

REDDING BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES - CURRICULUM CONVERSATIONS
May 13, 2010

Filed subject to approval.

Present: J. Gaspar; K. Joyce- Kirk; D. Martin; T. McMorran; S. Pierson Ugol

Public: Less than five members of the public were present.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

DISCUSSION

The meeting began with discussion of the transition from the elementary school to the middle school. Parents tend to be concerned with both academic and social challenges for transitioning students and the schools hold programs to address both sets of concerns.

Ms. Martin and Ms. Pierson-Ugol described how RES and JRMS teachers get together to discuss the transitioning of children in May and June. JRMS holds formal orientation in late May for parents and in early June for the students. Two one-week sessions are also offered by the schools during the summer. They are run by the guidance counselor and are camp-like in nature. Reviews have been good. Children have the chance to meet the staff and learn the building. Last year 20-30 children attended. During the school year, a variety of programs are in place to help incoming 5th graders. Noted highlights include IE period programs where 8th graders help 5th graders, as well as study skill lessons taught by teachers and administrators.

Discussion then turned to transition from the middle school to the high school. At the high school, concerns typically reflect academics (“can I do the work?”), process (“can I navigate?”), and social (“will I have friends?”).

Mr. McMorran said that, broadly speaking, the transition from elementary to middle to high school reflects a transition from family-centric to kid-centric to perceived “high stakes”. Much of the transition process is intended to reduce incoming student anxieties and raise positive expectations for their high-school experience. For instance, it is not uncommon for kids to go through an implementation dip (J curve) as they get accustomed to the new situation. A variety of programs are in place to help incoming freshmen. The assignment of students to an adult mentor whom they meet daily for the first quarter was identified as particularly helpful. These meetings provide a low-key environment for kids to discuss concerns and needs. As with the middle school transition, middle school and high school educators meet together to discuss needs of individual incoming students.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public audience participated throughout the session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

NEXT MEETING:

This was the final session of Curriculum Conversations for the current school year. The schedule for 2010-2011 will be released in September.

Respectfully submitted by Jess Gaspar