

West Hillsborough Elementary School
School Site Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 30, 2012

Location: West Library

Members Present: Steven Gans, Deb Kelly, An Chang, Jeannie Ainsworth, Jamie Adams, Kristina Kaufman, Ingrid DeMoor Kitahata, Teresa Pai, Betsy Miller, Angie Padian, Marlene Tuzar

Guests: Don Geddis, Mary Maher, Anu Hoey, Katie Pierce, Julia Zhen

Meeting Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER, 3:12 pm

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, 3:30 pm

1. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION –

Mary Maher – Director of Student services serving special needs, EL, GATE spoke about her role and the programs currently being implemented in the school district. She discussed Star testing which starts in second grade. In order to be considered for GATE the student needed to be in the top 10% of the class for two consecutive years. Students were identified in 4th grade after two years of STAR testing. These students are identified amongst the entire school district. And once a student is recognized for the GATE program, they are always in GATE even if their scores go down. The student generally needs a 600 for Math and mid 500's for English Language. A student can be recognized for both or just one area. The benefit of GATE is that the student is recognized as a high achiever. Teacher conferences and PEP goals are focused on how to challenge the student in this area of strength. Differentiation is used instead of a pullout for GATE students so, there is no special program per se for GATE students. Differentiation is used across the board and for all students. Public high school will seriously look at GATE as a means for placement. The question of telling the student about GATE was discussed. GATE is a State program that the district used to receive monies for but no longer. GATE is a mandate which is why we continue it. Teachers will provide additional challenges for a GATE student and it is part of the PEP goals here at West School.

Anu Hoey is the State Representative for the GATE program from West School. Ingrid commented that when forming classrooms, it would be good to put multiple bright kids in a class together because kids not only learn from the teacher but also, from their peers. It was commented that the top 1% should perhaps be looked more closely because they may need additional challenges beyond the targeted curriculum but, that the curriculum already targets the top 10% since that is a decent amount of children in the classroom. We discussed that there are too many other data points to really pay attention to just GATE which is reflective of star test scores only. All data points combined truly create the full picture of a child's ability and aptitude. Curriculum enhancement at West school is offered to the entire student base (not just GATE students) through programs like ILAB and mathletics. Jamie also commented that many students are challenged through differentiated activities in the classroom that are being designed by the teachers. This is being done through things like Operation Risk and activities that stimulate students to think outside the box (I.E. economics in 5th grade.)

1. DISCUSS FUTURE MEETING TOPICS AND OTHER ITEMS

Katie Pierce brought up the Khan Academy as a potential area in which to explore differentiated learning and to challenge students in the classroom. She spoke about how her child has benefited from this online program. However, using Khan Academy would not be a West School decision since the district ultimately has responsibility for these types of decisions. Angela Padian uses the Khan Academy from time to time in her classroom and explained the capacity in which it has been used. It was recommended that teachers doing these kinds of programs send out an update to the parents so that they are aware of what is being introduced in the classroom and can take advantage of it at home, also. Jamie added that we need to talk about social and emotional learning and not just things like computer programs because it is important to have a comprehensive education here at West School. (i.e. we discussed the use of the smart board choice for preschool and how it is good but, only as an augmentation to the others modes of teaching and the emotional well being and development of the child).

Next year's SITE council has 4 parents interested in being on the committee: Roger Avedon, Katie Pierce, Leslie Huie, Anu Hoey. Steven Gans, Marlene Tuzar & Deb Kelly will be stepping down. Theresa Pai also opted to step down so that an election would not be necessary for the four parents interested in the positions. One of the seats would be a 1 year or 3 year position depending on what the council decides. It was emphasized that all interested

parents are welcome to participate in the meetings. Colleen Golden will replace Jeannie Ainsworth and Jay Beams will replace Sherry Lynnes.

Roger Avedon has volunteered to be the chair. All four interested parents were approved for SITE council for the 2012-2013 school year.

1. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

1. OPEN FORUM FOR THE PUBLIC

Members of the public are invited to comment – no one

1. ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting: to be determined in the next school year.