

Minutes – PSCC Meeting

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Eileen Scarato

Yesterday, there was a meeting with parents regarding the Spanish program. Next year, Miss Scarato will be teaching 4th grade – 8th grade. Goal is to have students exit 8th grade at proficient level. Focus is on speaking and comprehending, giving basic directions. Based on certain criteria, students meet certain benchmarks at certain grades: novice,

Next year: 2 times a week for 4th – 7th grade; 3 times a week for 8th grade. There will also be an after-school program, just like any club. The goal is for students to place out of Spanish I in high school. Some very proficient students may place out of Spanish II. There is a possibility that students will be able to participate in a fee-based program with another individual. DMS suggested other opportunities for volunteers in K-3 classrooms to continue some connection to Spanish. There was some discussion of having Spanish only in 6th – 8th grade five times per week, but the master schedule will not accommodate such an idea.

Budget

The budget is 100% based upon the formulas that central office projects will be at Colfax next year. Colfax is projected to have 659 students in 2009 – 10. They are usually off by about 40 students each year. DMS expect 670 – 690 students. At the end of 2008-09, the numbers are at 657 students. 45 students will be leaving 8th grade. 80-90 additional kindergarten students will be coming in. There will definitely be 4 kindergarten classrooms. A few will leave for magnet schools and private schools. But, about 30 additional students will be entering 1st through 8th grade coming from magnets, private schools, and those relocating to the Colfax area.

Budget cuts: Mr. Hines, 2 paraprofessionals, Spanish program.

Compromise: two additional teachers were added back into the budget, not out of Colfax's budget. There will be 4 2nd grade classes and 4 1st grade classes. DMS had to open a 4th K teacher and a 5th-grade teacher. If the kindergarten and/or first-grade classrooms have about 27 students, DMS believes that Colfax could conceivably open up a 5th K or a 5th first grade class (or both).

Q: Through the efforts of some parents, two additional positions were opened up (or not eliminated). DMS was pleasantly surprised.

Q: It is possible that there is a glitch in the statistics. If a student ever applied to a magnet school (even several years ago), he or she may still be considered to be

enrolled at the magnet for projections purposes even if that student is attending Colfax. DMS will look into it.

Q: Is there any provision for re-counting the enrollment if the projection is substantially off? DMS is most concerned about elimination of paraprofessional positions. He is cautiously hopeful about re-opening 1 paraprofessional position for Mr. Hines.

Q; What is the outlook for intern/student teachers next year? DMS: Many of the master teachers would like them and hope to have them.

Total budget is \$4.1 million – mostly human resources. There are 37.4 teachers, not counting's special education teachers (4), gifted resource teachers (2), Spanish teacher, or the additional 1st grade position, or the speech itinerate teacher or the instrumental teacher (0.6).

Also: librarian, social workers, paraprofessionals, office staff, etc. for a total of 58 positions [not counting special ed, gifted, Spanish, or 1st grade position]. 48 Staff positions come out of the site-based budget.

Also:

\$45,000 for general supplies

\$10,000 books and periodicals

\$18,000 laptops labs (15 computers + laser printer in each lab)

\$ 3,500 for library books

\$ 10,000 – student activities

\$ 5,000 – transportation + students who can't pay for field trips

Note: the PTO doesn't pay for the paper used for its flyers that are sent home.

DMS: it's true the PTO doesn't pay for that, but those are generally communications that help the school. We have improved on our management of paper and photocopying, but we still don't have a foolproof system. Paper is not the biggest problem we face next year.

Q: are all schools facing budget cuts next year?

A: the cuts from the perspective of the schools have already happened. Also remember that overall budgets don't necessarily decrease as such. Rather, the payroll cost goes up every year but the student allocation doesn't increase proportionally, so in real terms, there is a decrease even if the total allocation for teachers stays flat (note that DMS characterized this as his personal perspective, not the "official" explanation of how site-based budgeting works).

Lunch/recess

There are 3 periods for lunch. We were given a schedule of coverage. Most of the people covering are paraprofessionals in the 4th period. During periods 5 and 6, there are paraprofessionals and middle-level teachers covering.

Q: For first half of 4th period, are there really 5 people covering?

Each teacher teaches between 27 and 35 periods per week. If a teacher teaches fewer than 35 periods according to the master schedule, he or she will have additional duty periods – either lunch or hall duty or instructional period. Halls are calmer than last year.

Q: Observed that during indoor recess there are too many students in one room, often with only one adult. It was also observed that some adults are walking 45 students down the hall by them. Is it possible for some kids to go to gym during indoor recess. DMS: It is very difficult to schedule. However, there will be discussions over the summer about how to improve matters.

Q: There are a total of 40 spots in which people covering, but none of them will be here next year. How will those spots at lunch be covered next year? DMS: We have to look at the lunch schedule and find them.

Q: It's disappointing that, because of the small number of adults at recess, that few students are able to go to the lower playground.

Q: Is it necessary for the students to line up at recess and wait for everyone to be ready before anyone can play? DMS: It's important to create a sense of orderliness.

Miscellaneous

Donna described partnership with Frick. Idea is to bring children to Frick Park for hands-on activities. Partners studied the first grade curriculum. One component is stewardship – giving back. The last two years, they received \$500 and involved all first-grades. They were convinced they would get grant money, but there was a shortfall. Cost of program for 3 first grades is \$1700+ that covers 18 visits. Students walk to park and return. First grade teacher believes that this is integral to the curriculum. It is not a field trip. Problem is where to get the money. Amanda tried to get money from state sources to no avail because Colfax is not perceived as a high-need school and this is not a new program.

Q: It should not be too hard for a parent to take on the responsibility of raising this money, which amounts to \$7.50 per person per visit.