

Topanga Elementary Charter School

Leadership Council Minutes

October 9, 2018

1:45pm

Call to Order by Ms. De La O (facilitator). Minutes recorded by Mr. Gediman

Welcome & Introductions: All present except for Summer Scott-Sexton. Reading of the decorum of meeting.

Minutes from last meeting: Kent Hill added that he spoke about the teacher and parents working together for the most effective method. Also, there was a request for the sources of the homework research. VAPA will be working with the curriculum committee on an art teacher position. Kent Hill also pointed out regarding homework the importance of having all key players (stakeholders) on the table.

Motion to approve the minutes by Roger Harrell

Seconded by Jesse Welch

Motion approved by all

Public comments: Michael Heard: I want to recount some of my observations of physical education - what is working, what is not. I've spent years volunteering with my son's class, and I've seen what works and what doesn't.

I've looked at the P.E requirements which are published and weighed that with my observations and used that to inform my assessment as well.

First and foremost - I think the YMCA needs to be adjusted. In the upper grades, they (the students) are not invested. 3-5 grade are being asked to do activities that are not grade level appropriate. Toy Story Tag, Bean Bag toss - works well with primary, but not upper grades.

Ms. Talan: Can you describe it? I haven't seen Toy Story Tag.

Mr. Heard: Well if it's Toy Story Tag, or whatever, they are being put through a curriculum . . .

Ms. Talan: What do they do? I don't know.

Mr. Gediman described petitions that were sent to him by a fourth grade class (Ms. Talan's class), and he observed that the main issue seemed to be with the names, not the content. He said that he had talked to the YMCA about changing the names.

Ms. Tapper: I was with flags - if it was a tire flag, they had to tag a certain movement.

Mr. Heard: There are different differentiations of the games that are very childish. You have the best athletes not wanting to participate (several students were named, but the council reminded him that we should not be using student names in our discussion).

Mr. Gediman pointed out that P.E. is not for athletic stars, it's for teaching grade level skills.

Michelle Butler: The standards mention leadership skills and high quality activities.

Kent Hill: I don't think Mr. Gediman is bringing out all of the issues involved. There were comments about the childish titles as well as observations that the games are not challenging enough.

Has anyone reached out to these students to acknowledge their views?

Ms. Talan replied that there has been much discussion in her class, and Mr. Gediman said that he has spoken to the students both individually and as a class.

{Afternote by Mr. Gediman - while I have spoken frequently with the 4th grade class on the yard and in the lunchroom, I had neglected to speak to them in their classroom. I went to Room 10 today (10/12/18) and not only applauded their courage and effort, but I also shared with them that their petition was read out loud at this week's leadership council meeting, which should make them very proud}

Ms. Talan: We teach a new program every year – and we have new kids every year. I agree with a lot of what Mr. Hill says, but let me read . . .(a statement about movement).

As for P.E. – it needs to reach all students, and inclusion is very important. Several skills might be addressed, but it may not be played or scored. I believe we should address it, and I believe we are. You need to be constantly moving in PE . . . we think they can all throw a ball, but are they throwing it correctly? It should just be a football game – and the worst thing would be to have two captains picking teams . . . Can the YMCA be improved? Yes. We are working with them – I think the lower grades are fine, we just need to work on upper grade. I think we’re moving forward – and we are going to get to a happy place.

Ms. Weisberg: We were presented by TEP with a budget and told we had to save money. We came up with this alternative, and we have to be able to present 100 minutes a week (200 minutes every 10 days). It’s not about competition – I totally agree with Ms. Talan that the worst thing is to be picked last . . . I wasn’t a sporty kid. But I’m okay now.

Michelle Butler: It sounds great, and my daughter really likes one of the teachers, and I complimented her when I saw her. I can only compare it to art – painting the picture is like playing the game.

Michael Heard: I like the idea of breaking up 4th of 5th and looking at where they are – seeing if some core foundational skill is missing. I can tell you students who are missing these skills, or those who have advanced beyond that level . . . when you know how to throw overhand and you are forced to do it overhand . . .

I don’t think the instruction is there – the kids are told to do a pushup, and not giving the instructions. The actual instruction is not there –

Ms. Tapper: I agree that the instruction can be improved in some areas – I had a sports scholarship, and I’m telling you this because not until college did I learn how to properly throw a ball. It takes a lot of repetition and yes, even throwing underhand.

As many kids as don’t participate now is balanced by the kids of never participated but now participate.

How can we continue the conversation?

Michael Heard: Could there be a time when we can meet with them ahead of time?

ADDITIONS to the YMCA PE Discussion

A primary reason for selection of YMCA was budget considerations, as the school could no longer afford the prior system. Concern regarding last minute absences by the prior PE teacher was also a primary driver of a change.

Parents and teachers all agree that while the YMCA program may meet some goals, there are changes that could and should be made, particularly for 4th and 5th grades.

Actionable: A group will be convened to meet with YMCA team to identify items to improve. Teachers ask that this group be a staff only, no parents included, envoy.

Committee Reports

- Curriculum: Ms. Tapper – We talked about a lot of things. Our afterschool intervention program has started. We have empty spots because not everyone has returned the permission slips. We discussed MTSS (Multi Tiered System of Supports) – teachers are implementing this, with lots of emphasis on social emotional growth. *Eureka Math* – 5 teachers will be going next week – now almost all the staff will have gone to this training. We got the new *Second Step* materials – how to cope with certain materials and emotions. It’s one of the only research-based programs for social emotional growth.

We talked about *Step Up to Writing* – we sent a questionnaire to teachers to see how many are using it. Most teachers are using pieces so it. We talked about Art Trek and how it would look if the art teacher replaced the Art Trek program. We need to go to TEP – we won't know what kind of teacher we will get without a budget.

Kent Hill: What is the timeline?

Edjoin that's probably the best place to advertise for an art teacher.

In *Second Step* there is an additional anti-bullying program schoolwide. How to pay for it – Donor's Choose? Clarification with TEP.

Michele Butler – what's bullying like at school? It is addressed in each classroom as part of the social emotional component of the curriculum.

- Safety: Ms. Weisberg – We talked about how on Oct 18 we are having earthquake drill. We went over the school safety team. The *Second Step* materials have to do with safety because it has to do with empathy and behavior management. We started working on a “3B” consequence chart that we have used before that will be consistent for all students.

Mr. Gediman then talked about how Topanga Elementary was chosen to begin Year One of Restorative Justice training. Five teachers and Mr. Gediman will be attending a two day training later in the month, and we will take a draft of the “3B” chart with us. Ms. Ripke explained more about the team and the process.

- Technology: Ms. De La O – Last year, TEP funded 40 new laptops. Those laptops are on laptop carts being shared by 4th and 5th grade (20 each grade level). We sent out a survey to the teachers to find out what they have and what their wish list is.

We met with the TEP parent who is in charge of technology – we are thinking now that we need 25-30 laptops for 2nd and 3rd – TEP has about 10k to use for hardware. Hopefully we have enough with that fund – maybe also to get a few for first grade. Long term goals of purchases – last year was 40 laptops, this year is 23-30, We plan to go scavenging at the District surplus – and we want to get new stuff. Cameras to read the QR codes for Lexia.

Old and New Business:

Andrea Shreeman: Talking Stick Council – 3rd Tuesday at the library. Includes the community. Next council is a week from tomorrow – would any teacher like to be a facilitator? The last one for the year is December 4.

Communication with parents. – Communication with parents. – We have a responsibility to share what happens in the meetings with the community. You all have the luxury of talking about it together at lunch, but many parents can't come to the meetings. I understand that 1:45pm works for your work calendar, **but Leadership has never even suggested that we move the time to evening meetings to allow working parents to attend.**

At our last meeting, I asked if we could send a quick debrief – we put a sample together, but it was rejected by the committee because I was told we already had a process. But the minutes are a month old by the time we see them . . .

Mr. Harrell: We looked at the document, and we disagreed with some of the content – we don't want misinformation spread. That's why we said no.

Ms. Shreeman: I suggest we post the minutes when they are ready on the website. Secondly, within 48 hours, the minutes should be approved so we can put it out.

Mr. Gediman asks for clarification: the notes I've taken today - I will send them out Wednesday, and we will get them approved and published by Friday.

Tracy Murphy: What if I have comments?

Ms. Weisberg: Only leadership members can make corrections.

If it comes out on the website and you see errors, you can say and we will make changes.

Suzannah Tackett: Traffic keeps getting worse – there should be no parking between 8-8:30 and the hour around dismissal. Cars need to pull all the way through. Mr. Gediman said that he is now seeing more parents volunteering to help him at dismissal – but cars still don't move unless he moves his arm in a swinging motion. There was talk about not allowing parking all the way around.

Clarification – We are talking about the parking on the other side of the circle. Isn't that private property? We would have to find out since the area across the street does not belong to the school.

People are not pulling forward all the way.

Can we get a crossing guard? Why don't we have one?

Ms. Richmond: If we only had a crossing guard at the bottom to keep traffic flowing.

Ms. Wabnig: Aides don't have a place to park. By the time they get here after 8:00 am, there are no spaces.

VAPA Report by Tracy Murphy:

The Fall Show - Tryouts were a big success – we have enough material for a two-hour show.

The Art room – seems like it's being used by most of the classroom. Working out the kinks with the teachers and a docent schedule and sharing the room. Teachers can use the room for their own art projects.

AV equipment in the art room. If we get an iPad we can project via Apple TV to the big screen in the art room.

Art is going up on the walls – rotate per grade level?

Lunch club has had one session – making decorations for the show.

Science Committee Report – Kent Hill:

Science Committee met on Sep 28, 2018. Summary:

1. Ongoing and Upcoming activities

a. Oaks:

- i. Developed a plan to bring mulched oak leaves for berms
- ii. Still working on an alternative watering plan;

b. Tile Wall:

- i. Garden wall 2nd installment done! - Kids made space and wildlife themed tiles. Installed by Paul Doolin and several parent volunteers.
- ii. Artwork OK to submit for VAPA talent show in Nov
- iii. Tiles up this this week
- iv. Collaboration with **Alisa Land Hill** (sci committee) & **Paul Doolin** (Topanga Art and Tile).
- v. Collaboration between **Science** and **VAPA**. Not clear if we'll make money but proceeds go to Science and VAPA, and we get campus beautification and student involvement in any case!

c. Raptor Day – set with Steve Gediman for Oct 26:

- i. We've secured Raptor Events to present.
- ii. We'd like to have one or more teachers partner with us to decide scheduling.
 1. Responsibilities: help set scheduling and communicate with other teachers.
- iii. Plan is ~35 min presentation + 5-10 for change over (unless folks prefer otherwise).

1. Amphitheater holds 85-100 students, so 3 or 4 groups.
2. TK/K go first, with room to shorten presentation – based on discussion with Ms. Kort and Ms. Weisberg.
3. Needs:
 - a. How many students in each class and grade?
 - b. Finalize group number and schedule for each group.
 - c. Plan for groups to come and go
 - i. Enter via trail to fire road; Exit via ‘bridge’. (Next group can be staged at fire road/trail entrance.)
 - d. Secure parent volunteers, particularly for lower grades

2. Funding

- a. Science committee is very pleased to announce that we have secured a donation for our school from the *Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation* in the amount of \$10,000.
 - i. The Beckman Foundation is a philanthropic organization based in Irvine California. They are dedicated to supporting scientific research, development, and education. The foundation was impressed with our school’s effort to support students’ natural curiosity and to impart in them a sense of environmental stewardship. We are honored to receive this support and recognition from the Beckman Foundation, which is known internationally as a tireless supporter of young scientists and scientific innovation.
 - ii. We’d also like to emphasize this award as an
 1. example of how our school can receive recognition (and support) beyond our local community for our efforts with children;
 2. and to illustrate what we can do as a team when we all work together to define our goals, build on our strengths and keep the kids front and center.

Principal report-

We need aides! – especially on the yard.

We will be forming a budget committee in a few weeks – the priority is making sure we can continue all our new programs and be able to continue to fund half of the CSR teacher position.

Donna Wabnig moved to adjourn – Michelle Butler seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm