TOPS Site Council Meeting Minutes
12/10/08

Present: Marlies van Bergeijk, Lori Eickelberg, Duncan Griffin, Maureen Germani, Steve Haines, Dan Hurley, Jeanne Kuban, Magnus Giaever, Craig McGowan (Eastlake Community Council), Leslie Nilan, Aaron Norikane (Kids Co.), Clara Scott, Cliff Shettler, Catherine Staunton, Kristina Stoneberg, Karen Stuhldreher, Susan Welch, Betsy Wells, Eva Masumoto, Liz Hayden, Janet Morrison

Minutes: November meeting minutes: approval moved, seconded and unanimously approved.

ASB Report (Magnus Giaever): Reported on dance from last Friday (Times Square Affair), food drive, and all-school spirit week (Magnus passed around photos). ASB is brainstorming an outreach effort for January, February. Kudos from Ms. Eick to Magnus for doing such a great job!

Site Council Discussion of School Closures and Assignment Plan: Susan, Marlies, and Duncan have attended several different meetings since the closure plan came out. The closure plan did not have any immediate impact on TOPS. However, TOPS community members have been attending meetings in order to monitor the situation and offer support to other schools. Marlies attended one meeting hosted by the district. Duncan attended an alternative school meeting.

One of the meetings was specifically organized by and for alternative schools. This is a group that grew out of the original Alternative Schools coalition. The meeting was very unstructured. They read through the district policy on alternative schools (available at http://www.seattleschools.org/area/policies/c/C54.00.pdf) Duncan read from the policy. The policy represents a solid commitment from the school board to alternative schools. There is a question about the degree to which the current board supports it. The meeting included discussion of strategies to defend alternative education in the Seattle Schools. The Superintendent’s office plans to do an alternative education audit by early Spring. There was discussion at the meeting about how alumni could become data to support the alternative model. and whether we should have an alternative report card. One possible way to have input would be to suggest who would be appropriate auditors. Duncan’s input was that the group should organize and get the alternative programs around the city to talk with each other. A committee formed last year submitted a report to the district that included a request that there be a director at the district who is dedicated to alternative schools. Duncan is willing to keep up with the group holding this meeting.

Site Council Discussion. Ms. Eick raised concern about the audit. If we don’t know what the questions are, they are likely not to find us to be alternative. We need to get an understanding of what definition they will be working with. What’s the difference between a really good alternative school and best practices?
It was suggested that Site Council convene a separate meeting to discuss our alternative school status.

Ms. Scott noted differences among alternative schools that sometimes make it difficult to work together. The data-driven nature of the district at this point makes it important to assess or collect data on student progress in standard ways. Clara hears a strong commitment to alternative schools from the district, but believes they will have to adhere to more of the state and federal requirements to survive.

Catherine – as important to be “successful” as to be “alternative.”

Marlies: Transportation costs for alternative schools may be an issue. Transportation costs for Summit and AS1 have been very high. Closure is going to come first before Assignment, but the two really have combined impacts on the district’s budget.

Maureen asks Ms. Scott what are our transportation costs? Ms. Scott notes that new transportation models are being considered to cut costs, e.g., having more gathering points where students are picked up rather than current model of pick-up at a corner near the student’s home. Ms. Scott will try to get information about our transportation costs.

**Principal’s Report** (Ms. Scott):
Music celebration was on 12/9. The new music teachers are doing a great job! Penny Harvest was really successful. Winter Wishes program is off and running. Thanks to families that have stopped by and picked up families off the board. 8th graders have contributed 390 items to the food drive. Clara went to ACT theatre where 4 TOPS playwrights were honored for their plays. Today TOPS received academic improvement awards for achievement in reading, writing, and math and also received a Shared Savings Award for reduction in energy and water usage.

Ms. Scott made a report on expenditure of the special auction item from last year. She distributed a list of what has been done and what is pending. The items that are pending haven’t been charged to FoT because we have not been given a cost by the district. Hoping to get most of these done and have an idea of the money by January

**No Bake Committee** (Marlies van Bergeijk):
No Bake is going great. Over $46,000 at this point. Next push is letters to alumni families. Doesn’t know where we are compared to where we were a year ago.

**Building Leadership Team (BLT) Report** (Jeanne Kuban):
Jeanne reported on Writers Workshop professional development activities that occurred this week. They brought in subs for full days to cover teachers who went to watch one of the teachers teach a writing workshop lesson. Observers were in same grade band team. Jacquie (the writing coach) met with teachers before the observation, had the observation and then had a debrief. They did the same thing in the afternoon with a different teacher teaching. This occurred all day Monday, Tuesday and in Wed. morning. Leslie N. reported it was a bit nerve-wracking being observed but extremely valuable. Kristina S. noted it is not often teachers get an
opportunity to see each other teach and that it was great to watch the second graders work. She also mentioned feeling respected as a professional to have time to sit with colleagues to plan and discuss a lesson. Having the observation was extremely valuable.

**Treasurer’s Report** (Cliff Shettler): A proposal had been made for FoT to fund a lunchroom assistant, since complications with the district funding for this position were keeping it from happening. We are going to defer on funding a lunchroom assistant. Not able to make a resolution at this point. If the district hires the assistant they have to be available to go to other schools, is here about 90 minutes a day and gets paid $11/hour. The school might have had the possibility of hiring a specific person who did not want to work for the district. But he is not actually available. The time frame for the work is 11:30-1:00 plus free lunch. Parent volunteers have been filling in. We need to clarify with the district what the situation is and need to advocate with the district to make this position workable.

**Miscellaneous**
Lori asked how the new conference scheduling (three full days prior to Thanksgiving) worked. Parents and teachers had positive things to say, as did Aaron (Kids Co.). Lori mentioned not all parents seemed aware of the change in schedule, so it was not as efficient as it could have been.

**Workgroup Reports**
Financial resources. Betsy distributed goals to workgroup members (Cliff, Jean, and Marlies) and is waiting for feedback. It was pointed out that we need to identify a treasurer for next year to take over from Cliff.

Special Education Inclusion. Dan will bring a proposal to next meeting.

Communication. Tamara and Barbara not in attendance.

**Items for follow-up**
District policy and Alternative Schools Committee report need to be posted on website.

Meeting after the first of the year should be convened to talk about TOPS as an alternative school.

Duncan will stay connected with alternative schools group.

Members should write letters to Olympia about funding for education.

Maureen will talk to Annie about the lunchroom assistant position, write up lunch room assistant job description and put it in the Eastlake newsletter and give to Aaron.

Kristina will do a survey monkey survey about new conference scheduling.