

Foreign Language Committee

Thursday, March 14, 2013

Meeting Called to Order: 3:30 P.M.

Members/Introductions: Terry Heck (CH), Tylene Hicks (CH), Suzie Marin (CP), Jeanne Thill, Cathy Tolnay, Teresa Elliott, Jennifer Mahoney, Helen Tome, Erica Edmonston, Debbie Towne, Daniel Saks, Jera Fusi, Stacy Gonzales, June Richards, Susanne Swartz, Hope Baker, Elana Levens-Craig, Milka Pejoric, DiAnn Albert (PRIDE)

Norms/Ground Rules:

- Start and end on time.
- Divide research tasks/workload.
- Allow members time to speak and get their point across.
- Be culturally aware (we all come from differing backgrounds).
- Stay on task/topic (No bunny trails/bird walks).
- Everyone's opinions have value.
- Silence cell phones.
- Keep moving/focus for progress.
- Allow for majority vote to rule when progress/decisions have to be made.

Purpose: *Explore and recommend the best foreign language instruction options to best meet the needs of Santee children.*

Meeting Minutes:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Brief history of our work and purpose, showed off the new district flyer denoting the strategic action plan and the visions/needs of the district. Reviewed/Described some of the programs visited in the community: Poway, South Bay, Chula Vista, Lakeside, San Diego.
- Strategic Action Plans: Foreign Language Enrichment
- Strategic Action Plans: Foreign Language Immersion
- Where are we now? Review Foreign Language Template
- Board Member Levens-Craig voiced the concern that teachers may need a better understanding and may have questions or concerns about these up-coming proposals. One teacher inquired, "Which sites, which schools would see these programs?" Terry clarified that each school's needs or wants within foreign language may vary. One school may choose enrichment; some may choose immersion, some after-school, some just for 8th graders, etc. The hope is that the committee can help to clarify and provide suggestions for what those individual needs and wants might be.

- Another teacher questioned, “What is our purpose? What is this group charged to do?” Terry responded that the committee needs teacher input on program options, what might work, what might not work. What are the pros, cons, concerns? Nothing has been decided yet, teacher input is essential. Eventually, we would like to make a couple of suggestions to the Board so they can make a decision for the district.
- “Are we staying within the confines of the current school day? Or are we exploring an extended day? Terry – this group will hopefully come up with those types of suggestions.
- “Has Spanish been the chosen language?” No, nothing is in stone. Are we leaning toward Spanish, probably...but not decided yet.
- “Budget – The community seems to be showering these types of immersion schools (example of Riverview). Massive fundraising/donations opportunities.
- “We need a clear plan to allow for growth and job conservation for current teachers.”
- “Shared about the Shadow Hills meeting in Alpine about their new immersion program for K and 1st grade. Which other districts are looking into this?” Cajon Valley has 6 classes, and we lose to La Mesa-Spring Valley for their elective choices in Middle School. Yale is considering an immersion pre-school program, however there is fear that if we have nothing to provide at Kinder and beyond, and we might lose those families. Riverview currently offers pre-K/Yale type program.
- Can we use high school students as intern, such as an ROP type program to help in the program? With an immersion program, it is essential that the instructor be bi-literate, with enrichment, it could be something different.
- Teresa shared the concept of hosting foreign exchange teachers as well as students. Having an exchange teacher stay with host family and pay the teacher by the school for their instruction.
- Rosetta Stone?? Currently 22 students at Pride are using this option for enrichment (as well as some students at the alternative program). Students additionally are provided opportunities to speak with native speakers to practice their language learning.
- Enrichment – I’m not just looking at the language so much as the culture as well. She mentioned her preference to have a human being teaching the program as opposed to a computer. There are subtle nuances in pronunciations and verb choice that could easily be missed through computer programs. Additionally, we need access to that type of technology as well.
- It would be great to choose something for our students, be passionate, stick our necks out and offer SOMETHING!
- Two options: Possibility of Rosetta Stone with a real/native instructor or Real-life Instructor once/twice a week.
- By-In is essential for teachers and community for this to be successful.
- “Have we considered starting with a 5-year plan, starting with a kinder program somewhere? And, what will happen at all the other schools? Can we offer droplets of water to feed the idea and want to try language.” A teacher felt fortunate growing up in a multi-literate family and learning conversational Spanish. She is now teaching a conversational Spanish class at her site

using a handful of hand selected materials. She feels the program is fairly successful. Keep notes on words, terms, etc. in a notebook, watching videos, novelas?

- When we had a need for art, we created “Art Attack”. We use volunteers to make the program work. Why can’t we use that for language as well? Volunteers are welcome, but do they have the academic language, know-how, commitment, organization, and strength to instruct on a regular basis and create a program that will work?
- Milka pointed out the want for students to be exposed at younger and younger ages and continually exposed to a language over the years as they age.
- Terry redefined the definitions of enrichment (exposure) and immersion programs.
- Suzie has created an electronic survey for current educators in the district to see what their current exposure, abilities, and/or credentials that they may have or would choose to use for an enrichment opportunity. The survey might spring board interest in teachers, to see which schools might want to pilot new programs.
- We have a teacher who worked in the Escondido bilingual immersion program. She might be a resource to questions/answers.
- We need to provide a competitive program that is worthy and worth our students’ time and energy.

Next Steps/ Questions:

1. As you read the minutes, as you learn new things, please share them out.

Next scheduled meetings:

- April 11, 2013 – 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. (Rio Seco School)
- May 9, 2013 – 6:00 – 8:00 P.M. (Rio Seco School)

Meeting Concluded: 5:00 P.M.