

Port Angeles School District
216 East Fourth Street, Port Angeles, 98362-3023, 360.457.8575

**Minutes – Elementary Transition Team Meeting
Wednesday, March 7, 2007**

Committee Members:

Kate Wenzl, Jeanne Wolfley, Michele Haworth, Doug Hayman, Nancy Pack, Debra Roos, Holly Juskevichy, Loren Engel, Karen Sox, Michelle Olsen,, Theresa Schmid, Vicki Helwick, Kat Dadd, Leah Bauman, Darren Mills, Ron Jones, Mary Morgan, Theresa Rothweiler, Nolan Duce, Julie Smith, Mary Hebert

Others in Attendance:

Dr. Cohn

Meeting Opening:

Mrs. Hebert welcomed the members and informed them that Dr. Cohn would be speaking with them about various subjects.

Dr. Cohn acknowledged the members' hard work and congratulated them on their decisions made thus far, particularly the decisions on special education program placement and the MAC Program. He informed the members that the *Peninsula Daily News* story that first appeared following the school board meeting of February 12, 2007 had contained incorrect information. The *Peninsula Daily News* was contacted and the information was finally reported correctly several days later.

Name Expectations:

According to Dr. Cohn, the school board members are asking the Elementary Transaction Team to decide whether or not the members should consider changing the name of the new elementary school that is being creating because of this transition process (Roosevelt/Fairview.) The second tier of the process is to inform the school board members of the rationale behind their decision by listing the pros and cons of whether to proceed with the process or renaming the 'new' elementary school, and if so, why? He also explained that the Middle School Transition Team is also deciding whether or not to rename Stevens Middle School.

One member asked about the cost behind renaming a school. She noted that along with the cost of signs, stationary, and inventory there would be other expenses, not the least of which are the newly required team uniforms, logos, etc. Dr. Cohn explained that the school district is in the process of gathering the information regarding the cost associated with renaming a school that will be part of the Middle School Transition Team report that is due on Monday, March 12, 2007 to the school board.

Please see the more detailed information on the renaming issue that is addressed later in these meeting minutes.

Scheduling:

Dr. Cohn informed the members that there had been discussion about the Learning Improvement Day activities that will occur on March 9, 2007, especially with regard the self-contained classes, such as the sixth grade classes.

Dr. Cohn asked if there were any other questions. Since there were none, he left the meeting.

Boundary Issues:

Mrs. Hebert reminded the members that at the February 7, 2007 meeting, she had reviewed the schools' boundaries with them. She also reminded them that, as discussed, the MAC Program is a district-wide program and the students within the MAC Program will be selected from all the elementary schools.

She further explained that the board had made the decision that the existing students in MAC Program may continue to be a 70/30 split, with 70 % of the children in the MAC Program from within the Franklin Elementary School boundary. Ms. Pack has planned an 'Information Night for MAC Program' to be held on March 15th.

Room Assignments per Building & Staffing:

Hamilton:

Mr. Engel described the placement of the classrooms for the upcoming school year. There are two classrooms located in the back of the school that will be used as preschool classes. These rooms were chosen because there is easy access to/from the parking lot and there are appropriate bathroom facilities located nearby. The portables will be used for band, the Responsible Behavior Development Program (RBD) and the Head Start Program. Space for Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy (OT/PT) has not been identified as yet but the speech pathology room will remain where it is now located. There are still some accessibility & facility issues that Mr. Engel is working to address at this time. Several members asked questions and explanations were given.

Roosevelt/Fairview:

Mr. Hayman informed the members of the placement of classrooms. Some of the information is as follows. The room that is now being used for strings instruction can be used as the third sixth grade classroom. There is a question as to whether or not the portables will be taken away. If the portables are taken away, there is no room for bubble classes. The special education classes were identified as well as Resource Room II classroom. Mr. Hayman anticipates 500 students to be enrolled at Roosevelt/Fairview next year. The OT/PT room will be placed close to the special education classrooms. There is enough office space for all the specialists.

Franklin:

According to Ms. Pack, there are two bubble classes in the fourth & fifth grades. Once the primary multi-handicapped class moves to Roosevelt/Fairview, there will be enough space for

the Title One classroom. Ms. Pack anticipates that there will be three kindergarten classes. Whether or not kindergarten will be an all day program has not been determined as yet. That decision will be made at the end of March, 2007. Ms. Pack also identified the OT/PT space. If kindergarten becomes an all-day program, all classrooms will be used. If the kindergarten program is not an all day program for next year, then there would be some flexibility regarding available spaces/rooms.

Jefferson:

Some of the information shared is as follows. The portable that is now being used for strings and storage, along with a second anticipated portable can be used for sixth grade classrooms. There will be one open space, but it's too small to be used for a classroom. There will be two kindergarten classes. In the future, the area now used for storage will be used for band classes.

Dry Creek:

Ms. Wenzl informed the members that the staff has been discussing various considerations regarding classroom placement. The staff wants to protect a designated space for their reading room. Another topic of consideration that has been discussed is regarding the available space. Since space will be tight, how can sixth grade general music, band and strings all be taught at the same time? After discussing the matter, it was suggested that, perhaps, the library could be used for general music. The portables will be used for orchestra. The other side of the portable could be used for three classes. The staff did not consider offering the sixth grade teachers a portable in which to teach since that did not seem very welcoming. However, several sixth grade teachers have expressed a preference to teach in the portables. Another consideration is where to place the portables. Also considered is whether or not the children have enough supervised play area. The staff is hoping that the younger and older students will not be sharing the same bathroom facilities. The third kindergarten class will move into the preschool area. There is no room for bubble classes.

Ms. Hebert reminded the members that as staffing is confirmed, there may be new decisions needed with regard to room assignments.

Questions were asked about bubble classes. The district has always had a goal of 22 students per classroom. However, realistically, there is no way to commit to 22 students per classroom, particularly for the sixth grade students. However, as Mrs. Hebert emphasized, the situation for 2007-08 will be no different than it is at the present time. Some classes/grades will always be larger than others. Mrs. Hebert stated that 'we know which grade levels have the higher number of students now. What we don't know at this time is the number of children who will be enrolled in kindergarten.'

Naming Facilities:

The members were given a copy of Policy No. 6970 "Naming Facilities" and Procedure 6970P "Naming Facilities" to review along with a number of emails sent from parents and community members who have written stating their views about renaming of schools and about programs.

Under the handout entitled “*School Name Change*” it states that the school board requested “... a recommendation from the Elementary Transition Team regarding whether the team should consider renaming the Roosevelt facility as students from other elementaries are blended into the new, larger K-6 program. If so, what should the process entail, and how much cost is estimated to be associated with such a renaming decision? The “default” is that the school will be named Roosevelt Elementary School, and materials must be purchased to accommodate the changes in 2007-08. We expect these reports on March 12.”

Mrs. Hebert suggested that the members take the time to voice their opinions as to whether to consider going through the renaming process. Therefore, each member was given the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Hayman informed the members that Fairview Elementary staff has continued to discuss the name change for the ‘new’ Roosevelt/Fairview facility. However, the staff has stated that there are more urgent matters to be discussed, such as staffing. However, most staff would like to keep the Fairview name, as would the students. He also stated that Fairview is not just the name of a school, but it also represents a culture and a community. Having said all of the above, he believes that the Fairview community will continue to rally together and that the name change is seen as a less important issue than other decisions, particularly the decision around all-day kindergarten.

One member feels that the Elementary Transition Team members should consider a name change.

One member stated that during the Middle School Transition Team meeting last night, the members created a list of the pros & cons of a name change for the Stevens Middle School. The Middle School Transition Team members were also asked to give the school board three to five names for consideration.

One member stated that she is torn on the name change issue. While she values the importance of looking at a name change, she recognizes that each school’s accomplishments should be acknowledged and honored.

One member stated that it is not an easy process, but it is a necessary to go through the pros & cons of the renaming issue.

Several members stated that the name of Roosevelt has been in this community for many years and is an honored name and therefore, should be kept.

Several members were concerned with the fairness of the renaming process and asked how everyone involved could be honored through this process, including community members, particularly since the new ‘Roosevelt/Fairview’ school will be a combination of three schools.

Several members stated that it would be difficult to satisfy everyone involved in the renaming issue since it was an issue that people do feel strongly about and in which they want to share their viewpoints.

One member questions the validity of the policy since this will not be a ‘new’ building. (However, it was pointed out that it is considered a ‘new building’ by the school district.) She then stated that at this point, she’d have to vote no to going through the process of renaming the school.

Several members stated that there are other more important issues to be considered and determined, and that money should not be spent on renaming the school.

A member stated that no matter what the district does, it will cost money but she would vote to keep the name as Roosevelt.

A member stated that since every Fairview student becomes a Roosevelt student, it is not a ‘hard sell’ to ‘vote’ to keep the name Roosevelt, with which students are familiar. Also, it would be difficult to satisfy everyone, even if it were possible to give them all a ‘voice’ in the decision.

One member suggested that the name Roosevelt be kept. Instead, a new mascot could be voted on and through this process of choosing a new mascot, complete with a new color scheme for uniforms, people would come together and feel more comfortable having had a ‘voice’ in the decision process.

After this lengthy discussion, Mrs. Hebert called for a vote. She reiterated that a ‘Yes’ vote by members would mean that they are proposing to go through the process of renaming the school, whereas a ‘No’ vote would mean that the members would not go through the process of renaming the school and instead, go with the default which means the suggested name will be Roosevelt Elementary School..

Another charge given to the members was to list the pros and cons of renaming the school and to state their rationale behind their decision.

When tallied, there were 16 ‘NO’ votes and 3 ‘YES’ votes. Therefore, the members have voted not to go through the process of making suggestions to the school board on renaming the ‘new’ elementary school.

Rationale Behind the members’ decision:

Pros: going with the No vote & not remaining the school:

- Roosevelt is an honored, historical name and should be kept.
- Roosevelt is a familiar name and familiarity equals comfort for people
- It gives a new identity to three groups of school children: those from Fairview, Monroe and Franklin.
- It is not a “new” building. We should ‘honor history.’
- It will save money by not going through the renaming process.
- There are more important issues to be considered and determined.
- There is no way in which to satisfy everyone regarding the renaming issue.
- Instead of changing the school’s name, decide on a new mascot to bring people on line with, and be more comfortable with the transition process.

Cons: going with the 'Yes' vote to proceed with the process of renaming of the school:

- Parents and community members will have 'no voice' in the matter of renaming the school.
- A new name would help in the process of adjusting to the transition. A new name will 'signal' a new, fresh beginning for all those involved.

Reviewing Past Decisions:

Mrs. Hebert reviewed the past discussions and decisions made by the team members.

She has been asked to have a report ready for the March 12, 2007 school board meeting which includes a review of the decisions previously reached on music and physical education schedules/staffing.

She informed the members that another music schedule has been provided during a meeting she held earlier today. It is a complicated schedule but the board members were not all in agreement with the original music schedule presented to them earlier in the year by the Elementary Transition Team members. She stated that the school district can not operate successfully with the current number of physical education teachers. When the sixth grade students are added to the elementary schools, it would be even more difficult to present a 'doable' physical education schedule.

She asked if it is possible to have music more than two times per week for the sixth grade students with the existing number of music teachers. Since the school board has already informed the members that there will be no additional staff, the solution of a music program given twice a week is a reduction in the music program. Mrs. Hebert stated that at this time, it is not possible to have an accurate, finely-tuned schedule without knowing the middle school staffing and schedule.

Mrs. Hebert noted that in her report to the school board members on March 12, 2007, she will state that with all the continued work done on scheduling, it looks like it may be possible to have music more than twice per week for the sixth grade students.

One member asked if she would inform the school board that this was a decision reached by the Elementary Transition Team members and was reassured by Mrs. Hebert that because the members have not had the time to discuss this again, after their initial music decision was rejected by the school board, that she would not present this as an Elementary Transition Team members' decision.

One member asked if anything will be presented to the school board regarding time issues, and in particular to mention that the members had recommended lengthening the school day in order to have enough instructional time for an appropriate curriculum.

Mrs. Hebert reiterated that she must create a report that will address many different issues, including costs, programs, and extended days. The school board intends to have another discussion about music. This team will not have recommendations ready for Monday, but Mrs. Hebert will reiterate the team members' previous recommendations.

During the meeting, Dr. Cohn got a call from the city. He informed the members that the final decision by the city for the emergency response time to Roosevelt was approved today. It was decided that whatever team is available at the time of an emergency, they will respond to an emergency. In this way, timely emergency service will be provided to the Roosevelt/Fairview school.

Another Meeting Needed?:

Since there are more discussions and decisions to be made, the members agreed to hold an additional meeting in March. That meeting will be held on March 21, 2007 from 6:00-8:00p.m. at the Central Services Building.

Meeting Adjourned:

The meeting was adjourned at approx. 8:30p.m.