

Patch Elementary School

SAC Inclement Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

Dec 13, 2012

15:00-PES Information Center

Members Present

Principal: Nancy Hammack, Sheree Foster(v)

Faculty Reps: Karen Antonucci,

Parent Reps: Travis Mooring, Beth Cypher

School Liaison Officer: Brian Pappas

Parents: 3

Meeting was called to order at 14:45

- Opening introductions were made to addresses the history and scope of inclement weather issue and to the specific goals of the subcommittee.
 - a. Administration Report: Principal - Ms. Hammack Provided Winter recess guidelines as set forth by the Heidelberg school District. The document is meant as a guideline with respect to the individual circumstances of each school's playground. The PES play areas are small when accounting for the population of the school. The principal also took note that the interpretation of the winter recess guidelines can often act to limit playground access even more for students. However the final call will always be based with the ultimate goal being the safety of the students. The PES Health administrator also hears a number of questions weekly from parents asking "why is my child out there?" and reported to the PES administration a greater than expected number of serious injuries spanning the previous bouts of inclement weather. The general opinion is that the playground surfaces are the root cause of the safety concerns And are exacerbated by the weather conditions in the Stuttgart area. Nurse reports all injuries to Principal.
 - b. Subcommittee research: Research by parent Beth Catchpole resulted in very few particular restrictions by other schools in similar climate conditions. Restrictions were general and broad-based and usually focused around temperature or wind-chill. Conversations with local national German teachers suggest that it is common for specific equipment to be closed off however, it is very rare for the entire playground to be closed. Such situations usually only happen once or twice a year, and during the most severe weather conditions.
 - c. Open Forum: Concerns were raised Regarding the increased instances of playground closures during inclement weather. Concern that one day is not a problem it is the second, third or fourth day when the playground closure becomes a problem. PE class is not enough. Question 1 - "What existed before? Or what specific policy exist? Answer 1 - The guidelines are as noted before from the administrative report. They are vague and situational and do not take into account playground equipment for playgrounds size. For safety purposes additional issues also concern zone coverage and staffing on any particular day. First recess staff ratios are 1/110and

second recess staff ratios are 1/78. Limiting equipment is possible but will take retraining of staff and monitors. Question 2 - "Can we salt the surfaces?" Answer 2 -cleaning the services are very possible but for expedited services volunteers would be needed. Suggest 4 to 6 volunteers.

- Subcommittee Business

- a. Playground walk-through: Ms. Hammack conducts a walk through of the playground. Open discussion continues. Parent question: "Can we have children help with the cleanup? Will the playground be open more if children create shovel crews? What is the plan if the snow continues? Will the playground stay closed?" Administration answer: "When the snow gets cleaned off in an expedited manner it becomes a safer condition where the kids can play." Parent question: "What is the first equipment that needs to be clean?" Administration answer: "When snow gets on the metal it creates a very dangerous situation the kids slip and fall far more. Fine sand on the metal areas do little to help, gravel causes injuries, Maybe mulch." Parent question: "Can the students play out front?". Administration answer: "More staffing is needed. "
- b. Administration note: Students need to be properly dressed for the weather conditions to include snow pants, hats and gloves. Parental support is needed to help teach the students to take responsibility for cold-weather gear. Suggestion: Maybe create a lost and found for kids to use for short periods of time or for kids that do not have proper weather gear.
- c. Further action to be determined based on implementation and effectiveness of volunteer cleaning crews.

- Announcements

- a. Date/time for the next SAC mtg announced for 10 Jan, 2013 at 1500
- b. Next SAC inclement weather subcommittee TBD

Meeting was adjourned at 4: 15 p.m.