

Foothill PFA Meeting January 14, 2009

Attendees:

Maria Kopf, Vicki Fraser, Alisia MacCormac, Elaine Green, Patty Cochran, Pam Lundgren, Janet Sheehy, Kathy Frattini, Linda Locke, Gail Markham, Megan Trowbridge, Barbara Amacker, Mr. Dial, Ms. Hutcherson, Mrs. Brown

Vicki Fraser called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Vicki called for a motion to approve the November 12, 2008 minute. Kathy Frattini made the motion and it was seconded by Patty Cochran. The motion passed.

Safety Presentation Plan: Mr. Dial

Each school is tasked with creating and updating their safety plan. About 90% of the overall plan is set by the District and each school is responsible for the remainder including Social and Physical Climate. Every year goals are set and the staff tries to achieve them. Last year suspensions dropped from 102 to 60. This is a significant drop and everyone helped with that; administration, teachers and students. Last year Alicia McCormick and Kim Harris worked very hard to update the emergency supplies for the school. New walkie talkies were also purchased. We were able to hire an additional noon supervisor. BEST practices program was adopted and it has been doing very well. This year we will focus on goals that were not attained last year, such as train all staff in BEST practices. BEST is reinforced all year long and every week there is a new topic to focus on. This year we would also like to focus on Student Recognition and the Leadership Class is starting to work on this. We will also be starting a conflict management class this semester and it will be taught by Peggy Shelby and it's being piloted in the Leadership Class. The Police Awareness Program for 7th graders will be starting and will go on for 5 weeks. This is very similar to the Character Counts Program taught at local elementary schools. Megan Trowbridge asked if something regarding the use of foul language could be added to the BEST document. The Walnut Creek Mayor was to attend and was unable to.

Principal's Report: Ms. Hutcherson

On December 19 at 4:55 pm (it was due by 5:00 pm) Ms. Hutcherson submitted Foothill's application for California Distinguished School application for 2009. We were nominated right before Thanksgiving and had less than three weeks to complete the application process. Schools can qualify every two years. We qualified two years ago but we didn't move on to the next step which is the site visit. The Validation Team will conduct a site visit in early March. Foothill will be hosting a Multicultural Celebration. During the day there will be activities for the students and at night parents and students are invited to attend. It is scheduled for Thursday, April 23 and will be held from 6-8pm. This will be a bi-annual event. So far 10 teachers have volunteered and we will be reaching out to parents as well. Mrs. Iglesias is part of an all women Mariachi band and they will be performing. There will be a fashion show featuring traditional clothing from different cultures. It's going to be a potluck family dinner. Ms. Hutcherson will be coming back to the PFA and to request a small donation to buy additional food for that

evening. The school had a successful coat and food drive. We had our first “Second Cup of Coffee” in the Library in December and 15 parents showed up. The topic dealt with keeping students focused during the holidays. She will be holding another discussion soon. The District is working on bringing a parcel tax to the June or November ballot. March is Disability Awareness month and there will be a program. Foothill has an 8th grader who is disabled and in the Leadership class. There will be a student assembly followed by a demonstration basketball game of physically disabled players. There will also be an evening event and parents are invited to attend. and will be followed by a basketball game where able-bodied players will play basketball in wheelchairs against a team of physically disabled players. New this year for outgoing 8th graders, there will be a parent/student night instead of separate session for parents and students. The dates are March 18 and 19 and attendance will be alphabetical. The 20 laptops for the Science department have arrived. On January 28 Ms. Hutcherson will be having knee surgery and will be out 4-6 weeks. The District may assign a substitute principal.

Faculty Report: Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Green

Mrs. Brown expressed her admiration and gratitude for the PFA and the Strategic Plan. On Friday, February 13, the staff would like to host a brunch for the PFA to say thank you for all they do. Mrs. Green concurred with what Mrs. Brown said. She sees the results of PFA/Parent support every day. The Youth Education Program is starting soon for the 8th graders. This takes place during Core and totals 6 hours of instruction. This is a very valuable program for the students.

President’s Report: Vicki Fraser

She attended a Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce meeting on December 12 that focused on education. This meeting is held regularly and they work with Walnut Creek middle schools and high schools. WCSD was very well represented and Vicki would like to see Foothill and Northgate better represented at these meetings. This meeting takes place on the same night as the MDUSD Principal monthly meeting. On February 26 there will be a Teacher Appreciation reception at Boundary Oaks and will take place from 3:30-5. They are accepting gift cards if anyone would like to make a donation. The next meeting is January 21 if anyone is interested in attending. So far Foothill has earned \$10.34 just by using GoodSearch. That check will be coming soon. Vicki was able to confirm with Mark Peterson that the Outdoor Theater project will not be happening. She is waiting for final confirmation. There is \$14,000 (\$4,000 in parent donations) and she would like to take the parent donations and have it go to the Drama Department.

PAC Report: Janet Sheehy

The District cut \$6.6 million from this spring’s budget this past December. Sites with less than 600 students will be losing vice principals. The District is also looking at bringing speech therapists in-house instead of contracting that service. The identified \$6.6 million cuts must be submitted to the county by March 15. MDUSD is looking at trying to get a \$100-150 parcel tax for the June/November ballot. It’s vital that they get MDEA (teacher’s union) support.

Parking Committee: Meagan Trowbridge

She met with Neal Harris the Friday before Thanksgiving and he seemed to be onboard with modifying the staff parking lot to allow for student drop-off/pick-up. On December 18 she received a very short email stating that MDUSD couldn't support it. Parking spaces will be lost and there handicapped parking issues. Megan felt very discouraged and asked the board what her next steps should be. Everyone agreed that the matter shouldn't be dropped. They are also trying to get a program in place so that the police will make regular visits to the school during morning and afternoon hours.

Treasurer's Report: Kathy Frattini

We are currently \$2,800 under budget and that amount will be made up soon. We have \$5,689 left over from the laptop purchases and that money will be reallocated. We will have some money in the Spring for Spring Proposals.

The next PFA meeting is scheduled for February 11, which is the same nice as the 7th and 8th grade Father/Daughter, Mother/Son dance. The staff is looking to see if that date can be changed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Committee Reports:

Parent Advisory Committee notes for January 2009

Budget reduction

The key piece of news is that the new Board of Education did budget reduction activity in their December meeting on items that were not in the pre-announced agenda. This means that if there are items, like Library or Athletics that you want to “speak to”, you need to go and speak at the next Board meeting – you cannot count on those items not being raised just because they are not on the agenda. The goal during this reduction exercise is \$6.6 million, if they approve all that is being proposed at this next Board meeting they will have cut \$5.2 of that \$6.6. March 15th is when we need Country approval/certification of our budget. The California Teacher’s Assoc (CTA.org) is floating a proposal to have a sales tax increase go towards education, info. is on their web site.

Parcel Tax

Along the same lines, there is great movement a foot on the issue of getting a Parcel Tax on the ballot. The first “get started” meeting was last Wed.; the second is tonight (1/14). If you are interested in participating it is never too late to join the planning group (CUES: Community United for Excellence in Schools) – contact me and I will put you in touch with the right folks. The first decision is whether to go for a June election (where that might be the only item on the ballot) or next November’s election. The advantage of June is that, if we are successful, the money raised would be available next school year. The disadvantage is that, if we are the only item on the ballot, we bear the entire cost of putting on the election – approx. \$800,000. The advantage of November’s election is that the cost will be shared and would be approx. \$200,000 for us; the disadvantage is that the money would not be available until the 2010-2011 school year. Many other decisions need to follow (like how much to ask for per parcel), but *when* is the first big one and they need to decide that by next week. They are accepting financial donations now to get the process going, it will be expensive and will take hours of volunteer time, however it is the only way we can ever become less dependent on Sacramento for our school’s finances.

Homework Policy

A revision of the District homework policy is in the works. The on-line survey that was available to us in Nov/Dec is being analyzed; it was largely an “overview” of people’s thoughts. A new on-line survey will be available starting this week seeking input on specific details of a new policy (an announcement will go out to the school community when it is available). The expectation is that there will be a new District Policy written by April, but it will be in very vague and general terms. Along with that will be a more specific Administrative Rule (AR) that will provide the guidelines, however each site (e.g. Foothill) will actually write their own details as part of their Site Plan (Single Plan for Student Achievement) each year. So, while there will be written “guidelines” from the District the change that we will see will be that there is a requirement for a written site-developed Homework “Site Plan” (it can’t be called “policy” unless it’s written by

the Board of Education) each year, by each school site, turned into the District each spring. It will force each school to have conversations between administration, staff and parents about balance, expectations, department standards, amount of time, whether it counts for grades, is it “busy work” or class work related, etc. – whatever is important to each school site – rather than dictates about those types of details from the District.

Fingerprinting volunteers

In an effort to have the best protection possible for our students the District has, for several years, required that regular parent volunteers be fingerprinted. This is time consuming and costly and currently the District has a long lead time to make an appointment to get this done. If you were fingerprinted when your students were at the elementary level, Foothill’s office staff can get your “clearance” by just phoning the Elementary school. Of interest to our community - When you are finally “all done” with volunteer work in the District you can submit a written letter to the head of District Personnel stating that you will no longer be working with students and they will get your name removed from their list of active names (means reports from the federal government will no longer include you).

Janet Sheehy