Liberty Elementary Community Council Minutes

November 18, 2014, 3:30 P.M. – 4:30 P.M.

Attendees:

Tricia Nielsen

Lindsie Depasquale

Natalie Stouffer

Matt & Cyndi Boulden

Brittani Sorensen

Deleen Fowlks

Colette Parry

Jennifer Dean

Andrea Wilde

Lori Metcalf

Minutes:

Reviewed the 2014 Progress Report and 2014/2015 School Plan.

No major changes on the plan from the 2014 first page.

Carry over amount was a deficit of $377.

Taken out some of the hard numbers in the plan so we can determine student growth without matching up to an exact number.

Goal #1:

Added $2,000 to provide professional development for teachers and paras for literacy academic goals.

Deleen is going through a program to be trained for Next Steps – can the money be allocated to her for that certification? Is this a separate motion? We will approve the budget first and then we can approve individual expenditures.

Technology is not a separate goal, but is integrated to support the current goals.

Can we actually pay Collette for extra tech support? Yes, as long as it is tied into academic goals on the plan. Also, will the district withdraw tech support because we have Collette helping with tech? No. Natalie stated that this has been brought up in principal’s meeting and the district tech support will still be in place for our school. Will this add on excess responsibility for her compared to previous years? No, just the wording to fit in with the plan has to put Collette’s help in harmony with academic goals.

We received $1,000 more than what we had originally estimated. Some of this money was used in the deficit. The total available funds are $28,899. We have approx. 421 students in the school right now – that is approx. $68 per student.

“Equipment” is where the bulk of the change occurred between the previous plan and the current plan. Last plan the equipment budget was $7,000, this time it is $1500.

Are we using the equipment that we currently have to the best our ability?

Currently this year we are not going to get any more funding for technology items unless they are coming out of the school level technology/equipment budget. We do not have any school money to do the professional development for teachers unless it is coming out of the Trust Lands funds.

Natalie is the one tracking the money. How do we as a council know how the money is spent after the plan is approved? Every month when we meet Natalie can let us know how certain line items are spent, or at least a general idea of how students are impacted by the money that is being spent. Do we need council approval to review each item proposed to spend against the budget? It would be nice if we have some sort of vision about where the money is spent, but not necessarily a detailed expenditure account. Teachers should perhaps choose a goal as a grade level or to choose a goal that aligns with specific teacher’s yearly professional goals – as long as it will align with the overall math and literacy goals of the plan. Teachers can be an “expert” on the certain professional developments that they attend and can report on what they learned to team members. Also, a key piece for professional developments to be effective is an element of coaching after the professional development. This can be worked out and implemented with Lindsie and Jen Lightfoot.

We agreed on the plan and motioned in its favor. We also motioned on the money to go to Deleen for the training for Next Steps.

We will re-evaluate the money situation in a couple years to see if spending the money on professional development is truly impacting student scores in comparison to having additional para-professionals in the school.

Teachers cannot do it all, even with extra professional development to train them. However, having more bodies that are not highly trained to work with students correctly isn’t necessarily the best option either. Natalie mentioned that we aren’t taking money from our “people” pot, we have mainly taken it from the equipment portion to provide this professional development for teachers.

Andrea mentioned that teachers should utilize parents more often to help the students. Some parents are much more available and educated to help with students than others.

Power Hour has made a huge impact for students and has allowed teachers to have much more one on one and small group time with students. By reformatting the plan we are trying to work smarter and not harder.

Are we going over SAGE scores? We have the overall proficiency levels written in the new plan. We do not have any comparative data currently, unless we are looking at students at an individual basis. We are finishing up the interim SAGE testing this week to see if that can give us good information to inform our practice. They shortened the math portion of the SAGE test. They have restructured the writing portion of the SAGE test. There has been better instructions and tools for the teachers to help improve testing timelines and student abilities. The district had anticipated a lot more frustration, concern and negative feedback from parents than what actually occurred. There was a lot of news coverage the week that the scores were released, so that maybe prepped parents as to what to expect. We are not having to learn a new testing format anytime soon, so the reports, data and resources will continue to improve. Natalie mentioned that teachers are adapting their practice and rising to the challenge of the new testing standards vs. pointing fingers or making excuses.

How do we get better input for faculty and staff? Send out the agenda prior to the meeting to get feedback about how teachers feel about the particular items to be discussed. Add into the weekly newsletter the importance of having parents involved in the community council.

No community council meeting in December.