

# Site Council Minutes

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February 9, 2006

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Experience

There was a presentation by the principal and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers regarding the future of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade experience. The presentation included a brief history of the Environmental Learning Camp trip (currently Camp St. Croix), some current issues the school faces, and possible changes to the trip in 2007-2008 or after.

### History

- Doing 5<sup>th</sup> grade trip for a long time, strong tradition
- Focused on environmental science and community building
- Tied to grad standards when those were introduced
- Repeal of grad standards, new academic standards
- Move to St. Croix to be more inclusive
- Changing curriculum in the district
- High stakes state and federal accountability – NCLB and AYP

### Current Issues

- Increasing population on free and reduced lunch has made raising the money difficult
- There are less expensive programs that are better aligned to district essential outcomes, the strategic plan, and the integration equity plan
- Planning activities throughout the year provides more ongoing opportunities for student learning to enrich the whole curriculum
- Science essential outcomes are already met through FOSS units
- As we are becoming a Responsive Classroom school, community building activities are ongoing throughout the year
- Already have the shortest instructional day in the metro area
- Liabilities – medical, legal
- Volunteers – difficulties getting enough, last minute cancellations
- Kids opting out because of overnight

### New possibilities

#### *\*Festival of Cultures*

An outdoor field trip at Battle Creek Park in May, there are four shows that focus on Africa, Europe, Mexico and North America. Through song, dance and storytelling, students learn about the heritage and traditions of these diverse cultures. The four shows include: European Flair, African Rhythm, Tribal Life and Aztec Energy.

#### *\*Civil War Reenactment*

This “in house” field trip already in place, life during the Civil War is brought to life with the Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery. Divided into 5 sections, it includes fashion, women's roles, cooking, toys, artifacts, flags, military clothing, small arms, and cannon firing.

*\*Franconia Sculpture Park*

Guided tours enable students to interact with the artists, artwork and the rural “open studio”. Located on 16 acres near Taylor's Falls, students will walk through the pastoral setting to view larger than life size sculptures. Opportunities for students to make their own sculptures are available as well.

*\*Northwest Company Fur Post*

Located in Pine City, students will learn how the fur trade shaped the region circa 1804. Costumed guides walk with students through 1.5 miles of trails to explain the barter system and how beaver fur moved from the hands of Indian hunters onto the heads of fashionable Europeans.

*\*Stepping Stone Theater*

Another “in house” field trip, students explore any subject matter by improvising scenes and short plays where they create, rehearse and perform for their peers, families and/or community at the conclusion of the workshop. Students create characters from curriculum topics and learn how to formulate and rehearse scenes.

Discussion followed

Many positive comments were made about kids having more opportunities and experiences. In addition, several members liked the idea of spreading the experiences out over the course of the school year. Along those same lines, one member commented that when given the choice between one big event or several smaller events, her Girl Scout troop chose several smaller events. Another positive comment was that the experiences could address more curricular areas and could be more closely tied to essential outcomes.

Concerns were raised as well. Some members wondered how kids would feel if they didn't get the big trip like the other kids before them. Another member wondered if we didn't do the overnight trip, could some of the experiences go past the school day with a return time around dinner time or after. Another member commented that the “overnight camp” experience is very special and has created a lot of memories for her kids.

Some members wondered if it should be the school's job to provide an “overnight camp” experience for kids. One person asked if YMCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Club, religious organizations and other organizations were better equipped and more appropriate to provide that experience.

Next steps

Members will gather feedback from the people they represent (see below) before the next meeting. Peter Mau will report to PTO on February 21<sup>st</sup>. If appropriate, Site Council will take a vote on whether or not to continue with the Environmental Learning Camp trip after the 2006-2007 school year at the next meeting in March.

**Membership**

Barb Ahn	Primary Teachers	702-8581
Melissa Garay-Triviski	Primary Parents	735-3303
Dayle Langlois	Intermediate Teachers	702-8531
Kathy Lukin	Special Education	702-8569
Peter Mau	Administration	702-8510
Suzanne Miller	Intermediate Parents	738-0255
Krista Muccio	Primary Parents	
John Baker	Intermediate Parents	738-1484
Melissa Furch	Support Staff	702-8584

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Your feedback is welcome. Please call your representative on the site council or return this feedback form to the school no later than **March 8<sup>th</sup>**.

- I have a child who has participated in the ELC trip in the past
- I do NOT have a child who has participated in the ELC trip in the past

My children are in the following grades (check all that apply):

- Kindergarten
- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth
- Fifth

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