

SCHOOLS COMMITTEE

Minutes of May 20, 2010

7:30 to 8:30, at the Multnomah Center

Chair: Will Fuller

Arnold Creek

Bridlemile:

Hayhurst:

Hillsdale:

Homestead:

Maplewood:

Multnomah: Sarah White

South Burlingame:

South Portland:

SWHRL:

WPP: Jean McCormick

Guests:

Staff: Leonard Gard

Will: Angela Moran-Hinsley of Oregon Partnership had a good town hall event at St. Barnabas on May 17 regarding teen drug and alcohol abuse. There was a panel of dignitaries and students. Students were frank. There was a pretty good turnout.

Follow-up from Sharing Family Stories event

Will reports: After the Sharing Family Stories event, Will did a follow-up with the students who participated in the event. Will did the follow-up during student lunch time at both Jackson and Gray middle schools. All the students were willing to act as mentors for incoming new students at the two schools.

Will asked three main questions: 1) What they learned at the event, 2) How could the event be changed, and 3) What ideas they have for other events.

Things they learned included new stories, a feeling that members of the community stay separate unless brought together, and even people who did no preparation were able to relate interesting stories.

Ideas for changes included more sharing of the speeches the students had prepared, more time for table discussion, spreading the tables out farther from each other to reduce interference from talk at other tables, and inviting more students to attend. The adult facilitation was generally good. It was generally subtle but sometimes there was too much control over flow of the conversation.

New ideas included incorporating more senior citizens and a potluck picnic.

Will will write an interim and then final report. He'll follow up in the fall with the schools and interview student participants on what they learned from the event in the longer term. SWNI's grant program has been slashed. The Sharing Family

Stories event cost \$1,000. Will may seek a grant elsewhere for a second event, and next time may need broader publicity.

Neighborhood reports

Jean: Don Rose, a teacher at Jackson MS, is interested in connecting with the West Portland Park NA and being a bridge to the Somali community. He's also interested in another Sharing Family Stories event. Jean was recently re-elected to the West Portland Park NA board.

Sara: Most of the latest Multnomah NA meeting was about the Multnomah Blvd pressure line. Angela from Oregon Partnership did not show up. May 22 is the bike rodeo fair. Maplewood School has reduced electricity usage by 12% this year.

83% Club

Will made buttons for club members to wear. The club is about supporting schools. It doesn't have a particular agenda or position on specific issues. Will is developing ideas for events for club members.

High school redesign

Will reports. Cutting out transfers under high school redesign could reduce enrollment at Wilson HS. But under the federal No child Left Behind law, some students will still be able to transfer. About 15% of Wilson HS students are transfers. Although there will be no cut in course offerings, there could be a cut in "sections" of classes, making it harder for students to get the elective classes they want. But all in all, the impact on Wilson HS will probably be minimal. For Lincoln HS, its attendance zone would change. Buckman students would shift to Lincoln.

The final school board vote on high school redesign is supposed to take place on June 21. Both Benson and Jefferson people will probably demonstrate in opposition at that board meeting.

School visits by committee members

Discussion takes place. Ideas for visits for this fall: Jackson and Gray middle schools and Markham. Protocols for visiting differ from school to school, especially at private schools.

Introduction to PPS structure and procedures

Will gives committee members a primer on PPS organizational structure and procedures.

At the top of the structure is the Board of Education, commonly called the School Board. Voters district wide elect the School Board members, and each member represents the whole district, but the seven elected board members must reside,

one each, in each of seven districts. Board members have two-year terms. There is also a student representative on the board.

The Board:

- Hires the superintendent.
- Sets policy.
- Has a staff and legal counsel.
- Bargains with the employee unions.
- Holds public meetings.

The Board has standing committees. Major work gets done at the committee level. The meetings are less formal than meetings of the Board, and occasionally members of the public are invited to speak. At Board meetings, the public can attend and listen, but do not participate. Staffers often give detailed reports at committee meetings.

The Board sets policies and issues directives. Directives implement policies. Because PPS is lightly staffed, what gets done is that which has pressure on it to get done. Some schools do not have site councils though all are supposed to have them.

At the next meeting, Will will talk about how the public can have an impact.

End of meeting.