

Green Meadow School Advisory Council
February 7th, 2005 minutes

Present members: Bernadette McLaughlin, Fred Chi, Nancy Messina, Kristen Richardson, Tim Sullivan, Priscilla Cotter

Attending: Members of Fowler School Council, Marie Kotlowski, Hanne Mully, Mark Masterson, Lois Cohen

Absent: Shirley DuFour, John Mason

Public Input: None

Minutes Review: Waived due to joint meeting with Fowler Current Status:

Mark Masterson was in attendance and spoke regarding next year's budget that the Finance committee is putting together. Presently they are faced with some substantial reductions in funding and are evaluating the options. Mark is hoping to have "coffee hours" in various neighborhoods throughout the town. The goal of these coffee hours is for Mark to present facts and answer questions regarding this current budget crisis in an informal setting. The school council will designate one or two members to coordinate these meetings with Mark during the March/April timeframe.

This school council meeting was a joint meeting with the Fowler school council. The purpose was to discuss the topic of changing the school start/end times for Fowler to a later time and the impact this would have on Green Meadow. The initial reason this was raised by Fowler school principal Bob Brooks and other council members was a safety issue. Fowler school begins at 7:45am, which in the winter months has children walking to school in the dark. The Fowler council has stated that there have been concerns raised by not only the council and principal, but by parents of "walkers" as well. Their initial proposal was to push the start and dismissal times up by 15 minutes. This 15 minute change would force Green Meadow to change their times as well, due to the fact that the same buses service both schools.

Since this topic has been raised, questions regarding whether a more significant change in start/dismissal times should be evaluated. There have been studies/research conducted by various school systems and medical/clinical professionals indicating that children of middle school and high school age are not getting the proper amount of sleep which could impact a student's academic and emotional well-being

Wayland public schools created a task force and published a report in December 2004 regarding this specific issue. Bernie had copies made and were distributed to all members, along with bus schedules for both Fowler and Green Meadow.

Many questions and concerns were raised regarding the impact any change would have. In particular, the impact to parents and their work schedules, before school programs, after school programs, sports and the comparability with other school systems, budgets, bus schedules.

It was decided that the Fowler school council would be in contact with the bus company, regarding potential ways to minimize the impact to Green Meadow if Fowler were to change their start time by the proposed 15 minutes. They were also going to make available to the Green Meadow council any surveys they had conducted regarding parent/teacher opinion.

Green Meadow was tasked to do an informal survey among teachers regarding a change in start time. It was believed that the elementary age children are more alert in the morning vs afternoon and an earlier start time could be advantageous from a learning perspective.

Bernie and Bob were going to put this topic on the agenda for the next administrative council and report back to their respective committees. Bob has stated that if the goal is to make a significant change in the start/dismissal times of the respective schools, a task force involving parents, staff, teachers and committee members would have to be formed to fully evaluate all options. Discussions with other school systems in the district and state would also need to be held.