

KOHALA SCHOOLS CONSOLIDATION TASK FORCE MEETING

10-15-09 Kohala High School “Home Economics” Room

Present:

Community Members: Kassie Kometani, Mikaela Bartsch, Sheri Bartsch, Jim Trump, Jenna Nickl, Wendy Nickl, David Austin, Margaret Hoy

Task Force Members: Catherine Bratt, Pam Mauro, Peter Clapp, Duncan Anderson, Jean Demercer-Breese, Eleanor Laszlo, Joleen Soares, Shiro Takata, Janette Snelling, Art Souza, Randee Golden

TOPIC	DISCUSSION
Call to order	<p>-The Task Force Chair opened the meeting with appreciations to administrators and task force members who have done work on this report since the last meeting. Janette has worked on integrating narrative into the current draft, which will be reviewed by the group.</p> <p>-The plan is to continue with revisions and try to have a semi-final draft done for the next meeting to review, and then call a public meeting following that.</p>
Approval of Minutes for 9-17-09 meeting	<p>Minutes were approved with the following change: DELETE sentence on page 2-Group Presentations – Facilities/Programs group: “-One suggestion by this group was to move the middle school to the elementary campus and they build a new elementary.” Per request of Dr. Clapp. Group approved this change.</p>
Public Testimony	<p><u>Sheri Bartsch:</u> Mrs. Bartsch was a former student who attended Kohala schools when all divisions were located on one campus. She shared, “The experience for me and my friends, being 12 years and sharing a campus with students 5-6 years older, was very intimidating.” Mrs. Bartsch stated her friends grew faster, and students adapted or regressed. They were scared of the older kids and she felt she didn’t quite earn the right to be in that environment. She stated it was hard to think about academics when it was challenging to figure out how to move from one class to another without being fearful. “It is not easy for a child in that mature environment.” Mrs. Bartsch was asked how everyone fit in one school before. She responded that the classes were smaller numbers of students and that they mixed grades 7-9, which posed challenges for teachers.</p> <p><i>Please notes, the following two students read their statements, typed below:</i></p> <p><u>Kassie Kometani:</u> “My personal opinion as a 7th grade girl about the consolidation is that it is not a good idea. I would be really scared and would not want to walk in the hallways by all the high schoolers. I think it would also affect my learning and I would not feel comfortable putting myself out there and volunteering for activities.”</p> <p><u>Mikaela Bartsch:</u> “My personal opinion as a 7th grade girl about the consolidation is that it is not a good idea. I would feel uncomfortable and overwhelmed with the high school itself and the upperclassmen. That could greatly affect my learning in a negative way. During our middle school years, we gain important leadership skills. We would have less opportunity to be involved in leadership and other important activities if our schools consolidate.”</p> <p><u>Wendy Nickl:</u> Wendy, who is curriculum coordinator/teacher at Kohala Middle School, shared about a Question & Answer session with SCC community representatives – it is an elective class on leadership. Kassie is with the Tech crew and Mikaela is a member, so the girl’s testimony reflects a discussion of a larger group of students.</p>

-The girls were asked what they currently participated in that won't be comfortable if the schools were consolidated. One response was less influence on the student council
-Students were then asked if they foresaw any problems with separate campuses down the road after elementary. The girls shared that their adjustment to 6th was more exciting, and that the physical move was part of it. Some 8th graders teased, but they were not scared. The girls were asked how long their adjustment to the middle school took in gr. 6 – “not long” was their response.
-Sheri was asked if she experienced any inappropriate social contacts when she was in school. She shared as a 7th grader she was asked out by a 16 year old. She was “scared out of my mind.” She did not want to pump into him – she didn't want to come to school. “Age 12 to age 16 is a huge gap.” “You are not sure at 12 who you are,” Sheri shared.
-The high school principal recalls things were no fun for students in grades 6-8 prior to opening the Halaula Campus.
-The discussion addressed observations of students (when middle school first moved to Halaula as well as currently) and how they are able to run and play without inhibitions on their very large field during breaks, which is extremely needed and age appropriate. This ability would be sacrificed with consolidation.

Jenna Nickl: Jenna Nickl, an active high school student, shared that the level of maturity of high schoolers is much different than middle school. Their responsibilities are different due to this maturity. She shared high school students are able to have less restrictions due to this maturity. An example was the difference in rules about iPods and cell phones, with the middle school banning use and the high school restricting to appropriate use.

Wendy Nickl: Wendy recalls first teaching at Kohala High as a 6th grade teacher, located on the high school side. She remembers being knocked by high school students before, and she remembered being helped by the VP. Things became better once the new two story building was built at the elementary where 6th grade lived prior to moving to Halaula. Wendy reiterated about main concerns from students in her leadership class: 1. Their student council would be in jeopardy 2. They may lose a spot for students at the Secondary Leadership Conference 3. SCC worried there would be less representation from middle school concerning decisions. They fear younger student voices may be lost with consolidation during a time they need to learn who they are and be able to speak their voice. Wendy shared her observation of students at play on their field during breaks, and that they have space now for lunch intramurals, which is high interest for many students. The theme for Kohala Middle School is “THE PLACE TO BE”, and Mrs. Nickl shared that she feels their program and campus location is appropriate for their student needs, where a lot of TLC can be shared. Their protocols are appropriate for this age, and combining with high school would shift the school protocols. Wendy concluded that she feels “the program is great, we have great teachers, a unified staff that is doing well. We made AYP.”

Jim Trump: Mr. Trump sits on the high school SCC and is a parent of two high school students. He commends the students and proactive teachers at the middle school. Mr. Trumps stated that often parents get involved when there are threats. He sees positive community involvement. He stated another threat is furloughs. Jim stated the purpose of his testimony, if consolidation goes forward, he suggests we become our own independent school system. He explained the way it could be done is to use the charter school format or discuss with the legislature about creating a unified school district.

Written Testimony	<p>-A site visit report for Kohala Middle School was submitted by Dr. Clapp, with copies given to each Task Force member present. Dr. Clapp was asked to email report if possible (otherwise it will be processed to be included in the report.).</p> <p>-Written testimony was also obtained via Duncan Anderson and submitted from Dr. C Kimo Alameda, a Hilo based psychologist and consultant who was a former counselor and special education teacher. His letter will also be submitted as part of this report.</p>
Group Discussion	<p>The current draft of the report was distributed by Janette with a decision to use remaining time to begin review and feedback as a group. Sections were read, comments were made, questions were asked, and notes were charted to use when revising. They are as follows:</p> <p>CHARTED NOTES:</p> <p>-Page 2, question whether increased class size was an advantage. The overall amount of money does not change if class size goes up, so this is not an advantage. This point will shift to disadvantage side. It was anticipated there would be some financial changes.</p> <p>-Question on page 16 – need to clarify advantages to the state.</p> <p>-A concern was mentioned that the state would consider consolidation without adding class space.</p> <p>-On page 6 – add – increased responsibility of teachers to teach both middle and high school may decrease effectiveness of teachers and impact highly qualified status (as well as students).</p> <p>-Idea discussed about comparable schools – to see comparable data in relation to other similar complexes in the state. How does Kohala complex compare?</p> <p>-It was suggested we look at the social-emotional data for these complexes to see the impact of a grades 7-12 program on the younger students.</p> <p>-We need to look at what can come next, suggested the complex area superintendent.</p> <p>-The CAS asked if non-teaching space was documented during school visits; all areas that were observed were written up. The summary in the report will be revised to reflect the full observations, which will be included in the report’s appendix.</p> <p>-The population at the middle school has increased this year, just shy of 30 students. The reason why was asked; multiple reasons include lower enrollment at local private schools due to economy, and a big 5th grade class coming up to Halaula.</p> <p>-It was stated that the reason we were on this task force was because of a 1.5 million repair and maintenance budget. This budget needs to be updated for accuracy. We need to highlight what has already been done on this schedule in the narrative.</p> <p>- The elementary principal distributed copies of additional information for the facilities report, which will be added by Janette to the rest of the current narrative</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For final report, it is important to include a summary or abstract which clearly states points. - Idea shared to include the classroom utilization reports. - Discussion was held about which class needs figure to use (on page 11) – 10.5 or 16.5; numbers are calculated differently. This will be researched. - It was shared that a report by Dr. Kimo Alameida, which will be woven into the social emotional narrative.
High School Survey	<p>-Mrs. Mauro had her students create a survey about this issue, which she distributed. The discussion about the wording needing modification; as student work, the intention needs to be honored.</p> <p><i>NOTE: a discussion between teacher and chair after this meeting weighed importance of this survey and validity of data without much revision. It was suggested that draft letters brought to a former meeting might be finalized and submitted instead, due to restricted class time.</i></p>
Middle School Survey	Teacher was going to do a survey at the middle school. The high school survey was taken as an example. (Please see above.)
Other:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Updated report is posted on the DOE website -Addendums to be added to the report
Public Testimony	-All present were asked if there was anything else to share at this time. No responses...
Next meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plans are to work on revising the narratives and updating the data through November; then meet as a group one more time to review a semi-final draft. -The next meeting will be on December 2, 2009 – 5-7 pm in the same location -The Task Force hopes to do a public presentation of the report in January – Tentatively Thursday, January 21st if no sports are happening. (Ms. Bratt to check school schedule; Meeting to be held in the high school cafeteria)
PLEASE NOTE	-January 21 st has no scheduled sports so we will tentatively set that as the date for public presentation, to be confirmed at the Dec. 2, 2009 meeting.

Notes by R. Golden