



## **Sheridan School APT Meeting Minutes from November 20, 2013**

*Call to order by Suzanne Sands at 9:30 am.*

**In attendance:** Kristen Chun, Wendy Darling, Bridgette Doheny, Alana Hender, Tish Houston, Heather Kotlarz, Brooke Kuehnle, Sarah Lockhart, Tracy Lundergan, Becky Nagel, Kate Rappel, Suzanne Sands, Laura Schlemm, Liz Scully, Dr. Shinn, Eileen Swartout, Laura Whisler, Consuelo Wilkinson

### **Guest Speaker – Mike Simeck**

Mr. Simeck discussed LASIC-why it is was created and where it's going. He reinforced the idea that Sheridan will continue to be a neighborhood school. Mr. Simeck also outlined his mission/vision for our district and invited parents to be on the look out for invitations to participate in the upcoming process the district will be undertaking to update the official mission/vision for our schools.

Mr. Simeck reflected on his first year observations which include: we have a smart, hard-working, committed staff; we excel at student-teacher relationships; community support is incredible-very involved, which kids pick up on; people move here for our schools; kids have outstanding social skills. There is a real focus on balance –which is refreshing and important. As we develop a vision for the future - we need an expandable view of intelligence – we need to stimulate every kid with the coolest (fun & meaningful) curriculum. We do not want to diminish their love of learning. We want to own the dinner conversation! He talked about the core competencies outlined by Tony Wagner that were discussed in the beginning of the year by the staff. As a school system, how do we prepare our students for their world?

A parent asked about free busing – if it's free maybe more students will take the bus, alleviating traffic. There was a brief discussion on the history of busing in the district.

### **Principal's Report -Dr. Shinn**

Third graders have been painting planets as part of an integrated project with science.

The first music performance for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is on Friday, Nov. 22. It is called *A Fall Festival*.

Winter Sing is on 12/13 at 9:30 for K(am), 1st, 3rd and at 1:30 for K(all day), 2nd, 4th. There was a discussion about some possible changes to the Winter Sing (chairs for parents, having kids sit with their class, information for new parents, etc.). Dr. Shinn will bring suggestions to Anna Gillan prior to the event.

3rd-4th graders will see the LF symphony at Gorton in March, the week before spring break.

Read Across Illinois (Family Reading Night) is Thurs., 11/21. There is more information on the website.

Mrs. Donoval is looking good and feeling well. We are looking forward to her return after Thanksgiving break!

### **President's Report - Suzanne Sands**

It's that busy time when everyone is gearing up for Thanksgiving so I want to thank everyone who is here today for making the time to attend this meeting. We have Mr. Simeck here today to update us on things that are happening in District 67 and beyond.

### **BALANCE**

#### **Inspirational Quote**

**Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving. - Albert Einstein**

#### **Take a Moment – Self Reflection**

I would argue that you also must reflect every once in a while and make sure the way in which you are moving is helping you get where you truly wish to go. Since we are here as parents let's focus on that aspect of our lives. These questions were shared so people could reflect on them at home on their own.

What is it that you want most for your children?

What are you doing to that end? What else could you be doing?

What might you be doing that is creating obstacles?

### **Calendar & Communication**

Our next meeting is January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Our guest speaker will be Margo Newtown our very own Information Literacy Instructor. We will have quite a few volunteer opportunities between now and then so pay attention to emails that are sent. I have Sheridan APT notecards available for any board members who would like to send thank you notes or other correspondence as a part of your APT role. Please let me know if you need some.

### **The Turkey Project**

Thank you to everyone who participated in making this year's turkey fantastic.

### **Highlights from the APT Executive Board Meeting**

For more details about any of the following topics please see the APT Executive Board minutes posted on their website.

### **Balance/Homework Discussion with Renee DeVore, Principal DPM-W and Michael Kroll, Assistant Principal DPM-E**

- A packet of organizational tips for students was shared.
- Leslie Fisher recommended Homework Club (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grade) and the Math Resource Center (5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Graders) as great options available to students afterschool.
- 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grade Homework Club is available Monday through Thursday 3:35 to 4:40 PM on a drop-in basis.
  - Monday & Thursday – Mrs. Bogrien Room 306
  - Tuesday & Wednesday – Mrs. Binversie Room 325

- Math Resource Center is available Tuesday – Thursday 3:35 to 5 PM for more details see the flyer posted on the Sheridan APT website.

### **Tour of the New District Website was provided.**

There are a few tips for parents that were recommended:

- Bookmark your school page(s).
- Customize your portal if desired.
- Subscribe to the iCalendar feeds that apply to your family

### **District 67 APT Nominating Committee News**

Nominations are now being solicited for the following District 67 APT Executive Board positions to serve during the 2014-16 school years:

APT Executive Board Vice President

APT Executive Board Recording Secretary

APT President, Cherokee Elementary School

APT President, Sheridan Elementary School

If you would like to nominate someone (including yourself), you may do so in one of the following ways:

- Download the 2014-2016 APT Nominations Form from the District 67 APT website <http://lfdist67apt.weebly.com>.
  - Complete the form and email it to [sandssuzanne@gmail.com](mailto:sandssuzanne@gmail.com).
  - Complete the form and mail it to Suzanne Sands, 701 Highview Terrace, Lake Forest, IL 60045
- Contact Suzanne via email at [sandssuzanne@gmail.com](mailto:sandssuzanne@gmail.com) or by calling (847) 283-0215 to submit possible candidate names.

### **FINAL DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS is Tuesday, January 7, 2014**

**Students Involved with Technology Conference** Saturday, February 22, 2014 at Aptakisic Jr. High School, 1231 Weiland Rd., Buffalo Grove, IL. If you have a child who is really into technology this is an event you shouldn't miss. For more information visit [www.sitconference.org](http://www.sitconference.org)

**CROYA** – Drop-in is available every day afterschool for 7<sup>th</sup> graders and up. They also have Middle School Treat Tuesday.

**GORTON** – Kids Only Holiday Shop is seeking volunteers for their event on December 4<sup>th</sup> from 2-6 PM. Christmas at Gorton will be on Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> featuring the symphony and caroling for all.

**DPM** – There will be a 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Dance on December 13<sup>th</sup>.

**LFHS** – There is a lot going on at our high school. They have task forces in place working on block scheduling and one to one computing. They are also working on expanding Emotional Wellness initiatives, and working on consistency across curriculum and grading systems. They will be holding Town Hall Meetings to gather more input from the community. They are also

committed to having students engaged in and involved in the process as changes are being explored.

### **November Appreciations**

- All of our Room Parents who have been organizing volunteers for field trips, Halloween celebrations, TIME Zone and more.
- Camile Mayer & Kristen Chun for reaching out to students with November birthdays and thanking folks for their participation in Celebration Book Club.
- Bridgette Doheny and Kristen Chun for kicking off TIME Zone this month for our 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders and our 1<sup>st</sup> Graders.
- Emily Savage and Kristin McCain for organizing the HUGS food drive at Sheridan with the help of Mrs. Volpe and her 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade class.
- All of our families who generously donated to the HUGS food drive this year.
- All of our students who participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Sheridan Turkey Project.
- Kelly Huguenard and Becky Nagel for organizing the upcoming Conference Luncheon for our teachers as well as all of the parent volunteers who are contributing to the luncheon.
- Laurie Whisler, Vanya and David Kramer for helping adjust the lunch volunteer schedule when the K/1 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade lunch times shifted.
- Kate Rother for beautifying the front of our school by refreshing our planters as needed.
- Carmen Doering-Clark for helping keep all of our parents informed and our website updated.
- Liz Scully for putting together the October minutes in record time.
- Mr. Simeck for joining us today to give us an update on our school district.

### **Treasurer's Report - Amie Marks**

A copy of the budget was offered for anyone interested. It is also available on the website.

**Co-Secretaries- Liz Scully & Tracy Lundergan** - No report at time.

### **Communications Coordinator – Carmen Doering**

Suzanne Sands said Carmen may be reaching out to people via email as necessary to gather information about the work they have been doing in their roles on the APT Board.

### **Community Organization Liason – Beth Laufenberg**

Report can be found in the meeting handout section of the Sheridan APT website.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Community Service – Emily Savage & Kristin McCain**

We had an AMAZING turnout for this year's Thanksgiving Food Drive to benefit HUGS. All donated food was sorted at Gorton Community Center by volunteers and will help make sure that every family in Northern Illinois has a real Thanksgiving meal. A HUGE thank you to Mrs. Volpe whose class artfully made signs for each donation box. Each grade participated in the food drive and bought to school a different food item to collectively make one Thanksgiving meal complete. HUGS will be providing the turkeys. Teacher feedback shared with us was that

the children were very excited about the food drive and eager to deliver their items each day. Thank you to all the parents who made a special trip to the grocery store or borrowed from their pantry to make someone else's table a little brighter this holiday season.

### **Conference Luncheon – Kelly Huguenard & Becky Nagel**

All the spots have been filled. The food needs to be brought in by 10:30am. Either drop off in the office or take back to the lounge.

### **Holiday Cookie Boxes – Laura Whisler & Wendy Darling**

Our goal is to assemble about 70 boxes of cookies. We are going to collect cookies on Wednesday, December 11th in the afternoon at Wendy Darling's house - 1311 Edgewood. We need people to bring 3 dozen homemade cookies and this year we are going to use the "Volunteer Spot" to gauge how many people are bringing cookies. The link is as follows for people to sign up: <http://vols.pt/4D8JT2>

### **Parent Awareness - Brooke Garrigan & Eileen Swartout (as submitted)**

#### ***Brief Summary of Current Month – Activities:***

- Melinda Hill has joined Parent Awareness as the Exec co-chair. Melinda has four children ranging from elementary school to high school. She's served in numerous volunteer and leadership roles in the community and we're very fortunate to have her join us!
- Parent Awareness reps will continue to ask for "Hot Parenting Topics" at school APT meetings. The recent topic submitted to the district was the concern about the website ask.fm. The DPM principal shared the concern, and issued an email to all 7/8<sup>th</sup> grade parents about the site.
- Kids use and abuse of Snap Chat and Snap Photo is also a concern to parents. Users may believe their use is private because the message or photo disappears in a second after it's been opened but savvy users can take a cover photo of the message by holding down two buttons on their phone as the image appears. Users' messages and photos have been saved and forwarded – with significant consequences.
- This month at the Exec Board APT meeting, the DPM 7/8 principal and 5/6 assistant principal were invited to speak about parents' concerns about the homework load at DPM. The principals have been researching the issue, and will continue to. Many parent board members expressed diverse concerns and issues on the topic. Suggestions ranged from managing the issue on the parenting side (not over-scheduling kids, teaching kids time management skills, helping kids advocate for their needs and utilizing the after-school homework resources at DPM) to the district side (challenging teachers to ensure work is meaningful, making teachers aware of assessments across subjects, keeping Edmodo up to date so students and parents can better plan work-load, and working to make subject requirements more even across a subject matter.) In the end, managing the middle school homework concern requires commitment on both sides of the equation to provide our students with a balanced, productive middle school experience.

- Are there any “Hot Parenting Topics” from our school that you would like resources for?
- Also in November, over 200 community members came to hear LEAD’s Parent University Keynote Speaker, author Bruce Feiler. He shared his research on “The Secrets of Happy Families”. He provided practical suggestions for parents which included the idea that happy families: adapt, talk a lot, and go out and play. His book is on Amazon.
- This month, Parent Awareness has a meeting with Ms. Devore, DPM West principal and Mr. Suminski, assistant principal, to discuss the idea of a JumpStart to 9th Grade program for spring.

***Brief Summary of Coming Month - Plans:***

- Parent Awareness plans to collect information about the diverse ways Red Ribbon Week is marked in our community, and assemble a ‘menu’ of best practices to share with the principals for customization in their schools for next year.

**Time Zone - Bridgette Doheny & Kristen Chun**

Information is on the website. Volunteers are still needed throughout the year.

**Teacher Liason – Laura Schlemm**

The school nurse is looking for gently used sweatpants. Parent/teacher conferences are next week. Report cards go home on Friday.

**Guest Speaker – Molly Sarver, *Spirit of 67 Foundation, Grants Committee*** – May need to re-schedule.

**Evening Parties & Coffees for Sheridan Parents**

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Parent Party – Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup>

**Board of Education – Alana Hender & Heather Kotlarz**

Board of Education Meeting:

Superintendent’s Report by Michael Simeck:

- Mr. Simeck introduced Rebecca Leafman, Director of Emotional Wellness, to discuss her role on the Food Service Task Force. The committee is comprised of staff from the Wellness Department, Food Service representatives, parent representatives and dieticians from Lake Forest Hospital. The goal is to compare our district’s nutrition and health standards to the state and federal standards, other districts and define our program. Any recommendations will be made in December.
- Praised the district for keeping class sizes low – even while enrollment is experiencing a positive trend
- Congratulated the DPM Cross Country team for a first place finish at State.
- Thanked the Spirit of 67 for an impressive luncheon. Thanked all parents who help the Spirit of 67 with their work.

Beth Clemmenson, Board Member:

- The Board is screening vendors who will assist with the mission statement process.

Rebecca Leafman, Director of Emotional Wellness:

- Discussed the Wellness Initiative going on in our district right now
- Described the 3 rules to spark education according to author Ramsay Musallam. 1- Curiosity comes first. 2 – Don't be afraid of the mess. 3 – Practice reflection
- District is using these rules to guide the emotional wellness journey in the curriculum
- Character traits ground the curriculum – several community projects are being organized at our schools
- Partnering with the community for best outcome – includes teachers, parents and kids
- Steady progress is being made as evidenced by the recent results showing students have a strong sense of safety and understanding of rules. Both of these scores have improved over the years thanks to the Emotional Wellness Initiative.
- Students participated in Unity Day on October 9. It was celebrated in different ways at each school but the theme was the same – stop bullying. This idea came out of the Youth Summit where 40 kids from DPM participated. This effort will continue, as the group will meet monthly to discuss ways to keep schools safe.

Liaison Reports:

NSSED – Mike Borkowski

- Possibility of District 112 withdrawing from NSSED
- They currently represent 10% of NSSED
- There will most likely be a financial impact on our district IF this happens
- Further information needed, recommendations by January 2014

Spirit of 67 – Lesley Fisher

- Donation levels are very good right now – significant increase from last couple years at this point

APT – Lesley Fisher

- Ms. Fisher will be attending all Executive APT meetings

Beth Clemmenson, Board Member:

- Attended LASIC meeting
- Learning other languages has a positive effect on test scores overall
- Two key reasons to learn another language are to enhance your world view and to learn a language
- More time spent practicing equals better learning which is a great reason to have our immersion program
- LASIC group will formulate ideas regarding District 67s language progress for the future

## **BOE Liason Meeting with Mike Simeck -- Alana Hender & Heather Kotlarz**

QUARTERLY LIAISON MEETING WITH MICHAEL SIMECK

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2013

FROM CHEROKEE:

**1) With the new math program in place it seems that there's a gap/leap between fourth and fifth grades. What is the transition plan? We keep hearing they're looking at it, but how will it affect our fourth graders?**

With the implementation of the elementary Bridges program, fourth grade students are experiencing a challenging, common core aligned math experience. The feedback from the teachers is that these students are further along in their learning and understanding than they have been in years past due to the rigor of Bridges. Fourth grade is focusing on implementing fourth grade Bridges with fidelity. Fifth grade is where we are building a "bridge" and where the bulk of the transition will take place. Fifth grade teachers are beginning to infuse some 5th grade Bridges material with their 6th grade Agile Mind content to ease the transition from 4th grade math to 6th grade math and ensure that we are not neglecting 5th grade standards. We will work on this throughout the year with much support from our middle school math coach, Deb Smith.

**FROM EVERETT:**

**1) We are new to the district but I'm hearing rumblings that the Explore program is being evaluated and that changes may be on the way so could you inquire about:**

**a. Could he help us understand the current state of Quest/Explore Program - how many kids participate in 3rd, 4th, and middle school grades? Increase/decrease vs. prior years?**

We don't have a maximum or minimum number of students in our Quest or Explore programs. Each elementary school has roughly 30-40 students participating in reading, math, or both in grades 3 and 4. At DP, most grade levels have one class of Quest LA and Quest Math and two classes of Explore LA and Explore Math, but this can vary. 6th grade, for instance, has two classes of Quest math this year. The enrollment has fluctuated, some years we've had higher numbers, and some years we've had lower numbers.

**b. What are the short and long term goals of the Explore program? How will common core impact these programs (if at all)?**

The overall goal remains the same: to make sure all students are challenged and growing. Programs like Explore and Quest provide a way to challenge high achieving and/or highly capable students. All students are held to the same common core standards. We are in the process of ensuring that our Explore curriculum in grades 3 and 4 is common core aligned.

**c. What are your thoughts on differentiated/individualized education (ie., special needs, explore, etc)?**

We work to provide differentiated experiences for our students - with a common set of standards. This is an area where we plan to provide additional professional development for staff in 2014-2015. During 2013-2014, the goal is establish an accessible, viable curriculum aligned to common core, written in a common format in the areas of math and language arts. Once we have this, we can have plan-differentiated experiences for students who need them.



**2) We'd also like to understand why so many permissive transfers were allowed to Cherokee families due to the Mandarin program and its impact on Everett and Sheridan (i.e., Everett and Sheridan families weren't involved in the May 2013 meeting when it was offered nor was it communicated until well after the fact and families started hearing about it through the grapevine)? How does he intend to handle the increase in class size (due to permissive transfers and general growth in the district)? Are permissive transfers going to be re-evaluated every year or if a family was granted one for 2013-2014 they are guaranteed a spot in their non- neighborhood school?**

A handful of Cherokee kindergarten children came from CH to EV this summer because their parents wanted full day and there weren't enough full-day requests at CH to hold a class.

Board Policy has long allowed Requests for Permissive Transfers. After studying class sizes we allowed about six families from Cherokee to move to either Everett or Sheridan. Transfers are granted one year at a time and depend on the class sizes. We will always study the district-wide impact of individual transfers before approving them.

#### **FROM DEER PATH:**

**1) We have students that participate in sporting activities after school. Some of these activities have very demanding schedules. Some students practice 90 minutes or more each day. Can we offer a waiver to opt out of PE? This would have to be signed off by their coach. If students choose, they could then go to the Cube to do homework or they could go to PE class.**

Illinois School Code recently reduced the types of exemptions. There is no exemption for daily P.E. for middle school students.

**2) My son's 5th grade science teacher mentioned his class is an International Baccalaureate program. Is this the goal/wave of the future for other classes?**

Likely, the teacher said the unit of study is similar in rigor and integrated subject matter to an I.B. program. It takes years to qualify as an I.B. school and we have no plans at this time to seek such accreditation. On the other hand, we have been creating units of study based on the I.B. model because we find it highly engaging. The elementary school Water Project and the middle school Holocaust Project were two units that had elements of I.B. in them.

**3) Why did you expand the charge of the LASIC committee to go beyond Mandarin immersion and include all foreign language learning? What is your concern with the present program?**

In seeking solutions to the concerns raised, the admin team felt we had unnecessarily limited the solution options. So we decided to bring in a language expert to educate us and potentially bring new and creative solutions that might potentially help all students. We are proud of our current program, but we are always interested in innovative thinking.

**4) How are teachers evaluated when there has been historic knowledge of certain negative behaviors? I am specifically concerned about a particular DPM male teacher who is known**

**for weird behavior - looking at girls' chests. It seems like parents all know about this but yet he is still on staff.**

Concerns about any staff members should be brought to attention of the principal. We take all such information very seriously.

**FROM SHERIDAN:**

**1.) Why are we having these late starts? I understand teachers need to collaborate but why not at a time when it is more convenient for families of the district?**

A DPM leadership team led by Renee and Tom will utilize the two-hour Late Arrivals on Oct. 23, Dec. 4, and Feb. 19 to improve Adult-Student relationships and Student-Student relationships through Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH) training. Though the full training requires certified instructors and three consecutive days of professional development, our leadership team is using this time to teach and implement CKH practices that are proven to make a very positive difference in student belonging at and enjoyment of school.

During Wednesday's first Late Arrival, the leadership team helped the faculty learn about several CKH techniques: 1) using three minutes to get to know your students, 2) developing a social contract among all DPM adults, 3) learning how to develop a social contract for students in each classroom, and 4) learning how to require students to give affirmations as consequences for put-downs. This was accomplished in small groups with teacher leaders sharing with their colleagues how these revisions to their classrooms had made a noticeable difference in student-student interactions. I (Andy) attended the two-hour in-service and was excited to see the number of teachers who wanted to try some of the new ideas.

Last year, input was sought from the DPM APT regarding whether late arrivals or early dismissals would be easier for parents. The group of about 50 parents almost unanimously agreed that late arrivals were easier - so the three late arrivals were aligned with three of the LFHS six late arrivals for families with both middle and high school students. We will conduct a parent survey in March regarding the impact families have encountered with this pilot program.

Rebecca's emotional wellness presentation to the Board of Education in October presents in compelling manner the gains made on improving climate, security, and students' sense of both.

**2.) I believe great schools begin with great principals so I'm very interested in learning more about how District 67's principals are evaluated? Are the parent's input part of the process? If so, how is it gathered? If not, why not?**

This year Andy Henrikson is evaluating the principals. If parents have concerns or compliments, they should feel free to contact Mike or Andy. Parent input is not explicitly sought.

The Principal Evaluation Process takes data and provides feedback within six themes of the Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders:

1. Living a Mission and Vision Focused on Results
2. Leading and Managing Systems Change
3. Improving Teaching and Learning
4. Building and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships

5. Leading with Integrity and Professionalism
6. Creating and Sustaining a Culture of High Expectations

For each of these themes principals receive a rating of **distinguished, proficient, basic, and unsatisfactory**. The principals identify an area or two in which they wish to focus. Target growth goals are established for student achievement. Student growth is measured by the difference between fall and winter scores.

**3.) Superintendent Simeck may have already shared this and I've missed it but I would be interested in his impressions after being here for one year. Can he share his vision and goals for the district?**

My observations:

- We have smart, hard-working staff that care deeply about their students and their school.
- Community support is impressive and looking for even more and more compelling ways to contribute to our schools. The legacy of community engagement here is omnipresent and exhibited in student activities.
- People move here for the schools and support them with their time and effort.
- Parents' and schools' focus on "balance" is as refreshing as it is important.
- If anyone can make his or her own "special sauce," it should be us.

My personal vision -I believe:

- Schools are awful talent scouts for success in life.
- In an expandable view of student intelligence - that kids rise to expectations of them and often dramatically exceed those expectations after they leave school. This is rooted in my own experience as a teacher, parent, and learner. I can't count the number of ADHD boys who have wound up running their own companies...and who were told in school that they didn't have what it took. The same of true for girls, frequently in math and science.
- We should "own the dinner conversation." School should be engaging and stimulating.
- That we should teach kids how we want to learn - actively (up and moving) or emotionally challenging. In either case, doing something students or adults find genuine and meaningful.

**4.) I think the non-immersion community at Sheridan would like to know the potential implications of the immersion program may have on us. Basically, rumors are flying that our school is going to become the immersion school and our kids will be sent to either Cherokee or Everett.**

Sheridan becoming the immersion school is just a rumor. LASIC will begin looking at various ideas and how they correlate to what the group has been learning about in prior meetings.

**This is not a question but a great comment that was emailed and thought it should be passed on.....**

**\*I think Superintendent Simeck is wonderful! I've been in 3 meetings with him in the past 2 weeks... how refreshing! I have also been in meetings with Barry Rodgers/Principal of LFHS and he is great... Things are looking good!**

