

ACE Meeting Minutes

The purpose of the Advisory Council for Education is to provide a systematic representative public involvement in educational decisions under consideration by the Board of Directors.

Monday, Dec. 4, 2017
6:00-7:30 p.m.

Call to order

Mary Levesque called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Members Present

Maggie Bagwell, Ryan Barci, Arianne Blackburn, Sarah Blake, Sarah Cofer, Kathy Ehman, Pedro Gonzales, Natalie Hollifield, Sheri Kelly, Mary Levesque, Kimberly Meno, Hanna Novy, Gary Sabol, Chrys Sweeting

Members Absent

Linda Bollinger, Lisa Coghill, Jen Fuller, Yvonne Gallardo, Cindy Glunt, Jillian Gooding, Casey Miller, Virginia Muniz, Jomo Simpkins, Matt Washburn

Guests Present

Brian Lewis

Introductions

Sarah Cofer, a second-grade teacher at Pioneer Elementary, joined the committee.

Approve minutes

Maggie Bagwell made a motion to approve the Nov. 6 minutes. Kimberly Meno seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

District Updates

Dr. Sweeting provided the following updates:

- The district is talking with Skagit Regional Health Cascade Hospital over mental health concerns. There's a possibility that they would provide three mental health professionals to provide services at the elementary, middle and high school levels.
- Two new board members, Judy Fay and Marc Rosson, are being sworn in on Monday.
- Gary Howard will be visiting the district next week.

Bond Update

Brian Lewis, Executive Director of Operations, provided an update to the committee on the bond.

The school board adopted a resolution calling for an election on Feb. 13, 2018. Arlington voters will be asked to authorize the district to issue \$107.5 million in bonds to build a replacement for Post Middle School and improve safety and security at all school buildings in the district. Approval would not result in a tax rate increase from the rate that district voters paid in 2017.

Why issue bonds now?

- Bonds issued in 2000 to build Arlington High School paid off in 2020.
- Bond interest rates are near historic lows saving community money on improvements. State Match.
- Facilities Advisory Committee, working since 2013 has identified projects to improve academic achievement, safety, security, and efficiency at all school buildings.

- Renovation of Post Middle School would cost at least 75% of building new and that's just to meet code requirements, not improve instructional spaces.

Proposed Improvements

- Install secure entry systems, improved door locks, and security cameras at all schools
- Replace Post Middle School
- Add eight classrooms, STEAM workshop and bus shelter at Arlington High School
- Add fire suppression system to Eagle Creek Elementary
- Provide classroom amplification systems at all elementary schools to promote student achievement
- Improve heating, ventilation, and air conditioning at all schools for better indoor air quality and energy efficiency
- Replace flooring at Eagle Creek and Kent Prairie Elementary schools

Why Rebuild Post Middle School?

- Modernization costs 75%-80% of new construction just to meet code requirements
 - Seismic, indoor air quality, energy, acoustic, ADA accessibility, electrical and plumbing systems
- Modernization does not address educational deficiencies
 - Security, room size, type of rooms, daylighting
- Portions of the building would have to be closed during modernization, would need to locate or acquire temporary space for students

Replacement of Post Middle School makes Arlington eligible for \$8.9 million in state matching funds. The district plans to purchase a new elementary school site with the match.

Senior Exemption

Persons at least 61 years of age and who earn less than \$40,000 annually may qualify for an exemption from local school taxes.

Citizens Committee for Arlington Schools

Kimberly Meno gave a brief presentation about the Citizens Committee for Arlington Schools. This is the group heading up the "yes" campaign for the bond. The goal of the committee is to get a commitment for 6,000 yes votes. There are 19,000 voters in Arlington. Meetings take place every Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. at Cascade Valley Hospital in the Rainier Room.

Equity Activity

Dr. Chrys Sweeting continued her discussion about equity. She reference Gary Howard's book *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*. The books talks about everyone being at a different place on their journey. It also talked about embracing everyone and their differences and to be inclusive.

Arianne indicated that sometimes in school there are kids who make derogatory jokes. Social media is really easy to hide behind. Teachers need to shut it down immediately

Pedro said that as a nation and local community, we need to learn how to work with our neighbors. Staff need to be trained to be sensitive to different cultures. It's something we need to learn to work with and grapple with.

Sarah referenced the Students Respect Committee. The committee has gone through a lot in the past. It's great that we're bringing this up.

Sheri would like to see the district hire people of more diversity and different backgrounds.

Ryan said it's important to affirm the child for what they bring and honoring their culture.

Dr. Sweeting referenced a visit to families to see the values their culture has related to learning in the



classroom. Teachers can take something from the child's home life and incorporate it into a lesson.

Maggie said it's important to grow our own teachers.

Natalie said there are local issues and it's easy to get lost in how we fix it. Kids are forgetting that despite their differences, they're all growing up in the same area. She said that middle school seems to be where the problem is starting. Some kids are singled out because they are perceived to be different.

The more you can empower students to stand up for themselves, the better they can be. The schools need to be supportive of these students. As things are changing, how do we educate the youth?

Mary said we need to get more information and education. What we're doing to fix it? People get to know people. Multicultural events in community? Do we still have a Respect club at every level? Looking at family trees? Celebrating heritage day.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, Jan. 9