

Swanson Middle School PTA Membership Minutes

February 9, 2016

PTA President Noah Simon welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda.

The agenda for the meeting will include:

1. Update from Brigitte Loft, Swanson Principal
2. Changes to the homeroom schedule

Noah Simon thanked the PTA executive for their work so far this year.

Ms. Loft introduced Beth Sanderson (Instructional Lead teacher) and Barb Helpin (Teacher Liaison to PTA), Barb thanked the PTA for the teacher breakfast and as the 8th grade writing SOLs are coming up there will be a schedule change for other grades.

Key Dates:

- Scheduling information night for 7th and 8th graders
- Early release at noon this Friday; President's Day
- Conference Days Friday March 4th (early release). Students are working on their student-led conference presentations.

Ms. Loft presented data showing that 20% of students perennially are not passing the Math SOL and 10% do not pass reading. On the other end of the mean, 30% are regularly advance passing (500-600) their SOLs. These students are evidencing a mastery of concepts and are ready to go further. This represents 50% of the students are Swanson. We need to do something different for our students in need and our students who are evidencing mastery.

We reviewed the presentation that can be found here: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/33533>

The tiered model of support in APS (ATSS Arlington Tiered Model of Support) addressed student needs academically, socially, and emotionally. This model identifies students that are in need of interventions and then focuses on creating a plan that is fluid and timely. This is modeled after the "Response to Intervention Model". We place students in tiers:

- Tier one – High quality class instruction – what interventions can occur at a group level
- Tier two – Targeted interventions outside of class time – Directed and in-school and NOT optional.
- Tier 3 – Intense, targeted interventions during class time.

Goals:

- To develop an intervention model that addresses tier 2, that does not impact instruction time

- Small, dynamic intervention groups so that a student who is evidencing mastery can flow in and out of the intervention
- Standard space, need to apply what they have learned across disciplines.
- Enrichment can allow students to dig more deeply into areas.

There has been a lot of foundation work to this program. The staff and Ms. Loft discussed the possibility of starting school early as a way to implement these interventions. However, after conversations with parents, they determined that was not the direction to go. Ms. Loft took the concerns back to staff team to review. One note is that the research shows 30 minutes of intervention if the minimum amount of time. With this in mind, the compromise decision is that we will move forward with the intervention and enrichment model during STAR time. School will still start at 7:50am.

- We will begin the intervention/enrichment model mid-October 2016. We will have tradition STAR September – mid-October.
- We will adjust the responsibilities of staff to balance the work-load
- This is an on-going plan and we will continue to adjust as we move forward.
- We plan a full roll out of interventions/enrichments in 2017-18 that have been adjusted according to our observations in 2016-17.

Questions:

Q: How will specialty STARS continue?

A: Since students will come in and out of the interventions/enrichments, so they will be able to continue to participate in the specialty STAR activities. STAR leaders will work to make sure that students continue to feel grounded in their STAR experience.

Q: How does the model impact the students that are in the middle – other 50%?

A: Since this model is more dynamic, there is an opportunity for students that maybe just struggle in on topic (i.e. fractions) to participate in an intervention for that topic.

Q: How are we handling security in the Marina?

A: We will have 18 security cameras and a single entrance point with buzzer monitored by a staff member (like we currently have at the front door.)

Q: Will we continue to have before/after school interventions?

A: We have not decided how this will impact these programs. We will still continue to work with students on an individual basis but this new program will allow to better help student overall.

Q: How will logistics work?

A: Some kids may not need the interventions but we will be constantly assessing. We will have staff that dedicated to scheduling and logistics.

Q: Concern about only 20 minutes of intervention per day?

A: We discussed moving STAR to 3rd mod and we do have a tardy issue with STAR. But we decided that having STAR early in the day allows for a transition time and a more relaxing start to the day. You should expect a change in tardiness next year. We will continue to monitor the efficacy of the program.

Q: Are tier 3 students eligible to receive the tier 2 intervention plan?

A: The tier 3 students are already receiving the support in their self-contained classes where they are getting the intense intervention so they will not be eligible for the intervention plan.

Q: What % of students will be in intervention versus enrichment?

A: 20-30% moving in and out of the intervention. For enrichment, that will be the remainder of the students. The details on how that will work will evolve.

Q: How will students be able to see their STAR teacher if they are involved in their intervention time?

A: We will need to address this issue.

Q: What is the format/content of the interventions?

A: Refer to the Tier 1-3.

Q: Will the students be with their regular math, English, teachers?

A: Not necessarily. The teachers have a common planning period and the teachers have looked at the areas where students need support, and they identify teachers for the various areas.

Q: Will interventions be mandatory?

A: Yes, they will.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Madelon Brennan, Recording Secretary