

Sky Mountain Charter School (SMCS) Parent Council Meeting Minutes

By GoTo Meeting Teleconference
1423 W. State Street Suite A, Redlands, CA 92373
Thursday, May 19, 2016 at 6:00pm

1. CALL TO ORDER

Jennifer Felton, SMCS Parent Council President, called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

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.

Sarah Coyan took role:

Parent Council Attendees: Jennifer Felton, Alison Ujueta, Rebecca Sanchez, Sarah Bjorklund, Deanna Munroe, Christy Harker, Na'Comi Berman, Danielle Kuhns, Christina Thompson, Christine DeVries, Karen Cobb

School and IEM representatives also in attendance:

- Cynthia Rachel; Director of Education Support Services
- Argi Sayari; Sky Mountain Educational Liaison
- Susan Clark; IEM Executive Director and Director of Student Enrollment
- Shawna Bohn; Assistant Director of Teacher Support Services
- Brandy Anderson; Director of Curriculum and Guidance
- Melissa Valdez; Assessment Director
- Laurie Goltara; LCAP Coordinator, Education Specialist, & PLT Specialist
- 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.

5. REPORTS

A. IEM Report; Susan Clark

- Year end closeout; IEM office staff is working on getting every rollsheets and student agreement entered, all POs processed and paid by June 30th, database archive and setup for next year, preparing for annual audit that will take place in August, processing 2016/17 applications, and assigning students for next school year.
- Enrollment news; 322 prospective students, students who are waiting to be assigned to an ES. This is a lot of students for this time of year, the bulk of our applications typically come in July and August. Judging by these numbers SMCS enrollment should be really good next year. We have plenty of ESs and should be able to accommodate as much enrollment as we get, we are excited about that.
- SMCS graduation; John Harvey, president of the Lucerne Valley school board was in attendance, Lucerne Valley is the district that sponsors SMCS. We were so pleased and impressed with the parent and student enthusiasm at the SMCS high school graduation ceremony. We are excited to announce that starting next year SMCS will begin having 8th grade graduations to celebrate with the students and the families that step toward the development of their lifelong learning and achievements.
- Recent SMCS meeting; a group of SMCS advisors, the guidance coordinator, and parent council president Jennifer Felton met with IEM directors to discuss how we can serve SMCS families better. One of the topics was vendor approvals; we came up with ideas and ways to improve the process, communication, and delivery in the vendor department. Next year there will be a FAQ page which will address the process, legal rules for vendor approvals, and other relevant vendor issues. We will be working on contacting vendors who have been on our list for a long time and have not yet been approved. We will

inquire to find out if they are still interested in becoming a vendor and if we can assist in the process. We will be working on keeping this process clean, compliant, and improved.

- Summer begins; teachers and families on break. Thank you SMCS families for allowing us to be a part of your educational choice, for supporting your students, we honor what you do everyday to support your child's education.
- Thank you parent council members; parent council member input helps direct our school. Parent council participation is much appreciated. Have a great summer!

B. Teacher Services Report; Shawna Bohn

- Shawna Bohn shared some SMCS graduation pictures and thoughts on what a wonderful event the graduation ceremony was for students, families, and ESs.
- Working on purchasing school site licenses for popular online programs that would be offered to students for free. More news and updates on this to come once we have approval.
- Triangle of ES effectiveness; a continuous cycle as the ESs evaluate themselves by going through the California teaching standards, reflection on how they are collaborating with families, students, and one another to achieve these practices. This process also involves some advisor feedback; the cycle helps ESs to develop goals. We offer professional development to support ESs in accomplishing these goals. There are some grants available to ESs for attending trainings that they have identified as supporting their goals in growing as educators.
- We are not currently hiring ESs for the 2016/17 school year; however, we will keep an eye on the prospective list and hire if needed depending on our enrollment numbers.

C. Curriculum and Guidance Report; Brandy Anderson

- Guidance; Jami-Lynn Riley, Guidance Coordinator, has been meeting with and reaching out to all 8th grade families. Going from 8th grade to high school is a big transition, the meetings with Jami-Lynn help provide families with an opportunity to ask questions and

prepare for high school. Jami-Lynn is also connecting with and reaching out to high school families to provide guidance and support.

- a-g courses; we are working on new a-g courses, last summer we wrote over 80 new a-g courses, this year we are working on refreshing some of those as we have recognized ways to improve those existing courses along with writing new ones. We will also be writing honors courses this year; we appreciate the feedback and ideas from families to initiate these courses. We hope to have these courses available for next year.
- Mobile science labs; each IEM school will have one mobile science lab. The mobile science labs are very large; the trailer and pickup truck that pulls it together are almost 60ft at length. We are excited to get these mobile science labs going, we are purchasing materials for the labs and Project Lead the Way. We are coordinating with teachers to teach the a-g science lab courses that go along with the mobile science labs. We are also working on all the logistics of this exciting new resource, including possibly getting a Project Lead the Way Coordinator for each school to help with these logistics; we need the staffing to support the launch of these new programs.
- Curriculum; Stephanie Lamar, Curriculum Coordinator, is working to wrap up our year intervention. We've done a lot with intervention this year, details were discussed during the LCAP report. We have been looking at the student learning surveys and evaluating the curriculum that families are using for math and ELA to see what is working for families and potential parent trainings we could set up for popular curriculum choices.
- Writing Initiative Program; we will be planning and coordinating resources this summer to help parents and teachers to better teach writing for our homeschooling students. There will be online programs, tools, and resources provided to families to support this; these will be optional programs, families have expressed a desire to have further support in regard to teaching writing.
- Cynthia Rachel addressed questions that came in the GoTo Meeting chat box in regard to Project Lead the Way and what exactly that is; Cynthia shared the following links:

- <https://www.pltw.org/>
- <https://www.pltw.org/our-programs>
- Brandy Anderson explained more about what Project Lead the Way is; the current science standards were written back in the mid 90s, technology was not written into the standards. There is a global criticism of K-12 right now that students are not being prepared for technology driven careers in the workforce and that standards are not focused on project based learning, problem solving, and creativity. There has been a complete rewrite for science standards; these are called “next generation science standards,” our school will be working toward these new standards. A big change from the old standards to the new ones is the integration of engineering principles, problem solving, using information to think of creative design problems/solutions, and modeling systems. The “next generation science standards” could be challenging for our families to integrate into their daily learning; the robotics, computer modeling, and materials to do these projects can be costly. Project Lead the Way is one way we are going to approach supporting our families in the “next generation science standards” in a way that is exciting and fun for our students. Project Lead the Way will give students problems to solve, get them thinking deeper about science (what they are doing and why they are doing it), and to think like scientists. We are basically launching Project Lead the Way K-12 curriculum in a mobile setting with the hopes of getting this opportunity out to the masses. We will initially launch this opportunity to K-8 students and eventually to high school students. There is a great deal of teacher training that will be necessary for launching this program and teaching these classes. We are excited for SMCS to be a Project Lead the Way school; we are one of only a very few independent study schools offering this opportunity. Cynthia Rachel asked what portion of Project Lead the Way will be paid for with LCAP funds; Brandy answered that this is a very expensive resource, the equipment alone cost \$50,000.00-\$75,000.00. Part of this year's LCAP money will be used to purchase the equipment, mobile science labs, and teacher training.

The main expenses have been covered; instructional funds will need to be used to sign students up for these classes, approximately \$280.00 for a semester. Again, these classes are optional for families.

D. Assessment Report; Melissa Valdez

- We have completed all testing for this school year.
- Update on iReady pre and post tests; we had a really good participation rate, more than 94% for both ELA and math. We saw gains in ELA for most grade levels; our gains ranged from 2% in grade 8 all the way to a 15% gain in grade 4. In math we saw a slight dip in grade 10 and no change in grade 11 but our gains ranged from 5% in grade 9 up to 20% in grade 2. We do intend to have iReady available for families through the summer up until July 31st. August 1st we need to do our turnover for the 2016/17 roster, which takes about 10 days, and we need to be sure it's ready to go as soon as school starts because that is when the testing window opens.
- CAASPP state mandated testing is complete; SMCS had 12 different testing sessions at 7 test site locations this year. We tested 1,060 students; we are happy to report we had no major technological issues this year. Official scores will be mailed to families in the fall. Some preliminary digital reports will be available sooner; however, those reports are unofficial and will exclude any parts of the test that require hand scoring.
- Thank you to all parent council members, SMCS families, and ESs for making this a successful testing season; much appreciated as we continue to maintain our accountability requirements for our charter and the state.

E. LCAP Report; Laurie Goltara

- Laurie Goltara introduced herself, she is the new LCAP coordinator for SMCS, in addition she has also been an ES with SMCS for the past 7 years, is a curriculum expert, a PLP specialist, and a homeschooling parent with a student at SMCS. As the LCAP Coordinator, Lauri along with stakeholders (staff, parents, students) helps to develop the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP).

- Results of the LCAP SMCS survey that was sent out to the parent listserv in April; we update the LCAP document each year. In the survey we reflect on the LCAP action items that were put in place the this past school year and indicate which opportunities we felt were most effective with the students. We also consider what we want to do next year.
- LCAP review; three years ago California law made significant changes to how schools are funded; as a result we now have the local control funding formula. The new local control funding formula determines funding based on an unduplicated count of students who meet the criteria set by the state for low income, English Language Learners (ELL), and foster youth. As a result each school is required to create a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). SMCS does not typically have a high foster youth population; however, we do have a growing ELL or low income student population. This is why it is very important for parents to fill out the Household Information Form that ESs have families fill out at the beginning of the year. This is information the state uses to determine funding for our school. We often have families who are apprehensive to fill out this form and wonder why we need this information; the information is for developing our local control funding formula. It is critical for these forms to be filled out so we have accurate representation for the demographics of our school and can receive the funding we need to support our students. Each year the funding changes, each year we write up a plan with an update on how we spent the money. The auditors look at this document; they look to see how much we said we would spend and did we actually spend it. Auditors pull POs and samples to see how the money was spent. LCAP is looked at very closely. We work diligently as a staff and school to ensure that we have accurate information.
- LCAP slideshow; Laurie shared an [SM LCAP presentation](#) showing LCAP goals and specific focus points related to those goals. The slideshow displays opportunities we currently offer, stakeholders selected items relating to the goals to focus on when completing the LCAP survey. The presentation also shows additional ideas from

stakeholders. LCAP brings decision making to the school and to the stakeholders by allowing all the funds to be placed in one bucket for the school to determine how to spend the money in a way that best meets their students needs and align with the eight state priorities. We are always looking for input from all stakeholders. When we keep the goals broad and simple it helps to support and assist as many students as possible.

- Students do not have to be foster youth, ELL, or low income to take advantage of these services and opportunities; all students have access to support offered with these funds.
- Cynthia Rachel added that we will keep with similar and broad goals that will allow us to encompass many action steps. One of the shifts that has been discussed during advisory council meetings for the LCAP is that we previously put emphasis on educational activities along with purchasing various curriculum for the students. We realized we implemented a lot of programs without realizing we did not have the staffing to fully support all of those programs. This year there will be inclusion of new staffing positions that will be funded by LCAP. We need the infrastructure to support these programs. We have a lot of grand ideas coming out of the curriculum and guidance department that need staffing support. There may be less purchasing of specific intervention curriculum next school year as we go through the process but the LCAP is based on stakeholder input so keep an eye out for emails on upcoming LCAP meetings. We want this to be a very inclusive process so people are aware of all the opportunities out there for their students. We are also reviewing the process for the qualifying for intervention factors. Also, if there is something families need for supporting their students we encourage you to ask; we are creative in supporting student needs. If instructional funds have run out and a unique opportunity comes up or something additional is needed, feel free to talk to your ES and ask so we see if there is anything we can do to support that need or perhaps have something comparable readily on hand.

F. Parent Council Report; Jennifer Felton

- Jennifer Felton spoke on behalf of the parent council on issues that have been brought to her attention.
- Vendor issues/concerns; parent council is concerned that the vendor related concerns and issues brought up at previous parent council meetings have not been addressed or handled in a timely manner. These issues seem to be talked about a lot with no action. Jennifer mentioned that after attending the recent SMCS meeting with advisors and IEM staff she feels there is a good plan in place to handle a lot of these issues.
- Purchase order cutoff dates; some parents are concerned about the cutoff date with POs; sometimes a PO is denied after the cutoff date which causes families to lose funds. Cynthia Rachel commented that when IFs are left over they go into a pot that we use to purchase curriculum for the school at large. Products and services purchased with these funds are offered to our families for free. These extra funds are also used for ESs to pre-purchase popular curriculum to have on hand for families to use. We encourage all families to use all of their instructional funds; but if there is money left over this is how those funds are used by the ESs and school. If there is a need after the PO cutoff date please feel free to reach out to your ES or advisor so we can see if there is anything we can do to help.
- Parent Council subcommittees; parent's would like a list of expectations for the subcommittees. Members feel lost on what these committees are suppose to be accomplishing and would like to make sure they can help out the school and give the most support they can. Cynthia Rachel commented that Argi Sayari will be working on this for next year.
- Parent council members are happy with the way state testing went this year. They liked the smaller group settings; the whole process was a tremendous improvement from years before.
- Parent council members would like to know if the OML list could be sent out at the beginning of the year so families can have a list of current prices.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Parent Council Elections; Argi Sayari

Parent Council Elections are currently taking place. We have nine parent council members finishing their second term; the 9 new members will be announced via the parent listserv group next week. We have 18 parent names on the parent council election ballot, the 9 candidates with the most votes will be elected and the remaining 9 candidates will be our 2016/17 parent council alternates.

Thank you to all of our parent council members for your time and support to our school. The following members will continue in the 2016/17 school year to complete their 2nd term:

- Victoria Lehndorfer
- Viviana McDonald
- Christy Harker
- Na'Comi Berman
- Danielle Kuhns
- Kimberly Ireland
- Christina Thompson
- Christine DeVries
- Karen Cobb

We look forward to continue working with you next school year!

We had a member resign last week who was in her first term; we will with our alternates this summer to fill this vacancy in accordance to our Bylaws.

The following members are completing their second term this year:

- Jennifer Felton
- Tari O'Neill
- Alison Ujueta
- Rebecca Sanchez
- Sarah Bjorklund
- Anabelle Mercado
- Dina Adham
- Deanna Munroe

We appreciate the time and commitment you have put in the past two years as members of the parent council. According to our bylaws, these members will be eligible to place their name on the voting ballot for the Spring 2017 elections.

We had a member who was finishing her 2nd term resign last week; we will not need to work with our alternate to fill this vacancy since her term was ending and already being filled with a new member during elections.

- Cynthia Rachel announced that we are moving away from GoTo Meetings; the new platform will be ZOOM and hopefully there will be less technical issues.

7. ACTION ITEMS

A. Motion to approve SMCS 2016/17 Annual Audit

****Cynthia Rachel noted a correction that needed to be made to the agenda; this is for the 2014/15 Annual Audit not 2016/17.****

****Christina Thompson moved to approve SMCS 2014/15 Annual Audit, Na'Comi Berman seconded the motion.** Discussion: all parent council members received a copy of the audit; Cynthia pointed out that we had no fiscal findings. We did have one self reported finding for that year; the way we monitored the unduplicated student count changed that year; once we recognized the way we had previously done it was not aligned with the way it needed to be done moving forward, we self reported that finding and made corrections. Other than that one self reported finding, we had a clean audit.

Motion approved by unanimous vote.**

B. Motion to approve intent to apply for 2016/17 Part I of the Consolidated Application for Funding Categorical Aid Programs:

SMCS is applying for Title II funds. Application requires approval. Title II, Part A, Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting is a federal categorical program contained in the Consolidated Application. The purpose of Title II is to increase the academic achievement of all students by helping schools and district (1) improve teacher and principal quality through professional development and other activities and (2) ensure all teachers are highly qualified.

****Na’Comi Berman moved to approve intent to apply for 2016/17 Part I of the Consolidated Application for Funding Categorical Aid Programs, Karen Cobb seconded the motion.** Discussion: There was a brief included in the agenda; the only federal categorical funding that SMCS applies for is Title II, part A; this funding is used for teacher and principal training and recruiting. We use that to support the VPSS process for our teachers to become highly qualified if they choose to so they can teach various core subjects for high school. This motion is to approve our “intent” to apply for the funding, not how it will be spent. Karen Cobb asked what the “other activities” would include; Cynthia Rachel answered that this is a small amount of money (typically under \$10,000.00) and is primarily used toward VPSS.

Motion approved by unanimous vote.**

C. Motion to approve \$650.00 from SMCS fundraiser account for graduation needs

****Karen Cobb moved to approve \$650.00 from SMCS fundraiser account for graduation needs, Danielle Kuhns seconded the motion.** Discussion: Argi announced that we currently have \$2,340.00 in the fundraiser account and is asking for \$800.00 for graduation needs (flowers, balloons, and various things to make graduation a fantastic event).

****Cynthia Rachel asked for a motion to amend the dollar amount from \$650.00 to \$800.00****

****Karen Cobb moved to approve \$800.00 from SMCS fundraiser account for graduation needs, Na’Comi Berman seconded the motion.** Discussion: Typically, and what will happen in the future is that we will ask for an amount in advance during the March meeting; since that did not happen this year we are asking retroactively. Normally this will not be something we ask for after it is spent.

Motion approved by unanimous vote.**

D. Motion to update Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Policy

****Danielle Kuhns moved to approve the updated Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Policy, Na’Comi Berman seconded the motion.** Discussion: We are excited about this updated policy. The TK program started a few years back when the state moved the kindergarten birthday start date to September. The TK program has been so popular the state decided to offer it for the

foreseeable future. The cutoff date for TK enrollment was that a student needed to be 5 on or before December 2nd otherwise they would need to wait and start kindergarten the following year. What has been put into place effective this past January is the option/opportunity (not a requirement) for schools to offer TK to students who turn 5 after that date but still within the school year to enroll for a partial year of TK. The tricky part is that students can enroll before they turn 5 but the state will not pay us until the student turns 5. The way we are presenting the proposal for this policy update is that the new policy will allow students to enroll on their 5th birthday even if it is after that date, as long as it is within our enrollment window. Parents can submit an application before their child is 5 but the student will not be activated until he or she turns 5. Typically, students are required to complete a full year of TK; with this new policy students who enroll in TK when they turn 5 will only complete a partial year of TK (until the end of that school year) and go into kindergarten the following year; we do not change student grade levels midyear. A lot of families have been asking about this and we are excited to provide this opportunity.

Motion approved by unanimous vote.**

E. Motion to approve March 10, 2016 Meeting Minutes

****Karen Cobb moved to approve the March 10, 2016 Meeting Minutes, Christina**

Thompson seconded the motion. Discussion: No discussion.

Motion approved by unanimous vote.**

Chat Box Questions Discussions:

- Siblings get first priority for ES requests as long as ESs have room; parents just need to be sure to let their ES know they have a sibling coming in so the ES can plan for that on their roster.
- Summer funding; historically there was a \$150.00 limit for materials to be ordered starting July 1st prior to the start of the school year. This year we will be allowing families to place any amount from the first funding period allotment over the summer;

remember that ESs are not contracted to work over the summer so you should get as many PO requests as you can in as soon as possible. If there is something that can wait until the start of school, please do, but if there is stuff you need for starting the school year, try to let your ES know before the last day of school so they can get those POs in. With this new arrangement, where families can spend all of their first semester funds now, those resources will not be provided until the start of school in August; we must ensure the students are in fact continuing to stay enrolled with us before we can deliver items to be used for next year. We give those funds out in advance before receiving them from the state for attendance. If a family purchases something over the summer in advance and plans change and they are no longer enrolled in the fall then the ES will work to cancel the PO or return the items to the vendor. This includes POs for services, we do not pay for services in advance so the vendor can get the PO for a service but it will not be paid until the service has occurred. POs will not be processed if a 2016/17 student agreement (SA) has not been signed; families wishing to place early POs need to be sure their SA has been signed for next school year.

- MiFi device question; the Internet service provided for students is for instructional purposes through the MiFi device and is only contracted for the 10 months of the school year. These must be returned to us for the summer and redistributed in the fall. Christina Thompson mentioned it can take a long time to get these devices back in the fall and wondered if families could put their own SIM card in over the summer and hold onto them. Cynthia Rachel answered that we have to get them back for audit and tracking purposes. Through LCAP this year we are looking to have a MiFi Coordinator so we anticipate being able to get the devices redistributed much faster this fall.
- Ordering a certain quota of curriculum before ordering services; families would need to talk to their ESs or advisors about this; we as a school need to be sure core curriculum in the core subjects are covered. It would depend on the services and curriculum; we as a school must ensure that students have access to all curriculum they need for their

academics aside from services; some classes address those subjects. This would need to be reviewed with your ES to determine the specifics on an individual basis.

- Karen Cobb asked if we as a school will be increasing IFs for the 2016/17 school year. Cynthia Rachel answered that the reason we have not yet made an official announcement about this is because the governor has not yet officially released his budget. IEM schools have a long standing expectation to never spend money we do not have, we are always willing to increase instructional funds but we need to first ensure we can afford to do that. Once we know what we will get per student we will keep families posted. We don't want to promise money until we know we can provide it. For now, the first semester allowance for POs is what we know for sure is the minimum funding which is \$1,000.00 for TK-8th first semester and \$1,250.00 for high school.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None at this time; please email Sarah Coyan scoyan@ieminc.org to have discussion items added to the first meeting of the 2016/17 school year.

9. ADJOURN

- Cynthia Rachel thanked the parent council members for their time this year.
- Huge thank you to Jennifer Felton for serving as the parent council president.
- Thank you to Jennifer Felton, Na'Comi Berman, and other members of the council for coming to us with concerns and working with us to problem solve and continue to improve our school. Thank you to everyone who works to make Sky Mountain great.
- We appreciate families who have worked with new ESs this year; there is so much to learn as a new ES. Thank you to families for being patient and thank you to our advisors who have been dynamic leaders for the school.
- We push teachers and advisors to take time off in July; there is admin staff available all summer if you need anything over the summer.
- Have a wonderful summer!

Thank you for attending this evening; Cynthia Rachel adjourned the meeting at 7:38pm.