

Olympus Jr. High Community Council Minutes
November 9, 2013, 3:15 p.m.
Room 315

In attendance:

Katie Graham, Mark Grant, Scott Gregory, Jane Nate, Tina Seastrand, Sally Timmins, Jen Wunderli, Kimberly Chytraus

Audience: Susan Schramm, Eric Schramm, Michelle Kuhn, Kirsti Jeppsen, Stephani Carlson, Camille Larsen, Mimi Jones, Jenn Pingree, Cindy Fulton, Layne Gordon, Shelli Jenkins, Tena Carlson, Robert Brough, Kent Nelson, Alyse Christensen, Crystalyn Nilsen, Jennifer Kleinmann, Heather Bankhead, Becky Dietrich, Susan Holberg, Alan Thomas, Nicole Howard, Steven Rossi, Marianne Burgoyne, Julie McKinnon, Mr. Boulton, Tyler Jensen, Jayne Springman

Welcome by Katie Graham. Reviewed agenda and process for meeting discussion and making a decision about the schedule change. All council members introduced themselves.

Mr. Grant showed a copy of the LAND trust budget and discussed overview of spending for the year. Majority of funds are going towards teacher salaries and budget.

PTA Update by Alyse Christensen. Reflections just finished and Reality Town is tomorrow.

Approval of minutes from October 2015 meeting. Tina Seastrand motioned to approve, second by Jen Wunderli. Council voted unanimously to approve minutes. [This was done after Mr. Grant's presentation but moved up in the minutes for clarity.]

Mr. Grant presented the reasoning behind the proposed schedule change. This is a great school with great kids. Reviewed Oly Jr. test scores compared to other schools in the Granite District. Math scores are a little above average, and science and language arts scores are a little below average. Our test scores tend to be a little below schools with similar student populations. Scores are about the same or a little higher than Churchill and quite a bit below Wasatch. Clarified later that Oly Jr. test scores have been declining for the past three years and the District is strongly encouraging a change to address improvement. Mr. Grant feels like we could do better and wants better for the kids here.

Granite District has recommended changing to a 5x5 block schedule, with double blocks of math, science, and language arts. Most jr. highs in the District have moved or are moving to a block schedule. To implement a 5x5 schedule, school would have to surplus 2 teachers in order to hire 2 more math teachers. It would also limit the number of electives that can be offered and that students can take. Teachers and parents have expressed a great deal of concern about a change to a block schedule so Mr. Grant wanted to explore other alternatives. He feels that providing remediation time during the school schedule is key to helping improve student mastery of core subjects.

Mr. Grant found that the highest junior high scores in Jordan District are at Copper Mountain Middle School, which is on a modified 7-block schedule. The school has been open for 3 years and this is their second year on this schedule. Test scores have improved dramatically since

implementing the modified schedule. The teacher advisory time allows teachers and students to develop relationships, which is particularly important in jr. high. It also allows time for remediation during the school day. Copper Mtn.'s schedule is 7 periods on Monday – Wednesday, 4 periods on Thursday with teacher advisory time (either remediation or enrichment activities based on core standards), and 3 periods on Friday with teacher advisory time (with the same homeroom teacher all year). Longer block days allow more time for teachers to get deeper into subject and activities. On Thursdays, if a student is meeting mastery in core subjects, the student has enrichment time (activities based on core standards, could be Friend to Friend, Service Learning, assemblies, character development, self-esteem/good choices). If a student is not meeting mastery in core subjects can be provided remediation (meet with teachers, have peer tutoring, mentoring). On Friday, teacher advisory time is with a homeroom teacher. If kids know someone cares about them it will make a positive direction in their school experience and mastery.

Faculty would decide what is best for school for teacher advisory/enrichment time. Some parents request remediation or to be peer tutors. If kids don't get mastery in jr. high they won't get it later. Enrichment and remediation are to address that problem. 60% are proficient/ 40% kids are not proficient. 20% need remediation.

Discussion by Council:

5x5 block schedule is no longer being considered because too many concerns. Discussion will be focused on modified 7 period schedule. Council visited Copper Mountain Middle School last week and was really impressed by the programs held during the enrichment and remediation time. Council sees benefits in peer mentoring, opportunity for service learning, critical thinking, and development of leadership, collaboration, and problem solving skills. The modified schedule is an opportunity to provide these experiences. Recognizes this is a challenge for the faculty and they will need to buy into the schedule to use time effectively. Teacher advisory time needs to be productive and not free time. Likes the opportunity for kids to connect with different subjects. Concerned that special needs kids would not do well in extended blocks every day but would benefit from remediation and one on one time with a teacher. Both Churchill and Wasatch have some remediation time (Wasatch's is once a week, Churchill has "Charger time" every day). A schedule change has been considered for some time and the District has left this to the community councils.

Time was opened up to parents and teachers for comments and questions. Parents sought information about what would be included in enrichment time and remediation would work. Many voiced that any time should be productively used. Some parents would prefer all remediation and enrichment be required. Some expressed support for peer mentoring. Some parents think that the schedule change is too drastic and that changing the schedule won't improve test scores. Some parents think the enrichment time could be used to enhance learning and allow teachers to meet the needs of different kinds of learners.

Some teachers expressed concerns about taking away any class time and that the enrichment time would need to be productive. Some teachers noted that there isn't time to provide remediation during class and that this would be helpful for many students. Many teachers were supportive of

incorporating peer mentoring. Teachers expressed that the faculty would need additional training and were confident that teachers could effectively use the longer block time.

The Council decided to continue the discussion on the modified 7-period schedule. The feeling is that a change needs to be made and Council is trying to find something that will address the District's desire to make a change in a way that is beneficial for our students.

Council discussed the process moving forward. Mr. Grant will look into how to present a schedule change to the school district if it is approved. Council will host a parent forum meeting on Tuesday, November 17 at 7 p.m. Purpose will be to discuss the modified 7-period schedule and take parent comments and questions. Next Council meeting will be November 30 at 3:15.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.