

Santa Cruz City Schools
GREEN SCHOOLS COMMITTEE
Meeting of 1/29/19

Minutes

Attendance at Meeting:

Stu Branoff, Bay View Elementary Teacher
Joanne Brown, AFE Teacher
Keresha Durham, GSCFT, Small Schools
Patrick Gaffney, Asst. Supt., SCCS Business Services
Dara Jameson, AFE Parent
Gray Jameson, AFE Student
Elnora Lewis, Harbor High Recycle Club
Heather Murphy, SCCS Instructional Coach for Science
Leslie O'Malley, City of Santa Cruz, Waste Reduction
Pauline Seales, Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Jeremy Shonick, SCCS Trustee
Tiffany Wise-West, SC City Climate Action Program

Call to Order

Asst. Superintendent Patrick Gaffney called the Green Schools Committee meeting to order at 7:05 pm. in the District Office. He welcomed all present and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

Minutes of 11/14/18 Meeting

The minutes had been sent out to expected attendees via email before tonight's meeting. There were no corrections.

Keresha Durham inquired about the LED lights being installed at District sites. Studies have shown that excessive exposure to the bright white/blue LED lights can affect people's circadian rhythms, and can affect students' nervous systems. LED lights are available in warm tones which are easier on eyes. In some cities, covers have been placed over street lights to minimize the blue light. Another strategy is to direct LED lights upward, so that areas are lit by reflected rather than direct light. Keresha shared two websites with more information:

<https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-citizens/led-guide/>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/blue-light-has-a-dark-side>

Student Report

Mass Transit Model – Gray Jameson

AFE Student Gray Jameson reported that he had attended a recent Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) meeting in Watsonville, where, after a lengthy debate, the RTC approved a study and findings regarding a potential rail transportation system between Watsonville and Santa Cruz. Gray presented a more detailed version of his video portraying a light rail system between the two cities. Now every segment displays text information. He is working on developing short segment videos for the different neighborhoods. His video shows how trains traveling in opposite directions could pass each other in a relatively small set of double tracks and then return to a single track.

Gray was encouraged to show his video to City planners and to the City Council. It was commented that one segment where heritage trees are marked for removal and a retaining wall built has created controversy within the environmental community. It was suggested that Gray reach out through groups like the Green Schools Committee to broadcast his video. Gray is a 12th grade Alternative Family Education student. He estimated that he had spent approximately 400 hours on the project.

Camille Gamboa – AFE Student

Camille was ill and unable to attend. She will hopefully be able to attend a future Green Schools Committee meeting.

Curriculum Update – Heather Murphy

Science Instructional Coach Heather Murphy announced that she hopes to bring student presentations to the Green Schools Committee meeting in April. Gault teacher Julie Yanggen's third grade class is working with Groundswell Coastal Ecology to restore the native habitat to Seabright Beach. Westlake Teacher Angela Albach's third grade class is working to reduce plastics in the ocean by reducing use of plastics.

Artist Taylor Reinhold is expected to start work on the Bay View sound wall mural this April. Caltrans recently approved a permit to shut down a lane of traffic on Mission Street so work can be done on the wall. The artist has met with the Principal at Bay View and with each grade level. Students cannot help directly with the mural, but they can contribute ideas on marine animals they would like to see in the mural.

Heather provided several professional development opportunities for educators, including:

- On 2/23/19 there will be a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) conference for educators at UCSC, with 20 different sections and many presenters. ([STEAM Conference](#))

Pauline Seales of Santa Cruz Climate Action Network will present at the STEAM Conference. She spoke about her goal of incorporating hope and fun into climate education. She described her lessons on ways to generate power. Other lessons focus on what students thought about the recent wildfires. Ice and water are used to understand the effect of climate change in Antarctica.

AFE Teacher Joanne Brown will present a workshop at STEAM with Dan Lazarus of Quail Hollow Ranch on nature journaling curriculum for teachers of grades 3-5. Students work outside and learn to do scientific observations, fostering a love of nature.

- John Muir Laws will be in south Santa Cruz County on 3/23 for a half-day workshop on Nature Journaling for Science. ([Nature Journaling for Science with John Muir Laws](#))
- [Green Schoolyards America Principals' Institute](#) offers resources, advice, professional development, and a peer network that helps principals and school district leaders to adopt and sustain comprehensive, high quality, green schoolyard programs at their schools and in their districts.
- [Monterey Bay Aquarium Summer Institutes](#)—Apply now for the aquarium's Summer 2019

Teacher Professional Development Institutes: Splash Zone for grades K-2, Coastal Systems for 3-5, Project-Based Science for 6-8, and Connecting Marine Science for 9-12.

Heather also provided several resources, including:

- [Environmental Literacy for All](#)—This website is our Santa Cruz hub for environmental education resources. Includes special sections for teachers, students, administrators and on topics such as green schools, climate education, curriculum, grants and more.
- [New Climate Education Resources](#) for grades 4-12 are available at the Santa Cruz Climate Speakers Website. The *Catalog of Resources* is organized into a binder for easy print out and will be updated periodically.

Environmental Literacy in the News:

- [Philadelphia Schools adopt outdoor education as a graduation strategy](#)
- [School's Out\(side\): Can California teach an understanding of the natural world to every K-12 schoolkid in the state?](#)

Heather commented that a Phenomena Summit is being planned for October, in which scientists will collaborate with teachers on topics that will excite students. Last summer's institute on environmental literacy and how to integrate it into curriculum was very successful. The institute will be repeated this coming summer, and is funded by the County Office of Education. Environmental educators will work with teachers to develop lesson plans. Heather asked Members' help in getting the word out.

Members discussed how to best re-use the old FOSS science kits, which contain useful items for science exploration. Heather has sorted some materials and has them available. Resource Area For Teaching (RAFT) in San Jose was suggested as a possibility to which to donate and from which to obtain classroom materials.

Bay View Teacher Stu Branoff commented the Green Apple Day of Service came and went this year without being recognized. This annual event usually takes place in September, which is right after school starts. It brings together school communities to volunteer at schools on one designated day to work on sustainable projects. Projects registered by 3/15/19 are eligible for a mini-grant and Green Apple rewards. (<http://greenapple.org/>) He suggested that this opportunity be put on the agenda right after the start of the school year.

Tiffany Wise-West mentioned that the City is starting a project in conjunction with Cal Fire to plant 500 trees by this time next year. She suggested that this could be a good project to do at the schools on Green Apple Day, or other days, if that works better. Principals can sign up online. Pat Gaffney said that information about the tree planting project and the Green Apple Day could be sent to principals and shared with their communities through the school newsletter.

Dan Lazarus – Quail Hollow Ranch Spring Camp

Dan was unable to attend the meeting.

Santa Cruz City Climate Action Program Update – Tiffany Wise-West

At the last Green Schools Committee meeting, Tiffany proposed that the City and District work in partnership to promote an Anti-Idling campaign. The Climate Action Program will purchase and install signs in public right of way areas. They will provide signs for District installation on school sites. This a first come, first served program, with a limited number of signs available. Private schools are also being contacted. Tiffany said that public outreach through school newsletters and PTA meetings will educate school communities. Pat Gaffney stated that he would talk to the Board about the campaign, and see about including information in the District newsletter. Tiffany will connect with Pat to coordinate next steps.

Members were enthusiastic about the long term benefits of this program, which may encourage alternative transportation like student groups walking or biking to school with parents. Pauline Seales offered to help hand out pamphlets. Tiffany stated that staff and other people may not know about bus schedules, jump bikes, RTC carpool matching and other options. Stu Branoff suggested that Ecology Action’s Bike Smart programs help to identify safe routes to school. (<https://ecoactbike.org/our-work/2-youth-education/>)

Santa Cruz City Waste Reduction Update – Leslie O’Malley

Leslie O’Malley announced that Mary Simmons, head of the Santa Cruz City Recycles Department, is retiring. School field trips will start up again in March, and are already booked. Waste Reduction staff are available to come to school to educate students and staff about trash reduction. The “Trash Talks” newspaper previously distributed to schools has been discontinued, to reduce paper waste. Earth Day class challenge applications are now available. Student groups could present projects at the Earth Day event on 4/20. Ten booths will be available. The competition element has been eliminated. Leslie asked that the District share this information at a Principals’ meeting.

Members asked what progress had been made in eliminating plastics from school lunches. Leslie responded that some advances have been made, including use of compostables. Also, shared tables are being considered, to provide a place where students can leave unopened lunch items for others to take. Leslie recommended reading an article written by Nancy Deming of the Oakland Unified School District on implementing surplus food reduction and recovery programs at their K-12 school districts. (<https://www.biocycle.net/2018/03/12/k-12-school-food-recovery-roadmap/>)

Keresha Durham said that she had assembled a class party dish set which she shared with other teachers at her school, and offered to wash after use. Members commented how behavior patterns could be initiated with our own modeling.

Next Meeting

The final Meeting of the year is scheduled on Tuesday, 4/9/19, from 6:00 -7:30 pm.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Pat Gaffney thanked attendees for coming. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Meyer-Johnson
Executive Assistant
Business Services

Patrick K. Gaffney
Asst. Superintendent
Business Services