

# Dowling Site Council

November 10, 2017

## **Present:**

Eric Day, Lloyd Winfield, Kathleen Downes , Catherine McDonnell-Forney, Jessica Keely, Lisa Gustafson, Tracy Young, Khadija Jamá, Ann Shaw, Ann Terlizzi, Jessica McDonald, Val Ausland Edna Farah, Paul Sarver, Emily Nelson, Fadua Pastrano

**Excused:** Janet Kujat, Kate Derickson, Shawna Hedlund, Ben Younan, Abdi Mohammed

## **Motion to approve agenda - Fadua**

- Eric Day moved, Ann Shaw seconded, all agreed

## **Welcome and vote new members – Fadua**

- New member was not present today, table until next month

## **Approval of minutes - Fadua**

- **All members**, please make time to review and approve or amend the minutes when sent out via email. Simply reply 'Minutes approved' if no changes to be made. Once a quorum of approvals is received, Val can post it to the website for the community to view.

## **District Focus Group – Fadua and Dr. Winfield**

- Multiple invitations from the district to involve parents and their feedback have come out as of late. Dr. Winfield received a request to invite **parents on the DSC** to be part of a focus group with the district around budgets and the process for next year. If DSC parents are interested, let Fadua know and she will get you the contact info to sign up. This invitation is distinct from the survey sent by the superintendent for parent feedback on preferences related to how money is spent and is also distinct from the invitation sent by Michael Thomas to invite parents to join the new Climate & Safety Advisory Committee.

## **Festival of Nations – Jessica and Fadua**

- Current counties and grades being represented:  
Kindergarten - Brazil  
1 - Somalia  
2 - Japan (with Tracy)  
3?  
4 – Native American Nations (with Tracy)  
5?
- Melina has offered to do or support the grade that chooses France, Ojibwe or India
- Question was raised about how this project is addressing standards that teachers are trying to make sure they are teaching to. 4<sup>th</sup> grade is searching for a connection and more support in gathering the information to be used in the classroom. Suggestion for

standards to match to was community building or Government unit. Fadia has offered support to teachers that request it.

- Some had the hope that the community/PTO would take this project on and it would not fall to the teachers. This project won't be possible without teacher's support and involvement in the classroom. Discussions around this were had last spring.
- The Festival of Nations committee would like to choose a date for a 15 minute meeting for teachers in which they can 'show and tell' an example of what this experience might look like. Hope to schedule this on day after school Thanksgiving week.
- Where is the information coming from even if it's just part of 'morning meeting'? Teachers are worried about the time it will take to gather this information with their work load. Fadia offered to help anyone that requests.
- Current barrier – not knowing what countries each grade will select. Once countries are decided, the committee can look for additional support for teachers (parents, specialists etc)
- Feedback to the committee this first year is very important along with flexibility
- January 23<sup>rd</sup> is the date of the event.

#### **Classroom Villages – Jessica McDonald, PTO member**

- Concept came out of a PTO meeting and will be a committee of the PTO.
- Feedback from families around feeling disenfranchised, jittery and confused about how to engage with the school as a new family. Goal of Classroom Villages concept is to improve this experience and broaden engagement in all ways in the school so participation more closely matches the demographics of our families.
- This model is based on what Groveland Elementary does, similar models exist all over. Goal is to improve current communication methods, establish new methods as needed and build community among our families, starting at the classroom level. Some parents may already be doing similar type work, this will serve to formalize and support them.
- This is not the same as a 'room parent' which might be familiar to some. More about pulling families together to make connections but there is a 'lead' family member in each classroom to encourage and support this. Teachers are invited but not expected to participate in this engagement.
- Miss Chervený's classroom has been piloting this framework out with 2 parents.
- To establish these leads, the committee may request ideas from teachers or Val as to who potentially good folks to approach would be.

- How do Leaders get family contact information? The PTO has purchased the database My School Anywhere which is how they manage the family directory. Families must OPT IN to this system, thus giving consent to have their data collected and shared at the level they feel comfortable. Discussion was had about avenues to increase participation in this system.
- Classroom village leaders will know who in their group isn't in the My School Anywhere system and can create a paper versions of information to ensure all have access to information. This will require support of teachers to include in blue folders.
- Classroom village leaders can communicate between themselves as a group via email.
- Teachers can have access to this database – Jessica will resend the invitation to teachers and they will then have access.
- New Classroom village leaders will be selected each fall.
- Suggestion to focus on the lower grades for engagement.
- Research suggests text messaging increases engagement with parents. More discussion is needed.
- Handout with more information included at the end of these minutes.
- Next steps:
  - Inform parents and teachers about this concept and tool
  - Find and Designate Classroom Village Leaders in the database
  - Jessica M will send the info to Val who will forward to teachers
  - If PTO could make an info/sign up sheet, that could go home with kids for older grades.

**Motion to Adjourn – Fadia**

- Val made a motion, Tracy seconded, all approved.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- December DSC Meeting – Friday, December 1 at 730am

**Respectfully submitted,**

Ann Terlizzi, (substitute for Janet Kujat)

# *Classroom Villages*

**Mission :** to strengthen the school community by establishing a welcoming culture of engaged students, families, and teachers to get together, build positive connections, contribute, and have fun.

**Vision :** to have one or more parent/family volunteers (Classroom Village Coordinator) associated with each classroom at Dowling to help accomplish the following goals.

**Goals :**

- Dowling is a welcoming and safe school for ALL families
- Dowling has a culture of community with positive connections within classroom and between families in class/grade
- Increasing involvement and engagement in school community among Dowling Families
- Supporting Teachers
- Building a web-like system of communication that flows from PTO and school to Classroom Village Coordinator to families, for a more personal and connected strategy to engage families. (This would not take the place of current systems, but add to them to reach more families).

**Classroom Village Coordinator Role:** Can vary depending on the teacher's needs and volunteer's interests and availability.

- Welcome all families and encourage more engagement in classroom/school community
- Facilitate communication between families, teachers, school and PTO (I.e, for special events,etc)
- Utilizing PTO directory to email families (access granted to coordinators for classroom email blasts)
- Plan special events/parties with the teacher for class or for families outside of class/school
- Have fun!

**Steps Forward:** (Many family members may already be doing much this. Classroom Villages will formalize the role and put systems and resources in place to support the volunteers)

- Gain support of teachers and PTO
- Potential volunteers, talk to your teacher; teachers, talk to active parents/volunteers in your class
- Email [directory@dowlingpto.org](mailto:directory@dowlingpto.org) to get access in the directory to email your child's whole class
- Contact Morgan Paldron, Kathleen Downes, or Jessica McDonald: [morgan.paldron@gmail.com](mailto:morgan.paldron@gmail.com) , [kathee.regan@yahoo.com](mailto:kathee.regan@yahoo.com) , or [jmcdonald321@gmail.com](mailto:jmcdonald321@gmail.com) for more information