

**Ocean Palms Elementary
School Advisory Council Meeting
Kitchen Resource Room
March 21, 2024**

Meeting Convened: 3:15 pm **Adjourned:** 4:33 pm

Attendance: S. McVeigh, J. Frein, L. Blaich, D. Lobos, L. Farese, J. Werba, S. Rendzio, J. Sellers, J. Sheen, E. Randolph, C. Savy, C. Roach, O. Pellegrino, J. Fitch, J. Dean, T. Cantwell

Excused:

Call to order: 3:22 pm

Welcome Members

Review the Minutes from the 2/15/2024 Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes was made by J. Werba; L. Farese seconded the motion

Motion Passed

Approve the Agenda for 3/21/2024

Motion to approve the agenda was made by J. Werba; L. Farese seconded the motion

Motion Passed

Current Financial Report- J. Frein

There is a balance of \$4,175.00

Results of School Recognition - S. McVeigh

1/18/2024

- Introduced School Recognition Funds process at SAC meeting
- SAC voted to the ballot from last year with current dates
- SAC approved amended draft ballot for this year

1/26/2024

- Draft ballot process explained to staff in school newsletter along with an invitation to attend SAC meetings

1/29/2024 – 2/2/2024

- Draft ballot was distributed to all staff members
- Staff was provided opportunity to give anonymous feedback on ballot
- Invitation to attend next SAC meeting was encouraged

2/15/2024

- No additional suggestions or input from staff regarding draft ballot
- No changes to draft were made and SAC approved final ballot for voting

3/5/2024 - 3/6/2024 Vote

The results of the ballot are as follows:

- **Option 1: 85% of the votes**
 - Bonus money will be distributed to the **2023-2024** instructional and non-instructional employees only, regardless of their current employment status.
 - Option 2: 15 % of the votes
- Option 1: 38 % of the votes
- **Option 2: 62% of the votes**
 - I agree to have the funds **divided proportionately** among all voting members of Ocean Palms Elementary based on the staff member’s weekly hours.
 - ❖ Example 1: An employee working 4 days a week 7.5 hours a day at OPE would receive a proportionate amount based on 30 hours (4 x 7.5 hours) a week worked.
 - ❖ Example 2: An employee working 5 days a week 4 hours a day at OPE would receive a proportionate amount based on 20 hours (5 x 4 hours) a week worked.

Motion to approve the School Recognition Funds Distribution based on the results of the staff vote was made by J. Werba; C. Savy seconded the motion. *Motion Passed*; Approved by Voting

SAC Survey Data – S. McVeigh

- 33% of the parents completed the Parent Survey
- 42% of staff completed the Staff Survey
- SAC Survey Data will be shared in our April meeting.
- Grade Level Participation Information: 4th grade had the highest percentage and earned extra recess
 - PreK – 20%
 - K – 30%
 - 1st – 29%
 - 2nd – 37%
 - 3rd – 26%
 - 4th – 43%
 - 5th – 23%

Vote on SAC Calendar 2024-2025 School Year- S. McVeigh

Motion to approve the 2024-2025 SAC Calendar was made by J. Werba; J. Sellers seconded the motion. *Motion Passed*

Focus Group Update – S. McVeigh

- Cathy Newman discussed the Take Stock in Children online portal is open and starts with 8th and 9th grade students. This program helps prepare them with a mentor to get them ready for high school/college. Thirty students will be accepted into the program. Website: www.takestockinchildrenstjohns.org
- There are over 50,000 Senior scholarships available to only SJCS D students who are graduating. Some scholarships are merits based, some are needs based, and some are geared toward specific schools, academics, etc.
- Bingo for Books is a new initiative this year for VPK-5th grade students who are striving leaders and not yet meeting grade level goals. New World Reading program (all approved and scholastic books) We have books to give away. Students may attend different locations. This information is listed on their facebook page. They are open to PTO partner with them.
- Educators thriving is another new initiative to help support teacher burn out. A fellow participant shared about a wonderful positive experience. More opportunities available.

District and Legislative Updates

Legislative session ends Friday, March 8th and the budget conference has started.

- Mr. Degutis and Mr. Asplin presented on ½ cent sales tax for capital outlay.
 - 2005 – 2014 increased 10,473 students and build 11 schools, 8 expansions, 318 relocatables (portables) (6,360 students) declining property values of 25% over a 3 year period
 - 2015 – 2024 projects – projected to grow by 15,813 students 47% increase, built 20 new schools
 - 4 categories or buckets for ½ cent sales tax accomplishments
 - Keep children safe (centigex, single point of entry, intercom upgrades, 800 mhz for enhanced communication, school bus GPS technology)
 - Meet needs of increased student population (1 new elem., 3 K-8, expansion to LPA, SPMS, POA) (on docket to do – build elementary school N, and expand SWES)
 - Maintain high quality educational facilities (13 roofs – 6 elem,4 middle, 1 K-8, 2 high schools... RB Hunt PE area and restrooms, RJ Murray site improvements, SAHS aerospace academy improvements)
 - New technology for 21st century learning (8,604 student computers, teacher refresh computers, classroom sound enhancements, wifi for elementary

TOTALING \$158 Million
 - 41% increase in growth of student population: NN, OO open in August ‘24
PP open in August ‘25
QQ, RR to open in August ‘26
 - The growth projections from 2024-2033 is 10 new schools and another 13,674 students (28% increase). There will also be 16 elementary schools looking to adding relocatables to house roughly 12,399 students.

- They shared that without the half cent sales tax, SJCS D will struggle to maintain the pace of new construction, technology advancements in classrooms, and forced to defer maintenance on schools.
- SJCS D would like to impose a new one-mill property tax for school operations.
 - The purpose of the one-mill would be for teacher salaries and retention, benefits, and utilities.
 - Millage is set by the state; in the last 10 years there has been a 1.93 mill reduction, approximately 38% decrease in revenue generating power.
 - In regard to employee pay – legislative and district funding to meet teacher salary increase allocation requirements had most go to new teachers, so veteran teachers have been compressed. In 2022 the legislative session fast tracked constitutionally mandated \$15 per hour. Keep in mind, SJCS D is the largest employer in the county with 6,438 employees (compared to Northrop, UF Flagler)
 - Currently SJCS D has employee vacancies – 46 instructional, 22 ESE, Para 8, ESE Para 40, Speech 10, 126 classroom vacancies, bus operators 45, bus attendants 21, custodians 31
 - SJCS D goals for one-millage increase
 - Eliminate teacher shortage
 - Reduce need for subs
 - Reduce bus shortage, custodians,
 - Reduce stress on the budge due to the \$15 per hour minimum mandate
- Concerns and ways to share information regarding the ½ cent sales tax and one-mill property tax have been shared below:
 - Help people understand how the education system is funded (2 buckets)
 - *How does it financially impact residents?*
People not invested in schools need communication for how these two items on the ballot will benefit them and our community.
 - *What will you do if it doesn't pass?*
SJCS D built a budget in 24-25 that will help us move in a positive direct to grow, recruit and retain. If it doesn't happen, SJCS D will operate more tightly, grants we had in previous years are gone, we will have less resources, depth of some positions/ district departments have been reduced and it will continue to be narrowed down.
 - *What cuts are being made at the district level?*
 - Mr. Forson shared a number of positions were marked unfunded or taken off – over \$2.3 million in one group
 - As ESSA funds go away, the position has been removed. Positions are changing as people leave or change positions.
 - The concern for nurses in schools was discussed. There is no allocation (not from state) that pays for a nurse. We will have 1 health professional in every school. Certain circumstances may make it more than 1. Nurse doesn't earn FTE, no dollar earned by their position. Concerns were raised for K-8 schools since they have a larger number or students, and asked to

take them in to consideration if SJCS D could place more than 1 nurse there.

- *Will SJCS D present factual data for where money is going as some residents are concerned it is not clearly being communicated?*

SJCS D is working on that, they are happy and willing to come present to SAC and PTO communities to spread factual information for where the money will be going. This presentation will be in various forms.

More information can be found with the following links:

½ cent sales tax: <https://halfcentsuccess.com/>

Financial transparency: <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/transparency/>

- *Is there a comparative chart for other surrounding counties?*

Mr. Forson says SJCS D is outperforming, however he says other surrounding counties do not have the growth rate like SJCS D.

- *Why are developers not helping fund the new schools if they keep building in the county?*

In SJCS D all the revenue sources follow the kids, we have impact fees but those do not begin paying until school is open and in operation, proportion share mitigation used the way it's supposed to by statute. Since 2006 we have only purchased 2 school sites – developers have provided those sites which is part of the mitigation.

- *How we are going to support gifted students with the gifted itinerant cuts?*

Teachers will be highly encouraged to complete courses to receive their gifted endorsements. Courses are offered free of charge to current SJCS D employees, however there is only a one time stipend of \$500 to compensate teachers for taking all courses (5).

- *How soon does the county start benefiting from the passed ½ sales tax or one-mill?*

It will be voted on the Nov. 2024 ballot and will not go into effect (if passed) until July 2025 fiscal year.

- *Is there more information on Nonprofits buying property in St. Johns County?*

Nonprofits do not pay property taxes. Concerns about Flagler hospital buying property in downtown St. Augustine were shared.

- *St. Johns County has talked to other counties who have passed the one-mill to find pros/cons and what changes they would make.*

- *How will the 2 charter schools that were approved effect SJCS D and funds appropriated to students?*

Next Focus Group Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 15th @ 9:00am.

Principal's Update – T. Cantwell

- Mrs. Cantwell discussed OPE status for next year, the budget will be significantly cut for Ocean Palms.

- Mrs. Cantwell wanted feedback on software that students are using in class and at home to help determine which products/subscriptions to renew for next year. She is open to exploring other different platforms within SJCSO guidelines.
- Mrs. Cantwell would like feedback for PBIS incentives. We want more student buy-in, especially to encourage more participation from upper grades. Mrs. Pellegrino shared ideas from 5th grade student ambassadors to take into consideration.
- Reviewed balloons incentives for STAR and FAST testing per grade level. Students will have many opportunities to earn balloons.

Public Question Period

Adjourned

Motion to adjourn was made by J. Sellers; J. Werba seconded the motion.

Motion Passed