

Abernethy Community Meeting, 4/19

Attending: Anthony Pieretti, Paul Coleman, Robert Krueger, Hanna Nesper Newell, Leah Woods, Brian Richardson, Beth Cavanaugh, Rachel Haas, Christine Olsen, Richard McNeill, Susan Beal, Julia Silverman, Megan Mishler, Sara Albert, Gretchen Kilby, Lisa Delaney.

Call to order: 9:02 am. MOTION by Richard McNeill to approve minutes from April 5 community meeting. Beth Cavanaugh seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

President's Report: Lisa Delaney

- Task force is being put together to consider how we can maintain the garden and keep programming/curriculum around it without having a daytime garden specialist. Teachers are being recruited to be a part of that discussion. (Susan Beal comment: Local scout troops may be willing to help maintain the garden as a public service project; can do outreach.)
- For 2018-2019 school year, the PTA has funded 2 FTE at \$277,000. Principal Hull has requested an additional \$76,000 to get to 2.75 FTE, to allow us to maintain full-time library and full-time instructional support. This is down from her initial ask, because of some staff members taking leave for next year, freeing up funds, community concern that we could not hit the initial target and additional money in Abernethy's All Hands Raised account that was not previously known about.
- If we do not raise enough for that \$76,000 from the Fun Run, we will proceed with a special ask. We have a matching grant of \$15,000 for anything above \$50,000 from Fun Run.
- Still recruiting members for the PTA's new advocacy committee, as well as for other board positions for next year. More info will be available at the chili cook-off.

Communications Report: Beth Cavanaugh

- Based on email from PPS that went out on 4/18, Abernethy has the district's highest student-teacher ratio for K-5. We are just right under the class size cap for every grade level except for one. This ratio does not include foundation allocations. When those are factored in, we go down to 18.4 kids: 1 staff member, down from 19.9: 1.
- The district has set a class size range of 1:28 in kindergarten, 1:30 in 1-3 and 1:34 in 4-5. That is higher than the targets set in the teacher's union contract, and will

trigger “overage pay” for teachers in many classrooms across the district. There is \$2.9 million set aside for overage pay. That’s enough for 44 teachers. But there are significantly more than 44 classrooms where teachers will require overage pay.

- The district is projecting that we will have only 90 3rd graders. The current second grade class has 95 kids. They based their projections on October enrollment numbers; we have added 3 kids since then. Their guess was that we would lose 2 kids next year, but given our more current numbers, that would leave 93 kids and *might* qualify us for a fourth teacher (because 3rd grade is capped at 30, districtwide.) Second grade parent Hanna Nesper Newell will lead a second grade “census” to determine what the numbers might be next year, and see if we can return to the district to make the case for a fourth teacher. Beth will reach out to other schools with K-3 classrooms that bump against the enrollment cap and see if they need any assistance to make a similar push.

Principal’s Report, Heather Hull:

- Messaging from the district has been that we are in a budget shortfall, not a lot of FTE set aside to mitigate challenges. There are 10-15 positions districtwide left for this. When considering where to assign those teachers, they will consider equity, and we don’t qualify for that. Next year’s budget cycle could be even worse for us.
- For 2018-2019 school year, 4th and 5th grade teachers have discussed blended classes. It would reduce class size by 3 or 4 kids, not significantly. The feedback from teachers is that there needs to be more than a single blended class if they go forward. They are also up against a new literacy curriculum that needs to be integrated. Seems not likely that blends will happen for the coming year, but it is not completely off the table. If the teachers are passionate about it, it will be considered. Community members can email administration if they would like to provide feedback about this.
- The 1st and 2nd grade blended class has worked well and will continue next year.

Guest speaker Erica Vaughn from BE SMART with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America:

- More info available at besmartforkids.org/about/
- Tips for gun safety at home – secure all guns in homes and vehicles. Secure guns in your homes and vehicles. Keep guns locked, unloaded and stored separately from ammunition.

- Tell kids that if they ever find a gun in a house not to touch it or allow friends to touch it. Leave immediately and tell a responsible adult.
- Always ask friend and families whether they have unsecured guns in their homes before having your children go there. You can say “Do you have any guns? Do you store them securely? May I see them?” If you don’t like the response, move the playdate back to your house, or meet at a neutral location. If older kids are babysitting, ask the families before they start the job; for younger kids, make sure to check with in-home daycare providers.

Open Forum:

Anthony Pieretti: Family members are master gardeners, could that program be tapped to help with maintenance and programming for the garden, to help keep it going next year?

Adjournment:

MOTION by Beth Cavanaugh to adjourn, seconded by Julia Silverman. Meeting adjourned at 10:13 am.