

Fireweed Academy

'Where students learn to view themselves as readers, writers, and problem solvers'

Academic Policy Committee Meeting

Approved Minutes

3-19-2014

APC Members Present: Kary Brinson, Matt Strobel, Jon Kulhanek, Hannah Gustafson, Garry Betley, Amber Niebuhr, Heather Reichenberg

Members absent: Stephanie Zuniga, , Kristen Metz

Committee Members Present: Paula Kulhanek, FWA Parent and Budget Committee member,

Staff Present: Kiki Abrahamson- FWA Principal, Janet Bowen -FWA Secretary, FWA Teachers Kim Fine, David Lefton and Deb Schmidt,

Guests Present: none

Public Comments:

Paula Kulhanek spoke about nonmembers not being able to speak during meetings. Paula feels it is important for the public to be able to speak during the meeting, especially parents. She did not find this rule in the bylaws and will research Roberts Rules of Order.

Kim Fine: Kim spoke to the teacher's configuration issue and wanted the APC to be aware of the lack of supportive infrastructure currently at Little Fireweed. They have three teachers for three classrooms, no nurse, no daytime custodian, no on-site secretary and a part-time administrator. Kim said sometimes this works ok, sometime not. And when it does not work, there are extra duties resulting in a loss of teaching time, safety issues, etc.

David Lefton: David spoke to FWA's attendance and tardiness issues. They affect the school's ratings. Chronic tardiness and absenteeism sets the kids back and reinforces the cycle. Teachers have to stop teaching and get the late student up to speed, kids fall behind. It is especially difficult as the SPED teacher to deliver minutes to the students when they are always late or frequently do not come to school.

Meeting called to order at 4:40 pm

Motion: Hannah moved to approve the agenda as is, Kary seconded and motion passed with unanimous consent.

Motion: Amber moved to approve the January 2014 minutes as is, seconded by Jon and motion passed with unanimous consent.

Administrators Report:

Enrollment: The FY15 enrollment is currently at 106. Kiki presented budget documents based on this number. We are not full, enrollment remains open. Janet was asked to track enrollment numbers as they change.

Art Projects: Kiki is working on an art projects with some of the kids and the Homer Senior Center. They are making a hanging banner out of silk and paint and the banner will stay at the Center. She is also working on an earth day banner showing different rotations of the earth. She and kids are getting it ready for the earth day

celebration and it will be hands on project at the event at Islands and Oceans on April 26th. The finished product will stay at Islands and Oceans.

Spring Fieldtrips: The spring fieldtrips have been determined. The 6th graders will be going on a 4 day camping and canoeing trip in the Kenai National Refuge (May 6-9, 2014) with Kris and two HoWL guides. The 3-5th graders will go to Yukon Island for three days (May 7-9, 2014). HoWL educators will be working with both groups about Leave no Trace techniques.

Legislation: Kiki is not writing a piece for the local newspapers yet, feels it is premature. She has taken groups of kids for two visits to the LIO and a few of the kids testified. Kiki testified in regards to charter school control over staffing- suggesting that district offices should not be able to place un-assigned teachers in charter schools without the approval of the charter school principal/APC. Kiki reported that HB 278, in the finance committee calls for an increase to the student base allocation. There is a proposed 1-time grant for new charter schools-an extra \$500/student. For existing charter schools there is a proposal to increase base allocation to 90% if enrollment is 75 or above (down from 150). Janet read about this in the Anchorage Daily News a week ago or so and will research it and forward it to the APC. This would be tremendously helpful to Fireweed.

Budget Committee: The committee has not had another meeting. Kiki and Eric are trying to get some questions answered from the District so they can move forward.

Fundraising Committee: This group has not met and will not until the budget committee has completed its preliminary work. This report will be removed from the agenda and minutes until the fundraising committee convenes.

Teacher Configuration: Teacher configuration will remain the same for FY15 at this point. Deb has decided not to retire, David has signed his contract. Jon's contract is on hold until April. It is possible that an un-assigned teacher could be placed in our school first.

Attendance: At issue are the chronically late and absent kids, not the families that go on extended vacations, offering valuable learning experiences. Stricter policies put more pressure on parents to get kids to school but can backfire as punishment. Jon said black and white policy are easy and clear but do not always work. How can this be tailored to parents who are choosing not to be responsible? We need to help parents be more compliant. Hannah suggested organizing a transportation coop.-Hannah will work on this.

The vacationers are un-enrolled after 10 days. We can support some families with carpools. The chronically late families need to be targeted-peer pressure, power of habits. A breakfast program at Little Fireweed may help. We could possibly use PS to generate letters, Janet will check on this. The staff will talk about this issue as a group. Janet will put this on next month's agenda.

Motion: Hannah move to have the staff develop a protocol for addressing excessive absences and late arrivals. The motion was seconded by Jon and passed with unanimous consent.

Janet brought up that the APC was to appoint a second point of contact once there was a few group.

Motion: Hannah moved to appoint Kary Brinson as the second point of contact, seconded by Amber and the motion passed with unanimous consent.

Motion: Jon moved to enter into executive session at 5:40pm to discuss Kiki Abrahamson's contract, seconded by Kary, motion passed with unanimous consent.

Motion: Hannah moved to re-enter the regular APC meeting at 6:11pm, seconded by Kary and the motion passed with unanimous consent.

Motion: Kary moved to approve Kiki Abrahamson's contract for FY15, Jon seconded, motion passed with unanimous consent.

Motion: Jon moved to adjourn the APC meeting at 6:12pm, seconded by Amber, motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Janet Bowen