Topanga Elementary Charter School

**Leadership Council Minutes**

January 29, 2019

1:45pm

Call to Order by Mr. Harrell (Mr. Harrell was the facilitator, Ms. Tobisman recorded the minutes).

Welcome & Introductions: Mr. Harrell read the decorum of the meeting.

Roll call: All present except Ms. Talan (teacher representative), Michelle Butler and Summer Scott-Sexton (parent representatives) and Jessica Jacobs Dirschel (parent alternate representative).

Minutes from last meeting were reviewed.

Motion to approve the minutes by Ms. Weisberg

Seconded by Jesse Welch

Motion approved by all

No public comments

Tracy Murphy (VAPA) presented idea of story pirates idea to staff 5-7 times a class

-School wide assembly to get excited for creative writing

-Then present options of ideas for writing (standards based aligned)

-2 people choose 5-7 times (more assistance) or 1-2 times (more teacher driven follow up writing) for creative writing

-Assembly/performance to show off finished creative writing

-Happening in April/May

-Funds coming from VAPA and TEP

Ms. Weisberg asked why if TEP has money why not use for computer instead of this activity?

TEP reorganized budget for art teacher that was never used so that is money being used.

Stephanie Lackenby (from TEP) said because computer program ranked lower on needs list in last year’s school-wide poll of teachers and parents.

Ms. Tapper suggested it be brought to curriculum since it’s a writing program being used in classroom.

Tracy Murphy agreed and will bring it to committee meetings

Committee reports:

-**Science** (report by Kent Hill – recorded by Kent Hill)

Science Committee met on Jan 25, 2019 at school, after classes let out.

Summary:

1. **Updates on Existing Items**
   1. **Butterfly Garden.** 
      1. Science reps spruced up the garden and checked on watering. Plants doing well.
      2. Girl Scout group is working to update a prior Girl Scout native plant plot on the hillside going down to K-1st classroom.
   2. **Hiking Trails**
      1. Oaks: The oaks that survived last year’s tough summer are doing OK, but still need to establish themselves. Hana Wear and Chris Walley are working to establish a system for easing the burden on Rena and parent volunteers for watering and shading while these trees finish establishing themselves.
      2. Rena will work with children on hikes to survey the current oaks and we’ll decide from there whether some should be replaced.
      3. The committee is in discussion on ideas for addition to trails experience, e.g. Owl Boxes, Worm Boxes, Composting Systems. Just brainstorming at present and the committee welcomes any and all suggestions from teachers and school staff regarding topics that resonate with the school’s science program for which the committee could be of assistance.
2. **Upcoming Events:**
   1. **Stargazing night:** 
      1. Had planned for Dec – schedule conflict with Nutcracker; Planned for Jan – strike and weather issues = cancel.
      2. Aiming for a date in the fall, To Be Determined after consultation with Rena, and the Ventura astronomy society. If anyone has classroom activities that would make good or bad correlates for scheduling, please let us know. (We are partnering with the Ventura Astronomical Society to bring an amateur astronomer out, with high end telescopes for viewing the night sky.)
   2. **JPL Presentation:**
      1. On hold due to scheduling conflicts with our presenter from JPL.
      2. Chris Pernin (parent member of the science committee) has a colleague who is heading the JPL “SHERLOC” project, is an effort to search for evidence of life in the universe. The plan is to present to the students topics about space and SHERLOC efforts. (For those interested, check out the SHERLOC link at JPL site.)
   3. **April 3 (Wed) = Science Day (5th grade + Hart Street) – save the date!**
      1. Same basic format and partners as last year. We have one slot to fill for partner and are working on ideas for this. Any suggestions from teachers is very welcomed. Current ideas: tide pools; green energy & composting; Surf Rider Foundation.
      2. *Need to set organization mtg with key organizers: Ms. Tapper, Ms. Santora, Rena, Mr. Gediman, Sci Committee. (Kent and Alisa taking point from the sci committee)*
   4. **April 9, 10 (Tues, Wed) = Science Fair (Tues, Wed) – save the date!**
      1. Reminder of the date.
         1. Tues (4/9) = poster drop off in morning, family viewing in evening with snacks and drinks (time TBD).
         2. Wed (4/10) = classroom viewing and poster judging 🡪 Need to be sure to establish judging and classroom viewing times with teachers. LET’S DO THIS WELL IN ADVANCE of the date.
      2. More info to come as we work up the website and event info
      3. *🡪 POSTCRIPT: a suggestion was made at leadership meeting as to whether it would be possible to arrange a time for students to visit/hear about projects from other classrooms or grades. 🡪 This is a great idea. Will be up to scheduling (point 2.d.i.2 above) as to whether this can be arranged logistically. Tues eve is one option for free-form examination of other posters, though that’s not quite the same thing.*
   5. **June 2 (Sun) = Butterfly Day at the Mermaid – Save the date.**
      1. Similar to last year – it’s a great chance for the school to interface with the Topanga community – consider attending and telling the community about our school.
   6. **School Safety.**
      1. Although this isn’t part of the sci committee’s mission, sci committee members have been interfacing with Town Council and other Groups that contribute to safety/emergency planning in the canyon and the committee would like to offer some info in this regard.
         1. A number of local groups have expressed interested in visiting the school to discuss with PARENTS and School Staff the safety plan of TECS, how this fits with community safety plans, and how people can improve fire safety of their own homes. We’ve connected the relevant individuals to Mr. Gediman and planning is in the works to have a presentation at the school – at present the plan is for presentation/discussion with interested parents and staff.
            1. North Topanga Canyon Fire Safety Council
            2. Station 69
            3. Topanga Emergency Management Task Force. Meeting is tomorrow at 10am (Alisa and Kent will attend). TECS is a member of this task force. Members of the task force are interested in presenting at the school to improve awareness of all.
            4. Perhaps this is something that the Leadership Safety sub-committee would like to interface on.
            5. *🡪 POSTSCRIPT: it was suggested at leadership meeting that one option for a school presentation would be at Open House in May.*

Mr. Gediman presented a request from a member who asked to FaceTime meetings

Jesse suggested that if only two members can be there then fine, but not regularly.

The consensus was no FaceTiming, but members can vote via proxy if need be.

**TEP update** – Art Show this weekend.

Giving fund is up $6,000 more this time of year than last year.

Based on fundraisers. only $600 shorter this year than last.

Ms. Weisberg asked if a handbook/guidebook to activities with an explanation would be beneficial. Stephanie Lackenby relay the message.

Mr. Gediman looked into class size reduction if can pay ½ of cost with TEP, but we can’t because it prevents us from a split.

District needs to hire nurses first, and won’t happen until at least 2019-2020

**Principal’s Report:**

Two bungalows need to be removed. They are planning to replace them this summer but Mr. Gediman said that he was told they might not be replaced immediately. He said not okay - we need the classroom space. The school is not ADA compliant, so they have to make it compliant and want to make a clock tower elevator – from main school area up to upper yard. The problem it could take a year to build and if removing over summer no space, so they are trying to delay removal first. Must get approval of plans prior to bungalow removal/replacement. This is all tied into playground improvement. Playground improvement means no grass due to expanding ground.

Kent Hill wants to know if input can be given on the plans because the butterfly garden and wall are potentially in the way and could be impacted. Mr. Gediman will look into it if parents can give input.

Ms. Tobisman motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:53pm and Jesse Welch seconded the motion