

Sustainable Schools Committee Meeting

12/10/2008 Palo Alto High School Library

Notes by Karen Grove. Lauren Sabatini and Gudrun Enger from Las Lomas District, and Bob Barrett from MPGR also attended.

Walt Hays organized the meeting.

Bob Bolton, PAUSD business manager, introduced:

Lisa Gelfant, CEO and Managing Principal of a Green Architecture Business.

Lisa gave an amazing presentation on school design for efficiency and comfort.

Two to three years ago, PAUSD resolved that all their buildings will conform to CHPS (Collaborative for High Performing Schools). Lisa worked with the district to modernize existing classrooms to meet the new requirements. Her commitment is that a modernized classroom is as good and long-lasting as a brand new classroom. She modernized Blach School (in Los Altos) about 10 years ago to meet CHPS (she's been doing this for longer than it's been popular).

Lisa pointed out that although she is in the business of increasing building efficiency, 50% of a school's energy impact is due to transportation -- kids and staff getting to and from school.

Typically, 60% of the energy a school uses is for lighting. SOLUTION: adjustable lights that self-adjust using sensors.

She installed prototype passive ventilation using mechanized shutters down low, and a fan to let hot air out, up high. The shutters open and close to control air flow and temperature in the room. I might not have the details of the system quite right, but it worked, and saved a lot of money!

She also mentioned "Advanced Energy Design Guides" and a website where students can monitor a school's energy performance.

Karen Mathys

Compared Palo Alto schools (there are 17!) energy use.

Compared Gas Usage, Electricity Usage, and Cost

10% savings = \$164,000

Addison School Plastic Bag Campaign

A parent and teacher gave this presentation. I didn't get their names.

They set out to reduce the use of plastic bags in lunches. One day they did a "cold count" in a classroom. They asked the kids to open their lunches and count the plastic bags. There were 25.

They calculated 25 bags/class * 20 classrooms = 500 baggies each day!

They set a goal to get three classrooms down to zero plastic bags in lunches. They reached their goal, and decided to reach out to the rest of the school. The school-wide goal was <50 bags. To help with outreach, the principal dressed up as Super-Hero Container-Man (he had a wax-paper cape and was dripping with plastic containers). They got down to 35 bags in the school one day (down from 500).

That was last year.

This year, they did another cold count, and found 2 plastic bags in the classroom. They announced another plastic bag count for a week later, and without any outreach or encouragement, that day there were 96 bags in 22 classrooms. **CONCLUSION: The effect of the campaign was long lasting.**

This year, one second grade class learned how dangerous juice-box straw wrappers are to wildlife. They immediately started brainstorming how they could eliminate them from their school. **CONCLUSION: The second grade kids' experience with the plastic bags showed them that they can cause wide-spread change, and they were ready to do it again!**

Someone from Palo Verde

Formed a green team last year, and is focusing on recycling and paper reduction.

Recycling:

- Involved a custodian
- Ensured there were enough blue bins
- Talks in every classroom about what is and isn't recyclable
- Posters, especially for K-3 (pictures, not words)

Paper Reduction:

- Double sided handouts
- Newletters by email
- Fliers by email
- Build up teacher websites (one parent dedicated 100s of hours to get them up and running)

Green Team Sustainability:

- Composition of team: Principal, Custodians, Teachers, Parents, Students
- Presence at school events
- Procedures: for repeat events *(KG Note: PTA is good model of sustainability from year to year)*

(Gudrun Note: PTA and school should use PayPal instead of paper checks and forms)

Carol Anderson and students: Paly Green Team

Team:

- 2 teachers, 3 parents, several students
- Meet every Thursday at Lunch
- 100% retention from last year, PLUS 4 new seniors have joined.
- Not diverse -- ALL FEMALE

Projects:

Recycling at Football Games

- Bins
- Signs
- Concessions sales clerks remind people to recycle
- Announcer reminds people twice each game.

Bay Area Bike to Work Day

- Green Team hosted two energizer stations at Paly

Campus Wide Recycling

- Prototype first
- 18 teachers, each in contact with one green team member

Additional Bike Racks

- 20% increase in number of bikes
- >500 bikes each day...of 1700 students at the school

Reduce Bottled Water

Annie Saxton: Sustainable Green Team Consultant

Elements of a sustainable green team

- Regular meeting times
- Team Roster
- Communications
- Open to All
- Announce topic of each meeting ahead of time – a way to recruit new people interested in that topic
- Share Success
- High School meetings are run by students
- Middle School meetings: small groups of students with one adult facilitator

Communications:

Palo Alto has a “Green Committee” similar to our Menlo Park Green Ribbon Citizens’ group. They use a wiki to share information. [Here is a page of that wiki](#), with links to School Green Teams. Many of the green team links are protected, and require permission to access (which I have requested but not yet received). [This one is accessible](#), however, and is a great example of a simple page with key information about the group.