

Community Council Meeting Minutes
for 03-26-09 Meeting

Attending: Joan Bramble (member), Karen Duzy (member), Michele Jones (member), Dan Lofgren (Granite School Board), Cindy McCandless (member), Mike Porter (member), Karianne Prince (member), Chelle Brain, Stephanie Buehner, Emiliee Dirks, Bruce Gordon, Leslie Lorimer, Christine Milbank, Karen Morgan, Amy Mulcock, Dannon Philbrook.

Karianne Prince: We would like to open this meeting and begin by welcoming everyone who has come today. We would like to acknowledge Dan Lofgren from the Granite School Board and later give him a few minutes to speak. We are discussing the possibility of a French Immersion program at Morningside today, and are happy to see many parents here to discuss it. Because our time is limited, we would like to open up 10 minutes for public comment before the Community Council begins its discussion. Let's see how many people would like to comment and divvy up the time allotted to speak from there. Three people want to comment, so let's let each person have 3 minutes. Leslie would you like to start?

Leslie Lorimer: Yes, Karianne, thank you. I am a neighbor with my youngest son a senior at Skyline High school. I have no kids at Morningside, but have been a member in this community for a long time and have a vested interest in the Morningside community. In other circumstances I might be for a Dual Immersion program, but I have some very deep concerns about this particular program. I feel that the procedure for making this decision has been rushed, that the Community Council is basing its decision on a flawed survey, I am concerned that there has been no attempt to outreach to parents with preschool age kids, and we already have a problem with traffic and this program will significantly increase the number of cars that are coming to pick up and drop off kids from Morningside.

Karianne Prince: Thank you Leslie. Amy, would you like to go next?

Amy Mulcock: I am concerned that there will be only one traditional classroom. I think that this program will make Morningside more of a specialty school rather than a community school. We already have two schools under one roof, adding another specialty program will only create an additional division within our school. It will be an us-versus-them with the traditional and immersion classes.

Karianne Prince: Emiliee, would you be next?

Emiliee Dirks: It seems like the big concerns are space and traffic. I would like to know how this was handled when Canyon Rim was here. That was before I had children here, so I don't know how that impacted the school. Was it really negative? Were students able to use the buses? Would we be able to utilize this again if the French Immersion program is implemented? Is classroom space truly an issue, or is this an opportunity for some positive change? I also feel like I haven't heard what the teachers feel about this program, I would like to know what their true opinion is.

Karianne Prince: Christine, would you like to comment?

Christine Milbank: I am the parent of a child in the Magnet program. In the Magnet program there is only one class per grade, and we have not found that to be a negative experience. There are different students each year as some move in and some move out. My child has not experienced an us-versus-them with the Magnet and traditional classes. I asked him this morning, and he said that they played together in the playground, that there wasn't any animosity or division between the two groups. In my opinion the larger number of kids attending Morningside will have more of an impact than having multiple programs.

Karianne Prince: Karen, would you like to comment?

Karen Morgen: For me the one traditional classroom is a concern. But the set up of the French program also gives me some concerns. When my children were in Kindergarten, I wanted to make sure they were in the morning program so they received the most instruction in reading. The afternoon Kindergarten got to go to more assemblies and participate in more extracurricular activities, but to me reading is far more important than those extras. I am afraid that the afternoon session of the English block will be interrupted far too often. I know that the first grade teachers really feel that students learn better in the morning, and holding that Language Arts component of the curriculum sacred is so important. I just worry that the English block of Language Arts that is held in the afternoon will be compromised by assemblies and other afternoon activities and just won't be equivalent to the morning block.

Christine Milbank: Has the Community Council made inquiries to other schools that are currently running these types of programs?

Joan Bramble: We have looked at research that has been done on programs that are running across the country. Our community Council has not made any official inquiries to other school, but there is some informal communication that has happened, and we are looking at the testing data that has come out of the programs running at William Penn and Vista. However, we want to make sure that this is a good fit for our school, and our French Immersion program would look a little different than the programs that are running in other local schools.

Amy Mulcock: I would like to just point out that with the Magnet program you choose to enter into a one-classroom model, with the French Immersion program the traditional students would be placed into the one-classroom model, it would not be a choice.

Karianne Prince. I would like to end the public discussion now and enter into the minutes the Report of Parent Surveys.

Cindy McCandless: I would like to enter into the minutes the Report of Teacher Surveys.

Karrienne Prince: As Leslie pointed out, the FAQ sheet had an error on Question #4. It stated that there would be two traditional classrooms, when in fact, there will only be one traditional classroom. Having noted that error, we have some options. The first option is to resend the survey, this seems the most fair and equitable choice.

Karen Duzy: The main issue is who do we send it to? Do we just resend it to Morningside patrons?

Joan Bramble: This seems like a reasonable choice. According to Community Council guidelines, our community is defined as those with children currently in the school.

Michele Jones: It seems like it would be very difficult to outreach to parents of preschoolers who are not currently at Morningside. I know that our decision affects them the most, but how do we contact these people? It is my understanding that we only have access to the addresses of those parents who are registered through the District preschool services. I know there has been discussion of contacting local preschools, but what about those parents who do not have their preschoolers in day-care? It just seems very messy logistically.

Leslie Lorimer: I think if you exclude these parents you are doing a disservice to the community. You could have volunteers walk their neighbor hoods and flier for community input.

Joan Bramble: I think that these parents can contact us via e-mail and we can have surveys in the office available. I don't think we need to solicit these parents like we do our patrons, but I think that we can include those community members who want to give their opinion, just as we did on the last survey.

Dannon Philbrook: I agree with Joan. I think fliering is a waste of paper. I think we can all talk to our neighbors and tell them to look on the website for information about the program and to e-mail the community council if they have an opinion about the program.

Leslie Lorimer: You need to allow the community to have a voice, just for public relations.

Emiliee Dirks: Going door-to-door is not always successful. It is impacted by who is spreading the word. I think that it needs to be made clear that this only impacts children who are in Kindergarten this year and younger. We should use e-mail and the school's website to make information accessible to the community and a printable version of the survey for those who want to fill it out.

Amy Mulcock: In the past when there was an issue that would impact the community a blanket letter was sent out.

Emiliee: It seems we are getting hung up on traffic and maybe overlooking the benefits of the immersion program.

Bruce Gordon: When Canyon Rim was here, weren't they able to use existing buses?

Joan Bramble: Yes, that would still be available for the French Immersion program.

Karianne Prince: We do have a timeline. We don't have time to canvas our whole boundary, we have to remember that our boundary has been expanded. We do have representation of the community through Morningside patrons. I feel pretty

confident that by surveying our patrons we will get a good representation of the community as a whole.

Joan Bramble: Our charge is not to exhaustively survey how the community as a whole feels about this program. We are getting a sample of how the community feels. There is no way for us to get a scientifically accurate sampling, we are simply looking for a representation of our communities opinions.

Chelle Brain: Since the other school opted not to do this program, do we have more time?

Joan Bramble: Yes, we do have some additional time. However, I do need a decision in the next week so I can begin staffing and schedule for next year.

Karianne Prince: I propose that we resend the survey and make it available on the website. We will accept surveys from any community members as long as the survey is properly filled out with their name and address on the form. If people want to flier, they are welcome to do so.

Dannon Philbrook: I think it is unrealistic to do fliers, and a waste of paper. We should just stick to word of mouth and send people to the website.

Karen Duzy: Our boundary is enormous right now.

Emiliee Dirks: We should utilize electronic means.

Mike Porter: I agree with Emiliee.

Dan Lofgren: The charge to survey your patrons should not be constraining. It is at the community council's discretion. The biggest concern is leaving people out. I applaud your council for having this discussion and involving your community. This is the way the process should work.

Emiliee: Is this standard format for making this kind of decision? Is someone going to be able to come back and nail us on not crossing a "t" or dotting and "i"?

Joan Bramble: The Community Council sets its own standards. We wrestled with the best way to assess the community's opinion of this program. The survey to Morningside parents and accepting emails from community members was what we as a council decided was the most fair and equitable means to do this.

Karen Morgan: How have other schools handled making this decision?

Joan Bramble: Initially the District had it as the principal's decision. But then there was a school community who raise concerns that the program was not a good fit for their school. After that the District asked the community councils to make a recommendation to the superintendency and the final decision is with the Superintendent.

Karianne Prince: Okay, first let's resend the corrected survey on Monday. The survey and links to information about the immersion program should be linked to

our school website as soon as feasibly possible. Let everyone here encourage community members to become informed about the program and to fill out a survey.

Stephanie Buehner: Does the FAQ specifically state that the traditional classroom is restricted to families within the boundary? I think that was confusing.

Karianne Prince: We will look at the wording and see if it can be clarified. I move to resend the survey on Monday, have it available on the school's website. The movement was passed unanimously by the council.

Joan Bramble: I would just like to reiterate that these surveys are a tool, and will not be the sole determining factor in the community council's decision.

Karrienne Prince: The surveys will be due next Friday. Can we make an e-mail version of the survey to be sent out before Monday?

Cindy McCandless: Sometimes length of time works against you.

Karen Duzy: Yes, I just want to make sure people have enough time to respond.

Joan Bramble: I can link the information onto the website today and have the surveys sent out on Monday as well as linked to the website.

Karianne Prince: We have had a good discussion on this. It is wonderful to see such an interest in our school from our community. I would just like to extend my appreciation to the teachers on this council for being open to involving their peers in this discussion as well. Dan, would you like a few minutes to speak?

Dan Lofgren: There are just a couple of issues that are really front and center at the District. The first is the budget. We have received a list of recommendations from Region V PTA. I would love to hear any comments you might have about this issue. My phone number is 801-424-4600 and my e-mail is: dlofgren@cowboy.us.

The second issue is that of bonding. There will be a final vote on this no later than June so we can place it on the ballot in November. Granite has not had a bond or indebtedness for 15 years, but now is a prime time to look at this option as interest rates are low and we have some serious infrastructure issues. One thing we are looking at doing with this bond is putting air conditioning in all Granite schools and replacing outdated schools. Obviously there is a question of proportionality of where the money goes, and this is part of the discussion.

Michele Jones: Where can we get more information?

Dan Lofgren: If you look at the minutes of the last Granite School District board meeting (the 17th) or you can contact me.

Karen Duzy: Is bonding only for capitol improvements?

Dan Lofgren: Yes. If we vote for a bond, a major issue is the proportionality of distribution of the money. I think much of the proportionality is resolved by air-conditioning. You have to realize that within Granite School District boundaries, only 29% of households have school-age kids.

Karianne Prince: Thank you Dan for coming to our meeting, we appreciate you interest. Our next meeting will be on Friday, March 3rd at 2:30 pm. Thank you everyone for coming, the meeting is adjourned.

Morningside Elementary Report of Teacher Surveys

Statistics

- ❑ 18 surveys went out to staff members
- ❑ 17 surveys were returned
 - 7 surveys were **for** the dual immersion program (41.2%)
 - 10 were **against** the dual immersion program (58.8%)

Comments

For

- ❑ Benefits outweigh the negatives
- ❑ May prevent splits in grade levels
- ❑ Enhances educational experience of all students and staff
- ❑ Could attract needed patrons to Morningside
- ❑ May be the catalyst to improve unity in our school
- ❑ Bilingual education is better than monolingual education no matter what language.
- ❑ “ If we don’t teach our young children other languages & cultural values, we are denying them access to the new world” S.Wang
- ❑ Knowing two languages is going to be necessary to compete in the market place
- ❑ We need to be more progressive in doing what other states and countries have already done.
- ❑ Our education system needs a lot of reform and teachers need to be looking at what students need to live in the twenty-first century.

Against

- ❑ May split the school community into 3 separate groups
- ❑ No storage space
- ❑ Deplete Multipurpose room time for P.E., Band, Orchestra, Programs
- ❑ Lose Art, Science, P.E., and science rooms and supplies in those rooms
- ❑ Parking and increase traffic, and safety issues
- ❑ Boring to teach same curriculum twice each day
- ❑ Money spent on Everyday math for ½ of the teachers wasted
- ❑ Every student from the home school should be able to participate
- ❑ Parents will not know how to help with math homework
- ❑ Attrition from the Dual Immersion class and growth in the traditional class will result in splits or overcrowding for the traditional classes in the upper grades

Morningside Elementary Report of Parent Surveys

Statistics

- ❑ 329 surveys went out to parents

- ❑ 101 surveys were returned (31%)
 - 66 surveys were **in favor of** the dual immersion program (65%)
 - 29 were **against** the dual immersion program (29%)
 - 6 were **not committed** either direction (6%)

- ❑ Of those surveys that supported the dual immersion program (66)
 - 33 families would be impacted by the program (50%)
 - 24 families attended the information meeting (36%)

- ❑ Of those surveys that opposed the dual immersion program (29)
 - 14 families would be impacted by the program (48%)
 - 23 families attended the information meeting (79%)

- ❑ Of those surveys that were not committed either direction (6)
 - 1 family would be impacted (17%)
 - 0 families attended the information meeting (0%)

- ❑ 10 letters or emails were submitted to the Community Council or Principal
 - 5 were supportive of the dual immersion program – all 5 families would be impacted
 - 5 were against the dual immersion program – 4 of the 5 families would be impacted

Comments

For

- ❑ Great opportunity for children to learn language at young age
- ❑ This would help prevent split classes
- ❑ Increase the vitality of the school by bringing in more students

- ❑ Boost school's image in the community
- ❑ Produce global citizens
- ❑ Keep the school open by increasing our enrollment
- ❑ "dereliction of our duty as parents and teachers" if we don't give our children this program
- ❑ Benefit to students to gain cultural understanding
- ❑ Amazing opportunity for our children
- ❑ Make our school a unique learning environment
- ❑ Great opportunity for students in dual immersion, magnet, and traditional classes to share in new experience together and have benefits of 3 programs in one school

Against

- ❑ Divisive – three schools in one space, we already have the magnet school
- ❑ Only one traditional classroom – no flexibility for problems with other students or the teacher
- ❑ Only one traditional classroom would become a "dumping ground" for poor students
- ❑ Traffic would increase in our neighborhood
- ❑ Parking and safety issues
- ❑ Traditional classroom would be taught at a "lower" level
- ❑ Not enough teachers support the dual immersion program
- ❑ Why French? Why not Spanish?
- ❑ How do I help with homework in another language?
- ❑ I don't think this program is a "good fit" for Morningside
- ❑ What happens when enough students drop out of the dual immersion program that our traditional classroom is overloaded?