

Meeting Summary SCPC

School Community Partnership Council – District Council General Meeting

Date: 1/28/2013

Location: Tucson High Magnet School Cafeteria, 400 N. 2nd Ave.

Call to Order: Kathy Sutherland, 6:05pm

Pledge of Allegiance: Kathy Sutherland

Attendance: Kathy Sutherland (Moderator), Michelle Simon (Secretary), Gary Fowler (Co-Moderator), James Fish (District Liaison), and Leo Masursky (Board Liaison) and appointed SCPC members and district representatives (see attendance record).

1. Discussion of District School Safety:

Notes: Presentation by Jeff Coleman, TUSD School Safety Manager

In light of the incident in Newtown, Connecticut, SCPC requested an update on TUSD safety policies and procedures throughout the district. Mr. Coleman provided the group with the following overview:

The school safety team went on a week-long training in June 2012 to learn how to update the current policies and procedures by including best practices from EMI/FEMA, fire, police, and terror agencies. The team is also part of the State Emergency Response Advisory Council that works on state level safety initiatives. The current TUSD safety policies and procedures were implemented in 2004. These policies and procedures have not been updated since their implementation.

The week following the Newtown incident the following actions took place:

1. Site visits to all locations
2. Review of site safety plans
 - a. Some plans were up to date while others were not
 - b. Identified missed opportunities in the site safety plans
 - c. Implemented policy to update all site plans on a yearly basis
3. An active collaboration has been created with the police department, sheriff's department, and fire department to work in tandem to implement site safety plans and coordinate training.
4. A "Back to Basics" program has been implemented to use the current security procedures in place throughout the district.

Policy Changes/Enforcement:

1. All TUSD personnel are required to wear their IDs at all times. Anyone without an ID should be questioned immediately.
2. All visitors must sign in at the school office and be given a pass by the staff.
3. All individual entering the school should be questioned about their reason for being at the school. If an individual ignores a staff member, as they are questioning them, 911 should be called immediately.
4. All propped doors should be closed and each school site should have a single point of entry.
5. Never open locked doors for visitors.
6. Lock all exterior gates
7. Staff should always carry keys to open doors in case of an emergency.
8. Implementation of these policies adds specific layers of security. Each layer slows down an intruder significantly.

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Site Drills:

Four types of drills are required by TUSD: Lock Down, Shelter in Place, Reverse Evacuation, and Off-Site Evacuation. Sites are required to perform fire drills (off-site) monthly and at least 2 other drills one time per year.

1. *Lock Downs:* All doors are locked and the students and staff are to be quiet and get out of sight.
2. *Reverse Evacuation:* All students and staff are brought back into the building and the site is then locked down.
3. *Shelter in Place:* Students and staff are directed to one area of the site and ventilation is shut down. This is used in case of chemical or toxic type emergencies.
4. *Off-site Evacuation:* Students and staff are taken off site via a preplanned route to a predetermined location.

There is current debate nationwide as to which course of action is most viable for dealing with an intruder. The general consensus is to perform a lock down. Drills are now coordinated with first responders (fire, police, sheriff) and they will participate with their local schools. TUSD schools have been very proactive in doing the required drills. Currently, only fire drills must be documented, but the TUSD Intranet will be setup to include the extra drills as required by the district.

Questions from SCPC:

1. The current policy has not been updated since 2004. You now state that it will be updated yearly. What was the previous policy?
 - a. There was no consistent time frame for the update of the policy. The document is quite large and only certain parts had been updated through the time period. The policy had been to update the plan yearly, but this had not been done consistently.
2. Currently, TUSD does not require that students wear their IDs. Will this be a requirement in the future?
 - a. The focus is to insure that all teachers, administrators, and staff personnel wear their IDs. Students wearing their IDs has been a topic of discussion, but no policy has been implemented as of yet.
3. How many safety officers does TUSD have?
 - a. The safety department has 31 staff members, 24 of which cover school sites over 3 shifts (24hr coverage).
4. What is your perspective on the "Run, Hide, Fight" philosophy regarding intruders?
 - a. This may not be a good option, especially with small children. There are too many variables to consider. At present, lock down is the best option for students and staff.
5. What type of continuing education will be provided to site personnel regarding drills?
 - a. First responders will coordinate training with sites and present information to teachers during professional development times.
6. Lock downs can be very scary for small children. What supports are put in place to help small children during the drills?
 - a. The experience with lock downs has been very positive. School personnel are very calm and make the process very smooth. Teachers handle the situation very well and do a great job of directing students.
 - b. Other comments from members indicated that small children accept these types of drills as a normal part of school life. Drills are meant to be done with as little stress as possible with minimal school interruption. Each site should consider the needs of their students (age, disabilities) and plan accordingly.

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7. What type of exterior security will be installed at schools and will it be installed at open schools, closed schools or both?
 - a. Panic buttons will be installed at all schools that have a voice system with a consistent, understandable message. This process is underway and the hope is that all sites will have them by next school year.
 - b. Access control, cameras, single points of entry, fencing, windows, and other technology are being considered. Currently, the department is looking at all aspects of security and trying to determine an appropriate balance between closed and opened schools.

2. Discussion of TUSD School Closures:

Notes: Candy Egbert provided detailed information about the school closures and the process for transition that would take place. TUSD is using current research and best practices to have the most effective transition possible between closing and receiving schools. Urban and suburban areas nationwide are facing similar issues. TUSD has researched other districts (similar to ours) to find out what they did and what they learned. Discussions have been held with principals, teachers, office managers, and parents. The specific research being used by the district was created by Dr. William Bridges. The curriculum provides a timeline, support components, budget and capacity building strategies for implementation at all levels. TUSD is focused on structure and having all of the pieces in place so there is a good line of communication between all parties. The plan includes components to tend to emotional needs and the physical movement of school culture.

The transition has some important parts that must be accomplished:

1. Disciplined, structured, and precise process for all details (17 tasks) to be accomplished and must be performed in coordination with all parties.
2. Boundary decisions determine home schools, probable enrollment, transportation, movement, human resources, and many other issues.
3. Using structured project management format with timelines and milestones while providing support is key.
4. Closing and receiving schools will receive the implementation plans and visits from project managers about the process and steps.
5. The plan focuses on 3 types of schools: closing schools, receiving schools, and efficiency schools. Movement within a school site will increase efficiency and the plan contains support contingencies for these sites.
6. TUSD is cognizant of the academic effects of this type of movement. The plan includes supports to address this issue and overcome the problem.

Jon Ben-Asher, Principal, Henry Elementary and Gary Fowler, parent at Henry discussed their experiences with the transition from the last school closures (Wrightstown closing, Henry receiving). At the time, Mr. Ben-Asher was the principal of both schools. He and Mr. Fowler detailed the merger of the two schools:

1. Before the merger: each school and a ½ time principal, no librarian, no class support, and declining academic achievement. After the merger: 1 full time principal, full time office/support staff, full time school counselor, class support, and increased academic achievement. The school has an “A” rating for 2 consecutive years.
2. A positive “can do” attitude was the key to their success. This was a community project, with an early start. The process was coordinated with the district, PTA, site council, and other parent leadership.
3. An intentional transition program was implemented to provide support to the students and families. One example was the pen pal program.
4. Joint site councils and PTAs were created.
5. Culture from Wrightstown was brought to Henry. A history wall was created to remember the school and its culture.

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6. PTA from Henry arranged a party for the PTAs of both schools. The goal was to gain a focus for the future from the combined group.
7. Events were coordinated to include both schools.
8. TUSD made a concerted effort to take an organized approach.
9. Important lessons learned:
 - a. Effective communication is necessary.
 - b. Standardization is important, but each school is different
 - c. Strategies to support staff of closing schools are needed
 - d. Teamwork is essential at all levels.
 - e. Happy kids=success, but the lack of resources will leave us with issues to resolve.
 - f. As a receiving parent, it is important to attend meetings and hear the voiced concerns.
 - g. Anger can be turned to motivation for a better future.
 - h. Lead by example. Your positive attitude will be mirrored by others.

Questions from SCPC:

1. Directed to Candy Egbert: How do you facilitate contact with the schools?
 - a. TUSD has a plan implemented to put the appropriate groups in contact with each other. First contact will be made with the closing schools and then move from there.
2. Directed to Jon Ben-Asher: How many families were lost during the last transition?
 - a. Henry/Wrightstown lost approximately 12 families. District wide approximately 100 students were lost during the last transition.
3. Directed to Jon Ben-Asher and Candy Egbert: The last transition was very different from the current situation. The comment was made that doing a transition without resources would leave issues to be resolved. We are now in that situation. What will happen given our limited resources?
 - a. The budget deficit and decreased state funding are the driving forces behind the school closures. TUSD must provide better management and maximization of resources. The School Master Plan was developed to help with the reduction in the deficit and proactive strategies have been implemented to deal with the issues.
4. Directed to Candy Egbert: Last time, the schools were self-selected. This time they are not. We would like to hear about what you anticipate won't work.
 - a. TUSD is listening to the concerns and issues brought up at the community meetings and through other communication avenues. The plan is to implement good ideas from the last transition while taking the current concerns into consideration.
5. Directed to Candy Egbert: How do you start the support process? Where can we see the resources, tools, templates, toolkits, etc... that will be used for this transition?
 - a. The goal is to have a website put in place with FAQs and the resources listed for public use. The website will be up in the near future. Following is the website address for School Closure FAQs.
http://www.tusd1.org/contents/distinfo/masterplan/ganda_closures.asp
6. Directed to Candy Egbert: What will happen next school year? Will these be the only school closures?
 - a. This next school year will result in the 11 school closures. There is no guarantee what the future holds.
7. Directed to Candy Egbert: Given the need for court approval, what is the status of the current plan between TUSD and the schools in this process?
 - a. The goal is to be ready with the plans and have everything in place. TUSD is planning as if the court will say yes to all matters. Things will roll out according to a schedule and not all things will happen at the same time.

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8. Directed to Candy Egbert: What about the dip in academic achievement? How is that being dealt with especially given IEP implementation and possible lack of success at the new school? Who do we talk to?
 - a. The key is finding the best placement for students. In the case of special education students, it may be possible for the teachers to follow the students. Principals from receiving schools will be discussing the placement of students, especially in the case of Howenstein. Exceptional Ed is working closely with schools to make sure students are placed accordingly.
9. Directed to Candy Egbert: What happens with open enrollment?
 - a. Open enrollment has been extended for all families impacted by the school closures.

Candy reiterated that TUSD is paying attention to the process. Plans, tools, and resources will be distributed to all school sites impacted in this transition. Program managers will be in contact with the principals and will be monitoring the plan every step of the way. All impacted schools should have been contacted by their assigned project managers at this point. If a school has not been contacted, please contact Candy Egbert (vivian.egbert@tusd1.org). Kathy Sutherland suggested that Candy return to address SCPC again.

3. Further Discussion:

Notes: Sam Brown, Director of Desegregation, was to present at the meeting, but did not attend. The presentation and discussion with Candy Egbert generated a tremendous number of questions. Many concerns revolved around how the district will address:

1. The academic dip of transitioning students
2. The consequences to staff, teachers, etc...
3. The implementation of new testing standards set forth by the state
4. The anticipated changes to the common core and improved academic achievement

Additional questions and concerns to the meeting topics should be directed to the SCPC Secretary (scpcsecretary@gmail.com) for inclusion in the minutes.

Questions:

Can the SCPC add a message board or blog to the TUSD website for public and member comment?

Action:

The secretary will investigate this possibility with the TUSD Webmaster and report back at the next meeting.

Additional Issues:

1. Clarification is needed regarding Dr. Stegeman's objection to Mexican American Studies. What is the district's position to Mexican American Studies? Is there opposition by Dr. Pedicone about Mexican American Studies? The District is currently at odds with the Board regarding this issue and now we have conflict. What is happening with this? How do we handle the situation with the discrepancy in the state mandate vs. federal court order? Aren't there common core standards that must be followed? Are Mexican American Studies accepted by colleges as meeting these standards?

SCPC is requesting clarification about Mexican American Studies with Dr. Pedicone and with the TUSD School Board.

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2. How are deseg funds distributed? Tulley Elementary had \$300,000 in desegregation funding and now has \$30,000. Why? What is the methodology for the distribution of funds? What are the specific criteria for the distribution of desegregation funding?

SCPC is requesting clarification regarding the distribution of desegregation funding to schools and the specific criteria required for the receipt of those funds.

Addendum:

The SCPC representative from Alice Vail and Sabino High School brought a specific concern to the group's attention regarding the enrollment requirement in order for an elementary school or middle school to receive funding for a librarian (900 students). Her concerns are detailed in the attached document. Included for submission are the Budget Planning Recommendations of TUSD.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:35pm (Kathy Sutherland)

Summary prepared by: Michelle Simon, 2/7/2012

Summary Approved: 2/11/2013