

WILLOWCREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL

School/Community Council Meeting November 9, 2004 - 9:00 a.m.

Attending: Julie Barnum, Glenda Carson, Jacque Christensen, Lisa Hadfield, Fred Openshaw,
Allison Randall, Julie Wallace, Tom Wiltbank
Not Present: Tani Ireland, Kim Southworth

Julie Wallace welcomed the group. She thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the School/Community Council meeting.

Mrs. Sally Taggart, WMS reading teacher, reported to the group on the importance of reading strategies. Her opening comment was “Students who can succeed at school will stay in school and be successful.” Americans who can’t function in society was reported as 21-23%. This percentage function at a Level I which translates as:

1. Having difficulty reading maps, street signs, and locating intersections
2. Having difficulty reading newspaper articles
3. Having difficulty filling out job applications

A very common reply after students read something is: “I read it, but I don’t get it!” They really have difficulty comprehending text materials. On a fourth grade level, students can read and understand text materials. As students advance to junior high and high school, academics are more demanding and their emphasis is now more focused on developing social skills. This being the case, the need for reading strategies is important for continued learning.

Comprehension is not always based on understanding vocabulary words. The most important thing is an extensive background knowledge. Prior knowledge (life experiences) is more beneficial than learning vocabulary words.

Seven Reading Strategies:

1. Activating and building on prior knowledge
2. Visualization
3. Making connections
4. Questioning
5. Determining importance
6. Inferring (reading between the lines)
7. Monitor and fix it

Parent volunteers, would that be helpful? Suggestion was made to enhance WMS web page to contain reading strategy information with response from parents expressing a need for volunteers and also their willingness to help. Ideally, five years from now there won’t be a need for reading strategies. The reading strategies are being implemented into the elementary curriculum.

Mr. Openshaw reviewed AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) and No Child Left Behind. Was the mailing sent home received by the council? Yes, it was received and it was great to hear that Willowcreek Middle School did pass AYP. The district report stated that WMS passed at 82%, the requirement to pass was 65%. The percentages did fluctuate from various testing areas but

the outcome was well received. Areas to improve were discussed with council members.

First year experience with A/B schedule, and how does it compare with last year's LJHS seven-period day? Council members feel comfortable with new A/B schedule as do their students. Many teachers feel retention is better for students on the A/B schedule. It is wonderful to hear positive feedback.

It was reported that Willowcreek Middle School has approximately 3,190 hits per day on the WMS web page. Patrons and students are encouraged to view the web page often so they are aware of happenings at WMS.

Bonding for new schools in Alpine School District will take place next year. Julie Wallace reported that to consider building a new elementary in a designated area would require 1,800 homes, a new junior high would require 2,500 homes and a new high school would require 6,000 homes. Mr. Openshaw said Willowcreek Middle School would be able to house approximately 1,500 students. Our current enrollment is 1,000. Julie also reported back on lands owned by the district. Council was given a sheet listing properties owned as of 8/01/04.

Julie Barnum attended the district-level meeting and reported that school/community councils are bound by established codes. Councils control trust land monies. Our purpose is to govern and make wise choices when allocating funds for educational purposes. We will work together to lift restrictive caps being enforced. We are a young group working to be more productive to help our school meet future needs. Plans for next year's trust land monies are to be submitted the spring of 2005.

SCC elections for next year's officers will be held in May. Recruiting members from our feeder communities is important. Notification will be put on the web page. Willowcreek Middle School/Community Council has more power than our PTSA organization.

Parent/Teacher Conferences were discussed. Tom Wiltbank, council member, will report next meeting on student led conferences – the Pros and Cons. He has had previous experience at Lakeridge Junior High.

A big 'THANKS' to parents and students for their understanding and support of recent teacher hires and students being subjected to class changes. We are a work in progress, but it's great to have the support of our Willowcreek patrons.