

ELLIS SCHOOL & THE FUTURE COMMITTEE  
May 21, 2015 Meeting  
6-7:30pm, SAU 83

MINUTES

Call to order – In attendance were Larry Dobson, Leah Kennedy, Sharon Pollock (6:21pm) and Dr. Betsey Cox-Buteau.

Review of Minutes of April 9, 2015 – The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Choice of topic for literature review for the evening

1. How should the school calendar year be structured for students to learn and not lose?

The discussion of this topic ranged over a wide selection of subtopics. The conclusion of the discussion included the following two additional belief statements.

1. The length of the current summer break allows some students to regress academically. This slows the pace of learning for all students.
2. A more balanced school-year calendar would improve academic achievement and reduce student and staff burnout.

The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the SAU. The question to be discussed is, “Does separating the genders make a difference in learning? If so, at what age is it most effective?”

Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

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BELIEF STATEMENTS TO DATE:

1. Students are best served when given the instruction and time to learn what they need to learn before moving on, in other words, students move at their own pace of learning and mastery.
2. There needs to be a well-defined mastery scale used to assess the readiness of students to advance along their learning continuum.
3. For number 1 to be successful there must be a learning culture established that support ageless learning and mixed age levels learning together at times.
4. Parents are expected to support the culture and be an active, integral part of such a system.
5. This system might be more effective with some kind of intrinsic student reward structure built into it.
6. A five level rubric should exist for each required instructional standard that clearly defines the expectations of performance against that standard.
7. Student achievement progress should be available to parents on an ongoing basis through secure electronic means and updated at a minimum of weekly or bi-weekly.
8. We believe that the evidence is clear that parent involvement and interest in their students’ educational experience and progress directly impacts their students’ achievement. Here are some collected suggestions:
  - a. Parent workshops for instruction in how to work with their children on their homework in various subjects
  - b. Parent school partnership groups
  - c. Home visits by educators
  - d. Parent conferences that allow for longer sessions
  - e. Parent questionnaires about their children’s learning styles and habits
  - f. Online resources on the website for helping with certain lessons
  - g. Online postings of workshops held
  - h. Parent assistance with improving executive functioning for their child

NORMS

Attend all meetings, Start/end on time, No school/no meeting, All voices heard, One person speaks at a time, Do your homework, Stick to the agenda, Be respectful at all times

- i. Send home ideas for home-based instructional activities to reinforce learning
- j. Parent peer pressure to “get involved”

Topics for research are:

- 2. How to level a school in the most effective way for learning? By age? By ability? Etc.
- 3. How should learning be reported to parents?
- 4. What is the best, most effective type of parent involvement? What does it look like?
- 5. How should the school calendar year be structured for students to learn and not lose?
- 6. **Does separating the genders make a difference in learning? If so, at what age is it most effective?**
- 7. What kind of grouping works most effectively for students to learn most efficiently?
- 8. 1:1 Technology – Is it needed? Is it worth it?

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