

NOVEMBER COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY MEETING

November 02, 2022

Chugach Optional School Library

Assembly meetings are monthly meetings where parents/guardians and school staff meet to discuss important school-related topics and foster community through connection. It is a place to show up, meet other parents, ask questions and share thoughts and ideas.

MINUTES

5:30 p.m. - Welcome to the Assembly

5:35 p.m. - President's remarks:

The CEC will provide whatever information is known related to the 6th grade transition. No decision will be made

5:40 p.m. - Principal's report:

- Explained the use of the Parking Lot for tracking questions and concerns to guide getting more information on the 6th grade transition.
- Joel explained the process for how questions will be handled and addressed.
- Joel met with staff earlier this week to confirm what the vision is for Chugach on their behalf (teachers and administration). The advocacy will be focused on advocating for Chugach to keep the 6th grade.
- The staff is united in this advocacy mission. There is no other information available at this time.
- The ASD School Board meeting did not open this topic up for discussion.
- The district is committed to supporting Chugach in keeping its option format.
- Parents have choices and we will advocate for keeping everything the same as best we can.
- There will be a survey from the school district for neighborhood schools, but not likely for optional schools.
- School board meetings are every other week on Tuesdays (next one is Nov. 15).

5:45 p.m. - Chugach Staff:

- Erika - Her son Kincaid spoke about his experience in Chugach. He couldn't imagine going to another school that doesn't align with the Chugach philosophy. She does not see a negative to our kids transitioning to 7th grade in neighborhood middle schools.
- Suzan shared that the thought of kids missing the 6th grade here breaks her heart. There are many leadership opportunities in the 6th grade. 6th grade is a year for kids to

really shine.

- Joel - Suzan's view represents the feelings of the staff.

6:00 p.m. - Auction Update:

- Please go online to purchase tickets ASAP. If you can't make it you can still bid for items online.
- Event prep is going well. Donations are going well and no more are needed.
- Tamar explained that staff are invited to come for free with a guest, regardless of how many staff tickets are purchased by parents. Any staff tickets that go unpurchased will come out of the total auction raised amount.

6:10 p.m. - Treasurer's report - System for big simple

- The budget to date was passed around.
- Big Simple: budgeted for \$26,000 and we are short about \$3,500. Will discuss in next CEC meeting on how to address that. Jenny explained where on the budget to find the Big Simple allocations.
- Budget shortfall impacts spending ability across family groups.
- Ice Rink: Received a generous donation from Hillcorpt from Brian Miller. \$2,500 for the Ice rink. The auction will have an Ice Rink auction item to fund the remaining expense, which is higher than last year's contract.
- When the budget was created last year for the auction expenses were not included. There was no auction for last year and a \$15,000 shortfall was budgeted.
- Sound cart: This is a separate item from the auction and still need to have further discussions on what the cart will include and how we can find a solution that will include the stage for plays and spring fling.
 - Joel said Inlet View has let Lauralee borrow their equipment but the principal has changed.
 - Jenny asked for volunteers to help Lauralee research grant funding options.
 - Parent Jo said we need to index all the needs so we can be more effective in searching for grants in the future.
- Big Simple expense reimbursement: In the past staff was able to order items through Yuki and she had the credit card, however this is no longer possible.
 - Current policy requires that expenses under \$150 be purchased by the staff and reimbursed by the CEC within two weeks. Expenses over \$150 can be emailed or sent to Jenny.
 - Jo asked where the Fall Carnival shortfall will be allocated. Jenny responded it will go back into operational expenses for the unfunded parts of the CEC budget.
 - Outdoor school is going to be more expensive than expected. Ice Rink is \$700 more than expected. Many things will be more expensive.

6:25 p.m - Winter carnival recruiting:

- Next big event is the Winter Carnival.
 - Time to start shifting gears to winter events.
 - We need a permit from the fire department to have open flames.
 - Sarah Jeffries is coordinating the Winter Carnival.
 - Joel: The more we have people helping out the better the event will be.
 - Amy Mick shared that the Winter Carnival was not meant to be a fundraiser, just a fun way to get together. Goal is for it to pay for itself.
 - Date is Jan. 27, 2023.
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- Discussion was had on students putting on fundraisers for outdoor school extra expense. Amy shared some parents were opposed to students fundraising and is glad to see we are talking about it again.
 - Kindy bread raised \$1,100 in 15 minutes.
 - Dates for Outdoor School are not yet firm. It will take place in March.
 - It will be around \$500 more than is budgeted.
 - Amy mentioned that we can use the Church kitchen to bake multiple things.
 - We used to have students help with various tasks at the Church.
 - CEC will explore going back to having students engage in this.

6:30 p.m. - Q&A via cards

Comments:

- Hattie: As a researcher there is substantial amount of research on the middle school model that shows on average a decrease in educational outcomes when 6th grade is in middle school as well as a cost increase, even when factors that influence achievement are controlled for.
- Joel believes optional schools will not likely be harmed in this process
- Erika: Need to think about what is budgetary effective vs. what is best for the kids
- Suzan: If there's a middle school model where teachers have a team and planning time, curriculum is integrated... that can work with 6-8 model. But with budget cuts children are going through the junior high model which is more like High School.
- Joel: as a parent of a child in special ed - elementary there is a more loving and caring environment for the children who need special education.
- Jo - I think we all agree that we don't want 6th grade to move from Chugach. Is there something we can do to advocate now ahead of time.
- Amy: Want to keep under the radar and not make any waves
- Tamar:
- Joel: We need to ask questions about what this will the transition look like both from the district perspective and from the Chugach perspective.
 - Parents will always have the choice to move to sixth grade if they want to.
 - The school district will very likely listen to parents

- Band and orchestra could potentially be
- Ask questions of the board whether the Middle School Model will truly be “the middle school model” in terms of teacher planning time, etc.
- Katie: In theory supports Chugach keeping 6th grade but this is complex and had kids go through the K-5 Susitna Optional model. It is very hard to have two different models of K-6.
 - If Chugach holds tight to the K-6 there are serious implications that can’t be boiled down to just “parents have a choice.”
 - We as a school need to think hard and understand what it would mean to us to have all other schools transition and chugach doesn’t.
- Jo: We need the social research so we can all be informed.

Questions:

- There is a lot of evidence on why this is a good thing
- How is the information shared back from the district on how many people respond, how will the info be looked at and disseminated?
- What would it look like for Chugach if we didn’t keep 6th grade. There are options for us to consider like preschool or extending to 6,7,8.
 - K-1 is not a great option from a literacy perspective and not recommended from a philosophical perspective
- Jenny - Is Joel taking a cohesive stand from staff to the district?
 - Yes, he already has.
 - Tamar asked if the assembly has the ultimate voice and power, not the administration.
 - Tamar: but a stand has already been taken prior to discussing with the assembly
 - Joel: This was just a private preliminary conversation with Elementary Ed Director, not public testimony and only on behalf of staff.
- Is there pushback from the neighborhood schools to keep their 6th grades?
 - Joel: Yes, definitely.

7:35, meeting adjourned

All questions and comments that were not addressed in the Q&A portion of today’s meeting will be read and consolidated into a school wide email in the near future. We value all opinions and appreciate everyone’s patience.

Next Community Assembly Meeting December 7th, 2022