T.Clay Wood Elementary  
Advisory Council Minutes  
Thursday, September 25, 2014 ● The Library ● 6:37 p.m. – 8:19 p.m.

**I. Welcome by Chairperson**

Chair Cindy Vollmer opened the meeting and thanked those who had provided the yummy food for the meeting.

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| **Members Present** | Cindy Vollmer ● Janna Raper ● Jill Mulhall ● Ann Marie McCurdy ● Megan Kutner ● Andrea Winans Laskowski ● Meslissa Schmelzer ● Andrew Buchheit ● Melissa Yuditsky ● Maggie Hansford ● Jennifer Ludlow ● Dana Fonner ● Renee Watson ● Rachel Rapee ● Kate Bennett ● Kristen Argonis ● Diana D’Amico ● Erin McLaughlin (PTO Secretary) |
| **Members Not Present** | Bill Muirhead (excused) ● Megan Pomfret (excused) |

**II. Review/Approval of September 25 Minutes**

The minutes for September 25, 2014 were reviewed and accepted with no changes

**III. Citizen’s Time**

* No citizens were present to speak

**IV.** **PTO Liaison Report (Erin McLaughlin):**

* The PTO will hold their third meeting of the year on Nov. 6. The previous two meetings have been well-attended.
* Holiday Shop will be held Dec. 8-12. This will culminate in a pajama party movie night, since the previous movie night was so popular.
* A spirit night will be held at Chipotle on Nov. 17. Fifty percent of the proceeds will go to the school, which is a very high percentage for spirit nights.

**V. Superintendent’s Advisory Council on Instruction Report**

* SACI Rep Kristen Argonis said that the SACI chair (Karen Martin, previous chair of the TCW Advisory Council) made an off-the-cuff remark at the SACI meeting about the number of car riders vs. bus riders at T. Clay Wood.
* The SACI meeting spent a lot of time discussing the school division’s homework policy.

**V. Chair’s Time:**

* Guest Speaker – Balanced Literacy: Mrs. Rapee, Advisory Council Staff Representative and T. Clay Wood Literacy Specialist, gave a presentation on Balanced Literacy at T. Clay Wood. The three main components of the program include:
  + Talk – lots of opportunity for students to talk about what they are reading and writing, in order to develop thoughtful communicators
  + Writing
    - Morning Message
    - Interactive Writing
    - Guided writing, within guided reading
    - Guided Spelling and Word Study
      * Teachers can differentiate somewhat, based on differing student abilities
    - “Being a Writing” Writing Workshop – connected to a mentor text
    - Independent Writing
    - CLAWS (Children Learning Handwriting Actively with Senses) for K-1
  + Reading
    - Making Meaning – comprehension; County also adopted Benchmark Literacy as a complement to Making Meaning
    - Shared Reading
    - Guided Reading (Jan Richardson’s plan)
    - Literature Circles (grades 2-5) – like “book clubs”
    - Daily Five (reading, writing, and word work)
    - Independent daily reading
* New Advisory Council members introduced themselves:
  + Melissa Schmelzer – Tartan Hills alternate
  + Andrea Winans Laskowski – Highland Village alternate
* Back to School Night – the Advisory Council table was slow. It did not see much traffic. One parent asked if the agenda for A/C meetings could be posted on the school website ahead of time, and Mr. Buchheit will begin doing that.

**VI. Principal’s Time**

Andrew Buchheit, principal, discussed the following topics:

* Kindness Challenge – During the kindness challenge in October, students collected 2,500 pair of gently used shoes to be distributed to families in need throughout the world. This exceeded the goal of 1,800 pairs.
* Operation Turkey – This food drive to collect holiday food for PWC families will be held Oct. 27 through Nov. 10.
* An Internet Safety presentation was held at the school October 16. It was an excellent presentation, but attendance was very poor, with fewer than 20 in the audience. Mr. Buchheit summarizes the main points of the presentation as:
  + Be Safe
  + Be Smart – discreet with private details
  + Be Kind
* In partnership with PNC Bank, the school sponsors a student bank in which students can conduct transactions Friday mornings. Fourth graders serve as the tellers.
* The school division will be holding informational meetings about boundary changes that will take effect with the opening of the Devlin Road elementary school in fall of 2015. Mr. Buchheit encourages TCW community members to attend these meetings to learn about the process and possibly try to influence decisions if you have opinions. The meetings are scheduled for November 24 and December 8 at 7:00 PM at Piney Branch ES.
* Upcoming dates:
  + No school November 3, 4 (teacher workday and conferences)
  + No school November 11 for Veteran’s Day
  + There will be no school on November 27, 28, and the afternoon of November 26, in observance of Thanksgiving.
  + November 12 – walking field trip to Patriot High School to hear the marching band
  + November 13 – next meeting of Advisory Council (one week earlier than originally scheduled due to Heritage Night)
  + November 13 – report cards sent home
  + November 20 – Heritage Night
* The lockdown event of October 20
  + There is a framework in place for situations like this, but the process has to remain fluid as the situation progresses.
  + The staff and teachers did a great job.
  + The staff held a debriefing after the event.
  + The front door to the school is now locked during school hours, and visitors much communicate with office staff via intercom to be allowed to enter. Unfortunately, it is not equipped to allow the staff to unlock the door from their desk, so someone must go manually open the door. Mr. Buchheit is evaluating the cost and feasibility to upgrade the system. He is hoping that the school would be eligible for some financial assistance from the division.
  + This event drove home the need for TCW parents to have access to appropriate means of communication. In cases such as these, the most important is for parents to have signed up for emergency alerts from PWCS E-news, as TCW personnel may not have the ability to send out communications. Mr. Buchheit has been and will continue to be emphasizing the need for parents to sign up for this service.
    - Parents need to make sure that their email address is correct on the school system, so they will receive all necessary communication.
  + Mrs. Yuditsky thanked parents for the patience and cooperation during the event.
  + Ms. D’Amico asked whether the school undergoes security assessments, and Mr. Buchheit responded that the PWCS Risk Management department conducts assessments regularly.
* 2014-2015 Budget
  + Enrollment at TCW as of 10/1/14 is 930.
  + Budgeted income is approximately $5.6 million.
  + Employee expenses are projected at $5.3 million, with the remainder of the allocated to operating expenses.
  + Ms. Winans Laskowski asked whether the advisory council would be able to see a comparison of actual versus budgeted expenses later in the year. Mr. Buchheit indicated it would be possible to look at some actual numbers during the May or June meeting.
  + Ms. D’Amico raised the question of how much teachers spend out of their own pocket to provide supplies for their classrooms, wondering if there are means by which to provide teachers additional funding for this purpose. In a follow-up email, Mr. Buchheit asked staff representatives to contact their grade levels / departments to request estimated averages for this spending, in order to discuss at the next advisory council meeting.
  + Mrs. Bennett asked why the average salary/benefit amount for fixed employees used in the calculation of the income differed slightly from the amount used in the calculation of employee expenses. Mr. Buchheit followed up later on October 30 with an email stating, “...fixed positions are funded close to the actual expense but not quite - there is an assumption of a small amount of students for each school to ensure these positions. So that is why the numbers for a position in fixed did not match the expense for the same position in expenses.”

Mrs. Yuditsky discussed the results of the car drop-off survey that was distributed to TCW families after our September meeting.

* There were 67 respondents:
  + 45 bus riders
  + 3 SACC
  + 17 car riders
  + 2 other
* Most common reasons cited for dropping students off in morning:
  + Time reasons
    - Ability to spend more time with kids
    - More time to get ready in the morning
  + Bus environment (behavior, hygiene)
  + Only 2% responded that consistency of bus times is an issue
* How often respondents drop students off in morning:
  + 28% daily
  + 24% never
  + 17% hardly ever
* The staff has noticed that there seem to be more car riders in the mornings lately. They will be monitoring this.

**VII. Representative’s Time**

* Staff
  + K-1 – good
  + 2-3 – good
  + 4-5 – good
  + Classified – good
  + Encore/Resource – Mrs. Rapee noted that a lot of cars leave Patriot High School at the end of their school day through the TCW parking lot. Some other members noted that parents picking up their students are instructed to leave PHS this way.
  + Special Ed/ESOL/Gifted – Good
* Parents – Several representatives expressed their appreciation for how well the school handled the lockdown situation.
  + Highland Village – Good
  + Tartan Hills – Some parents are complaining about cars coming through the Patriot parking lot in the mornings and cutting off cars waiting in the drop-off line. Mr. Buchheit said the school will monitor this and address if needed. Ms. D’Amico added that she sees many parents driving through the line while using their cell phones, which is a safety concern. Mr. Buchheit will send a reminder to parents to not use their cell phone while driving in and out of the parking lot.
  + New Bristow Village – Discussed the fact that communication about the lockdown situation was not handled consistently by bus drivers. Some bus drivers told parents about the situation; some did not.
  + Kettle Run/Schaeffer – absent, nothing to report
  + Student Resource – A parent had asked what involvement the on-site security guard had in the lockdown situation. Mr. Buchheit mentioned that he has met with the security guard to review procedures for these types of situations.
  + At Large Reps – good

**IX. Upcoming Meetings**

The next meeting date is November 13 at 6:30 in the Library.

Proposed agenda topics include:

* The Transportation department will be presenting
* Strategic plan
* Staff development plan

**X. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.  
 *TCWES School Vision: A Community of Leaders and Learners Achieving Excellence*