**Appleton Citywide Parent Network Meeting**

**February 2, 2015, 6:30 pm**

**Wilson Middle School**

**In Attendance:** Jill Georger (Houdini), Amber Cittadino (Badger), Lee Allinger (AASD), Tober Moderson (Jefferson), Sheree Garvey (AASD), Renee Brown (Badger), Jenny Hintz (McKinley), Ginger Schaden (Berry), Troy Blake (Edison), Kathy Hammerton (Houdini), Stacy Peapenburg (Einstein), Karin Kools-Scheel (Jefferson), Mark McQuade (Wilson), Tiffany Frerks (AASD), Shannon Rabas (Odyssey-Magellan), Michelle Anderson, (McKinley), Becky Drennan (Huntley).

\*Meeting minutes from last meeting are on our website: [www.appletonparents.com](http://www.appletonparents.com). Recently awarded Project SPEAK grants can also be found on our website.

\*It was suggested by Jill Georger that we do another Staff Appreciation event similar to last year’s bagel drop-off on the March late start date. A motion was made by Michelle Anderson to do another staff bagel delivery. Amber Cittadino seconded. The motion was passed unanimously by all in attendance.

\*Our next meeting will be Monday, April 13th, at Einstein Middle School, at 6:30 pm.

\*The purpose of this meeting will be to share our cover our topic of choice: **Gathering Input for the Current Grading System** (the 1-4 rating scale in elementary classes that is currently on the progress reports which we receive.). How do we feel? Do we understand? What do you like/dislike? What are your concerns/questions?

\*There is scattered information within our district on whether or not this transition is occurring in our middle schools. Currently, middle schools are still operating with percentages and letter grades, but some parents are seeing a 1-4 rating system coming through on homework assignments and it may be confusing to some parents. Potential future changes may need to be clarified.

\**Each attendee was given the opportunity to write on a poster with each of the above headings written on it, and below is a summary of what was written on the posters and the discussion that ensued:*

**Poster Topic: What questions/concerns do you have regarding potential future changes in grading/progress reporting?**

Elementary Level:

\*Is there any chance of reverting to the “original” grading system if there is an overwhelming negative response?

-AASD: In last year’s survey, there was a largely positive response, but there is another survey that is going home in upcoming report cards. In some surveys, it was reported that the two separate reporting keys on the last year’s report cards may have been confusing to parents. As a result, this year, changes were made so that the reports cards had the same reporting key.

-Parent: There isn’t as good of a “thermometer” with the new reporting system. With the A-F reporting system, it was easier to know when to be concerned, but with the 1-4 scale it is more difficult.

\*Are teachers held accountable for their students and the numbers that are put on the reports? (ex: Everyone needs to be at a “3” before year’s end.)

-Concern was brought up by a parent whose child was still at a “2” at year’s end, when during the course of the year, she had been told that just meant that her child was “on target to meet end of the year goals.” Now what would happen, being that it is the year’s end, and he hasn’t achieved the “3”?

\*Parent: Could there be a hybrid for 6th grade—both the 1-4 and a letter grade system to help them with transition to middle school?

Middle School Level:

\*Parent: Will (or when) this system go into effect?

-AASD : There “is no hard and fast answer.” We are exploring the options, but currently there is no timeline in place.

\*How would shifting to a 1-4 system benefit the transition into high school with the use of GPAs? Is there any benefit to a transition in middle school to a 1-4 system?

-Parents felt that this transition would be more impactful at a middle school.

-Some parents felt that if there weren’t rumors of the impending change going around, that this conversation would have died down long ago.

\*Will surveys be conducted prior to this system being put into place?

**Poster Topic: What do you like about the current standards based progress reporting system (grading system)?**

Elementary Level

\*Separation of “achievement” and “effort.”

\*Numbers are easier to understand than check marks.

\*Good to know that they are meeting standards/where they need to be for the point in the year (not all parents may understand this on the reports, so it is also a dislike.)

Middle Level

\*”Like grades as they prepare for high school.”

\*Question was raised about why there was a need for change. Was there concern with the previous grading system?

-AASD: The grading system is now more reflective of the standards being used in the classroom. The grading report is not just a tool for parents, but it should be reflective of what is happening in the classroom.

-AASD: With any rating system, they are never going to get a consensus amongst the 8000 parents that any one system is perfect.

-AASD: A parent need was not the driving force for a change, but a better need to understand and reflect what is going on in the classroom.

-AASD: At the Middle Level, staff is not prepared to go to 1-4. They use standards-based instructional practices, but there is no requirement to switch to standards-based report cards.

-AASD: Change is hard for our teachers as well. We need to think about: What is it that we want our children to know and do? What are we going to do to get them there? How do we know when we get them there? What are we going to do with the kids who already know (what we are teaching)? How do we maximize every child’s potential? The most resistant teachers are the ones that you are hearing from. We need to get our teachers on board first before we can get our parents on board.

-AASD: There are multiple feedback opportunities in a classroom by the specific learning targets.

-Parent: It is important to bring the students on board because even the students are confused.

**Poster Topic: What are your dislikes/concerns with the standards-based progress reporting system (grading system)?**

Elementary Level

\*4’s are “unattainable,” even according to some teachers (“we don’t give 4’s”), so sometimes our kids feel like they cannot be good enough.

\*I feel like I know less about the specifics of how my kids are doing. I figure if they get 3’s, they’re fine, but I feel I don’t know as much as I did with the previous system.

\*Comments seem to be too generic (not always applicable to that particular child).

\*I don’t know what to do when my child has a 1. Also, what does it mean if my child has a 1 at year end? What does that mean?

\*What if it looks like my child got the worksheet correct and receives a 2?

\*Rare usage of 3’s and 4’s.

\*Seems to work better for skills that are developing through the semester/year (ie. reading composition, writing), but not as well for more discrete areas (ie, math, science).

\*Confusion over use of 2 meaning both “on track” and “needs improvement.” As a parent I don’t know which way it’s being used.

Middle School Level

\*Difficulty translating 1-4 system use on homework/tests to final A-F grades.

\*Do not see 1-4 grades on Infinite Campus—only letter grades.

\*No way to follow child’s progress using a 1-4 scales. Have never seen any assignments with any grades on them.

**Poster Topic: Other Questions/Concerns**

\*How does this possibly change GPA’s for in high school? Do the numbers affect it?

\*What middle schools currently have this implemented?

\*Struggling with standards-based progress reporting at middle school when I feel that middle school is prep for high school and high school GPA is critical for college admission. Need to prepare your child as a parent responsibility.

\*Isn’t this more work for teachers? How do you achieve consistency across teachers/grades?

\*What drove the need to change at the elementary level?

\*What will drive the need for change at the middle school level?

\*Parent: some middle schools are seeing this system already implemented on assignments. Change is good, but many of us are reluctant to change. We want to be along on the journey.

\*Parent: 90% is clear, vs. 2-3 system is gray.

\*AASD: There is a panel of teachers to collaborate on what 1-4 mean. The teachers who have worked hard to figure out what those mean.

\*Citywide: There is a feeling that we possibly might not be meeting with this specific topic of choice if there weren’t inklings of transitions in middle school and rumors about transitions in high school.

\*Parent: Middle school assignments are coming home with 1-4’s on them, and there is a disconnect between parents and teachers. Parents weren’t notified.

\*AASD: It is important that we have this dialogue and these discussions. We are proud of what our teachers are doing.

\*Parent: We are also supportive in our teachers and what they are doing. This group (Citywide members) are in the schools and the most supportive.

**Project Speak Thank You**

\*Jane Heenan (4th grade teacher at Houdini Elementary), came in to thank Citywide for the Project Speak grant in which she purchased 5 Hokki stools and UV lights.

\*85% of people in the Midwest have some type of seasonal affective disorder, so having the UV lights/natural lights have made a difference.

\*Hokki stools run about $100 a piece and she rotates them to different students every day as an incentive for positive behavior. They are more compact than yoga balls and easier to store.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 pm.

Submitted by:

Amber Cittadino

Appleton Citywide Parent Network Secretary