

Sky Mountain Charter School Parent Council Meeting Minutes

By Webex Teleconference

1423 W. State Street Suite A, Redlands, CA 92373

August 27, 2015 at 6:00pm

1. CALL TO ORDER

Jennifer Felton, SMCS Parent Council President, called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Jennifer Felton led all meeting attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. INTRODUCTIONS/WELCOME/ROLL CALL

Jennifer Felton welcomed everybody to the meeting.

Parent Council Member Attendees: Jennifer Felton, Alison Ujueta, Rebecca Sanchez, Sarah Bjorklund, Anabelle Mercado, Dina Adham, Gregg Spector, Victoria Lehndorfer, Serena Ontiveros, Christy Harker, Na'Comi Berman, Danielle Kuhns, Kimberly Ireland, Christina Thompson, Christine DeVries, Karen Cobb, Deanna Munroe

Jennifer Felton introduced meeting presenters:

- Burke Wallace; Director of Teacher Support Services
- Brandy Anderson; Director of Curriculum and Guidance
- Dina Adham; SMCS Parent Council Treasurer
- Cynthia Rachel; Director of Educational Support Services
- Argi Sayari; SMCS Educational Liaison

Jennifer Felton noted that also in attendance was:

- Dr. Jason Jones; Chief Administrative Officer
- Susan Clark; IEM Executive Director and Director of Student Enrollment
- Sarah Coyan; Sky Mountain Parent Support and Parent Council Secretary

4. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

Members of the public may be heard on any item. A person addressing the Council will be limited to 3 minutes, unless the Site Administrator grants a longer period of time. Comments by members of the public on an item on the agenda will only be allowed during consideration of the item by the Council.

- No Members of the public spoke

5. REPORTS

A. Sky Mountain Charter School Report; Cynthia Rachel

Cynthia Rachel welcomed everybody and announced she is excited for new school year and shared some upcoming events:

- We received a lot of positive feedback after the SM parent information night last year. We are planning to hold quarterly, organization wide Parent Town Hall meetings this school year. You will receive listserv announcements to be notified when a Town Hall meeting is scheduled and will have opportunities to submit questions ahead of time or during the virtual GoTo Meeting using the chat feature.
- The year we are hoping for more interaction between parents and IEM/SM departments. Please be considering what types of parent trainings you would like to see offered. If you have suggestions for parent trainings please reach out to Argi or Sarah. Parent feedback is very important for developing these trainings so that we can offer trainings that parents are interested in and feel will be useful of your time.

Cynthia shared some changes in the vendor department:

- With the approval of our insurance company we will now be allowed to offer courses that involve rebounding and archery. These activities use to fall under disallowed, they will now fall under high risk/restricted courses. What this means is that there is a limited amount of instructional funds that can be used toward high risk courses; there is a 50% cap. The vendor offering rebounding or archery must carry the required insurance, vendors can update their insurance through the Vendor Relations department.

John Wilberger, Director of Vendor Relations, added that we are happy and excited to release these restrictions. For rebounding it will be important for gymnastics vendors and parents to understand that spotters are a requirement; communication will go out to vendors about this requirement. Alos, vendors need to include SMCS and IEM on their general commercial practice policy.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Introductions of New SMCS Advisor Team; Burke Wallace

Burke Wallace thanked the parent council for the opportunity to join the meeting and introduce Sky Mountain's new advisor team:

- The new advisor team is truly a wonderful group of positive individuals that are excited to be guiding and mentoring our ESs to ensure that SMCS continues in the parent choice model of education.
- The Teacher Support Services department is wrapping up a reorganization, which included many new employees. IEM has a new Assistant Director; Shawna Bohn who will be working closely with the new advisors. Cherie Brown, IEM Interdisciplinary Coordinator who will be in charge of organizing and planning the parent trainings that Cynthia mentioned during the school report. You can contact Cherie directly at cbrown@ieminc.org with ideas and suggestions for parent trainings. Dr. Jamie DeWitt, Teacher Support Services Coordinator, Jamie has a Doctorate Degree in professional development of K-12 teachers which is exciting because her role includes working with ES on professional development.

Burke introduced the five new SMCS advisors who are all very positive and excited to support ESs and families (each ES gave a little information about themselves as noted below):

- Kristy Henry; this is Kristy's 5th year with SM, she has been teaching for 10 years, homeschools her own children with SM, is excited about her advisor role, and is looking forward to working with ESs and their families this year.
- Andrea Henderson; this is Andrea's 7th year with SM, she was previously an ES, Area Facilitator, and test site coordinator. Andrea loves the parent choice model set forth by IEM and is looking forward to a wonderful school year and being a part of ensuring SM stays strong.
- Megan Kelly; this is Megan's 4th year with SM, she is excited to work with parents and is available for parents to reach out to anytime. Megan values her role as an advisor to support ESs, parents, and students.
- Serenity Greeno; this is Serenity's 1st year with SM. Serenity is very excited to join the SM team and be a part of this incredible program. She is excited to work with parents and help SM continue to grow for our students.
- Sarah Gonzales; this is Sarah's 5th year with SM, she is looking forward to working alongside families to support students.

Burke added that we are looking forward to a big year! There was transition over the summer, Sky Mountain came out stronger, we have a great team built, there is emphasis and focus on trainings for new ESs, and we look forward to hearing from parents and seeing wonderful things students do with support of SM ESs.

B. Introductions of New SMCS Guidance Team; Brandy Anderson

Brandy Anderson announced that we are excited to have Jami Riley on the guidance team. Jami's position is full time and dedicated to high school guidance. Jamie has been an ES with SM for 7 years and has taught SME math courses and was the math chair. Jami will be calling all high school families in the next few months, this is something we have never done before and are so excited to be able to offer this year. (Jami gave a little information about herself as noted below):

- Jami Riley; excited to be working full time in this position that is so important for families, ESs, and high school students to have a direct contact for high school questions.

Brandy Anderson introduced Kim Evans, Assistant Director of Guidance. Kim was an ES at Ocean Grove Charter School for 9 years, she has single subject credentials in English and Spanish and has taught SME courses in Spanish. Kim comes to us with a great deal of high school knowledge and experience; she is very patient and has made several trips down to Southern California to work with teachers and families. (Kim gave a little information about herself as noted below):

- Kim Evans; so excited about everything happening with SM and IEM in general and with high school. We have rolled out almost 100 new a-g courses, all very flexible and we believe you will experience a much more parent choice and user friendly high school experience that will support a lot of different learning styles than you have in the past. We have a team of positive SME teachers to work with who offer a wealth of talent and experience, and want to support college and career for high school students. Kim looks forward to working with everybody throughout the year.

C. Academic Dishonesty Policy; Cynthia Rachel

Cynthia Rachel discussed the Academic Dishonesty Policy. We have been working on revising policies that were previously vague or unclear. The Academic Dishonesty Policy (Plagiarism Policy) did not have clear consequence, the consequences were left up to ES/advisor. We have some great resources like Turnitin.com through Schoology and ways for students to learn how to appropriately site references and put things in their own words. The examples of plagiarism in the Academic Dishonesty Policy have not changed, the consequences changed by laying out an official first offense consequence, second offense consequence, and so on. We believe that plagiarism is an opportunity for education. The first time plagiarism occurs will always be assumed to be unintentional and will be embraced as an opportunity for the ES, parent, and student to work together, find the issues and plan for future writing assignments. The second offense of plagiarism results in no credit for the assignment, third offense results in one letter grade lower for the semester in that course, further plagiarism results in failure of the course. If plagiarism is occurring frequently and becoming an issue even after efforts and educational opportunities to learn how to appropriately use citations, the ES, parent, and advisor would need to have a discussion about if independent study is the best option for that student. We want students to be successful, every student learns different, and sometimes independent study might not be best fit; in regard to plagiarism issues this would only be a discussion way down the road if interventions and learning opportunities were not working. Addressing plagiarism issues is not always a comfortable subject for ESs to approach; revising the Academic Dishonesty Policy will help guide the process with clear expectations and consequences. This was a discussion item at the meeting because although the revision of this policy does not require a vote from parent council, we would like feedback. If you have feedback please email Cynthia crachel@ieminc.org in the next week so this policy revision can be rolled out as soon as possible.

Serena Ontiveros asked what classes/grade level this policy is most enforced; 3rd grade level v. high school level for example.

Cynthia answered the policy is school wide but will be approached in a developmentally appropriate way. Typically this is not an issue until upper grade levels like 6th grade and up as this is when students really begin doing a lot of research, gathering information, and using references. Plagiarism is not likely in lower grade levels, we will not hold a child to this policy until they have been taught the concept and citations are not a standard until they get older. We do work with lower grade levels on how to put things in their own words.

D. Subcommittees; Argi Sayari

Argi Sayari, Sky Mountain Educational Liaison, introduced himself. Argi will be setting up GEAs and working with the parent council. Argi is looking forward to an exciting year and has already heard some exciting and positive feedback about the GEA announcements that recently went out on the parent listserve. Argi is looking forward to working with parents, receiving feedback, and setting up the 2nd semester GEAs.

Argi discussed parent council subcommittees. Parent Council subcommittees are developed and designed by the members who service on them. These committees can involve as much or as little time as each member is able to dedicate. The five subcommittees are:

1. Fundraising: Research, suggest, and implement fundraiser ideas for the school. Work with the Parent Council Treasurer for fundraising money deposits.
2. Graduation: Assist with decorating, volunteering, taking pictures, etc. at the graduation ceremony. Our guidance team typically will reach out to members of this committee for support with graduation planning.
3. Group Educational Activities: Work with Argi to Research and suggest potential GEA opportunities and report those ideas to our GEA coordinator.
4. Spring Testing Volunteer: The Assessment team may reach out to this committee for assistance at the testing sites during spring state testing.
5. WASC Focus Groups: The WASC Coordinator will reach out to members of this committee when WASC needs arise. Members of this subcommittee are asked to participate in WASC Focus Group meetings.

Argi thanked the parent council members for submitting the 2015/16 Parent Council Planning Form which included signing up for a subcommittee. Argi gave an update on subcommittee signups:

- Fundraising subcommittee- 1 member
- Graduation subcommittee- 2 members
- GEA subcommittee- 12 members
- Spring Testing subcommittee- 2 members
- WASC subcommittee- 2 members

Argi asked that if any member on the GEA subcommittee is willing to or interested in changing to the Fundraising subcommittee to please contact Sarah Coyan.

Please feel free to contact either Sarah or Argi if you have questions or suggestions or need any support from the school while designing subcommittee projects.

Gregg Spector mentioned that he loves SMCS but his concern as a parent is the students don't see one another enough, there is not enough social interaction opportunities.

Argi answered that we can address this in the future agenda items section of the meeting.

Victoria Lehndorfer asked what exactly members of these subcommittees are suppose to do and asked if the parent council members will we be contacted by the school about the subcommittees.

Argi answered that yes, parent council members will be contacted in regard to subcommittees.

Christine DeVries mentioned that sometimes parent council members feel like they are just there to fill legal obligations, and suggested that members would like to be more involved. Christine also asked to learn more about the fundraising subcommittee and asked why one might want to be on that subcommittee.

Cynthia answered in response to the first part of this question that there is a legal component to parent council and that this structure approves policies that require a governing board. However, for the most part we look to our parents for advisory and feedback. Parent Council serves a dual purpose in regard to legal and advisory issues. In response to the second part of this question, Cynthia answered that the main thing we currently fundraise for is the graduation ceremony; however, we can fundraise for anything. Parent Council members can explore options and present ideas for fundraising opportunities. We are looking for creative ideas. There have been some suggestions about a parent driven teacher appreciation gatherings to recognize and celebrate our ESs; this could possibly be in the form of “park days” opportunities, which might also be a good way to build the sense of community that Gregg is looking for and suggested. Sky Mountain services a large geographic area so this would need to be county and or region specific.

Serena Ontiveros asked who chairs the subcommittees because they have been underutilized in the past and do not have much structure.

Cynthia answered that going forward there will be department appropriate staff to work directly with the subcommittee members.

Karen Cobb asked who determines what GEAs happen and what the grade levels are for GEAs.

Argi answered that he will be setting up GEAs and that there are parameters that go along with that process. He will be putting every effort to ensure fair opportunities. The intention is to get as many grades as possible into GEAs but we still need to be mindful of GEAs that are grade specific and correlate with age appropriate curriculum.

Danielle Kuns asked if we have a set amount of GEAs per year that are allowed, or if we can we have more? Parents would like to be more involved, see less repetitive GEAs, and would like to see more GEAs.

Argi responded that these are all great ideas and are part of the goal. Yes, we can certainly have more GEAs. Cynthia added last year SM had 3 total, currently Argi is working on 4 for the 1st semester. Organization wide, one of our schools has 20 scheduled and this IEM schools Educational Liaison is working with Argi. The sky's the limit; the goal is to make sure families have many opportunities. Parent Council members asked if they can contact Argi directly with ideas; Argi answered that yes, the GEA subcommittee members should reach out to him directly and that any parent can reach out to their ES who can forward ideas to him.

Serena Ontiveros asked if there are regulations that govern GEA preparation, funding, and chaperoning. Cynthia responded that a GEA is different than field trip. On a GEA each parent is responsible for his or her own child, so we do not staff chaperones; parents are the chaperones. In regard to funding, GEA costs for a student comes from instructional funds to the approved vendors. Argi is responsible for planning GEAs but would love feedback and suggestions from parents.

Christine DeVries asked, vendors that offer group courses, can families submit separate POs and go as a group when it's not an official school scheduled GEA? Cynthia answered that it will depend on if that is something the vendor allows in regard to taking individual family POs. If the vendor requires one check, reach out to Argi and suggest the activity as a GEA.

E. Parent Council Meeting Dates/Times; Argi Sayari

Argi thanked the parent council for submitting the 2015/16 Parent Council Planning form. The majority consensus based on the form response spreadsheet was for meetings to take place quarterly, which is approximately every two months, during the evening at 6:00pm. We have set the SMCS 2015/16 Parent Council meetings schedule:

Meetings will take place on Thursdays at 6:00pm at the Redlands Resource Center and Via teleconference on the following dates:

- **October 15, 2015**
- **December 17, 2015**
- **March 10, 2016**
- **May 19, 2016**

This will be the set schedule of regular meetings for this year. Additional meetings can be scheduled if Sky Mountain or the Parent Council have a need to meet outside of the set schedule.

F. Recognition of Parent Council Officers

Argi recognized the current Parent Council officers:

- Jennifer Felton is our current Parent Council President and has been committed to attending meetings in person and has done a wonderful job with facilitating meetings.
- Dina Adham is our current treasurer and we appreciate her support and dedication this summer in getting our parent council bank account business handled.
- Sarah Coyan is our current Parent Council Secretary and she has been dedicated to working with parent council members to gather preferences for planning meetings.

G. Parent Council Bank Account; Dina Adham

Dina Adham discussed the SMCS Parent Council bank account. The Wells Fargo SMCS Parent Council Bank account was closed this summer because the primary account signer Kara Willis, former Sky Mountain Education Liaison is no longer with Sky Mountain. We have a cashier's check in the amount of \$3247.39 which will upon parent council approval will be deposited in a new bank account with the new Educational Liaison, Argi Sayari as the primary account signer and the 2015/16 elected treasurer as the secondary account signer. We have an action item further down in the agenda for this business matter that will be voted on after the parent council officer elections.

7. ACTION ITEMS

A. Motion to approve alternate parent council members to fill vacancies

Argi discussed parent council alternates filling vacancies. Sarah Coyan contacted parent council alternates over the summer as members resigned. The following parent council alternates have been appointed to fill our vacancies: Karen Cobb, Anabelle Mercado, Alison Ujueta, Rebecca Sanchez, and Deanna Monroe

****Christine DeVries motioned to approve the appointed alternate parent council members to fill vacancies, Danielle Kuhns seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.****

B. Parent Council Officer Elections

Motion to approve nominated SMCS Parent Council President

Argi Sayari presented the role of Parent Council President includes:

- Facilitating the meetings
- Helping with flow of communication between council members, subcommittees, and school administration
- Direct point of contact for Parent Council members and school administration

****Danielle Kuhns nominated Jennifer Felton, Jennifer Felton accepted. No other nominations or volunteers. Motion to approve Jennifer Felton as SMCS Parent Council President approved by unanimous vote.****

Motion to approve nominated SMCS Parent Council Treasurer

Argi Sayari presented the role of Parent Council Treasurer includes:

- Authorized signer and account manager of the SMCS Fundraising Account
- Works with the fundraising subcommittee for transactions and oversight of the fundraising account.

****Jennifer Felton nominated Dina Adham, Dina Adham accepted. No other nominations or volunteers. Motion to approve Dina Adham as SMCS Parent Council Treasurer approved by unanimous vote.****

Motion to approve nominated SMCS Parent Council Secretary

Argi Sayari presented the role of Parent Council Secretary includes:

- Meeting Minutes
- Parent Council correspondences
- Maintaining the contact roster
- Reminder phone calls and emails to help ensure a quorum for each meeting
- Sending emails with pertinent information to parent council members

Argi Sayari presented information from the SMCS Bylaws stating that The Parent Council Secretary may but shall not be required to be a member of the Parent Council. Sarah Coyan has been elected and filling the role of Parent Council Secretary for the past seven years. Sarah has expressed her intention to continue fulfilling this role if the council members would like for her to do so.

****Na'Comi Berman nominated Sarah Coyan, Sarah Coyan accepted. No other nominations or volunteers. Motion to approve Sarah Coyan as SMCS Parent Council Secretary approved by unanimous vote.****

C. Motion to approve Argi Sayari, Sky Mountain Education Liaison, as primary authorized SMCS Parent Council bank account signer

****Dina Adham motioned to approve Argi Sayari, Sky Mountain Education Liaison, as the primary authorized SMCS Parent Council bank account signer, Christine DeVries seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.****

D. Motion to approve elected 2015/16 Parent Council Treasurer as secondary authorized SMCS Parent Council bank account signer

****Na'Comi Berman motioned to approve Dina Adham, elected Parent Council Treasurer as secondary authorized SMCS Parent Council bank account signer, Christine DeVries seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.****

E. Motion to approve May 14, 2015 Meeting Minutes

****Karen Cobb motioned to approved the May 14, 2015 Meeting Minutes, Danielle Kuhns seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.****

F. Motion to approve Complaint Resolution Policy

Cynthia Rachel provided further information about the Complaint Resolution Policy. The goal for developing this policy is to have a very clear plan for how to handle internal or parent concerns with staff members or third party vendors. We want to be sure parents know how to file a complaint if needed. There are hyperlinks on the document that will take you directly to a Google Form to fill out for submitting concerns. There is a form for internal issues staff/staff, those complaints are sent to the Director of HR. Complaints from parents about a staff member or third party vendor go to Cynthia Rachel. There is also a third form developed for if there is a complaint against Cynthia Rachel or the Director of HR and those go to the CAO, Dr. Jason Jones. If you generate a complaint you will receive an email that the complaint has been received and the investigator will receive email that complaint has been submitted. At the end of the internal and external policies for complaint resolution there is information on an appeal process if needed. We are hoping this policy will provide parents and staff with clear guidelines and a solid system in place for handling complaint resolution.

****Danielle Kuhns motioned to approve the Complaint Resolution Policy, Karen Cobb seconded the motion. Motion approved by majority vote.****

G. Motion to approve Education Protection Account for 14/15 and 15/16 school years

Cynthia Rachel provided further information about the Education Protection Account for the 14/15 and 15/16 school years. The education protection account was developed under proposition 30; approved by voters in November 2012. These expenditures are budgeted for student instructional funds. This does not increase the funds but is continuing to provide the funds at the level where they are at. The Education Protection Account requires approval for our decision to put this money in instructional funds for our students.

****Na'Comi Berman motioned to approve the Education Protection Account for 14/15 and 15/16 school years, Christina Thompson seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.****

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Argi Sayari opened up a discussion for future agenda items.

- GEAs
- Student social interaction opportunities/park days
- Science camp for 5th/6th graders
- Special Education
- Vendor database
- Resource Center
- Parent/Student Handbook
- Communication board resource

9. ADJOURN

Jennifer Felton thanked everybody and adjourned the meeting at 7:47pm.