskirk, and says yes it is possible. A 501C3 would need to be obtained and the funds would have to be used for a specific purpose and be treated as a grant for a year.
- Jason shared that the Career Technical Ed Funds that were received last year, were used to purchase Lego Robotics for 30 students, but they did not have a teacher to work with the kids. This next year

they will have that and this person will be trained. Then through the next years other teachers can be trained as well with the Lego Robotics, so as to maintain this opportunity and activity for the kids.

- Maya asked that this issue and recommendation please be put on the May agenda, so that it does not become a dire situation after this next year. Joe's guess is that they will have an administrative recommendation to tentatively approve the recommendation for the 6th grade move.
- Hayden Beard suggested clubs to fill the need for activities and to have parents lead them, which is a great idea; however time for many parents is an issue.
- Raylynn was concerned about having Chemistry next year for the high school. Trevan said that there would be Chemistry!
- Amy Hankins would be happy to help in finding funding for options for the children, such as writing grants etc. She would lead a task force...to help fill in gaps.
- Trevan asked for clarification as to where we are with our recommendation. Is it for this year or next year and Mica stated, that she didn't think that was our decision.

SBC Resolutions –

- Amy Hankins asked, what happens if the resolution we put forth (regarding additional FTE to fill the gaps in smaller schools for equity) get some traction, then what do we do. The suggested answer was to wait and see what happens and address it then.
- Mica did get some response from the board and she thinks it is possible that funding formulas are going to be discussed at the planning meeting in June.

New Business

Draft School Schedules - Principals

- Handout from Jason –Middle School Plan and Plan Co-Curricular Activities
See Seward Middle Interscholastic Draft Plan (by sport)
Amy Hankins – asked if we could get a waiver for the 6th grade students to be able to come up and and play sports with the middle school. ??? We do know that the schedules are not the same for the two schools and it would be impossible to take away class time. She is giving lots of good ideas and different scenarios. Bus does pick up the high schoolers and the 6th graders at the same time.
- Handout from David – PE 4 days a week and Library 1 day a week
- Handout from Trevan – but not set in stone by any means and he recalled it at the end of the meeting. Gave many details about different options.

Education Foundation – Mica Van Buskirk/Amy Hankins

- They finally have the information they need to move forward and would like to have committee meetings regarding this wonderful opportunity. They also invited any and all interested parties to contact them to contribute and be a part of the group.

Site Council Meeting Time Change – Mica

- Once again discussion as to whether or not we could extend our meeting to 9:30 as we never have enough time to complete the agenda. There were several yea's and several nay's definitely no consensus. Moved on as time was short.

Title VII parent Advisory Committee Volunteer – Rachel James

- Unanimous Approval and comments of support for Rachel James

New Members – Community Representative

- Mica had stated that since Jerry Olive resigned his seat has been open and she would like to fill it. Laura Hensley, who was at the meeting, expressed willingness and an interest. She introduced herself and will send her information via email.

Reports from Administrator's, School Board Rep & PTSA Rep

- *David Kingsland – SBA's are over!; Successful Bingo & Books Night; Boys & Girls Club Activity; Guitar Club; Mr. Fraad – Cheerleading Coach; Augusta Lind – Miniature Mind Amazes; Arts for Parks; Wrapping up Summer School Invitations- which will be run by the Boys & Girls Club*
- *Jason Bickling – Myla Liljemark was named a BP 2013 Teacher of Excellence for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District and is in the running for the BP Teacher of the Year; Jeremy Swarington placed 14th out of 110 in the State Geography Bee; Ruby Lindquist ,SMS Masonic Student of the Year; Track is in full swing; As always meets are being cancelled due to snow on the track and fields; KFT Tour – 7th graders; May 8th Bike to School Day*
- *Trevan Walker – May 6th Board of Education Meeting 7 PM – committee meetings during the afternoon. May 7-9 the Spring Drama Production – A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Coliseum; Rex Davis and WC..thanks to them for clearing the track; Commons should have a new look next fall; Lindsey Kromrey is our SHS Masonic Student of the year; Gary Benson – retiring; Seward HS is hosting the all district student council meeting next fall*
- *Maya Moriarty – Land Trust lawsuit filed – hopefully another source of funding for education; Imagination Library – April 13th; Garage Sale – May 25th- gather your nice goods, proceeds go towards scholarship; PTA convention- April 26th & 27th please let Al McCarty know if you are interested in going.*

Council Remarks –

- *Julie: Thank you to Mr. Arness for driving over and joining us tonight!*
- *Linda: At the next meeting, where are we at with football?*
- *David: Megan Mullaey – Elementary School, Masonic Student of the Year; Tenth Annual Math Bowl coming up on Math3rd at the EL School*
- *Amy Hankins: would like to start conversations about becoming a STEM School; Teaching a robotics class –teaching 32 students, it is a 12 week program*
- *Joe Arness: has always referred to us as the Seward School District*
- *Mica: Excited about the principal training at the high school; please everyone go to the school meeting; Borough Assembly meeting next Tuesday*

Next Meeting- May 9th – 6:30 PM

