

## **L.M. Nixon Elementary School Site Council 2011-2012**

### **Meeting Minutes**

October 3, 2011

#### ***In Attendance***

Mary Pat O'Connell  
Jodie Harrier  
Ginna Park  
Kevin Stevens

Laura Nicolls  
Mike Grady  
Athina Peiou-Quake  
Tina Sugimoto  
Melissa Wilkinson

#### **Agenda Item 1: Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The Council reviewed the draft Minutes of the September 2011 meeting and upon motion made and seconded the Minutes were unanimously approved as drafted.

#### **Agenda Item 2: Mission and Vision Statement**

A lively discussion ensued regarding the Mission Statement. The members of the council were thankful for the student and parent input for creating the Mission Statement. The PTA, student body, teachers, and the Site Council worked diligently on the Mission and Vision Statement to accurately reflect the current goals and aspirations of L.M. Nixon students.

Then followed a discussion about using linked text for certain words (i.e. Neuro-Educational research) in the document. This may be of benefit for those who would like definitions or a greater depth and breadth of information regarding terms used in the Vision Statement. Mary Pat reminded the council that this is a "live" document that can change with the needs of the student body over time. Additionally, Mary Pat looks at the Vision Statement as all that we would like to grow into and the Mission Statement as a succinct statement distilling our reason for being.

The council unanimously approved the final draft of the Mission and Vision Statements and discussed how best to publicize and disseminate them. It was decided that the L.M. Nixon Website would display a copy of the Mission Statement with a link to the Vision Statement. Communication and distribution school wide would include a full version of the Vision Statement via a link because it has a higher word count than e-News prefers. Laura will talk with Julie Tomz about adding the Mission and Vision Statements to the Nixon News Letter.

#### **Agenda Item 3: Update on District Disproportionality**

Mary Pat explained that the Palo Alto Unified School District has a disproportionately higher amount of children of racial minorities in special needs programs compared to the baseline population. This overrepresentation of minority children in the PAUSD special needs programs has resulted in the development of a process to provide all needed support for children at the classroom level. The Nixon School Site Council is the committee responsible for approving Nixon's Response to Intervention ("RTI") plan for identifying, assessing, and ensuring the implementation of the school's programs and strategies for enabling students to perform to the best of their abilities. This RTI plan assists in the early detection and intervention to assist underperforming students with a view towards bringing their performance up to grade level standards.

Nixon Elementary School has existing strategies and programs in place for prevention, detection, and early intervention to address and support the educational needs of the children. The goal is for greater consistency in how

this process works. What is needed is a strategy for the district to look into the process for how children qualify for special needs and how to support everybody effectively.

Mary Pat noted that Nixon Elementary School did not have any disproportional minority representation in its special education classes, but that the State had identified a disproportional minority representation across the District as a whole.

One of the ways Nixon supports the need of an individual child is by the “Kid by Kid” Grade level meetings with teachers and the principal. At these meetings, each individual child's needs and strengths are discussed as well as how best to support this child at Nixon Elementary.

At this time, there is deliberation on how to make this information easy for parents to access. Discussion is needed on ways to distribute the information so that parents can help and support their children where needed. Parents may fear or may not understand how this system works. Nixon is here to help all children access an education that is individualized to their needs.

#### **Agenda Item 4: District Focus Goals**

Mary Pat tabled this agenda until the District sends more information on this topic.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Other Business**

Mary Pat brought to the Council’s attention a New York Times Article titled “What if the Secret to Success Is Failure?” and advised that the Nixon PTA is interested in co-sponsoring, with the Site Council, a Nixon community discussion of the ideas raised in the article. This article explores questions on what it takes to flourish... and the idea of resiliency. The ideas presented encourage discussion on how to succeed after failure. Discussion ensued and the Council’s consensus was in favor of partnering with the PTA on such a discussion session. Athina Peiou-Quake offered to serve as the Council’s liason with the PTA to organize a Nixon community discussion session regarding this article, similar to last year's discussion session on the book “Nurture Shock.”