

Seward Schools' Site Council
Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2023

Attendance:

Meegan Miller, Jennifer Swander, Christiana Smith, Tara Craytor, Joel Williams, Jenn DesErmia, Dr. Henry Burns, Jr., Christy Jordan, Matt Cook, Heather Shank, Traci Baumgardner, Mica Van Buskirk, Heather Lindquist, Virginia Morgan (via Zoom), Deanna Trobaugh (via Zoom), Jackie Marshall (via Zoom), Geri Nipp (via Zoom)

Call to Order: 6:33 pm

Public Comments: None

Approval of the Agenda: Approved

Reports from Student Representatives: None

Old Business

- HS Track Update: Mica talked to Kevin Lyons who said that the track has been designed & has gone through engineering. He reassured her that our track is #1 priority. It was a \$2.6million bond, but the winning bid came in at \$5.2million. He said we will get our track even if it takes all of that. Set for construction in spring, but if it's another very wet summer, it may only get to the asphalt stage. Dr. Burns shared that he has a 200-pg. document that includes the design if anyone wants to look at it.

New Business

- Site Council Goals: Set goals at this first meeting. Then have quarterly meetings of the entire Site Council, with separate committee meetings for any goals we choose.
- Site Council's 2022-23 Goals:
 - Recruit Substitutes/Bus Drivers - Although there are still lots of shortages for activity buses, 2 new bus drivers just came on, and the new van has allowed coaches to drive teams to events and save lots of \$\$\$. This goal is no longer needed.
 - Advocacy - Keep this goal.
 - HS Track - No longer needed as a goal.
 - School Highlights - MVB has a good relationship w/newspaper. They want to interview new principal Matt Cook. Student Hour/ "Student Beat" 1x/wk is wanted by Seward Radio. Could this be taken on by theatre or journalism class or SHS Today? Can be a heavy load for these. Mica offered to facilitate this.
 - District Formula/Alternative Ed. - They've heard us; various questions have been asked officially of the School Board. It was suggested we bring this back up later in the year. Governor's Budget comes out in December w/\$13million deficit. The SB has to do a budget that will work.
 - Internet Safety - Keep this goal and change it to Digital Safety. There is a new "gateway" that allows administrators to see what students/staff are accessing online by categories such as Suicide/Hate Speech/Violence and freeze it remotely and alert parents as needed. It was suggested that there should be a

short launch/assembly about this new “gateway” to inform students/parents. Screen usage is also a super-important aspect of this issue. Seward Police Dept. will be providing de-escalation techniques for staff. Will be digital safety talk after spaghetti dinner at high school during conferences. Feb. 7 is Internet Safety Day. It might be good to have an event/activity built around this with childcare provided so parents can attend (maybe Sources of Strength or highschool students earning community service hours may be a good avenue for babysitting.)

- Business Partnerships/CTE/Career Day - Keep this as a goal. Career Day is already set for March 20, 2024 from 12:30-2:15pm. Job shadowing is a possibility, too. Jennifer S., Jackie M., Samantha at the Chamber, and new Student Support Liaison Jonathan L will be on the committee.
- Site Council's 2024 Goals:
 - Strategic Planning Session - This was originally offered with district then Mr. Holland vetoed it. They will be advertising for a MS principal for next school year which means there will be no MS interventionist nor MS Athletic Director nor 0.5FTE art teacher. Want this as a goal. The committee will work on strategic planning as a community and prepare a vision for Seward. Will meet in November. The KPBSD \$13m deficit is the “elephant in the room.” Mr. Holland plans to meet with Virginia, Mica, and Seward admin. In October. It was mentioned that we have to be prepared to focus on our community’s strengths and out-of-box solutions. There is a small schools committee but we aren’t invited onto that; worried about the arts but we are now fighting just to get core classes. Kids not able to graduate because not enough in-person offerings for math, science, etc.
 - School Start Times - Too much on plate to work on changing high school time right now. It was asked how this decision to change HS start time came about. The ILearning program: all schools in district were aligned to Kenai Central for distance ed classes. It was mentioned that the SB is setting up an ad hoc committee to discuss a 4-day school week.
 - Opening the Gate - This is a fight between the city and the borough. Let’s keep it as a Site Council priority/goal. Mica, Tara, and Deanna T. volunteered to be on the committee for this.
- High School Dress Code: Dr. Burns would like to adopt a new dress code and distributed copies of SoHi’s dress code/policy to all present. He asked us to look over it and send comments to him on what we like and don’t like about it. He has this whole year to update Seward High’s dress code.
- Site Council Structure: It was suggested that we might want to split up the Seward Schools’ Site Council into one for each separate school. One complaint is that in this structure, the meetings take too long and the emphasis is very heavy on the HS and very light on the elementary. It was countered that the PTA deals mostly with the elementary and provides support there. It was expressed how important it is for many of us to have a meeting that combines the 3 schools. It was suggested that we stick to a more strict format that has persons reporting out from their respective areas. It was decided that we move the meetings to 6-7:30pm from 6:30-8pm to make them not run so late.

- Honors Diploma: It was expressed that much of it is not applicable anymore as a lot of requirements have changed. Could we update this? Need to facilitate kids to do this. Also important that an awareness of the AK Performance Scholarship go hand-in-hand with this, and that it should be brought up in 8th grade.
- Membership/Elections:
 - President - Mica Van Buskirk
 - Vice-President -Geri Nipp
 - Secretary - Heather Lindquist

Reports from Administrators, School Board Rep. & PTSA Rep.

- Matt Cook- Seward Elementary: 221 students currently. Hired a custodian but still need a SpEd resource teacher and ½ time aide. Spotlight classrooms at assemblies (do special something and parents can come to see). Started up student leadership team again. Multiple students are experiencing loss, so a Grief Group meets every other Friday. Soccer is TWTh. Fire safety training for 2nd grade and Kids Don't Float.
- Henry Burns - Middle School: enrollment 108-110 currently with 115 projected for next year. Hired new bball coach Ms. Dodson. Starts Mon. 2:30-4:30 at HS. PT conferences coming up. Need 2 aides, cafeteria worker, nighttime custodian, SpEd teachers. There are 2 new subs.
- Henry Burns - High School: Enrollment is 158 currently. Made \$16,500 renting out kitchen to cruise ships in summer. Purchased 12-passenger van and plan to buy another one which will save \$20,000/year in bus/driver fees. Ms. Bagheri takes her class down to shoreline in it every week. Ronn H has driven teams/groups over 40x without charging us. New dryer for swimming pool. Wrestling team trying to replace mats but need permission from KPB as there are problems with tile and carpets. Upcoming Spaghetti Dinner during conferences. Seward Police will come and present about digital safety. Football (undefeated season) and XC teams won championships.
- Virginia Morgan - School Board. Tabled until next meeting due to late hour.
- Jennifer DesErmia - PTA: Tabled until next meeting due to late hour.

Council Remarks...Round Table...Closing Thoughts

- Parent expressed concern about screen time in elementary classes during lunch and is curious how it is decided what the children watch and who makes those decisions.

Committee Meetings

- Strategic Planning Committee Meeting: Thursday, Nov. 16th at 6:00 pm
- Site Council Quarterly Meeting: Thursday, Jan. 18th at 6:00 pm

Adjourn: 8:43 pm