

## SALMON BAY Building Leadership Team (BLT) Extended Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 20, 2015 - Principal's Office 3:30pm -7:30

**Agenda: Getting a jump on next year's agenda.**

### In attendance:

Administrator: Neil Gerrans

IA Rep: Nancy Gruber

Nurse/Counseling Rep: Markos Weiss

2/3-Team: Dave Middleton/absent camp

6<sup>th</sup> Team: Katie Hayes \*

Cascades (7/8<sup>th</sup>): Jeff Callahan

Parent Rep: Jeannie Czesla

Nicolette Jensen, Guest

\*Acting Chairperson

Office Rep: Caitlin Racey

Library/Specialist: Linda Illman

K/1 Team: Amy Gross

4/5 Team: Brian Williamson

Olympics (7/8<sup>th</sup>): Connie Gold

Parent Rep: AJ Silva, Absent

Asst. Principal: Darren Frink

Gail, Guest

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**1) Minutes:** from 5/12/15 approved and will be sent to staff and community.

**2) Neil brought the meeting to order at 3:45,** noting the many treats available for this extended planning meeting. We'll have pizza as the evening wears on.

**3) General Team Reports: Brian and Nicolette** recognized a really nice day as kids make preparations (sewing bonnets, aprons, etc.) for the upcoming **Oregon Trail Expedition**. Brian also added that they were heading into FLASH curriculum and how nice it was to see all the kids offering such open support to one another right now. **Dave** noted the impressive showing of the **Red For Ed Walk Out** yesterday and how special it felt to include his daughter in that experience. Many chimed in to say that the event was flooded with Salmon Bay families and staff! Some of our staff made the front page of the paper! **Amy** added that the kindergarteners who were there really seemed to connect with that experience, too. Very cool to hear their thoughts since they just finished a unit on stating opinions. Linda recalled when she was young and participating in events like this with her parents, she recalled the intense impression it made on her as a real life example of civic involvement. **Markos** talked about how energizing and exciting the march was, and how 'collective' the atmosphere felt. **Katie** reported that she took 120 kids to see the Pompeii exhibit today which was wild crazy fun. She noted some sweet moments of kindness the kids displayed with some younger non-SB students at the exhibit. **Connie Gold** talked a little about her rock activity her 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> graders did today. There was lots of movement around the class and kids were learning about the "Rock Cycle" and rock 'lives'. It sounded very cool.

**4) The Art of Communication at Salmon Bay:** Neil talked a bit about the strong emotions running through the community since the announcement that some or all elementary classrooms will not be looping next year. As part of this conversation, the group discussed the input/decision making processes within our larger school community. In a day and age of emails – some thoughtfully written, others dashed off more hastily – strong points of view are often shared with individuals and/or some wider groups, which can unintentionally be divisive or hurtful. Knowing this is not what we want for our community, we took some time to brainstorm suggestions for improving the tone and pathways of our individual and community communication: **Ideas/Suggestions:** **Linda** noted using softening language in our communication (such as 'it seems to me that...' and 'maybe we could...'). **Brian** mentioned the benefits of gathering wide input early-on in a process, so everyone has similar

information. **Gail**, who is also a parent of school-age kids, noted that parents sometimes need to understand that can't or won't know all the reasons why a decision has been made because of time or privacy issues. Nancy noted that all of us have individual ideas, but being in a room where we can hear other points of view is so important. This seems like it would help us all understand issues better, and broaden our perspective.

Everyone agreed that trust is a hugely important piece of our school. There have been so many changes in the last couple of years, trust is something we have to actively rebuild...especially when we are talking about big changes like the reconfiguration of our elementary classroom structure (reduction of looped classrooms).

Neil was candid in acknowledging that his announcement of the looping change was not handled as artful as he would have liked, but – too - that he and Darren have learned a lot from this experience, and will do better in future. Nicolette asked if there was anything we could do to understand the situation better so that we as staff members could take on some of the tremendous feedback burden Neil/Darren are bearing. Staff can respond positively about next year and reoriented the focus back on assuring parents that next year will be a great year for kids. Going forward everyone agreed that an evening information event/forum for parents where everyone could hear a variety of ideas/points of view expressed would be useful. Coming together to share ideas seemed like a great way to continue to build trust and communication so we can crest from this and end this year strong. Jeannie added that this kind of meeting needs a strong, upbeat moderator to keep the tone positive and respectful.

Jeff added support for this kind of community meeting stating that as a staff member, he felt the all-staff meetings where we dug-in and discussed issues/brainstormed solutions -where we could hear and discuss ideas - those meetings really helped keep us all on board and moving in the same direction. Hearing the broad K-8 impacts of potential decision is beneficial. Dave agreed that holding community conversations – both staff and parent group – we engage the community and build trust. Markos seconded Jeff's comment about the usefulness of those deep conversations.

**5) Professional Development:** Before our dinner break, we wanted to begin digging into ideas for 2015/16 Professional Development. Since project Based Learning has been discussed previously, we started there.

Neil described a potential school scenario where a theme was selected/identified and all staff members were invited to develop project based learning opportunities at all grade levels that connect in some way to the theme. Thinking of that, we began a discussion about how a theme like that might look at Salmon Bay: Brian mentioned that at Thorton Creek they do a review of the exploratory learning projects that were done each year to gather feedback from fellow staff members. Linda and Nicolette reminded us that we did a similar kind of thing with our 'Fishbowl feedback' event a few years ago where we heard about Making Hisotry. Linda mentioned the Medieval Museum last year. Jeff wondered if that might mean more cross-subject collaboration in middle school, an example of which Nancy and Connie mention the Washington State Dam project which was a very successful 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade project we did for many years that cross-collaborated fluvial geomorphology (science) and Washington State History (social studies) units.

**6) Pizza intermission!**

After dinner the group settled back into the PBL discussion. Neil talked a little about “World Peace and Other Fourth Grade Achievements”, Story Map, Story Path, The Buck Institute and other programs that are being used as PBL curriculum bases. These could serve as starting points or tools for supporting PBL. These allow students to incorporate authentic or real world elements.

**7) PBL Brainstorm:** Explored what PBLs and Themes we currently have going at SB K-8. We had an engaging conversation about how we might overlap or synthesize projects/themes to create a K-8 arc of learning at SB. Examples were given from schools that use all kinds of ideas: organizing by continents; by local, state, national politics; Room 9 had an evening event to gather parent input and connections for their annual learning theme. Several members noted other essential PBL take-aways, including presentation skills and self-representation skills. Caitlin mentioned that a theme might be nice for the families, or course, keeping the curriculum age-appropriate and whole child. As the discussion progressed, a few challenges with implementing a PBL over-arching theme were discussed: Connie reminded us about limitations at middle school: cohorts moving from class to class, limited contact time, and Next Gen standards, etc. Patience for implementation is a factor, too. To do this well, it would take thoughtful implementation and time. It would need to be done step by step.

Neil called up the Buck Institute’s website that had some good books on PBL that we might be able to purchase for summer reading. Maybe 4 different books might meet the broad needs of our community. Linda thought she could help select some books. Neil said he’d order a few for staff to peruse. Then staff could sign up for a book that they might find useful.

**Action Items: Members come up with ideas for possible themes for next year and email them to Amy. Neil to order some Buck Institute materials to review.**

What would success look like for next year when it comes to implementing PBL? That every grade would ultimately have at least one dynamic project based learning opportunity. There could be some K-8 collaboration whereby teachers could help each other develop and enhance project-based ideas. Rollout calendar might look something like: June – begin reviewing current PBL opportunities at SB; Summer – have Buck Institute books/materials available for staff use to act as starting blocks for PBL ideas; August – present and review possible new PBL ideas as a staff.

**8) Nuts & Bolts:** We did a quick review of the (many) upcoming promotion and end of year events for the next couple weeks. Very exciting ...AND very busy schedule. We also called for a volunteer or two to take the Decision Making Matrix forward a step or two. Nancy and Katie volunteered. We will also note that we need to gather some folks to work on the to Master Schedule and Curriculum Change categories.

**Action Item: Nancy and Katie will take another stab at the Decision Making Matrix.**

**Action Item: Master Schedule/Curriculum Change volunteers TBD**

Next meeting is Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. 7:20am

Submitted by Nancy Gruber

