

Port Angeles School District
216 East Fourth Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362-3023, 360.457.8575

**Elementary Transition Team Meeting
Wednesday, June 6, 2007**

Attendees:

Jeanne Wolfley, Nolan Duce, Theresa Rothweiler, Theresa Schmid, Holly Juskevich, Michele Haworth, Vicki Helwick, Kate Wenzl, Matt Gochnour, Loren Engel, Nancy Pack, Ron Jones, Doug Hayman, Michelle Olsen, Gunnar Thomason, Kat Dadd, Kathy Millar, Karen Fox, Julie Smith and Mary Hebert

Others in Attendance:

Jennifer Soule, Bill Prorok, Kelly Sanders, Heather Chapman

Meeting Opening:

Mrs. Hebert welcomed the members and the 2007-08 newly assigned sixth grade teachers and thanked the members for all their hard work and dedication to the whole elementary transition process.

Mrs. Hebert asked everyone to (again) introduce themselves and state their positions.

Mrs. Hebert thanked Ms. Julie Smith as the representative for the secretaries and acknowledged the many contributions that the secretaries have made and will continue to make as the ‘first line’ of contact.

Recess – Next Steps:

Mrs. Hebert reiterated the members’ decision to eliminate the first (a.m.) recess for the sixth grade students.

She also noted that during the May 23, 2007 meeting, she had voiced her concern that teachers get all their contractual breaks. She will meet with Barry Burnett, the PAEA President, to make sure that there are no concerns on the teachers’ part with regard to their contractual time.

Music:

Mrs. Hebert reminded the members that the sixth grade students will have music five days a week for forty minutes per day.

Ideas, Programs and Fun!

Mrs. Hebert asked the members to offer their support and ideas about the ideas and programs for the upcoming 2007-08 school year and many members did so.

A member had a parking lot 'aha' after the last meeting. She suggested that the 'older' students, those in the fourth to sixth grade be given some leadership training and therefore, opportunities.

Another member informed the group that there will be inter-mural sports, football, basketball and soccer offered to students as enrichment opportunities. He is still working on the details, but some of these activities will take place during recess, as well as after school. He is hoping to provide the students with tee shirts. The students will again do posters that will be both on display and also be available to parents for the cost to make the posters. He also intends to have the students design posters for the upcoming plays, especially the Christmas play. He is also planning to have a sixth grade student council as well as a leadership class for the older students. Tournaments will be held during recess. Goals will be set for track and other sports. The students' accomplishments will be noted during assembly and in the school's newsletters. The students' ran track and the number of miles that they ran were tracked on the U.S. map. The students have 'logged' enough miles for them to reach New York and all the way back to New Orleans!

Another member was thinking of other remedial opportunities that could be offered to students. She held a remedial math class this year that will be continued during the 2007-08 school year. Tasks based on WASL-like questions were given to the students.

For the 2006-07 school year, there is a student leadership team made up of fifth grade students who worked on, and completed a school newsletter. This was the first school newsletter completed by students alone. For the 2007-08 school year, the student leadership team will be made up of fifth and sixth grade students. Based on a discussion during a parent discussion group meeting, she is hoping to involve parents in an enrichment program and a mentoring program.

Another member spoke of a leveling program and explained that during a leveling process, it is not just the students with remediation needs who are targeted, but also students with more ability to be involved in enrichment programs.

A parent member stated that she was involved as a coach in the Math Olympiad at Stevens Middle School. She explained that this is a state-wide program run by the Washington State Math Council which provides WASL-like math problems. The Math Olympiad is based on grade levels – grades five through eight. The team consists of 4 students. The team works on a 'long problem' together to develop a strategy for solving the problem, as well as coming up with a solution to the problem. There is also a 'short' problem assigned to the student team members. There can be mixed grade levels. It is state funded when a school hosts the competition site. It has been proposed to hold a Math Olympiad at the Stevens Middle School during the 2007-08 school year.

Spelling Bee – the Soroptomist Club gave the district a grant of \$5000.00 in the hopes of reintroducing the 'old-fashioned' spelling bee back into the schools. The spelling bee was held in the Franklin Elementary gym and involved the fourth grade students from each fourth grade class. The winners of the spelling bee were given trophies in the shape of bees and were also

mentioned in News & Notes. The Soroptomist Club is hoping to hold a district-wide spelling bee competition next year.

A member stated that the Chess Club was started by several survivors of a concentration camp who wanted to contribute something beneficial to students and decided that a good way to do this was to teach the children to play chess. Many chess boards and pieces have been donated by different people and because of this generosity, the school has now been able to donate chess boards to other schools. It was stated that it was very rewarding to watch children who were previously only involved with playing video games, learn to play chess, learn strategy, and also learn team building and game etiquette.

A member informed the group of her experience with student enrichment. Five years ago, she and all the teachers went to the University of Connecticut to attend an enrichment cluster seminar. Enrichment clusters are best for small groups of eight to ten students. The enrichment clusters are based on the students' interests. Based on this seminar, there were fifteen different clusters introduced at the school. They include art, baseball and basketball. The goals of the clusters is to have the children, as a team, choose a topic/theme/project, work with each other to brainstorm ideas, come up with a process and provide a final product. This is student driven, not teacher driven. The PTO has been outstanding by providing funding for these enrichment clusters.

At Jefferson Elementary, their remediation program is funded by Title 1 and is focused on grades K-3. During the 2006-07 school year, there has been a fourth and fifth grade after school remedial reading and math program. Teachers have willingly given of their time to these after school programs. The students are serviced right at the school and the parents have been picking them up at school.

Last year, the students got involved in a project of making/providing personal care products gift bags for homeless children. Once the products had been created/produced, they were delivered to homeless shelters.

Last year there were thirty-nine children who did not have a place to go after school and they formed an after school enrichment program. These students put on a play as their project.

Dry Creek – Currently, for remediation, there is extended year program for kindergarten. A good source of funding had been a three year grant from the state for after school programs.

Their discipline committee met this afternoon. There were several teachers who attended a disciplinary seminar and came back with many good ideas that they shared with their peers.

One of the ideas being explored is to have the sixth grade students lead the assemblies.

Mrs. Hebert informed the members that the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has submitted a grant for an after school program for Native American students which will be hosted at Dry Creek. She also mentioned that the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has a great deal of resources for science

instruction through several grants. They can be a great resource for student enrichment ideas/programs/projects.

Another idea is to have a current student be a buddy for an incoming student. There is a WEB, Welcome Every Body, which is an ice breaker used to welcome new students. (This idea comes from Roosevelt Middle School where they have always had WEB.) The new students will also be given a tour of the school.

A member suggested that all the schools offer students and parents a tour of the building, all tours to be held on the same night. During the discussion that followed, it was noted that each school has already scheduled a tour of their school and the dates have already been determined by each school.

A member stated that at Roosevelt Elementary, there will be a notice sent to parents that they may tour the school during business hours anytime after August 15. He is also hoping to hold a barbeque for sixth grade students the day before school begins – Labor Day.

At Hamilton, the students' enrichment programs/opportunities have included leadership opportunities for their older students. For the 2007-08 school year, the sixth grade students will also have leadership opportunities. Art instruction will again be offered, using the many supplies that are already available at the school. Student enrichment opportunities have also been offered to students seasonally, for example through Christmas carols. This year, the students have done 'blogs' of the Hamilton Hawks. Mr. Engel mentioned that there are many people who have offered to be mentors. For example, 'grandmoms' will be coming to the school to teach students how to knit.

A member mentioned that the Port Angeles High School Auditorium is a great site to be used for sixth grade events. There is enough room for all.

He suggested that as ideas are developed and implemented at each of the different schools; staff field trips might be considered to these schools to see how these projects/processes are working out/being done.

A member suggested 'adopting' a high school team member to offer remedial assistance. The team member came to her class and worked with the students. As a result, there were less disciplinary problems with her students, but the high school team member also enjoyed and benefited from this interaction.

Several members reiterated that this is a time of transition for the whole school district. By sharing and contributing ideas, programs, efforts and resources, the elementary schools can offer a smoother transition for everyone throughout the district.

Since there were no other comments, Mrs. Hebert thanked the members for sharing their thoughts, suggestions, and ideas and asked them to continue to work with their peers with the hope of getting more information/suggestions.

Support for Newly Assigned Sixth Grade Elementary Teachers

Mrs. Hebert hopes to ensure that the newly assigned elementary sixth grade teachers feel supported during this transition period. She asked the members to check in with their sixth grade colleagues to determine the best way to provide team support. She also encouraged the sixth grade teachers to speak with their principals for assistance and support. She asked the members for ideas and suggestions on ways in which to make sure the sixth grade teachers are ready for next year's alignment.

A newly assigned sixth grade teacher informed the members that she will be a part of a team with two other teachers for next year. She has not had the opportunity to meet with her new colleague, except for brief times, on their own after classes, and feels a little frustrated about making decisions for next year, especially since she has not worked with these two teachers as yet. However, because there are only two weeks left of school, she does not want to be away from her class for a whole day to meet with her new colleagues.

Mrs. Hebert stated that there would be a sixth grade team meeting held on Thursday, June 13th. She asked if it would be helpful for the meeting to begin at the buildings with the principals. Several people did think that this would be helpful. She then explained that if the meetings began at the buildings, then the second part of the meeting will be held at the North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center. The sixth grade teachers are also scheduled to meet with their principals before this meeting. They will discuss their top three (greatest) needs. After meeting with their sixth grade teachers, the principals will inform the Elementary Transition Team members what those decisions are. This information will also be included in a meeting that Mrs. Hebert will be holding with the elementary principals on Monday, June 11, 2007.

Mrs. Hebert reminded the members that the last Elementary Transition meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 13, 2007 and invited them to discuss any issue/topic or ask for any clarification they may need at that meeting. Members were asked to email either Mrs. Hebert or Janice Giordano any questions for discussion.

Meeting Adjourned:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50p.m.

Next Meeting:

Sixth grade teachers and principals are meeting in their buildings and continuing their work of aligning curriculum, deciding the delivery of programs and determining building schedules. Therefore, the Elementary Transition Team members' work has been completed and there is no need to meet further. Consequently, the June 13, 2007 meeting has been canceled.

Thank you for all your dedication to this work and please contact me if you have any additional questions that I can process as we close school and prepare our work for next year.

With my sincere appreciation,

Mary