

Orange Grove Middle School
2015-2016 Site Council Year-End Report

Site Council Members: Addie Anderson (Art Teacher), Anne Morgan (Office Manager), Jenna Sullivan (FFO President), Ken Mars (Parent), Elizabeth King (Parent), Patti Wisnom (Community Member), Susan Rosenthal (Principal)

Meeting Dates: 10/1,12/10, 2/11, 4/21

Mrs. Rosenthal began the work of this year's Site Council by presenting the role of a Site Council Committee and looking at the work we had done in the past, the work ahead of us with our SIP plan and what our direction should be.

The Council continued its efforts to support beautification and the importance of connectedness at OGMS. The Council looked at our SIP Goal of how we were supporting and implementing regular two-way communication with families to provide multiple opportunities to become more engaged in academic programs and their students' learning. Furthermore, the Council helped to look at the changes that may need to be put in place to support how we do fundraising in the future as well as contributing to ideas to support bond projects/spending of our Tax Credit Funding where appropriate.

The work accomplished/overseen by Site Council was:

1. Members looked at a variety of options to support what beautification at OGMS could look like for the 2015/16 School Year. (purchase a panther that would be tiled by 8th grade art students, a metal orange tree where 8th grade art students would hang items from the tree reflecting their time at OGMS, creating/decorating the panels at the back of the MPR, having 8th grade art students participate in decorating the front brick wall with a welcome panther and supporting the Ben's Bell mural) After researching costs and figuring out what would support the intent of working on beautifying OGMS as well as continuing the legacy efforts of 8th grade art students, the decisions were made.

a. Art students would create a tiled word wall on the exterior north wall of the library. Samples of clay word tiles made by the 8th graders were shared with council members. The tiles will be mounted prior to the end of the school year.

b. We purchased a curtain that can cover-up the back panels in the MPR and provides a more finished look to the MPR for concerts, promotion, assemblies and other public activities held in the MPR

c. We cashed in our Interstate Tokens for posters that beautify our school, but also continue to send messaging that is the foundation of the work at OGMS. Posters that can be moved around campus and say: Panther Pride, Be Kind, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Kindness Counts and one that has all three phrases: Be Kind, Be Responsible, Be Respectful. These will be used on the stage where it works for promotion and will also be placed in the Commons during the 16/17 school year.

2. Connectedness continues to be a priority for the Council. It was reported out to the council the different ways staff has worked to support ensuring students feel connected and we used the PBIS survey to support that we are continuing to help students feel connected.

a. The PBIS survey was again administered and yielded the following results:

1. 96% of the students reported they feel the teachers/staff listen to them.
2. 92.7% of our students say that OGMS has clear rules and expectations and 78.8% report that a counselor is available most or all of the time and 72.8% report that the principal or dean is available when they need them all or most of the time.
3. 92.3% of students feel safe at school.
4. 83.6% of students are proud of OGMS.
5. 79.2% of students said that all or most teachers help them when they don't understand a concept.
6. 70.1% reported most students are kind to one another. 29 or 5.6% said all students are kind. Additionally, only 8 students or 1.6% reported that there are no students that are kind to one another and in fact, 65.4% said that most or all students really care.

These results imply we have been successful in some of our initiatives. For example, we tasked the teachers with encouraging students to ask more questions by wearing buttons saying "Just Ask" or name cards that said "Got Questions." Many students were intrigued and it prompted many classroom or individual conversations. (results #5-students ask and find teachers helpful when they don't understand)

Additionally, the Principal and Dean did the discipline talks and handbook review at the beginning of the year as an entire classroom lesson and with a flipped classroom approach rather than a brief walk through at the beginning of the year. The counselors were in classrooms teaching lessons and with the dean/principal at lunch duty and passing periods so the kids were able to approach them and set up a time to meet or work out an issue quickly. (results #2-the results show that they do know rules and expectations are clear and admin./counselors are available)

Our 7th and 8th graders were a part of our Be Kind initiative (2014-2015) in which the mural was created and built at the beginning of this school year. We continued our Panther Pride recognition and implemented strategies to recognize more kids and at different levels. (results #6-area we need to keep working on with the caveat that 70.1 % do believe that most students are kind)

b. Site Council was updated at each meeting on new life that was put into our Panther Pride Program as the counselor put together a student PBIS committee. The students (one representative from each grade level) prepared a video that was shown at OGMS's first assembly. The video created explained that quarterly students who received a PRIDE award would be announced on Morning Announcements or at an assembly. The student committee also composed an email to teachers explaining the process for the semester selection and how a prize would be given at each grade level. The students suggested that better prizes were needed. The committee members agreed that only five students from each grade should be rewarded each week as opposed to ten, and it should occur randomly. (In the past, there was an effort made to award as many different students in the year as possible.) They also wanted to have quarter prizes for students who received the most tickets from each grade level, and a semester prize to be voted on by staff and students. For the semester award, staff nominated students that had shown exemplary Panther Pride. Any student who received more than one staff vote was placed on a ballot for students to select the top three exemplars of Panther Pride. These students were then announced at morning announcements or an assembly and given an award. Any student who received a staff nomination was also given a Panther Pride certificate. The weekly prizes that have furthered students thinking we are giving better prizes are: sunglasses, the quarterly prizes are ear buds, and the semester prizes are portable chargers.

In addition to supporting how Panther Pride Tickets were awarded, the staff supported kids connecting to each other and the school, we held Self-Awareness Fridays- 'Wear your sunglasses you have a bright future, wear a superhero shirt you have the power to have success, post it Friday kids wrote a positive message to support their self during a difficult time.' We feel these days further made students feel apart of the school as students participated or had fun observing others who did participate in these fun Friday activities.

Finally, themes regarding Panther Pride tenants were used throughout the year, a new Tolerance lesson was created by the counselor and taught in 7th grade and a parent volunteer, Shannon Close, focused on beefing up the Panther Den to support students having another place to get help, make connections or do STEM activities as listed below:

- A. The Harry Potter Problem - Are you as smart as Hermione? Come into the Den to solve a logic problem that only Hermione could solve.
- B. The Time Travel Grandfather Paradox - Can you help Mrs. Close build a Time Machine? First we'll need to figure out what one of the classic paradoxes (or contradiction) of Time Travel is.
- C. Feeling Brave? Come to the Den to solve a Sudoku letter puzzle.
- D. Stem Thursday (and Friday): Sending a Message: This week's challenge is to Build a Communications Device using no pre-existing technology. You need to send a message from one side of the Panther Den to the other.

****For additional ways OGMS supports student connectedness, see Appendix with **bolded items represent additions or changes to our continued work in the category of making connections with kids.**

3. The Site Council Members also helped to brainstorm how to support our communication goal of ‘Implementing regular, two-way communication with families to provide multiple opportunities to become more engaged in academic programs and their students’ learning.

a. The committee members had ongoing discussions about ways to improve communication with parents regarding academics and learning. Principal Rosenthal noted that feedback had been positive and kind, that we were doing our job and when negative feedback was received, it was not related to two-way communication concerns, but questions like: (grading system-go to letter grades and community school notifications and updates) Principal Rosenthal provided an evening Listen and Learn session to support eliciting more feedback and only 3 parents attended this special event. Finally, it was suggested that when we surveyed parents who attended the SLC process we should add a section for 6th and 7th grade parents to respond about their child’s learning as we have done for 8th grade parents and that we should put a feedback box in the front office to further try to learn of parents’ needs. Ms Algeo, the front office clerk, would ask parents to take a feedback form while waiting for a teacher, a meeting, or an event, to give us input about our two - way communication. Feedback continued to be positive. When looking at our SLC Spring Survey-Our 6th/7th grade parents responded positively to the opportunity to tell us about what they thought regarding the growth of their child and how their child had demonstrated who he/she is as a learner. The following is a small sampling of feedback:

“She is held to high standards and driven to reach potential. Thank you for your support of her!
I enjoy listening to my son explain to me in detail his school work. It shows me that he IS truly learning what he is being taught.
My daughter seems to be very aware of how she is performing as a student. She knows the classes/areas which require improvement and those classes she is performing well. She's aware that she needs additional help in order to improve her grades in the classes she is struggling to maintain a 2.0.
My daughter has always been very timid to speak in front of people or present things. I have seen a big improvement this school year in her confidence and leadership. She had a very rough transition to her new school and as time moves on, she is becoming more comfortable and accepting of the choice to move schools.
The timely manner in which teachers input the grades is helpful. My student checks the StudentVUE frequently and regularly communicates his grades on assignments to me. Having this information gives him (and me) a clear picture at all times of where he is in his learning and achievement. I appreciate the time he's taken to reflect on what he's doing well and what he needs to do better. Setting goals even at this time of year is very important.
I really like that the students set goals, both academic and nonacademic. It is a skill that my children will use in their lives.
I think my son has come a long way in the last year. He has really begun to find a groove and routine that has allowed him to become more organized and in turn more successful in his schooling. Very proud of my son.
My son did an excellent job sharing his work throughout the year and discussing how he can improve in the future.
We are very impressed with the progress our daughter has made in her language arts and social studies classes. She always seems very engaged in these classes and has positive comments about her teachers.
I love this process. The claim / evidence structure is useful; I'd like a section in which students also have to identify a piece because of which they learned the most, or a favorite piece, or the biggest disaster. Hearing about individual assignments was interesting as well.”

The suggestion to open up the survey for all parents to reply on the process helps us further see the value of what parents are seeing and saying and allows us to get a large feedback return on how parents are learning about their child as a learner. Furthermore, the annual parent survey again suggests using many vehicles to give information is effective with ParentVUE, Bulk Emails and the OGMS Website receiving the most user hits. When digging deeper into the Parent Survey, the

committee felt we might get better information if we separated parents being comfortable reaching out to staff for information as well as when they reached out was the information received in a timely manner. The year before the combined results were 94.48%, but when separating the information, we had mixed results. We only had 17 parents answer the two questions about timeliness and 198 parents answer their satisfaction about teachers communicating about academics. So, pulling the question apart lets us know we need to keep looking at ways classroom teachers communicate with parents regarding their child's academics. As a council, we will look for suggestions that might reduce the 26.77% of our parents who are not as satisfied as they could be about communication from staff regarding academics. We will also look at why 181 parents would skip a question about teachers responding in a timely manner once they reach out to a teacher.

4. Finally, Council Members looked at changes that may need to be put in place to support how we do fundraising in the future as well as feedback to support bond projects and spending of our Tax Credit Funding where appropriate.

a. We brainstormed that direct donation drives for items may be the way to go in the future, we had success with doing this for the Marquee that will be installed at the end of June with the help of our FFO, Tax Credit Funding, and Community Schools making a donation.

b. We looked at PE Uniforms and using the Planner to continue to support funding for Student Council and the FFO as conveniences for parents, but not as a required item. Parents continually buy uniforms throughout the year and so this seems to be something that may just be a funding source that will support the FFO, but it won't be a main FFO funding source. Additionally, student council voted to customize the planner and use birthday ads to further support engaging families with the planner. Unfortunately, the idea had to be dropped after it was approved because Student Council as a club does not have the funding to cover the upfront costs of the customized planner while also fronting the cost for carabineers for the new school year. This will be looked at again in the new school year.

c. Site Council members were asked for their suggestions regarding renovations and improvements. Information was shared with Mr. Huie in discussions as the principal walked the campus and looked at needs with him.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Rosenthal

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Principal

Appendix:

The appendix represents an update on work that administration continues to monitor, but was not the primary focus of Site Council Members during the 15/16 year.

Goal #1: Staff Connectedness during the 2015/2016 SY

1. School Wide Connectedness:

1. We continued putting students in leadership roles and acknowledging students publically as well as displaying their work to help students feel connected to their school.
 - a. *Artwork is displayed in the front office, commons, MPR, and library, student council posters fill the display cases, and overall kid work from other content classes is displayed throughout the year in common areas (Science models, social studies inventions, ELA/Counseling friendship analogies)*
 - b. *A Panther Pride leadership team was created this year consisting of one student from each grade level to represent the needs of the peers and support of each other.*
 - c. *We continue to have Student Council opportunities for students to fulfill leadership roles in their classrooms and campus wide.*
 - d. *A recycling club was formed to support student leadership in helping the planet and being passionate about the environment.*
 - e. *Students from all sports teams throughout the year are chosen to represent their team at assemblies and give a report on the successes they experienced.*
 - f. *Students were chosen to participate in the Geography Bee, Math and Science competitions and represented OGMS at local and state events.*
 - g. *Peer tutors were re-instated and served many roles in the Panther Den, Saturday School and at ZAP on Wednesday mornings.*
 - h. *8th Graders assisted in designing the promotion program and filled roles with Masters of Ceremony, reading the Pledge of Allegiance, and giving speeches.*
 - i. *Our FFO again sponsored a Student Action Committee where students could volunteer for our community events.*
 - j. *8th graders were selected to help at Open House as representatives answering potential student/parent questions and providing student insight to OGMS. Similarly, 6th graders were chosen to help at our Visit to the Prideland as group leaders, answering questions and supporting the Math/English rotations.*

2. We continue to display signage in our parking with friendly reminders about being respectful, being courteous, checking parent view, events that are coming up, etc. We also continue to monitor both the front and back parking lots before and after school with Mrs. Rosenthal out front and Mrs. Brannen in the bus bay and our custodian at the cross walk. Although we have parents that are not always

following our school rules, we have seen an improvement in cooperation to make the easy of drop/off and pick up successful.

3. Morning announcements continued as a way for students to connect to their peers and other teachers campus wide as well as building literacy skills. The morning announcements were taped in first period classes over the course of the year in the media lab. Students had a chance to work on their communication and collaboration skills, model their digital citizenship and enhance their technology operations and concepts. Announcements took on a whole new meaning as students hosted interesting facts about their first period content.
4. Our mascot once again came to after-school games, attended school-wide events and assemblies, and participated in our 5th grade tour. Our mascot increased spirit and provided pride to our OGMS community.
5. Student Council not only provides leadership opportunities for students, they also continue to add additional activities to help students feel more connected. Some examples are: spirit days throughout the year, creating posters to support different events or mindsets, purchasing lanyards for each student, a t-shirt contest, and organized a Mix It Up day where students were encouraged to reach out to others in their grade level they didn't know and sit with someone different at lunch.
6. Our new to the district students are supported by the counselors holding pizza parties to help these students get to know each other. Our lunches were well attended with 60 6th graders, 55 7th and 25 8th graders enjoying pizza with the counselors during the first few weeks of school. Ambassadors supported this group of students who were new by taking students to their classes and inviting them into their circle of friends and the Principal continued to call every new family as they transitioned into OGMS at the beginning of the year.
7. Assemblies were again used to promote school spirit, showcase student talent and leadership and provide a sense of community and connectedness for all. Student Council, band, choir, panther pride winners, and our community school athletes are always showcased. Students do grade-level spirit cheers or competitions. Our second assembly had a cultural awareness theme. OGMS continued to focus on culture and diversity for the month of January that culminated in a parent luncheon and an assembly. For our final assembly in May, students could send in clips of their talents to be compiled into a video that served as a mini talent show.
8. We did an additional assembly when we invited our potential 5th graders to visit our school see how we build connections amongst students. A sample of students leading morning announcements was played, the choir and band played and students had an opportunity to see how assemblies run at OGMS. This event was used as a recruiting tool.

9. The importance of using safety as a tool to support connectedness occurs several ways at OGMS.
 - a. Lock downs and fire drills are conducted, classroom lessons taught by the counselors occur in all grades regarding bullying and tolerance, as well as administrative presentations at the beginning of the year to support district policies.
 - b. Teachers are at their doors during passing periods supervising student interactions and all areas on the campus are supervised before and after school.
 - c. Signs around campus were again displayed with the wording “Bully Free Zone.”
 - d. We continued to use the anonymous tip line to support students/parents feeling okay to share concerns.

2. Student/Adult connectedness:

Relationships with adults is critical at this age and can truly make a difference in the life of a young person. Therefore, creating structures to support adults being visible and available still continues to be important at OGMS.

- We continue providing themes each month to be discussed during our first period to build a stronger learning community and to promote character development. During this time teachers work with their classes on creating the morning announcements, and/or do short activities that focus on themes such as: Panther Pride, Respect, Responsibility, Kindness, Grit, Punctuality, Goal Setting, Digital Citizenship, Personal Responsibility, Reusing, Reducing, Recycling, Diligence, etc.
- Teacher mentorship continues to support students who may be in the margins because of needing academic, social or emotional support. Mentors are not revealed to students, these are staff members who are committed to making the extra connection with a student. Mentors may have lunch with their mentee, send notes home, reach out to other staff of behalf of the mentee, skill build, celebrate successes, work on strategies to communicate and build school skills and can overall be seen providing additional encouragement and support to their mentee. Students are chosen at SAT meetings and then a mentor is assigned. Counselors developed a school wide unit plan to support the mentors with ideas and provided them once a month during the school year. Student grades are tracked in the class they have with their mentor to show the relationship to having a connectedness with the teacher. The results are below.

Second Quarter

6th grade: 11 out of 12 earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 75% of all students earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

7th grade: 9 out of 10 students earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 80% of all students earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

8th grade: 10 out of 10 students earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 80% of all students earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

Third Quarter

6th grade: 11 out of 12 earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 75% earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

7th grade: 8 out of 9 students earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 78% earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

8th grade: 8 out of 9 students earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 78% earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

Fourth Quarter

6th grade: (Two students added) 12 out of 14 students earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 57% of all students earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

7th grade: (Two students added) 11 out of 11 students earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 90% earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

8th grade: (One withdrawn) 6 out of 8 students earned a 2.0 or better in the class taught by their mentor. 75 % earned a 2.0 or better in all of their classes.

- Additional structures that continued this year to help with academics and connectedness include: ZAP, Math Lab, Academic Assistance, Student Support Program, Saturday School, Counselor small groups. To further support students, we provide a summer school program for students who failed two quarters of the same class, or who teachers recommended need assistance continuing to build their school skills to be successful in 7th and 8th grade. We provide 3 hours of summer school in which half is spent working on school skills and the other half is making up missed work from the school year to help fill in the gaps and hold the student accountable for the learning. This year we have five students in 6th grade and four students in 7th grade participating.
- Teachers and staff continue to stand at doors during passing periods throughout the year and adults are assigned duty during the morning arrival and the afternoon departure to greet students as they enter and exit the school.

- Teachers periodically send out achievement post cards to note students' successes. As a focused effort on this step, administration brought achievement postcards to a staff meeting and had each teacher write notes to students that they maybe had been neglecting to note something positive.

4. Lunchtime Connectedness:

Lunch is an awkward time for an adolescent, so we have a variety of alternatives to the commons to support students feeling comfortable. Some options include the majority of teachers opening up their classrooms for groups to eat, get help or just hang out, attending Tues/Thurs movie lunches in Mrs. Edmonson's classroom, doing STEM activities or receiving peer tutor support in the Panther Den, and using the computer lab to catch up on or print off work. The field and the library are also places students can go and play games with other students once they have finished eating.

- *Our PBIS survey indicated that last year 52% of our students had been to the Panther Den and this year that number was increased to 57%, a data point that truly shows the need for such a place to exist for students*

5. Student-to-Student Connectedness:

We know the importance of letting peers lead and Mrs. Altman headed this effort this year training and supporting our 8th grader peer tutors.

- This year, 21 peer tutors were trained. Every day, at least two from 7th and 8th grade were assigned to Panther Den from October on to support students at lunch. There were 9 peer tutors at the first and second Saturday School, and 5 at the last one in May. Every ZAP was supported beginning in October. At least 4 tutors were assigned. Some would just show up to help. On some occasions, a peer tutor was assigned for a specific student for the two hours to help support a specific academic class.

6. Administrative Student Connectedness:

Being present in the classroom, being visible during passing periods, before and after school, and attending lunches continue to be priorities for administration to support students understanding administration is available to listen to their needs.

The activities below were additional ways that supported students and administration connecting.

- **Principal Connectedness**-The principal continues to call each new family as the school year begins to welcome them to a new school year. Then each month postcards are sent to students celebrating their birthdays. The principal also sent a success postcard when students excelled, were recognized in the daily paper, or the school heard from parents that a student had achieved in an area. The principal also acknowledged sick students with notes home, sent bereavement cards and attended concerts and sporting activities.

- Assistant Principal Connectedness- Mrs. Brannen continued to track weekly Panther Pride winners, recognizing students on the morning announcements and with a prize coming to the front office, and creating an I-movie to recognize these students at assemblies. She also worked with the Panther Pride student committee to revamp the program. After informally surveying their grade level peers, the team decided that we needed different levels of recognition and that we should not be so systematic in selecting winners, but make it more of a luck of the draw. In addition to our weekly winners, we recognized students that recieved the highest number of tickets each quarter, and included a semester award where students were first nominated by their teachers and then voted on by their peers to receive an outstanding recognition. Each student that was nominated by a staff member received a certificate and the final winners were announced on the announcements and given an award. She also communicates home with emails, phone calls, and letters regarding student concerns and celebrations with grades, attendance, and/or behavior. Mrs. Brannen would randomly call students in that had struggled previously and were now successful to give them a personal word of encouragement and thank them for making a change for their own success. Lastly, Mrs. Brannen monitors the ZAP and SSP programs, ensuring student attendance and staff/volunteers are supported.

Goal #2: Continue to Increase Parent Connectedness

Parent involvement and looking for ways to engage parents in the life of the middle school student is challenging and a work in progress. OGMS staff and administration created opportunities to support family involvement in the following ways:

1. FFO Connectedness:

- FFO breakfasts continued to be used as a forum to invite parents in to share various topic themes. Throughout the course of the year all parents received a personal invitation to ask the principal questions and to hear about what was going on in their child's life in each grade level, or what initiatives were going on at OGMS. For the Principal's breakfast the topics were:
 1. What can we do to support our OE parents?
 2. Welcome to our new parents
 3. Supporting your 6th grader
 4. Transitioning your 8th grader to high school
 5. Being a 7th grader and being in the middle
 6. 8th grade parents and promotion protocols
 7. An end of year volunteer thank you breakfast. At the last FFO meeting, our staff hosted a breakfast where we acknowledged our parents who had volunteered throughout the year.

Additionally, the principal reached out to both elementary feeder schools again and visited their FFO meetings to support inviting future OGMS parents with information on how to be involved and ways that middle school was different from elementary school.

2. Parent Connectedness Through Communication and we also used these connections to support enrollment:

- We continued the practice of only sending a Principal's Message once a month, but to ensure timely messaging to families as soon as information came in, it went out on the OGMS Blog. Our CTI, also used the OG Facebook page to further enhance communication. Additionally, Orange Grove's Webpage posted a virtual tour and a short video clip to explain why OGMS is home of the Panthers. We created a Parent Guide to OGMS and posted it on our website and we gave tours to incoming families and hosted an open house night to showcase student voices of the past and our curriculum.
- Volunteer opportunities were advertised and used to support parents connecting in the school through volunteerism. (FFO committees, lunch duty, being in the Den, helping with band and choir, and helping with the student action committee)
- **Our two way communication goal was to collect information throughout the year and what information do parents need from us to help do a better job with our two-way communication. The principal held a listen and learn session. Parents were given a form for feedback each time there was a breakfast and asked to leave it in a suggestion box at the front of the office.**
- **We also opened a Technology Help-line that parents/students could use if they needed assistance with any technology needs.**

3. Bringing Families To School Through Organized Activities:

- Community Schools: A variety of activities/sports are offered for our students after school and parents can be involved through various methods.
- Cultural Luncheon: In January, OGMS staff and students hosted the 6th Cultural Luncheon where parents came and dined on cuisine from other countries. Art students showcased artwork in the Commons and Band /Choir students again performed solo pieces from various cultures and provided the history of the piece played.
- Open House: In August, OGMS staff hosted open house and the principal shared the goals of the SIP through an I-movie.
- **Color Run - The FFO sponsored a Color Run on campus to raise money and build community.**