

**Piedmont Middle School Site Council Minutes**  
**October 4, 2011**

**Attendees:** Jeanne Donovan, Eric Mapes, John White , Annie Holland, Debby Sorenson, Carolyn White, Sue Lin, Michelle Lucas, Marianne Mitosinka, Beth Wiesbrock, Roy Tolles, Barbara Love, Joseph Chu

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 3:30pm The minutes for the September 20 meeting were approved.

**SITE COUNCIL GOALS:** Jeanne Donovan opened the meeting with a discussion of the Site Council goals, which will include the areas of World Language, Student Assessments and School Climate

1)World Language

Barbara Love (Piedmont Language School) said that PLS has done some research on language programs at other schools. The PLS board would like to participate in the Site Council study of World Language at comparable middle schools. Barbara said that PLS is designed primarily to support the language program offered at Piedmont schools. The goal is to transition PLS into a fundraising arm for the PUSD language program.

Debby Sorensen asked John White (PMS French teacher) what questions he has regarding how language is taught at other schools. John noted that PMS is unique in that it has a 3-semester system for language (one semester in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and two semesters in 8<sup>th</sup> grade). This allows students to take an additional elective in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Teachers feel that this system works very well. John would like to know whether there is a language requirement at other middle schools, and whether languages are offered at the elementary school level. He made the point that elementary school is the best time to begin learning a language.

There was discussion surrounding the wording of the Site Council goals on World Language. One goal will deal with conducting a survey of World Language at comparable schools. The other goal will involve assessing the minimum skill requirements for advancement in each World Language. (See Single Plan for final wording)

It was agreed that we will ask the parent community for volunteers to help with the study of World Language programs at comparable schools. The request will be put to the PMS Parent Board, and also to all parents through a notice in the bulletin. Jeanne Donovan will ask the World Language teachers to develop questions for the survey and will then submit the questions to the Site Council for review.

The question was raised of how the Curriculum Forum will deal with the question of World Language at the elementary school level, and who will represent the elementary schools at the Curriculum Forum, since there are no language teachers at the elementary schools.

Joseph Chu said that he felt it would be good for students to be able to start a language in elementary school, but that the program should be very basic and not too difficult.

Annie Holland asked how we can encourage kids to take languages. Barbara Love said that there is a trend in this country for kids to learn a language, in order to prepare our kids to be global citizens. Carolyn White noted that is often difficult for Special Education students to take a language, due to scheduling problems. It was agreed that it would be helpful to explore what obstacles/issues are preventing students from taking a language.

#### 2) Assessments:

The wording for the goal surrounding Student Assessment was finalized (See Single Plan) The goal will address the need for additional assessment strategies to enhance STAR data. These may include departmental common assessments, project-based assessments or media presentations, with the goal of developing both written and oral measurements. Each department needs the flexibility to choose how best to improve the quality of assessments.

#### 3) School climate:

The wording for this goal was finalized (See Single Plan) The goal provides for improving school climate by developing programs to foster inclusiveness and respect for all students.

#### BLOCK SCHEDULE

Jeanne Donovan noted that there is an upcoming parent/administrator meeting to address the possibility of PMS changing to a Block Schedule. The meeting will start with a brief introduction and background of the issue, and then parents will break into small groups to discuss concerns, questions and possible issues. The notes from these small groups will go back to administrators and teachers for their consideration as they continue to evaluate this possibility.

Jeanne noted that this will not be a question/answer forum. The meeting will be announced through the PMS bulletin, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents will be informed as well.

Some parents noted that the parent community really wants to be kept informed as the process moves forward. It would be helpful to let parents know if there are certain conditions or requirements for any proposed change, such as whether all three grades at PMS need to be on the same schedule, whether the schedule needs to match the high school, and whether a "modified block" is a possibility. Jeanne Donovan said that she will be developing a timeline for the decision process.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 4:55pm.