

Faith Community Advisory Board
May 6, 2004
Meeting Minutes

Members attending:

Jan Borman, Kris Cord, Cathy Kainer, Ellyn Dickmann, Jana Ley, Kathy Branzell, Nina Rubin, Rebecca Saunders, Brownie McGraw, Pastor Jeff Wright, Laurel Zitowitz (replacement for Rebecca Saunders).

Unable to attend:

Gary Bamford, Tommi Sue Cox, Pastor Joyce Dennison, Chuck DeWayne, Brenda Gifford, Mayor Ray Martinez, Karen Koehn, Pastor Rich McDermott, Sue Reid, Terry Vanderpan, Pastor David Williams, Dan Seegmiller.

Introductions and Welcome:

Kris Cord welcomed all and asked for each to introduce themselves.

Review April Coordinator meeting—Dan Seegmiller No report. Dan was not present.

Updates on Faith Community Volunteer Program in schools and congregations:

Kris Cord talked about the Faith Coordinator meeting held April 22. All ten coordinators attended and there was excellent sharing. Online registration and coordination is going smoothly.

Bennett Elementary is now officially matched with Plymouth Congregational.

Centennial High School is matched with Congregation Har Shalom.

Laurel Elementary is partnered with Heart of the Rockies and Spirit of Joy and things are going well. Tommie Sue Cox has reported that 25 out of the 100 total faith volunteers are regulars. Mike Cookenmaster (Title 1) will not be back next year but should be replaced in some capacity.

The partnership between First Presbyterian and Dunn is going well. A need for an accompanist was filled by a church member.

Jan Borman mentioned that the faith volunteers are very consistent and the kids really benefit from that. The students learn to trust others this way.

Dunn Elementary students are writing notes of encouragement to homebound faith members of First Presbyterian congregation. This is a way of "giving back." Postage was paid by the congregation.

Moore Elementary appreciated the school supplies and clothing donated by members of their Abyssinian faith community.

Rebecca Saunders introduced Laurel Zitowitz who will be replacing her for the 2004-05 school year at Bennett. They are meeting once a month to share and prepare for next year.

Rebecca also reported that many of the faith volunteers have strong science backgrounds and they hope to utilize this more next year. All volunteers have been from Plymouth Congregational.

Nina Rubin reported that Congregation Har Shalom is partnered with Centennial High School. The new faith coordinator at Har Shalom is Pamela Sachs-Kapp, a former counselor at Centennial. They are focusing on music, wood working, alternative health issues, and the Rhodes Scholar Program. She added that the needs are quite different from an elementary. John McClusky will be the coordinator for Centennial High School.

Nina also reported that many volunteers work for Hewlett-Packard and can give technical support. An agreement should be signed within a month.

Kris Cord added that a recent *Coloradoan* article highlighted a Faith Community volunteer at Dunn.

Grant Update:

Kris reported that the PSD Partnership and Volunteer Center did NOT receive the \$100,000 Federal Grant, but the \$10,000 grant may happen.

The Partnership Center DID receive a Hewlett-Packard grant for 15 computers that will be put into schools for volunteer use.

Kathy Branzell, DAB Representative, shares her experiences:

Kathy explained that her absence has been due to ongoing serious medical problems. She moved to Fort Collins in August of 2003, and wanted to be involved with the faith-based partnership program. Her background includes work on the national level with President Bush, Faith Based Servants and the No Child Left Behind connection partnership. She explained that she sees her role as one of a "servant" and asks, "What can I do for you?" as the bottom line of her work.

Memorandum of Structure—Jeff, Tommie Sue, Nina:

MOU addition

Kris wanted all to note that in the "Memorandum of Understanding," an addition has been made (see 3 a), which should make things a little more clear. This will be changed

before the final signing, and this is how the document was presented to PSD's Core Leadership.

3a reads: "All partnership activities shall have a secular purpose and volunteers in the activities should respect the religious rights of the students and the responsibilities of school officials to neither foster nor discourage religious belief or activity. It is not appropriate for members of the faith communities to use their involvement in public schools as an occasion to endorse religious activity or doctrine or force participation in a religious activity. (U.S. Department of Education: "Faith Communities Support Children's Learning in Public Schools", 1999)."

Jeff Wright suggested the word "proposed" be taken off this document (MOS).

Discussion took place regarding the "Membership" portion of the Memorandum of Structure."

- A "nominating team" will work to get five representatives of the local faith community (congregations) for the Leadership Advisory Board.
- Jana Ley will continue as part of this Leadership Advisory Board as part of her 2-year committee duty as a Board of Education member. She added that she is on this particular committee to see that the "separation between church and state" is not violated. She held concerns about proselytizing.
- Nina mentioned that she received a call from an irate parent needing clarification about the faith partnership. There is a huge "fear" in her congregation as they are a "minority" being the Jewish component. She added that her congregation encountered strong proselytizing growing up in the public schools, and they have a certain sensitivity based on experience.
- Kris asked if there were PSD people who wanted to be on the PSD side of this committee. Jan Borman will check with all principals of schools partnered with any faith congregations for volunteers.
- Jeff Wright suggested that the nominating committee be comprised of two persons each from the faith community and Poudre School District.
- Nina and Jeff both nominated Rev. David Williams and Rev. Rich McDermott to be faith members on the nominating committee.
- Nina asked about the change to eliminate the community member seat that Brownie McGraw has filled. Since that position is no longer required, Brownie will no longer be a part of the Leadership Advisory Board.
- Kris added that John McClusky at Centennial High School was a little hesitant at first to embrace a faith partnership.
- Jan Borman added they have so many different faiths represented at Dunn Elementary that it needs to be made clear that this is about ALL faiths.
- Rebecca used the Columbine disaster as an example of a "What can we do?" mentality, and that these (faith) people just care about kids and want to help.
- Kathy Branzell added that we need to be very clear that love and caring is the vision.

- Kris and Nina commented that concerns are individual to each school and each congregation, and both sides need to move through the issues and past preconceived ideas.
- Ellyn Dickmann will continue to be the representative on the Leadership Advisory Board and the Superintendent's Cabinet, and Kathy Branzell will be the DAB representative.
- Brownie McGraw thanked everyone on the board and said her "goodbye." She particularly expressed her hopes for the students in the district.
- It was noted that the "Expectation" document was missing in the handouts.

PSD Strategic Planning—Ellyn Dickmann:

Ellyn Dickmann, PSD's Director of Research, Development and Planning gave a brief explanation of the current, dynamic Strategic Plan for the district. She passed out copies of the plan, explaining it was still in draft format and is being revised as she and BOE member John Fooks hold "community forums" to gain input. She stressed that she welcomed input from this group.

General highlights from Strategic Planning overview from Ellyn:

- This is a purposely "dynamic" document, intended to change with the needs of the district, the Fort Collins community and any legislative demands.
- Ellyn noted the simple new mission statement on the front of the document: "Educate.. .Every Child, Every Day" with the additional statement, "Poudre School District exists to support and inspire every child to think, to learn, to care, and to graduate prepared to be successful in a changing world."
- The focus is on student achievement.
- This document should help guide the Board of Education in decision-making.
- The plan contains a "worksheet" outlining six priority areas and is used as a starting point for discussion.
- A Diversity worksheet has been added for this year.
- Ellyn will hold meetings with site principals to provide direction for each site. For the most part, guidelines and rules will be the same for each site to provide consistency.
- Brownie added that the plan also lets schools deliver and implement as they need.
- Jan Borman commented along with others that the "old" objectives for the district were not as "student-focused" and welcomes the new approach.
- Brownie likes the format and that it is easy to understand.
- Brownie also commended Ellyn for her hard work on this plan.
- Ellyn stressed to call her or BOE members John Fooks or Jana Ley with any input or questions concerning the new Strategic Plan.

Thank You!

Kris Cord and Cathy Kainer expressed thanks for this Advisory Board's hard work and support throughout the school year, and passed out "Partnership and Volunteer" pens to all.

Next Meeting (August):

It was determined that the next meeting would be

Thursday, August 26th, 11:30-1 :OOP.M.

At the Partnership Center.

Lunch will be served.

Please mark your calendars and a reminder will be sent as the meeting date arrives.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Katie
Clopper Administrative
Secretary