Site Council Retreat

Monday - August 27, 2012

3:30-6:45 pm Room 13

Present: Joel Lavin, Pam Reynolds, Andrew Gaughan, Joann Block, Christina Powell, Andrea Smith, Margaret Lara

The meeting opened with a welcome from Joel, in combination with a teambuilding exercise in which participants talked about how long they had been connected to Awbrey Park (Joanne is our veteran!)

The team worked to establish the protocol for future meetings. It was decided that Principal Joel would be the meeting facilitator, and that the role of recorder would be assigned on a rotating basis. Margaret will take minutes for this meeting, with the rest of the schedule as follows:

September – Pam

October – Andrew

November – Andrea

December – no meeting

January – Christina

February – Joann

March – no meeting

April – Margaret

May – Pam

June – no meeting

Joel inquired about the need for a timekeeper in order to keep the meeting on track and it was decided that the note taker could also function as time keeper to be sure that all matters on the agenda receive the time they need. The group determined that the meeting will be expanded from 4:00 to 4:30 in cases where that is necessary.

Agendas for the Site Council meeting will be published a week ahead, so team members as well as teachers and parents can have input. The team agreed that it will be important to be sure that the minutes are posted on the website in a timely fashion.

The team took a preliminary look at the Site Council work plan for the year. The schedule seemed to fit for the upcoming year, though it was recommended that we move the item “review of School Improvement Plan” from the September meeting to the October meeting and move the item “Create and plan yearly communication to families from the October meeting to the September meeting.

Joel asked team members to talk about goals for the upcoming year. The team talked about continuing to strengthen the connection and collaboration between PTO and Site Council. It was suggested that members from both Site Council need the opportunity to recognize one another, and know who is on each team, and that teachers would also benefit from having a better awareness of those volunteers. Members from Site Council agreed to come a little early to the Hot Dog night and wear name tags, so that folks can put names and faces together. In addition, Site Council will continue the practice of having a representative attend the PTO meeting each time it is held. We will work on creating that schedule when we meet in September.

It was suggested that increasing the financial support for the school is another goal to tackle, using some innovative methods, like escrip and EEF direct giving. Joel mentioned that at his last school there were computers set-up at open house events where parents could sit down and register on the spot, we will look to accomplish that at our Hot Dog event, or at parent conferences.

Under the heading of “parental involvement” the team discussed ways of connecting to parents and helping them know how to help their youngster be successful in school. From helping parents know what types of questions to ask, to being more aware of online opportunities/websites and even looking at having consistency among teachers with respect to newsletters, vs. blog updates or emails, there seemed to be an opportunity to continue the conversation about how best to maintain that parent/school connection.

Joel also posed the question, “how do we market Awbrey Park” – who are we? The group agreed that being able to articulate this and move away from being a well-kept secret would be positive. Team members pointed to our strength in technology, but balanced that with the desire for appeal across more than one specialization. Andrew wondered aloud about becoming a green school, which generated interest from the rest of the team.

There was discussion of the school’s needs with respect to technology and the advantages of various devices/tools.

The team began a conversation about Awbrey Park’s Mission Statement and a desire to take the emphasis off “meeting the state and district educational standard” and put it where it reflects why educators do this work in the first place. It was suggested that we think of a succinct way to articulate who we are and what we do, perhaps using three words or short phrases that keep the focus on Awbrey Park: something like, believe achieve, succeed.