

King School Site Council

Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2011

In Attendance:		
Nick Fenger	Joy Williams	Kenneth Butler
Julie Davis	Tanisha Jones	Donita Jordan
Jim Anderson	Melodie Adams-Hill	Sirena Brown
Trace Salmon	Kim Patterson	
Megan Kahn	Tommy Allen	

Tier I School Improvement Grant

Kim introduced Amanda Whalen—Assistant to the General Counsel/Assistant to Planning and Performance. Kim explained King School is to be included in a letter of intent from PPS to the Oregon Department of Education on January 23rd that our school will be one of three SIG (School Improvement Grant) recipients. This is the same grant that Roosevelt High School is receiving. The amount would be between \$50k to \$2M/year for three years. The grant will likely be a minimum of \$500k as \$50k amounts are usually to perform closures. Reconstitution is not necessary to receive the funds but “transformation” is the least intensive reform model. King will receive monies in the spring to perform the application. Receipt of the grant is likely but the level of funding is uncertain.

Amanda distributed a paper copy of a PowerPoint regarding the process. School improvement grants have changed under the Obama administration. Previously, each school received an even amount of funding. Now the funding is focused on school in Tier 1 and Tier 2. King is in Tier 1 are Title I schools in lowest 5% performance. Tier 2 is lowest 5% but not Title I. Tier 3 is all other schools in school improvement status. This is what King’s status was last year. Every year, the ODE recompiles the list. ODE has \$5M in one year for all the grant recipients. Each school can apply for up to \$2M.

January 23-Letter of intent due to ODE

February 7-Workshop in Salem for a team from each applicant school to learn the process

Spring-Applications due to ODE

Fall-Begin implementation

Funds are anticipated to be available as early as February to work on planning. There are four models for improvement:

- Turnaround: Replace Principal, all staff would need to reapply for their jobs. No more that 50% could be rehired.
- Restart: School partners with an outside educational institution or charter to assume management of the school.
- School Closure: This model being used for BizTech.

- Transformation: This model being used at Roosevelt and all Oregon applications last year were this model. Principal replacement required only if he/she has been at the school for over two years. Implementation of a new evaluation system developed with staff that uses student growth a significant factor in teacher evaluations, identifies and rewards staff who are increasing student outcomes, removal of those who are not doing so, new strategies to recruit, place and retain staff.

As an International Baccalaureate candidate school and priority zone school, this transformation would be a continuation of ongoing work with job-embedded professional development and the continuous use of data in instructional planning. Another component is providing extended learning opportunities for students. At Roosevelt, SUN and Step Up partner with the school program; there is summer school for 8th graders. The grant recipient would gain operational flexibility to meet goals stated in the grant. School scheduling could be altered to help the school. King may adopt a 3-4 week summer session. PPS administration is working closely with Portland Association of Teachers to work on any teacher contract exceptions that would need to be made to implement the grant and operational flexibility.

Staff asked about how the evaluation/reward system would work. Amanda responded that a series of changes would be put together into a portfolio and would be adopted in cooperation with the union. As for rewards, some teachers could be singled out to be teacher leaders to focus on content and curriculum development and be offered national board certification, tuition and support. Roosevelt teachers and PAT representative could come to King to explain the process and how it has worked there.

Amanda emphasized that the U.S. Dept. of Ed has emphasized that creativity is to be used to apply the grant. As an example, an allowable use in one case was to use funds to pay the mortgage for a principal a school was trying to recruit. Staff was involved in every step of planning.

Kim said that there is the danger in planning change to get distracted from the growth and improvement that is already ongoing. There is no need to reinvent the wheel when great teaching is going on at King currently. The planning should only focus on remaining weak points and augmenting everything that is underway. It is about getting all the resources needed to do the job.

Examples of success stories are online on the U.S. Dept of Ed website. Forest Grove High School is one of the examples. As examples of what could be done at King, Kim mentioned meeting with the Latino family coordinators and families, asking for parent volunteers in 1-5 grade classrooms to help the teachers with the ¡Hola, Hola! Spanish curriculum. She could see a better situation would be to pay parents and community member to do that work and get more formal training. This could be handled in the grant period and the resource base of teachers and volunteers could sustain the program after the funding expires. It would be great to have a full-time Spanish teacher to coordinate the effort as part of the IB curriculum. This would support ELL instruction, foreign language, and IB.

As for showing sustainability in the reforms, having a math specialist last year raised math scores significantly but the school cannot rely on this long-term but must adopt any effective strategies into all classroom instruction. As for Kindergarten, a full-time aide would be most beneficial. Roosevelt

brought in extra resources to deal with students who needed extra support so that teachers were free to focus on instruction.

1-2 Grade Level Team Presentation

Kim: the teaching that goes on in the classroom is the crucial component to student success. As we listen to the approaches underway, we should listen for how the potential grant monies could best be applied.

Megan Kahn explained walk-to-read. She teaches the lowest reading group, Tommy Allen teaches the middle group and Melodie Hill teaches the high group. First and 2nd graders are mixed into groups based on ability level. Megan does an intervention program called Horizons focusing on letter recognition, sounds, and phonemes. She has three adults to help with the three sub-groups. Students have 30 minutes with each adult for a 90 block session.

Students were assessed using DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) and grade-level reading assessments. Students were placed in their groups and have been moved as needed based on demonstrated proficiency. The second round of DIBELS was just completed and groups may be changed based on the results.

Melodie passed out example DIBELS books. Each test is one minute: letter recognition, phonemes, nonsense words to test for pronunciation without memorization, and oral reading fluency. There have been a lot of gains in 1st and 2nd grade with some students going up 20 points—20 words per minute. Most of the high group is meeting currently. The goal is to have them all exceeding by next year. One student's middle score is 141 when the benchmark for 2nd grade is 56-80. The middle and low groups have not finished assessments to determine their progress yet.

Megan has seen a faster progression since she has had three adults with her group in the last month. Melodie had a student who had a nonsense word score of 3 at the beginning of the year and subsequently tested at 18. This is dramatic improvement for a child who missed large amounts of Kindergarten. Students have progress checks every ten lessons and are aware of and invested in their progress

Tommy Allen uses the Scott Foresman and Enhancements curricula which use a variety of texts. The day starts with phonics review and reading practice, followed by vocabulary building and sight word acquisition. Each week brings a new story and its accompanying phonics, high frequency words, and "amazing words" which are the complex vocabulary. Booklets related to the week's lesson go home as well reinforcing the concepts. After the whole group lesson, students go on to pair reading where students read with each other and the lesson takes on a social aspect.

Melodie implements higher-level thinking in her high groups with the phonics and comprehension strategies. There is a main story of each week. The students study the genre of the stories, author's purpose, drawing conclusions from the text. Each day there is a "daily fix-it" on the board for students to practice correcting grammar. There are four subgroups, each is reading a separate novel and using

that to reinforce the concepts in the Scott Foresman curriculum. There is game playing such as syllables where the students compete to spell and recognize words and synonyms using dictionaries and thesauruses. The students need to have their comfort level pushed or they get bored.

Tanisha asked about parent participation and support with their children's learning. Melodie said that her parents are very supportive and ask often as to what to do to help at home. Megan said that they send home a weekly newsletter guiding families as to what they can do to help reinforce the concepts and vocabulary.

Kim said that the team should return to Site Council at some point to discuss the walk-to-math curriculum as well. The 1-2 team is the strongest teacher team that she has worked with in that they are a perfect sized group of three who collaborate well and have a deep understanding for the grade levels at which they teach. The modifications to the school improvement plan are in direct response to what is going on in these classes. Megan could not have hoped to move her lowest group to the level of exceeding in 3rd grade without the extra help in her classroom. Kim has taken \$33k of money from summer professional development that is planned to pay for the extra help now in the classroom, intending to replace the money with part of the SIG grant funds when they come in. The transformative funds in the grant could pay for a math specialist for the three years to build the math instruction.

Kim thinks the other two groups could benefit from an assistant as well, especially to meet the needs of TAG students. Melodie has some super-bright kids who are not always the best disciplined or fit the image of a TAG student but Melodie is adept at recognizing their ability and meeting their needs.

Nick asked how parents can best support student success. Megan cited ¡Hola, Hola! as an example of parent support in that native Spanish speakers are coming in to the classroom to aid the Spanish instruction in the lower grades.

Jim Anderson asked if the 1-2 team has communicated the weak points they are seeing to the Kindergarten teachers to help direct their instruction. Kim replied that there was no early reading intervention last year. This year there are two part-time teachers delivering early reading intervention to students who are behind. Most Kindergarteners need intervention this year with ongoing assessment.

Nick asked what would be the greatest help. The teachers said that more trained personnel in the classroom would be the first priority. Small iPods could be sent home with books recorded as well as recordings of the students reading to work on oral skills and give feedback and to make it more cool.

Julie asked: how do we deal with the issues outside of the classroom? How do we incentivize learning?

If we look at planning teams—involving parents, site members in planning team meetings. Y-care and SUN employees could be involved in the curriculum. SUN could be used to provide classes for parents to reinforce what their children are learning--especially for ELL parents. Nick asked how to address the size of vocabulary spoken at home—how to increase that to overcome generational barriers. Melodie likes the idea of having Spanish-English parent nights to learn another language from each other.

Melodie thinks that more events at the school for families help to work to connect parents to the school and education. The year is going well—an improved attitude and sense of ownership and pride in the school.

Tommy: in parent teacher conferences he encourages Spanish speakers to read to their children in Spanish. These are skills that apply to all reading. Reading and writing in Spanish is a skill where the native Spanish speakers have an advantage and it should be developed and not sacrificed in favor of only developing English skills.

Kim: if we are to be a thriving IB school, we need to have a Spanish program. Fluency in Spanish is beneficial. Both Tommy and Megan have their ELL endorsements. King in the past has had ELL students born in the US who did not exit the ELL program by the 8th grade. ELL students should exit ELL in four years. The SIG grant funds could help as well to reinforce Spanish language skills and develop that part of the program.

Julie: how does King do all the interventions it needs to do without losing its parents/kids who don't need that level of intervention. A comprehensive Spanish program could be that bonus. The ¡Hola, Hola! program is not that level of offering.

Kim: That is already part of the IB plans. Next year there could be two full-time Spanish teachers.

Joy: There is remedial instruction that takes place but the inquiry based instruction of the IB units in addition to the differentiation in the walk-to-read and walk-to-math engage students at their level and work on critical thinking.

Julie: Regardless of the strengths of the curriculum, King needs to face the perception in the community of being a merely remedial school.

Kim: This is why having the grade level teams report to Site Council is an important first step to getting the message out that that is not the case. Kim has concerns about the assessments that were done last year. She feels that the assessments did not accurately reflect the students learning and abilities due the way they were administered. The culture is being instilled in the school that the students and staff are partners in their learning and share the responsibility and credit.

Trace: The test scores are what people see and give them doubt about our instruction. He hopes that the gains made this year result in not only more meeting benchmark but exceeding as well.

Julie: The assumptions people make are wrong—our son has learned so much in Kindergarten this year—he is reading and much more. We need to change that perception and draw in more members of this community or it will hurt the school.

Kim: The 1-2 grade team are on the problem better that the other grades are at this point.

Recommended the book: NurtureShock. Third grade on is where kids develop their self-esteem and that is the crucial point to establish the culture to avoid the pitfalls of racism and negative self-image. The 1-2 grade team has the capability to do this.

Nick: as a math teacher, knows that many adults struggle with math and pass their math anxieties on to their children

Melodie struggled as a child with math. She has lived through the tough circumstances that many of our students face. She understands the kids. She sees the progress this year and sees that we don't need to focus on the behavior aspect constantly like last year. She doesn't want to see racial/cultural barriers to develop as they often do. King does not have many of those barriers and that should be reinforced. This year the students are engaged and challenged so there is not the frustration that leads to interpersonal conflicts. The atmosphere is very positive. King has the people who understand the parents that could offer adult literacy classes.

Review of the latest edit of the SIP for 2010-2012

The last version was submitted the day of the meeting.

Kim: Last year reading scores declined, for ELL students particularly due to the major focus on math. That is why King is in AYP status this year. The previous year, King did not meet in math. Last year none of the 7th graders met in writing.

Nick: Is this due to what Trace was saying about students' investment in the testing last year?

Kim: I believe it is. We did not have teachers last year taking their own student through evaluation and making sure they were doing their best work. This year, individual teachers will take their own students for the assessments.

In the budget portion of the revised SIP it shows the monies for educational assistants that were added and teacher release time. This year, as part of the high school redesign, the school board instituted the academic priority zone. As a zone school, King has certain curriculum and assessments that are mandated as well as the collection and application of student performance data. As part of the budget, funds are there to pay the teachers for the time it takes to do this.

There will be a new math curriculum next year.

On page 36 of the revised SIP: \$74,569 is the King School Improvement funding amount and the line items are listed with their amounts. Part of the funding will go to a spring curriculum night for parents. They will walk through each of their teachers' classrooms, learn about each curriculum and learn how to support their students' success.

Kim recommends the council review the SIP and bring and questions or comments to the next meeting.