

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 22, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Smithland Elementary School

NOTES

The purpose of the Parent Advisory Committee is to create a two-way communication between the school division and parents.

After-school programming: The Superintendent and Principals are interested in expanding enrichment and remediation programs after school.

- Looking for ideas that might interest and benefit students
- Universities and Colleges, Parks and Recreation Dept. and Boys & Girls Club are possible partners in this effort
- Interest surveys to parents will be sent before Thanksgiving Break
- Targeted date for some pilot programs will be mid-late January

Division-wide Information:

- 98% of Schools in Virginia make State Standards- All Harrisonburg Schools made State accreditation
- 70% of students in designated grades have to pass science, social studies, math, English SOL tests
- Federal Standards have a higher passing requirement and schools are held accountable by passing the standard for each subgroup – 81% in English and 77% in Math- every year the passing rate increases and the expectation is that by 2014 all subgroups will have a 100% passing outcome. All our schools with the exception of the middle schools met the Federal passing mark for 2009-10
- Would like to see continuous improvement and increased advanced scores on the English, Writing, and Math SOL tests by 10% by subgroup. Passing score on the SOL is 400 and an advance score is 500-600.
- Developing Initiatives:
 - foreign language program at the elementary level
 - Restructuring central office (instructional direction, moving toward general rather than specific coordinators, integrate curriculum, work together rather than in isolation
 - School-wide enrichment and increased advance learning opportunities for all students

Around the Table:

- Foreign language in schools
- Need to sell schools to all – use 800+ employees to make an impact
- Focus on every kid
- Middle school recess – some free time
- Lecture – speak publicly (students)
- Art project to share with class
- Robotics (Lego) has been discontinued? Possible joint team?
- Spelling emphasis in school system
- Rocket building
- PASS
- Parent involvement – need more of it
 - ask for more from teachers to focus on children
 - volunteer in classroom
- Home school liaisons
 - what obstacles we need to address (college applications, translators, conversational Spanish class for educators and parents)
 - All parents have a skill to offer
 - Parents and children want to be successful
 - Make sure parents feel invited (i.e. parent center)
- Any opportunities for parents who want to learn English
 - Dr. Kizner would be willing to offer it in schools (possibly let parent Spanish speakers teach Spanish as well as English speakers teach Spanish)
 - look into Rosetta Stone for educators and students
- Field Trips
 - are decreasing—would like to see more of them
 - Dr. Kizner – \$3 million from budget and no positions were cut. Field trips have great value, teachers are being asked to “think outside the box” and focus more on value even if closer with less bus trips. Look at strengthening business relations for support.
- Sports physicals
 - students are having a hard time getting them
 - Dr. Kizner – we have 5 nurses for 8 schools...partnership with health dept., doctors, nurses, open house at facilities for help (i.e. daycare center at school)
- Magnet Schools

- Dress code
 - If parents are opposed to it, it will fall apart
 - Dr. Kizner – individual schools buy in and choose to do it, has to come from the “bottom” up. Parents have responsibilities – dress for success. Schools will focus on best instructional practices and we ask parents to focus on being parents and not ask the schools to monitor what you buy for school and how you dress your child.
- Teachers and administrators will make a concerted effort to reach out to more parents and communicate more often – the research is strong that the more parents are involved in their child’s education the greater their chances of doing well in school and post secondary education.
- Parent involvement – all have something they like to do (i.e. sports, culture)
- Field trips
- Art class – paint mural
- Kids mentoring other kids – more programs
 - Dr. Kizner – high school seniors can work and learn in community, want to expand into middle school, high school kids read to elementary kids

Meeting adjourned approximately at 8:45 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, November 10 at 6:30 p.m., Smithland Elementary School
(will start with Around the Table)**