

# Heatherwood Elementary School

## SAC Minutes

September 15, 2011

5:45 pm

### Attendance:

Larry Orobona, Sarah Burnett, Lisa Jenkins, Chris Newby, Cathy Zimmerman, Bob Oehmke, Tami Musfeldt, Tabitha Brown, Erin Hirschland

### Review District SAC policy identifying that only required to meet 4x/year

- agreed to remove some dates from schedule, acknowledged that sub-committees may fill gaps and meet on the side as necessary
- hinted that members will review work on own time and come to working meetings with comments

### Revised calendar/schedule for SAC meetings

- Tuesday September 27 – working meeting
- Thursday November 10
- Thursday February 9
- Monday April 9 (possibly the 10<sup>th</sup>)
- Thursday May 10

**Eliminating Meetings in** October, December, January and March meetings relying on email communication as necessary during these times

\* **Side note** – Principal hiring committee not a part of SAC responsibilities

**Question posited** – How will we get more parents involved?

- suggested to have principal invitations

### Work

- 1) identify academic achievement celebrations (currently at meets or exceeds district standards)
- 2) Address root cause and action to target the achievement growth & growth gap
- 3) Identified struggle for teachers to increase student growth more than a year's worth of growth in only a year's time to catch up to a similar student in another school
- 4) Reviewed teachers work or growth and climate root causes
  - a. Agreed that focus needs to be to support all students who need support not just identified "does not meet" categories in Heatherwood's case – Free/Reduced Lunch

- b. Growth gap for F/R Lunch students lower than district for 3 years
- c. Low income students don't have advocates or voice to represent them in the school and to strengthen their social/emotional needs
- d. Lack of community in the classroom
- e. Need nurturing atmosphere/relationship among all students
- f. Create buy-in among all students and their families
- g. Mentoring - teacher / student
- h. Focus on intervention in math
- i. Focus on imbedding ability for success
- j. How can school professionals be a positive mirror for the students

#### 5) Parent questions

- a. What are other schools doing? Look at Mesa and Flatirons Elementary Schools
- b. How can parents be educated/supported/encouraged/held accountable to help their own children

### **Additional Notes by Bob Oehmke**

1. Lack of motivation
  - a. Message of "education isn't important" from parents
  - b. Low self esteem
    - i. Society h and they have less of it compared to other kids
    - ii. Already behind, because of issues 1-3 in the past (vicious circle)
    - iii. Not as much of a peer group here at Heatherwood, because of small number
  - c. Hungry, so less energy...
2. Distraction
  - a. Worries about problems at home
  - b. Hungry
3. Less education outside school
  - a. Parents busy with working or other concerns, so can't help
  - b. Less educational stimulation
    - i. Less books, educational games and other educational items
    - ii. Less educational activities
4. No advocate.

The items below the numbers are some of the causes I can see for those, and the "i"s are some of the causes I can see for those. Here is where my analysis thing falters a bit. It seems like it makes sense to attack things a several levels. There are things we can probably

do to help with 1,2,3... without regard to what's underneath, as these would help with other students as well. The a,b.. are harder to fix, particularly as we don't know who they are, although I think Sarah's idea of community time would help a lot with 2a and as we discussed personal attention would help with 1b. I added 4, because outside of all of the root analysis I agree with Chris I think that it would really help to have someone who really understands as an advocate for these kids, for all the issues. In fact, it would really help with this document itself; there may be issues we're not even considering....

Here's some thoughts of fixes (linked to the above) to do (although I'm not an educator, so some of these may be naively and be happening), and some were suggested in the meeting:

1. Discussion of why what they're learning is practically important. Motivators outside of just doing well, prizes, letters home, etc.
  - a. ?
  - b. Personal time from teacher. Emphasis on amount they've learned vs. what they know. Rewards for little victories]
    - i. Discussion of heroes who diversity (particularly financial) (e.g. George Washington Carver, etc.), resilience training.
    - ii. Emphasis on how far they've grown vs. absolute measure of achievement, extra help to catch them up
    - iii. Discussion in classes that there are people at Heatherwood who aren't well off, but who we are that much prouder of because they have to work that much harder to achieve???
  - c. Free and reduced lunch, PTO supplies to everyone, so they don't have to be embarrassed about taking them
2. Practice focusing despite distractions (I think that there are meditation techniques which teach this)
  - a. Sarah's (and Chris's) community hour
  - b. free and reduced lunch, PTO supplied healthy snacks available to everyone, so they don't have to be embarrassed about taking them
3. Less education outside
  - a. Extra homework help at school, staffed by volunteer parents? After school and during recess, so they don't have to find a way home?
  - b. Less educational stimulation?
    - i. We have books, but have other educational things (PTO funded?) that they can check out
    - ii. Volunteer outings?
4. Find someone who has been i who can be a voice

There are probably many others....

One other thing I thought of while thinking about this, as part of the way we are now graded as a school is how much kids are growing academically, should we now start including that as part of school tests? E.g. test them about things before they're taught then after teaching, so they and we can see how much they've learned. Maybe you're already doing this or maybe it would be too un-motivating to the students?? We should just be sure our internal metrics match those by which we're judged externally.

## **Plan of Action**

Sarah Burnett and Lisa Jenkins arranging to meet afterschool to write a draft of improvement plan – Chris Newby, Bob Oehmke – review and have prepared comments by Sept 27<sup>th</sup> meeting

## **Climate goals**

- Quickly reviewed the 20 reasons teacher group identified as to why climate is not where we would like it to be
- A look at students blaming adults for not providing support, follow through, comfort level
- Did not finish discussion due to time

**Adjourn 7:20 pm**

**"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." – Eleanor Roosevelt**