



Inter-School Teacher Council Minutes
October 19, 2016
City School Administration Center
300 Sixth Street - 3 East – Rapid City, SD 57701

Dr. Simon welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce themselves and where/what they taught in the district. Dr. Simon told the group that the highlight day was her first of three listening sessions with students. First one was held at Stevens today. Students were articulate and open about sharing strengths and concerns of the district. She said the students said we have amazing staff that has helped the students be successful and our staff do not hear that often enough – so THANK YOU to each of you.

Building questions brought forward:

A teacher has obtained teen pregnancy prevention training curriculum, which is a need that they and others is currently believe is not being met. There is potential for this curriculum to be used in other buildings, but it has not been allowed to be used, citing district policy and a fear of controversy. Is there a standing abstinence-only sex ed policy, and if so, can this policy be reviewed?

Valerie Seales, Coordinator of Staff Development, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment was contacted regarding this curriculum. She let the staff member know the steps for adoption of such curriculum but it was never brought forward. All items like this are vetted through Instructional Council and other committees before going for Board approval.

Automated phone calls are becoming problematic. Teacher-parents are sometimes getting 4 phone calls a day from the automated phone system, often during the day. The concern is that the automated system is being overused, for everything from mundane announcements to important information about lockdowns, and we may wind up with a "boy who cried wolf" situation where truly important situations get ignored because the same system is being used for calls about school dances.

We have heard this conversation from parents. This will be discussed at Senior Leadership and at the principal meeting. Just a reminder – put 1-888-882-7179 in your contacts. This is the automated number that will send out district announcements including weather announcements.

Other questions from the group included:

Shortage of subs – teachers are having to cover shortages even when the teacher's leave has been put in way in advance. Dr. Simon stated that this is a nationwide issue. She said the district needs to look at

enticements similar to what was used in her former district. They didn't solve the issues but they did help the issue.

Substitute orientation – Would it be possible to bring teachers in during sub training to give subs an overview of how the day will look? Also consider bringing in science or math teachers to share information and tips? Or invite subs to open house in the buildings to become familiar with building, staff and students. One building has a sub there every day and they are sent where there are shortages. When some buildings are short, classes are divided among same grade level which is concern because then they are short printed materials, space, etc.

Coaching stipends – why do we get coaching stipends in small amounts rather than one sum now? Sue Podoll stated that it is because of negotiations and stipends are divided among the twelve pay periods.

High security building status – why do we have secured buildings and then open up to voting? – Mr. Janak shared this information - Historically schools have been used as polling places due to their central locations. Districts have also felt that having students watch the electoral process take place offered an additional civic instructional opportunity. That practice is slowly going away as concerns associated with student and staff security take precedence over civic activities. We have significantly reduced the number of schools being used as polling places over the last few years. The Facility committee met with the Pennington County Auditor last spring to discuss this exact issue. It was agreed that every building the is being used as a polling place for the general election will have additional security provided by either Rapid City PD or Pennington County Sheriff. We felt that this is an appropriate response at this time to deter any potential issue that may come up.

What is SLT? Senior Leadership Team was formerly named Cabinet but Dr. Simon has revamped the group. Team members include superintendent, two assistant superintendents, four coordinators, title I grant person, public information manager, and senior administrative assistant. Each meeting we include two elementary principals and one secondary. These are on rotation and then they share the information with fellow principals. Dr. Simon reorganized a position and now we have a director of strategic partnerships and college and career readiness and this person will join SLT. SLT reviews/vets work, processes and many other items at the first level. It is then taken to principal level and will be coming to this group for thoughts. Attendees liked the thought of bringing to Inter-School Teacher Council and then taking back to buildings for input. It also provides them the correct information when they hear co-workers talking and they may not be getting the same information. The teachers feel being heard and valued is important.

Math at high school – question regarding the naming of math with integrated titles. Students transferring from other districts have classes such as algebra, algebra II and geometry. Would it be possible to have them the same statewide?

Graduation – with ESSA implementation and districts waiting to see what the state will decide on accountability – it may be 4 and 5-year graduation rates. Sioux Falls is currently reviewing this.

Burning Issues:

Elimination of the lane changes and years of experience has really been tough to deal with. To be valued and receive the raise was great that it helped recruitment but we being in education don't value additional education – Why?

We need to work together as teachers and respect one another and not bicker. Dr. Simon met with the governor and thanked him for the half cent sales tax and that it is a start. She believes in on-going professional development. The board felt it was a start and we did have strict guidelines on dispersal of the allocated money. We need to continue to talk to legislators. Sue Podoll encouraged attendees to study candidates and their forums as not all candidates support education. For a voter guide with educational views, go to SDEA.org

Dr. Simon wanted to know what the group would like as a format of the meeting. It was decided if there are questions that teachers would like answered, they will get them to Shirley TWO days in advance. We will then share out at the end of the meeting.

Dr. Simon thanked everyone for attending and reminded them that her focus is our students. We need to rally support for our schools throughout the community and create great partnership opportunities. There are tough decisions to make in the months ahead by taking a hard look at early learning and giving our staff the p.d. and tools to help our students become successful.

Representatives are reminded to submit future agenda topics to Shirley at shirley.fletcher@k12.sd.us **TWO** days prior to the next meeting. Tentatively the next meeting is scheduled for December 7th.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Fletcher
Senior Administrative Assistant