

Southwest Area Educational Advisory Council

April 18, 2007

Featherbed Lane Elementary School

Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Southwest Area Education Advisory Council was called to order at 7:00 P.M. on April 18, 2007 at Featherbed Lane Elementary School by Lisa Orens, Assistant Chair.

Present:

Board of Education Member: Joe Pallozzi

Council Members: Brian Bailey, Robert Lesnevich, Sam Macer, Jean-Marc O'Connor, Lisa Orens

A. Welcome and Introduction

Principal Tiffany Livingstone welcomed the audience to Featherbed Lane Elementary School, showcasing the school's new Front Row Sound System. If the systems are approved in the budget, the Company will donate one system to each school in the Woodlawn cluster.

B. Dr. Manuel Rodriguez

Dr. Rodriguez shared information about the Southwest Area Schools.

Catonsville High school was listed among the top 100 high Schools in the United States. Western School of technology scored among the top 5 High Schools in all content areas. Lansdowne High School made AYP and Woodlawn High School made significant gains in all content areas. Catonsville Alternative High School is not included in the statistics.

Four out of the top seven BCPS Middle Schools were in the Southwest Area: Catonsville, Lansdowne, Arbutus and Woodlawn. Arbutus and Woodlawn Middle Schools both made AYP. Southwest Academy enjoyed the biggest gain in algebra scores.

All of the Southwest Area Elementary Schools made AYP. Our new principals in the Southwest Area are providing strong leadership on all campuses.

Woodlawn Middle School achievement is implementing a prototype of Short Cycle Assessments, which will be ultimately be utilized in all schools. "Strong leadership has brought success".

The Southwest Area Middle schools are under renovation.

Questions from the audience:

Sam Macer asked what is happening with HSA preparation. Principal Ms. Bittner described the “Algebraic Thinking Program” in place at Catonsville Middle School:

The three-year program provides a 90 minute period for Math. It is not a remedial program, but teaches the same concepts and skills as the standard curriculum. They are also providing coach classes for different concepts and different levels of math.

Ms. Yasmine Stokes, Principal at Powhatan Elementary School announced that the clusters met and planned form a continuum of skills and determined what skills the students need to enter Middle school. The AIM (Accelerated Intervention Model Program provided through the Office Equity and Assurance looks at the skills students have mastered and what they need. Dr. Rodriguez explained that initially the information was managed manually, now software will be available system wide to facilitate this program. Many SW area middle and high schools are using learning style inventories in Language and math.

Dr. Rodriguez described Dr. Hairston’s vision of using Woodlawn Middle School as a model for middle schools system wide. Mr. Brian Scriven, Woodlawn Middle School Principal, announced that their 8th graders took the PSAT for the first time this year. The baseline results show that 1/3 of students scored at or above the 10th grade level, 1/3 scored at the 10th grade level, and 1/3/ scored below the 10th grade level. This raises the bar for these students by exposing them to a test they haven’t seen before. Dr. Rodriguez noted that because Woodlawn Middle School has been under transfer option the school is missing many of its high achieving students, and they *still accomplished strong results*.

Mr. Macer explained that as achievement improves, behavior improves, and as a result the negative perception of a school is false. He also requested that the schools inform elementary school parents of what they can do to start preparing their students for the HSA’s.

Public program concluded at 7:35 P.M.

Business meeting adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

Mrs. Kelly Strzelecki, a parent from Catonsville Elementary School, presented her concerns about issues surrounding recess.

Recess is taken away as a punishment or because of a lack of staff, teacher health issues and so on. Sometimes one student’s poor behavior results in the entire class being kept inside during recess. She feels this is misguided since physical activity improves performance, and childhood obesity is a growing problem in the United States.

Because daily physical activity is essential to our students’ health, well-being and academic success, she is requesting that the Board of Education develop a policy for daily recess and guidelines for punishment. She has assembled an information packet including Howard County’s new Policy on Wellness.

Council members advised her to send an executive summary to the Board of Education. Her comments will be sent to the Board of Education in the minutes for this meeting. Council members can address the Board of Education at their meetings, and parents can attend and sign up to speak to the Board as well.

Mr. Pallozzi stated that the State legislature tried to pass a physical education requirement for all students.

Mr. O'Connor said that a new policy should separately define recess and physical education requirements. He also suggested expanding the school day to include time for physical Education and Recess.

As a follow up to a question about short cycle assessments Dr. Rodriguez explained that the assessments are adjusted to the curricula covered. The skills are taught across many areas. Students progress from functionality to proficiency to mastery. Mastery requires 60 to 2000 repetitions, so teachers use the short cycle assessments to re-teach, review and revisit those topics where students are lagging behind.

The Council will have a meeting next year addressing the High School Assessments.

Upcoming meetings:

Capital Pre-budget Hearing, Wednesday May 16, 2007 at Catonsville Elementary School, 7:00P.M. Speaker sign up begins at 6:15 P.M.

Planning Meeting, June 13, 2007, 7 P.M.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M. by Rob Lesnevich.

Minutes submitted by: Lisa Orens