

**McNeil Canyon Elementary  
Site Council Meeting**

11 Feb 16

**Members Present:** Pete Swanson, Dale Banks, Matt Hakala, Joanna Greene, Melon Purcell and Laura Sheldon.

**Members Absent:** Mark Marette and Sean Rhodes.

Others Present: Amy Stonorov and Meriam Linder.

No public comment or public presentations.

Bussing changes were discussed. Pete said that he doesn't have any hand-outs. What he knows is mostly conjecture at this point based on information he was given in October. At this time, Homer doesn't have a tiered bus system. The Bid the District receives is per bus per day no matter how long they are on the road. The District hopes to cut 3 buses down here by going to a two tier system. 3 yrs. ago there was some discussion about this. Basically HHS and HMS will have to choose a time to start and then elementary will have to start either before or after them. HHS and HMS have good reasons for not wanting to change their start time. Buses would pick up all HHS/HMS students and then all elementary students on the same routes. If we are cut to two buses, one bus would start at end of east end road, drive past school to Fritz Creek, turn around and pick up kids from Fritz Creek to McNeil. This is how it was explained 3 years ago.

The District is spending money on a 3<sup>rd</sup> bus that they think they can cut out. They also don't like that we have students riding the bus from out of our attendance area. If a bus route is cut, it will mean longer bus rides for our students. Daycare kids are typically younger and they would have 45 min ride.

The District won't implement any changes until next year. The current bus contract goes thru next year. A couple of board members have asked, why not continue bus routes as is next year. For the District to get out of contract they would have to show that they no longer needs that bus. This clause is in the contract mainly because of declining enrollment.

Laura commented that 3 years ago they also wanted to redraw attendance area boundaries. We haven't heard any more about that.

The District is saying that it is misuse of transportation funds to have an activity bus. Buses are meant to be home to school to home. Pete contends that they are going from school to home. We are just changing time they go home. Pete says he doesn't see an issue with elementary kids riding the bus with middle and high school kids. We have been doing it for years with only one incident.

When asked about numbers, Pete stated that we have about 12 out of boundary kids and about 12 of our kids go into town. Plus Fireweed and Connections and Idea have about 30 kids each from our attendance area.

Pete brought this up to Community Council as a way for parents to get involved. He wants to start the conversation now that parents are concerned about this and ask them to address those concerns to board members so they have information and also to people at district office. Unfortunately all the other schools don't think it will have much impact. Which it will although probably not as much as us. Half our population rides that 3<sup>rd</sup> bus at some time during the week. The bus folks have always been very cooperative with us. Community Council is putting together a letter. As Site Council members we could sign that or we could send our own letter. It was decided to send our own letter in March.

Dale says that it sounds like that for next year we need to advocate to keep things the same. Dale is wondering why the bus contract is set up as per bus per day. He thought that would be worth exploring. Is it an industry standard? Pete has asked but not gotten a clear answer. Pete understands that the new RFP is being run this month.

Pete asked if there were any other thoughts on bussing. Site Council members will be helping get parents informed and stressing the importance of keeping bus routes as is. Community Council will have a letter for parents to sign at the Talent Show.

The School Board has asked for two RFP's. One maintaining the current system and another using the two tier system.

After our next Site Council meeting will be too late for a letter about bussing. Pete will draft something and send it to Site Council members sometime the last two weeks of March so School Board members can receive it in time for their April board meeting.

Pete handed out a couple of items from Board packets pertaining to the budget. He explained to members how to access information that is given to Board members. These documents were reviewed.

Dale asked, why not add two grades here at McNeil, make it a K-8 school. Pete said that idea has been thrown out there. He explained that Pupil Teacher Ratio's are not policy, just a statement of how they are going to staff schools..

Most districts in state have built their budget on a \$50 increase to Base Student Allocation. Ours has built their budget on status quo. State may cut funding further – at 5% the district would lose approx. 6 million dollars. It would push more schools to go to blended learning. There is a big push in district for blended learning. Pete commented that blended learning has pluses and minuses. There has been more of a shift for kids to do dual credit at high school and college.

Dale left at 4:55 pm.

Pete says if there is more interest in the budget stuff should attend meeting in Homer on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The effect on McNeil is that we are losing a staff member. We have one retirement so that position won't be filled. Staff has been having conversations on how class

configuration might look next year. We will bring this conversation back to the Site Council again.

Site News:

Movie night 2/19

Talent Show and Snow Fiesta 2/26

Love of Reading this month. Special activities every Friday. Dr. Seuss B-Day celebration will be held the first part of March.

End of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and Spring Break.

Swimming for grades K-3.

AMP testing will kick off.

The State will be putting standardized testing out to bid. There is pressure to use MAP – 34 out of 52 districts in the state use it.

Mike Hanley is no longer education commissioner. There is a temporary person in that position.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Sheldon