



School/City Liaison Committee Minutes



School/City Liaison Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 27, 2005

8:15 AM to 9:45 AM
Palo Alto Unified School District
Conference Room A
25 Churchill Avenue
Palo Alto

In Attendance:

City of Palo Alto

Steve Emslie, Planning Director
Emily Harrison, Asst. City Manager
Yoriko Kishimoto, City Councilmember
Patrick Larkin, Parks and Recreation
Gayle Likens, Transportation
Sharon Murphy, Palo Alto Family Resources

Palo Alto Unified School District

Linda Lenior, District Nurse
Mandy Lowell, Board Member
Jerry Matranga, Associate Supt, Business Serv.
Cynthia Pino, Associate Supt, Education Serv.
Gail Price, Committee Chair and Board Member
Carol Zepecki, Director, Special Education

Meeting convened at 8:25 a.m.

1. Oral Communications

None

2. Approval of Minutes – March 23, 2005

Ms. Kishimoto moved to approve and Ms. Lowell seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Student Stress

Dr. Zepecki then gave a presentation. She met with counselors and found that more students had stress issues than she had ever seen before. The counselors agreed that this issue had become much worse in recent years. The District had developed a three-year strategic plan. Every year the State of the District report is presented. A

statewide survey called the California Healthy Kids Survey, this is given every other year. It has been found that student stress is closely tied to curriculum.

Ms. Murphy said the community's culture had changed. Family Resources has created a database of health and human resources available to people in the community. There were over 90 services just for adolescents and over 151 services to disabled people in this community. Family Resources and SHARE hoped to avoid duplicating services by finding out what was already available.

Mr. Larkin, Youth Council Advisor, said the Youth Council was comprised of 15 teens from PAUSD and Castilleja. Their goal was to be the voice of teens in this area. This year's workshop was on stress reduction on May 5th from 5 to 7 pm. He added that they are struggling to find the money to continue producing these brochures. This was done in addition to a nutrition workshop because there was a lot of bulimia and anorexia in the high schools. In the Recreation Department, stress reduction can come from the middle school athletics program. The approach is that "everyone plays", so all kids have an opportunity to play. In the summer, there are two different camps for middle school kids: Future Authors Camp and Jive Camp. There is a drop-in program at the Mitchell Park Community Center for all middle school kids called The Drop. Other programs are dances twice a month, Youth Advisory Board, Teen Advisory Board, Junior Advisory Board, High school Band Nights, Skate Park, Career Park, and Positive Activities for Youth (PAY) program. Mr. Larkin said the Youth Advisory Board was trying to update the décor at Mitchell Park and was looking for donations.

Dr. Zepecki brought up the Drug and Alcohol Committee, which was created in 02-03 by Dr. Mary Frances Callan, PAUSD's Superintendent. They came to the conclusion that the approach they wanted to take was called "social norms". It had been determined that about 10% of kids admitted to using some drugs or alcohol, meaning that this was not the "norm". The campaign for social norms goal was to get this information out, so kids would realize that MOST kids did not drink or do drugs. Dr. Zepecki said Federal "Safe and Drug-free School Money" was being received.

Ms. Price said she had been participating in the Lifeskills Developmental Assets Taskforce. The issue was about communicating about resources that were available. Last March, a community forum was held, with over 200 people in attendance. Fundraising has been completed and there are now eight new brochures and they are being sent out to high schools.

Dr. Zepecki said this fall, Denise Pope from Stanford University, had a grant for a project called Stressed Out Students (SOS). Both high schools participate in this. One concept Ms. Pope stressed was that parents were not always listening to their kids. Standards probably cannot be changed, but a balance must be found for the kids.

Ms. Lowell said it was heartening to see that these resources were being brought together, rather than being reinvented. She said she appreciated the “Rejection Wall”, especially at Gunn, which was covered with rejection letters kids get from colleges. She then asked Mr. Larkin how he intended to reach his target group in regard to student stress.

Mr. Larkin said the advertising was in a kid to kid mode, rather than expecting parents to tell kids about it.

Ms. Lowell it was interesting how big a role adults who were not parents played in students’ lives. Kids frequently went to them, rather than their own parents, with problems.

Dr. Pino commented on the community conversation, saying that she had attended these two meetings. It was determined that there was an incredible amount of duplication among resources. There were so many different groups wanting the schools to “do something” that it became too time-consuming and fragmented.

Ms. Kishimoto said every parent of high school students reaches a point where they wonder how the world has changed from how it was when they were kids.

Ms. Lowell said the number of slots at community colleges and universities had not increased, yet more kids were being encouraged to apply.

Dr. Pino said she had heard parents say they wanted to educate the “whole child”, but that in reality they really wanted “the best”. Not just kids, but parents as well, need to be reminded about social norms.

4. Update on VTA Partnership

Ms. Durkin and Ms. Likens requested that this item be postponed until the May meeting of this committee.

5. Future Meetings and Agenda Items

It was determined that the May agenda items would be: Safe Routes to School and School/City collaboration. In June, the agenda item would be libraries.

Mr. Matranga said that in May, a Board report would be presented on the status of School/City collaborations.

Ms. Price suggested sharing progress with the community as it occurred. Celebrating successes within the community is a very positive element.

Adjournment 9:40 a.m.