

FR Council
October 20, 2011
Calvert Elementary School 4:15p.m.

BUILDINGS NOT PRESENT: Eastridge, Humann, Lakeview, Lincoln Northeast, Lincoln Southwest, McPhee, Morley, Norwood Park, Park, Pyrtle, Roper, Saratoga, Schoo, and Sheridan.

“EARLY BIRD” DRAWING: Connie Lacey of Lincoln High won a \$25 gift card to HyVee, compliments of Candace Specht, Horace Mann Insurance.

CALL TO ORDER: President Jenni Absalon called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

CHECK IN/CELEBRATIONS: Jenni asked new Faculty Representatives to stand and be recognized. Student teachers in attendance were also recognized.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The September 15, 2011, FR Council minutes were approved as printed.

SPECIAL GUEST: Ruth Gerber, LPS Foundation

Ms. Gerber spoke regarding that the LPS Foundation Campaign for this fall. She encouraged teachers to give during this upcoming campaign.

POLICY LANGUAGE CHANGE

Jenni explained the proposed LEA Policy Language regarding Board Member Attendance. FR council members voted in favor of the policy change.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

- President’s Report
A copy of the President’s calendar for September/October was given to FR’s.
- Association Update—Jenni Absalon
 - Member Relations
 - Membership—NEA is down 26,000 members. LEA is down 10 members from last year
Other metro associations are down approximately 150 members.
 - Committees—The LEA Committees for 2011-2012 was presented to FR’s.
 - Contact Teams: Jenni encouraged FR’s to join a School Board and/or Legislative Contact Team.
 - Rebuilding of LPSDO—The LPS School Board has narrowed the sites to two locations: the present site at 59th and O and a site at 70th and A. Jenni has sent a survey to members asking for their input and encouraged everyone to take the survey.
 - Negotiations—LPS took a huge hit this last year from state aid. Members will be asked via a negotiation survey to find ways to use resources wisely.
 - LEAF Classroom Grants—\$250 grants are available for classrooms use. One for elementary and one for secondary. These grant applications are due November 1st.
 - I Can Do It—Jen Yoder and Jan Olmstead will be teaching this class on November 8th and November 15th from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the LEA building.
 - Retirement Seminar—Roger Rea will be presenting at Goodrich Middle School on November 9th at 6:30 p.m.
 - Communications

- ESEA Reauthorization—the reauthorization of this bill is being discussed in Congress. One of the major discussions is whether schools/teachers should be held accountable for student success/failure based on one state test. Jenni encouraged FR’s to email and/or write their Senator and Congressman regarding this reauthorization.
- Professional Agreement—Jenni stated that elementary report cards are due no earlier than Monday, October 24 at 4:00 p.m. as per the LPS/LEA Negotiated Contract.
- Member Surveys—this will be sent to all members to clarify what area they specialize in.
- Publications—Jenni announced that links to surveys and additional information are in the LEARN newsletter each week.

Community

- Harvest of Books—Jenni stressed that each elementary must inform the LEA staff of the counts for their building. The Harvest is not as plentiful as in previous years.
- Transcending the Flames—Union Bank is hosting a breakfast, in conjunction with LEA and other organizations, on how things have transpired since the fire at LPSDO last spring. The breakfast and discussion will be held the morning of October 25th at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel.

“THE RIGHT STUFF” – Dan Studer, LEA UniServ Director

Dan discussed the LPS/LEA Negotiated Agreement and the following sections: Plan Time Guarantees (5-16; pp.12-13), Duty Day (5-3; p.8), and Report Card Deadlines (5-21; p.14).

DRAWINGS: The names of the following FR’s were drawn for grab bags: Krystina Luther, Bryan Community; Rachel Bark, Clinton Elementary; Paula Buckner, Scott Middle School; Tom Meyer, Arnold Elementary; Chris Martin, Campbell Elementary; Bobbi Adams, Cavett Elementary; and Lisa Wiedel, Beattie Elementary

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT—Jim Rea, LEA Executive Director

Jim discussed the following information with FRs

- 1) Supplies needed by the Expelled Student program.
- 2) Reports from the following buildings on how each used the \$200 awarded for high membership for the 2010-2011 Association Year: Paul Buckner reported for Scott Middle School, Doreen Ainslie for Mickle Middle School, and Jan Enstrom for Randolph. Reports for Kahoa and Hartley will be presented at the November FR Council meeting.
- 3) Jim reviewed the LEA membership report from September 30, 2011. Each building needs to implement a membership plan that will result in “Plus ONE”—add one more membership during the next 30 days.
- 4) The audit was completed this week and will be presented to the Board of Directors in December, 2011.

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

ACTION ITEMS:

The FR Council unanimously approved the adoption of LEA Policy Language regarding LEA Board Member Attendance.

COMMENTS, CONCERNS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Group Concern/Comment, Randolph Elementary

Randolph is scheduled for interior painting this fall/winter. It is projected to take 2-3 months, each classroom approximately 2-3 days each. The problem is our building is full so we have no space to move to. We have been asked to be creative about “going on a trip” to someone else’s room for a couple of days. Teachers are already stressed about all the curriculum and getting everything in. We don’t feel we have an extra day or two to be housed in someone else’s classroom and away from curriculum. Also it will take our time to take everything off the walls and windows and put it back up again. Compensation for that extra work?

District Response:

Due to the sheer number of district buildings to be maintained, some painting must be done during the school year. In anticipation of the painting, Dr. Bonaiuto asked the teachers to make suggestions concerning the painting plan and then a meeting was held in which the plan for classroom movement was devised. An average sized classroom should take approximately one day to complete. There will be no additional compensation for teachers to take down and later re-hang items on their walls.

Building Concern/Comment, Mickle Middle School

As a workload issue, middle school teachers now have additional duties because computer techs have been moved out of our buildings. Teachers now must move mobile labs, hunt down equipment needed, etc. Also, is there a reason why high school teachers only need to have their gradebook up to date for mid-quarter progress reports but middle teachers must “push them out”?

District Response:

After considerable research, and in an effort to best meet the technical needs of all teachers/staff in the district, Computing Services changed the support delivery model by going to regional teams rather than assigning a support technician to each middle school building. Computer Services has closely monitored this implementation and can demonstrate timely response to all reported technical support requests. In addition, the new configuration has improved the time to delivery at the elementary schools without significantly increasing our time to delivery at middle schools. The reconfiguration of responsibilities prioritizes providing the technical resources in the best position to meet all reported technical needs. In the shift, it is true that the computer techs may not be able to do all of their former tasks (ex. move mobile labs). If teachers believe that are spending an inordinate amount of time moving labs, hunting down equipment, etc., they should discuss the issue with their principal. The middle school process of emailing ("pushing out") the mid-quarter report cards follows the past practice (pre-Pinnacle) of distributing mid-quarter grades.

Group Concern/Comment, Culler Middle School

Fall break: Teachers are upset over the ‘comp’ day being used as ‘Fall Break’. One day is not enough time to close one quarter and prepare for another. Besides that, our comp day should not be expected to be used as a workday.

Individual Concern/Comment, Prescott Elementary

Concerns about loss of fall break: A survey was put out to LEA members in fall 2010 in regards to how many days for fall break. Members said at least 4 yet we ended up with one. The one was not even a day it was a “comp” day. If we are going off what UNL does, UNL had 2 days. The students and staff need some time to regroup in the fall.

Please listen to the teachers (the ones who actually work the calendar) when deciding future breaks or time off. One day is not a fall break.

FALL BREAK RESPONSE FROM JENNI ABSALON:

The LPS Calendar is recommended and presented each year to LPS School Board by the joint LPS/LEA Calendar Committee. The 2011-2012 calendar was the first presented with first semester ending before the winter break. This calendar was developed after public, staff, student and family input. The LEA membership responded to several surveys and expressed their feelings about many variables that go into making the calendar each year.

I have been on the calendar committee for many years. That year's committee collected and shared more data and information than ever before. The committee's charge has always been to make the most instructionally sound calendar they could. That year the data indicated overwhelming support for the semester to end before winter break. In order to do that and remain within the restraints of the calendar guidelines, changes had to be made.

The 2011-2012 Calendar was approved in May of 2010. The calendar approved was not the exact calendar the committee presented to the Board. The Board listens to testimony typically during a first reading and then can hear more testimony the second reading and then vote. There were several changes made by the LPS Board over the course of several meetings. One of those changes was to the length of fall break. Fall Break became the conference compensatory day because the LPS Board voted to start school later which limited the number of days for the semester. Therefore because holidays fell on certain days of the week we had to add the earlier start days back into the calendar, the result was the one day off between quarters.

The calendar committee is a dedicated group of individuals who volunteer their time for the good of the school district, the staff, and the children. They work through many set variables and have provide the Board with answers and perspective. The School Board has the final decision, which is as it should be.

Last year, School Board member Richard McGinnis joined the calendar committee. He was able to share information with the Board from another perspective. The calendar for 2012-2013 is on the LPS website.

Group Concern K-2 Math Implementation:

District Response:

K-2 Math has been implemented this year and we have grade level monthly meetings. We need to attend at least two for our district flextime but the other meetings are voluntary. However if you don't attend you do not receive the information and numerous changes each month. We have grade level teacher leaders. Shouldn't they be providing the information to ALL the K-2 teachers?

The teacher-facilitators' training for this implementation is focused upon the grade they teach. Thus, the teacher leader will not have the training for all of the grades K-2.

If a teacher is unable to attend a meeting, the pertinent information from the meeting can be accessed on Docushare at:

Kindergarten Monthly Math Folder & LPS Resources for Math Expressions

<http://docushare.lps.org/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-166356>

<http://docushare.lps.org/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-158425>

First Grade Monthly Math Folder & LPS Resources for Math Expressions

<http://docushare.lps.org/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-166359>

<http://docushare.lps.org/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-158455>

Second Grade Monthly Math Folder & LPS Resources for Math Expressions

<http://docushare.lps.org/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-166360>

<http://docushare.lps.org/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-158284>

We have to adjust mistakes on district made tests on our own.

District tests were created at the request of the teachers. Occasionally, concerns are raised such as the instructions are not clear enough or the test is too long. Input concerning those issues is being noted and the tests will be altered for next school year. Any questions, comments or concerns with the tests should be forwarded to Matt Larson or Susie Katt.

Could Matt Larsen start a K-2 Q and A BLOG or format where we can learn and ask questions.

Matt and Susie are visiting every elementary school to meet with the teachers implementing the program. They answer questions, take comments and address concerns at these meetings. They have developed a sheet of frequently asked questions with the answers. Those sheets are contained in the Docushare documents listed above.

Is there a plan to survey the teachers and parents at semester about the curriculum and implementation?

Input is being gathered from teachers on an ongoing basis through meetings with teachers. Matt regularly communicates with elementary principals concerning the implementation and the effectiveness of the new program. A presentation is available for presentation to parent groups. No formal parental survey is planned.

Also we are very concerned with the budget implications of this math curriculum. As we prepare for next year we do not have enough materials in our kits for the number of student we have and each unit is supposed to be 50 additional dollars out of our already reduced budget.

The district will continue to provide the materials necessary to support the program.

DRAWING for ½ day of Guest Teaching: Cindy Swanson, Pound

ADJOURNMENT: Jenni adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Olmstead

Jan Olmstead
Secretary-Treasurer