

## Minutes of the Friends of Venice Magnet meeting held on October 9, 2014

Meeting called to order at 6:39 pm.

**Board Members in attendance:** David Kent, Craig Jaffe, Mary Smith, Jim Barrie, Lois Saucedo, Nancy Steiner, Sherry Godfrey, Elsa Shekelle, Alim Shamji.

**Others in attendance:** Cris Vicente-Aguilar, Courtney Lockwood, Rosi Kent, Sarah Auerswald, Gloria Halfacre, Brenda Robinson, Bobby Mustol, Daryl Olesinski, Hiroyo Garrett, Jasmine Jaffe, Amy Sobajian, Hamideh Najibzadeh, Mihar Tanaka, Lisa Craig, Steven Craig, Terri Sayama, Conny Lederer, Leonor Bautista, Lina Yamaguchi, Bonnie Roche-Blair, Richard Valerio, Dr. Elsa Mendoza.

**School/Administration Report:** Dr. Mendoza and Mr. Valerio spoke on behalf of the school. Dr. Mendoza thanked David Kent for his efforts in helping with recruiting for the school, including making arrangements for the Mar Vista Fall Festival. She also recognized student Lisa Sobajian for winning a \$10,000 scholarship and a Mac laptop from Nordstrom, and parent Amy Sobajian for all her efforts on behalf of the school. The enrollment numbers for the school are still uncertain. The STEMM magnet has sufficient enrollment to keep all its teachers, but the WLGS magnet is currently showing as one student short to maintain its full staff. The school is appealing to the district, as the problems with MISIS is preventing them from having accurate numbers.

Mr. Valerio noted that the graduation rate for Venice HS jumped by a large percentage over the prior year, to 79.3%. He is hoping that some students who were attempting to complete their requirements over the summer will succeed and push that number above 80%. They are hoping to continue to increase graduation rates by identifying students early in high school (10<sup>th</sup> grade) who might be at risk of falling behind in credit due to D's and F's in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. They feel that personal attention will keep these students focused, and they will get back on track to graduate before it's too late. Dr. Mendoza indicated that they have identified 78 students at risk. There was further discussion on how best to address these at-risk students – identifying students as early as 9<sup>th</sup> grade, working to promote regular attendance, and making sure students are aware of and are using the tutoring services available at Venice.

Ms. Roche-Blair noted that the WLGS class of 2014 had 9 students who didn't graduate in June (out of about 140), but that four finished over the summer, and the other five were expected to complete their requirements by December, which would give the class a 100% graduation rate. She then noted that the MISIS transcripts are not accurate, and that current senior info is not up to date. With college applications right around the corner, this has the potential to negatively impact students.

**Magnet Teacher Reports:** Cris Vicente-Aguilar, Spanish teacher for WLGS and Senior Class sponsor thanked the FOVM for arranging the very successful Meet and Mingle (held on Sept. 30) and all the parents who have contributed towards the teacher wish lists. In an effort to help with recruiting for future years, the WLGS teachers are reaching out to former students to get their responses on how the school impacted their lives and prepared them for college. He noted that Mr. Moore is working with seniors on their college essays, and that non-profit 826LA is coming to his classes every Monday in Oct. and Nov. to help the students. The latest installment of the WLSG Documentary series was very successful, and the follow-up assembly with survivors of the Guatemalan genocide, and some of those involved in the making of the film was well received. The students were engaged and their response was mature and emotional. The language teachers are working on details of implementing use of the language lab funded by FOVM. Each language teacher will use the cart one day per week. The students have begun using the iPads with Duolingo. Ms. Roche-Blair noted that the PSAT test will be given at Venice on Oct 15. All 10<sup>th</sup> graders and those 11<sup>th</sup> graders who signed up will take the test. Parent/Teacher conferences will be on Oct 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Courtney Lockwood, lead teacher for STEMM reported on that program's recent activities. Many of the STEMM teachers are participating in recruiting for students for next year, and they continue to write grants and post Donors Choose projects to raise funds for the program. All of the STEMM teachers are participating in tutoring outside of the class – either at lunch or after school, and many are also sponsoring/leading

extracurricular activities.

**Financial Report:** Treasurer Lois Saucedo presented an accounting of financial activities for the period.

**Old Business:**

The Mix and Mingle event was discussed. Overall the event was considered very successful, although attendance was lower than hoped. The group will focus on how to better plan in advance for next year.

**New Business:**

David has put together a flyer to advertise the school. These will be distributed at recruiting events, and at the Mar Vista Fall Festival, to be held on Oct 18<sup>th</sup>. He has also had custom pens made to promote the school. Volunteers are needed to staff the booth on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Mendoza has agreed to have the flyers printed up in full color so that they will look more professional and better serve as a promotional tool.

A short discussion ensued on how to increase donations to FOVM, including better advertising of school needs and continued use of Donors Choose.

After concluding remarks by David Kent, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Next meeting 11/13/14, 6:30 pm

Submitted by Jim Barrie