

Community Forum Notes—April 29, 2009

1. Welcome

- a. Introduce CSC, PTA, and SPie reps—CSC elections—
Annie Leuthold and Kelly Hisamoto have volunteered to be on the CSC for next year. Ballots will go out in this week's Thursday folders . Due date for ballots is May 7th.
SE Denver community meeting Wed. May 20th 5:30-7:30 at Slavens—please attend to share your voice on issues concerning Southmoor!
- b. Teachers introduce themselves

2. Topics of discussion

- a. **Stimulus package money** will be distributed to Title 1 schools only-Southmoor will not receive any money at this time from stimulus package
- b. **New tables for the cafeteria**—to replace unstable tables—bond money from last fall's election for addressing safety issues will pay for cafeteria tables
- c. **Presentation by Helen Moser—GT Itinerant**
Helen's presentation:
 - *Many positive steps for HGT/GT this year—some new staff members at the administrative level are in the process of advocating at a higher level—gives DPS GT/HGT a larger voice
 - *Explanation of HGT vs. GT identification: HGT is a separate program
GT is identified within the traditional program
 - ***Parent concerns**—Why are there not more pull-out done at Southmoor to work with the GT identified students? According to Ms. Moser, pull-out does not serve their needs best. The GT itinerant is only at the school 1 day per week, so having her pull out students 1x per week is not as effective as giving teachers the tools to work with the GT students on a daily basis . Ms. Moser worked with teachers this year on differentiated instruction. Ms. Moser does pull out students to meet and get to know the children or she comes into the classroom to work with the teacher and work with differentiation strategies to best meet students' needs. She helps teachers to understand the range of student learning styles.
 - *Next year each HGT/GT will have an **ALP: Advanced Learning Plan** to help structure their learning to benefit the student the most. Ms. Moser is also responsible for testing for GT/HGT. Ms. Moser is also planning to build a library of resources for GT/HGT instruction. She will help with ordering materials for students
- d. **Humanities Facilitator and Interventionist-half time positions—**
 - i. Will work with teachers and staff in the fall to determine the needs of the students
 - ii. **Facilitator** will work with teachers to provide materials and professional development (teaching techniques, etc.)

- iii. **Interventionist** will work with K-5 students in cooperation with the teacher—will take small groups of students in a.m. based on assessments for extra intervention—the interventionist will work on both lack of skills and skills not being addressed (such as GT)
- e. **Enrollment for next year/class size**—overhead and handout

District follows growth trends i.e. it looks at periods of time over the years.

 - 1. ECE-next year we are going to have Colorado Preschool Program (high needs students)—capped at 16 with a para. Denver Preschool Project (the district program)—capped at 20 students. We have a waiting list for next year for ECE
 - 2. KDG-We cap kdg. at 50 all-day, tuition-based students, which is the max in this program. This year we have had 58-60 students combined in a.m. plus full day kdg. There will be no students choiced into kdg.
 - 3. 1st grade—5th grade projected enrollment (see handouts-can obtain copies from office)
 - 4. Bottom line: **377 students 1st-5th projected for 2009-2010 school year: this is the number used for pupil to teacher ratio
 - 5. We need to average 26 students per classroom to retain all FTE (full time equivalency—i.e. full time teachers) If our enrollment numbers drop below the 26 average, we lose FTE funding
 - 6. After the first days of school, we identify classrooms with 27+ students to get negotiated para time (one hour per day per student over 27)
- f. **NEW SCHOOL FOR HGT:** Proposal by Grace Hopley and Janet Gilbert—Mrs. Hopley explained their proposal for new DPS HGT 1st-8th school: Designing a school for HGT grades 1-8. Grace Hopley and Janet Gilbert proposed a new school with the DPS school board with a request to open in the fall of 2010. Nice option for HGT to be grades 1-8. . **Board was surprised to know that Southmoor was overcrowded.** New school would be in the SE area of Denver. HGT helped start the school but we have outgrown our walls. How can parents help? Send letters to the board, go to the regional Community Meeting at Slavens on May 20th. Continuity would be better for students. Vote on the proposal will be in June. School board meeting on May 18th and June 18th is an open forum to discuss this issue before the vote.
- g. **Use of Modules for 2009-2010**—Teachers will stay in same classrooms for next year. This means that 4th graders will be in the modules next year (this year's 3rd graders will go into the modules next year as 4th graders). Information utilized in Mr. Burger's decision—each module classroom has over 800 sq. ft. Most classrooms in the main building are 700+ sq ft. 4th grade teachers have expressed a willingness to stay in the modules for one more year. They will have smaller, 1 student desks instead of double desks in the modules for more seating flexibility next year.

Parent questions on the module issue:

 - 1. Could music be moved to modules? -Mr. Burger's response: because of the complexity of the instruments (especially large instruments such as drum sets and piano) going back and forth into the main building, this would be difficult.

2. Could library be reconfigured? Can we move the movable walls around? Mr. Burger's response: the movable walls are actually attached to metal tracks bolted into the ceiling and a reconfiguration would be difficult and Southmoor would incur the costs.
3. Could the computer lab re-utilized? Mr. Burger stated that this is not an option.
4. What about putting the 4/5 HGT students in the modules? Mr. Burger's response: because of the particular learning styles of HGT students and the resources utilized by the HGT teachers, there is not enough space in the modules for the 4/5 HGT students. HGT students need more room to spread out with their learning materials.

Comments by parents regarding modular issue:

1. There are just as varied learning styles in traditional classrooms as there are in HGT and with the 3rd grades being so large, the space in the modules is a major concern
2. If teachers are happy in the modules, hopefully students will be happy too and it will be a positive learning atmosphere for the students. If teachers are unhappy in the modules, this would cause even more problems.
3. There is concern about the larger class size being in the module(15-20 more kids next year than this year is a major concern)

Next year

- a. Changing demographics
 - i. Southmoor has gone from 11% to 25% of the student qualifying for free and reduced lunch
 - ii. 14 languages are spoken by students
- b. How do we get more parents involved?
 - i. Family Nights
 - ii. International Day or Week -- work this into the curriculum If possible

Final Questions/Concerns

1. What could be done to involve more families?
Volunteerism is down--Let's reach out to the community to get ideas, provide clear and specific information on the roles of each committee within Spie, CSC, and PTA, compile ideas on things parents could work on at home to help out, be sure teachers communicate their needs and are utilizing parents to help when needed
2. Can we please keep the CSC minutes up-to-date on the website?
3. Is there a protocol for additional questions and responses following this forum?—parents can email questions to CSC on the Southmoor website or can

contact one of the parent reps, teacher reps, or Mr. Burger to get a question or concern put on the CSC agenda. All parents are welcome to attend CSC meetings to ask questions and communicate concerns. CSC asks for advance notice to be able to place specific parent concerns on the agenda. Inquiries can be sent to CSC parent rep Mike Adamson at mike@hrssi.com

4. A class size study was presented by DPS a few years ago by Bruce Hoyt. It was stated that DPS would try to reduce class size to 22 per teacher in K-1. What happened with this?
5. We need to be sure to utilize resources effectively to help manage large class sizes
6. There are communication problems with e-Thursday folders. Things that need an RSVP must go home by hard-copy. Several parents (especially kindergarten parents) are not getting information for some reason
7. How can we improve communications? Mr. Burger meets with office staff for weekly planning meetings to keep communications up-to-date on a weekly basis.
8. Add a reminder to the Thurs. Folder with the link to the Southmoor website to remember to check the weekly notes.
9. PTA has struggled with communication this year--we need to address this problem. The e-Folders are not seeming to be very effective in getting communication out to everyone
10. Is there a way to help teachers to work on their websites and newsletters communicated to parents on a weekly basis? Can we post the class updates/newletters on the Southmoor website?