

Richmond Site Council Meeting Summary

December 10, 2007

Present: Tim Smith, Kathryn Anderson, Jaina Kapranos Johnson, Lynne Cunnings, Minori Fukushima, Melanie Scheuermann and Dawn Uchiyama

Absent: Gary Kuney

The group reviewed and approved the meeting summary from October 8, 2007.

Site Council Membership

Tim Smith and Dawn Uchiyama will continue to serve on the Richmond Site Council as chair and secretary, respectively. Tim and Kathryn will continue to look for opportunities to recruit other parent members. Jaina volunteered to write up a short summary of each Site Council meeting to be included in the Richmond Shinbun.

Updates

12/10 Enrollment (handout). There are currently 435 students enrolled at Richmond. Pre K has two classes of 25 (with a 10:1 ratio of students to adults), Kindergarten has four classes of 22, 1st grade has four classes of 24, 2nd grade has two classes one with 28 and the other with 29, 3rd grade has two classes of 29, 4th grade has two classes one with 20 and the other with 22, 5th grade has two classes of 22. While opinions vary, many agree the ideal range for instruction is 22 to 23 students. PPS is looking for 26 to 28 and will take up to 30.

The State Attorney General just issued an advisory opinion that stated school districts should not be charging for half-day kindergarten. A letter to parents will be going out in the mail soon but this issue will likely be deferred until next year.

DJC, Asian Reporter and Yuaake Shinbun ads have been very successful and have prompted many inquiries. Unfortunately International School ad look very similar and hopefully readers are able to see the distinctions.

School name change (handout). A survey was posted on Richmond's website in November. Approximately 50 people responded to the survey, with 70% preferring that "Richmond" stay in the new name and 81% preferring the word "Japanese" be included in the new name. The most frequent suggestion for a new name was Richmond Japanese Immersion School.

Several grant application have been submitted recently for both cultural support staff and the Japanese garden.

Review Immersion Program Data

Michael Bacon, Immersion Education Coordinator for PPS, provided the following information for the 9 immersion Programs within the District:

- List of schools
- Language spoken
- Neighborhood program or not
- % of native speakers
- Number of teachers
- Number of students
- What the school language model is
- Test scores

- Interns or not
- Type of parent organizations

The group reviewed data and discussed it's relevancy to Richmond. The group discussed the importance of the International Baccalaureate Program and the prospects Richmond has to entering into the IB certification process.

Kathryn reported that the K-8 model is experiencing growing pains throughout the district. Typically there is not enough staff support and concern for the safety of students.

Richmond is the only school with an intern program. Kathryn mentioned there is controversy brewing with our interns regarding their ability to teach and learn in the classroom vs. making copies and other administrative assignments.

Kathryn reported that her number one priority working with Michael Bacon is a dramatic revision to the current Richmond curriculum. Professional development and parent education are also on her priority list. She mentioned that for the other immersion programs the district provides all documents in two languages except Japanese. She said it is essential to have adequate teaching materials in Japanese. She also reported that she is looking getting reading materials donated to Richmond from Portland's Japanese Saturday School.

The group agreed Michael provided a lot of useful information and that we should start with some small steps like contacting a few schools to gauge their interest in comparing programs. Dawn agreed to contact Patsy and see if she can get the contacts of 2 or 3 other Immersion Program Site Councils (particularly Ainsworth and Woodstock).

Holiday Survey (handout)

Richmond parent Melanie Scheuermann asked the Site council to consider the idea of surveying the Richmond community to get a better strategy for how holidays are incorporated into the school curriculum. After several encounters, Melanie observed that our program appeared to lack consistency and purpose when it came to holiday celebrations. Kathryn noted there is a District policy that states holiday observances must have an instructional focus. The group agreed this was an important issues and Melanie said she would be revising the survey and would keep us posted on what happens.

Items not covered (for next Agenda?)

- Garden Committee Goals
- Focus for Site Council in 2008

Potential agenda items, carried-over from last year

- Fifth grade trip (is this resolved or is further discussion needed?)
- School volunteers
- Fundraising
- FTE Staff Plan
- Growth Plan

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45. The next meeting is January 14, 2008.

Meeting summary prepared by Dawn Uchiyama