

Parent Dialogue Night **Tuesday, May 30, 2006**

Notes from meeting that began at 6:00 and ended approximately 7:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Angela Baker, Prevention Specialist	Louise Fitzgerald, Parent
Officer Frank McCarty, SRO officer at BFA	Carole O'Connell, Parent
Joe Cahill, Esq., FSCU Attorney	Richard Trahan, Parent
Kelly Gosslin, Community Justice Center	Kim Chesarek, Parent
Derek Miodownik, Department of Corrections	Trudy Cioffi, Parent/School Board
Marylin Abell, Student Assistance Counselor,	Michelle Coe, Parent/Day Care
Deb McCarthy, SACS Counselor	Tina Tuttle, Parent/Day Care
Judy Ashlin-McGauglin, Department of Health	Mary Barton, Parent/School Board
Pam McCarthy, Agency of Human Services	Mary Ellen Lamb, Parent
Mary Lynn Riggs, Principal SACS	Kathleen Rogers, Parent
Georgie Andrews, Assistant Principal 5-8 SACS	Cathy Fitzgerald, Parent/Community Justice Center

Mary Lynn Riggs opened the meeting with a welcome and stating the goals for the meeting.

Goals:

1. To establish the current reality of risk taking behaviors of youth in this community. What adult responses will support all youth and families in the community?
2. To examine the regulations and policies that guide the decision-making processes without violating parent and child rights.
3. To identify ways we can work in partnership to address the community needs in regards to alcohol, drugs, and other at risk behaviors of our youth.

Outcomes:

1. To brainstorm ways to work together to build prevention networks for children and young adults in St. Albans.
2. To gather information in order to adjust our protocol for keeping the public informed of safety issues relating to our children.

Introductions followed and Angela Baker, Prevention Specialist facilitated the meeting.

Angela stated that there had been a drug and alcohol incident at school and invited participants to open the meeting by putting concerns forward respectfully. The goal was to identify actions to move forward with.

PARENT/SCHOOL CONCERNS:

1. **Are there gangs?** Parents learned that students are not in formal gangs but are modeling the behaviors of gangs that they see in the movies, TV, the Internet. Officer McCarty offered that the Crypts, Latin Kings, would be incredibly more concerned than us if there were a group here in Saint Albans copying the gang's behavior. We definitely have groups of students who hang around together.
2. **Are there incidents where students are being bullied for money?** We need to have parents provide information so that we have the evidence needed in order to take action within school. Investigations are always conducted if any person in the building submits a report. Parents also need to call the school if there is any retaliation against a child for the reporting of incidents
3. **How can we educate our students about the dangers involved in gangs?** Make sure that we grab each teachable moment in school, at home, so that students understand what to look for in the community. Teaching children about safe adults that they can go to with their concerns. It is also about building the protective factors such as clear consistent boundaries, caring adults, and good opportunities for positive interactions, positive feedback from adults and a sincere sense of hope.
4. **How can we maintain the balance of keeping all children safe and protecting the rights of all children?** Students have far more information than the adults at times due to FERPA (Federal Education Right and Privacy Act) regulations. We are allowed to report only general conditions. FERPA restricts the information to on a "need to know" in order to support the child. Attorney Joe Cahill shared with parents that this is a law that in the end protects all children and at times is a barrier. It is so important that as a community we work together and understand the law's limitations.
5. **How can we communicate better?** It was agreed that there are some incidents that just do not allow immediate communication. The school agrees to respond in a timely fashion informing parents with as much legal information as possible. If parents ever find themselves concerned about what had happened within a particular day, they should call the school for clarity. Angela Baker stated that she was contacted by the school for consultation and she felt from the state's perspective that Saint Albans City School's team had responded well to the incident.
6. **Why isn't there consistency with discipline?** We are currently focusing on our PreK-8 student management system/discipline. There is much evidence of works in progress such as the school wide discipline committee, responsive classroom, and professional development for adults, morning meetings to build community,

hallway expectations, and lunchroom expectations with logical consequences. In the fall of 2006 a parent presentation will outline the changes in the student handbook highlighting levels of behavior and logical consequences, including policies and procedures.

7. **What is Community Justice?** It is the opportunity for public education through Family group conferencing/Restorative Justice to reinstate b
8. mutual caring after an incident that has affected many people. The goal is to serve and/or compliment the building of empathy.

Moving Forward:

1. Read the Drug and Alcohol Policy and provide feedback to the school board that allows parents to have voice regarding policy issues.
2. Adjust the protocols and continue to communicate with parents in a timely manner in regards to issues that affect the health and well being of students.
3. Health Care Snippets in the Messenger – consistently and constantly provide information to help parents educate their children with at risk issues that affect all of us.
4. Continue with prevention in school through guidance and student assistance counselor.
5. Attend Dialogue Nights that address the specifics in regards to community issues such as drugs, Internet safety, discipline, etc.
6. Foster community partnerships that can support the school and parents with this work.