

## West Hillsborough School Site Council

### DRAFT MINUTES

April 29, 2015

#### A. Call to Order:

Members present: Jamie Adams, Chris Flores, Jamie Evare, Megan Medvitz, Sherry Gavin , Vicki Volden, Leslie Huie, Christy Maclean-Chu, Theo Kotseroglou, Suma Raju (unable to attend).

Also present Marlene Tuzar and Terri Cruce.

#### B. Minutes Approved (3/18/15)

#### C. Next year's Parent Volunteers:

Theo Kotseroglou accepted position of Secretary for 2015-2016.

Christy Maclean-Chu and Suma Raju return.

Marlene Tuzar will step in to the Chair position. Marlene's role could change IF her employment demands change.

New members: Marlene Tuzar; Terri Cruce, Kimberly Dalal.

New staff members: To be announced.

#### D. West Site Council proposed 2015-2016 schedule:

Sept.16<sup>th</sup>.

Oct.21<sup>st</sup>

Nov.18<sup>th</sup>

Dec.16<sup>th</sup>

Jan.20<sup>th</sup>

Feb.17<sup>th</sup>

March 16<sup>th</sup>

April 20<sup>th</sup>

May 18<sup>th</sup>

#### E. Celebrating Principal Jamie Adams' tenure at West Hillsborough School.

Jamie remembered six years ago during most of her first year at West, trying to wrap her mind around what people were doing.....how much 'testing' she saw and how little 'interactive' instruction there was. Jamie came from language-based thinking, which prompted Operation Risk, an approach which provided the teachers a chance to walk away from the Smart Board, with the goal to drive students to heir own level/capacity, to try something

new. The staff site council members present shared how they appreciated Operation Risk, risk in action, where they learned it was also okay for the kids to experience seeing a teacher fail, then recover. Try, try, try again....also learning how to think outside the box. A few parents commented how they too have noticed change in their kids, in their ability to take risks.

Jamie mentioned Dan Siegel, author of Mindsight.

added: (“Mindsight” is a term coined by Dr. Dan Siegel to describe our human capacity to perceive the mind of the self and others. It is a powerful lens through which we can understand our inner lives with more clarity, integrate the brain, and enhance our relationships with others.)

The West school teachers and counselor, Jamie Evare, have become resourceful about teaching children Mindfulness, as well as offering educational sessions for West parents.. Under Jamie’s leadership, West school has spear-headed issues, like Mindfulness, which are setting in to the Hillsborough district. Megan Medvitz has piloted Mindfulness for her 4th grade class this year.

Good to have a blend of old school and new school....use Technology as a Tool, but not End. Linked to Mindfulness, the children are learning to interact through classroom technology. Parents shared their appreciation of Jamie and her ability to influence upwards.

In addition to Operation Risk and Mindfulness, there have been other improvements to the curriculum during Jamie’s tenure at West:

- STAR testing went away at the lower grade level...
- Each child is learning to be a Creator instead of a Consumer.....
- The idea of FAMILY in which a pod of chosen kids come together regularly, and contribute as a family, making it intriguing as they represent cultural cross-section, gender and age....another example of risk-taking.

Even upon arriving at West to an already highly esteemed staff, Jamie and staff continue to empower each other.

Jamie relies on the staff and their input regarding how to balance parents and requests and high performance issues. She has tried to be attentive to relationships, filtering before passing parent input/requests to faculty, noting

that a leader has to have good timing.

Jamie could 'see' a STEAM night for next year...not a science fair but rather a family night, showcasing science and art. (This decision would be made by the incoming Principal with staff support.)

Writing is a topic near and dear to Jamie's heart. She feels that West tackled some this year and would really like to see more Creative Writing as part of the curriculum at West.

When asked what she would like to see continue in growth in to the future at West, Jamie enthusiastically responded with CREATIVITY, developing/nurturing a GARDEN, SERVICE-LEARNING within and for the community.

Another parent commented how it will be interesting to see if Jamie sees an emerging aptitude and building block between the elementary schools as they enter Crocker Middle School, and that hopefully she will share that information with the different schools.

Jamie and staff liked the assembly Soul Shoppe. It resonated with kids too, and didn't label.

Some parents addressed the desire to continue discussion about Labelling: Label vs. not labeling...  
"Geek vs. Chic" --- work with Site Council to help overcome this issue.

Jamie recalled a discussion at a recent district board meeting, and how she is proud of the kids who lost elections, the long arduous process, the let down, and their attitude of not giving up, how some are determined to try again, how they were un-phased by losing, very well poised and spoken in front of the board. Again, it speaks to the Process and how often it can be even more empowering that the Outcome...it spoke about the awareness of Mindfulness... (:

A parent inquired about the annual 4th Grade Yosemite trips. Yosemite trips will continue!!! It's teacher Megan Medvitz's 11<sup>th</sup> year (wow!!)

Before Anthony Ranii, the administrators didn't go, but they have really enjoyed being a part of this special week in Yosemite too. There are now

parental requests for West's counselor Jamie Evare to join in on the Yosemite trips as a participant beginning in year 2015-2016. Her presence might be comforting for many students as well as teachers.

Parents question what is the right mix for a strategic mix of site council discussion topics? In addition to the Site Plan, should it be STEAM , technology, school security concerns, etc....? Jamie wanted to create a forum for parents to discuss. There are tactical, strategic issues to tackle. Find a balance. How about homework? Balanced use of time for children? What kind of difference can the Site Council make at West Hillsborough School?

Some parents are interested in exploring the concept of presentation awards for kids in Mathletics, Creative Writing, Arts, Science, just as is given for athletic awards.....it was agreed that this could be a worthwhile conversation for the Site Council to pursue.

One parent commented that it appeared that school math was prized more by students than creative writing. Interestingly, some teachers praised and seemed to value creative thought. It is likely that they can't be super successful at Common Core math without creativity so attitudes may change.

At West Pre-school the children are given individual attribute awards as a way to identify a strength for that child to be proud of and celebrated for.

Maybe the kids could be celebrated in their individual classrooms or at lunch, or by having a STEAM-type exhibition around the school—in the MPR, Library, etc.

Thank you, Jamie Adams.

F. Meeting Adjourned.

Submitted by Sarah Adams, Chair/Secretary

