

INCLINE GREAT SCHOOLS COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, April 4, 2011 – 3:35pm-6:15pm @ the Parasol Bldg., I.V.

Present: Nancy Sanger, Harry Haaser, Stacey Cooper, Sharon Kennedy, Kathleen Watty, Sandy Soli, Joanne Devine, Virginia Miller, Liz Harrell, Amy Henderson, Michael Goldberg, Mayra Barajas, Valerie Jackson. {Meeting open to public}

Harry Haaser opened the meeting at 3:40pm with greetings and a brief review of Action Items.

Each site was to look into their individual websites. Sharon shared that Incline Middle School's site needs some updating. Harry again suggested that students get involved with this process. Another suggestion was made that it would be great if each teacher had their own link to the website to update their information and to post assignments, etc. IC is somewhat limited in that capacity.

All three principals were then advised to go back into the survey results to continue their gap analysis and pathway targets for the middle school.

Community/staff comments since the last meeting:

A staff member shared with one of the IGSC members that she has spent a great deal of time putting programs and events together for parents in the evenings with very few parents showing.

In response to this dilemma, it is not possible to force parents to participate. More creative brain-storming regarding this is needed.

It was suggested that perhaps these events could be video-taped and put on the web for parents to view at their convenience. Ideas will continue to be sought after for this problem.

An additional comment/question from the community was regarding the IB funding for the Spanish program at the lower levels. Now that IB is done, will the classes still be offered? The answer, at this time, is no. It is not in the budget but the option for outside agencies or sources would be acceptable, as they have been in previous years. There is potential out there.

It was also suggested that perhaps there could be fees charged, as at the high school, for all art, music & science classes. In addition, asking for parent donations, as was done in the 1990s, to help support these programs at the lower levels. Categorical Grants were also mentioned.

The possibility of asking teachers to donate time, such as zero periods, for students interested in the extra programs is a possible option...if teachers are willing to volunteer for this time.

Focus Group Results:

Nancy handed out the printed results of the focus groups to be looked at and briefly discussed. (These results will be available on the website after further review).

A few of the recurring results was that parents want their students tracked in their testing results. There were also comments stating that it seems difficult to keep all of the students engaged in a multiple level learning environment/classroom. This started a discussion about the challenge that exists in matching up students' different level of skills in the classroom and implementing 'hands-on' learning. Differentiating instruction and assessment within the classroom remains a challenge. In many cases, it would require 3 or more different curriculums in one class to accommodate the needs of all students.

Patterns: At the elementary school, science, technology and Spanish are being looked at. At the middle school, alignment and transition are being looked at. At the high school, pressure of testing, AP courses and scheduling conflicts were a concern.

A Comment that was made from the P-3 meeting that was attended by a IGSC member: Concept – “Learning to read then reading to learn” - parent involvement is crucial in this process. Students that are more engaged at ALL levels equals students that are more prepared for transition at EACH level. When this process is more successful, ‘differential’ teaching will be more a pleasure than a challenge. Students should be engaged at all levels to be ready for the eventual transition to high school.

Harry then mentioned that many times students claim “boredom” as an easy excuse to not get engaged. In many cases this is just laziness. Motivation can be a hard thing to force in some students who simply do not want to excel. Often they want success without the work involved to achieve it.

It was then said that the lack of parent involvement is in all ethnic groups, not just in the Latino families. There needs to be a way to get more parents of all nationalities involved.

Further Focus Group results stated that high school students felt that the transition from middle school to high school was “a breeze.’ This conflicted with high school Parent Focus Group results that claimed it was a “rough/tough transition.”

It was agreed upon that communication at all levels remains a challenge.

Gap Analysis was touched on briefly, more details to come when recommendations are made later in the month. Sharon did give a short overview of her gap analysis. Stacey’s has been emailed to Nancy but was not available for the group.

Nancy discussed the AACT and the need for more vocational training. She stated that standard diplomas are achieved at AACT and that there are even AP classes offered there.

Further summing up of the details from the Focus Group results showed that behavioral alignment was needed at all levels. Nancy mentioned the success of the PBS (Positive Behavioral Support) plan and stated that it should be utilized at every school.

Recap of preliminary Focus Group results:

- We need to gain better ways to engage students, staff, counselors and parents.
- Differentiation - accelerating students.
- More ‘hands-on’ – project based learning.
- Find more creative ways to get students to master the curriculum.
- Enhancing/keeping science, Spanish & technology at lower levels.
- Continuation of Art, Music & P.E. (at lower levels).
- Smoother transitions – align curriculum at all levels.
- More parent involvement.

Harry added that we need to keep in mind that if we add to teachers’ plates, something will need to be taken off for results to be realistic.

It was then mentioned that assessment results should be discussed more regularly at each school as well as acknowledging and addressing cultural changes within the schools. (A simple check list).

Nancy reminded the group that we need to continually ask what will support the district strategic plan (this plan is on the WCSD website).

The date for the next IGSC meeting is still to be determined. The group will meet one to two more times before final recommendations are made to Dr. Heath Morrison.

The meeting was then opened up to public comment/questions:

1. It would make a great GT class or technology class at IMS to create and maintain an IMS and IES website where teachers could submit assignments/planner page to students, a week in advance, and the students enter the work on the web page for teachers. **A. Noted.**
2. Your conversations about Spanish, music, PE programs inferred that without IB there is no longer money for these programs. There never was money. IB did not come with endless funding. WCSD is short \$65,000.00 for just one year of Spanish teachers. If the community wants these enrichment classes, they should fund it. The survey results for the elementary school show parents will support these programs and science with \$. The administrators from each school need to work with parents to raise funds for programs with clear goals.
A. Noted
3. Will WCSD be posting Task Force Focus Groups' comments on the WCSD website? Will Inlineschools.org be posting? It was very helpful to be able to read the survey results online. **A. Yes, soon.**
4. Incline needs to invest the time to do PLCs properly: Alignment, communication, working together – solution tree – all about PLCs!! **A. Noted...in place already.**
5. Will Incline ever consider doing a true immersion program K-8? We lose families to Kings beach each year. survey results show parents want Spanish in the curriculum. We could start with one class per grade level. This committee should seriously look into the feasibility of such a program. **A. Noted**
6. Teacher/class website updates are required in most Calif. Schools – this should be an administrative function – whether the principals do it themselves or delegate input that is provided by the teachers – why doesn't the school district require this? **A. This is done and has been done for years!**
7. There needs to be more involvement w/parent participation at the administrative level. Some administrators don't seem to be doing their jobs - or are not interested enough to try and maintain a line of communication or even make an effort to do anything. How can this be accomplished?
A.
{The above comment is from a community member who has not had students in Incline schools for several years} **Future derogative/insulting comments will NOT be addressed nor will they be placed in the minutes.**
8. Retention VS English language addresses this for all ESL students. What program accomplishes this? **A. constant efforts are in place and have been for years...calls, letters & meetings with parents, etc. Already addressed.**
9. Correction AP = college credit for passing exams. Nancy needs to understand this. All H.S. classes should be college prep for the average student. **A. Noted. And they are and Nancy is fully aware.**
10. Categorical grants can be used for foreign language, science and etc. – why isn't this discussed more and utilized more? **A. It is being utilized but these funds come greatly from outside donations. This too was covered.**
11. When will the results of the focus committees be posted on WCSD website? **A. Soon. Already stated.**
12. If this is the last meeting when will particular programs and compromises be discussed? Who will be responsible for these decisions? **A. Dr. Heath Morrison – from this group's recommendations and this is not the last meeting. The next is TBD. Again, already stated.**
13. Why wouldn't all principals have a 3-5 years strategic plan in place now? Do they have this in other WCSD schools? **A. They ALL do and have for years!**
14. Does this committee have copies of programs to compare and discuss? **A. Yes, data from many areas are looked at.**
15. It should be a no brainer to integrate, align and implement a vertical alignment curriculum based education. There are many model schools – Nancy mentioned one that she was involved in. **A. These are things being mastered currently. There are always challenges and they are all being addressed.**

NOTE: At future meetings public comments/questions will be limited to what can be written on a 3 X 5 card in the interest of time constraints and courtesy.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm

Minutes taken and submitted by Valerie Jackson.