MIPAC Meeting Minutes

March 17th, 2016

Board Attendees: Audrey Shaw (Chairperson), Daniel Wong (Co-Chairperson – attended by phone), Jennifer Pang (Recording Secretary), Agustin Del Alamo (Parent Representative), Ami Barrett (FoMIP Representative), Greg Hauser (Principal), Julie Fong (Lead Teacher), Cynthia Chang (Lead Teacher), Nicole Loh (Lead Teacher)

Absent: MC Barrosa (Asst. Principal)

Guests: Paula Yousef, Amy Koch, Doug Pang, Susanne Dachgruber, Chi Nguyen, Ron Pei, Stacey Cartledge, Debbie James

Meeting called to order at 2:10pm.

Adoption of February 25th Minutes – Nicole Loh made a motion to amend the 2/25/16 minutes to strike the words “dominant text” with regard to Mei Zhou Hua Yu (“MZHY”), and clarify that the teachers will choose content from both MZHY and Better Chinese as appropriate. Motion was seconded by Cynthia Chang. All voted aye. Susanne Dachgruber will make sure the revised minutes get posted on the Friends of MIP website.

Better Chinese has presented the teachers with an updated version of Better Immersion, which is now developed in traditional characters for grades K-2. The teachers will look to see how it compares with the MZHY / Better Chinese hybrid method that we are implementing for next year, and will report back next month.

Teachers have scheduled a half-day workshop development day in late April to continue their progress toward finalizing curriculum for next year. 5th grade curriculum is being revised to incorporate both MZHY and Better Chinese, and this should be complete by June (English curriculum for next year’s 5th graders has already been developed). This year’s 4th graders are currently using the third MZHY book, so there will be a transitional period for those students. But starting next year, the 1st graders will start with the 1st book, etc.

3rd Grade 50/50 Model – a draft of the survey to the current 3rd grade parents was distributed, and the language was debated and modified. Survey results will be presented at next month’s MIPAC meeting. Cynthia Chang and Amy Koch (3rd grade MIP teachers) were interviewed during the meeting, and both stated that they would prefer having their own self-contained classroom if given a choice. Reasons include: difficulty of building a relationship with students if you can only speak to them in Mandarin, it’s difficult to have in-depth conversations about cultural concepts if you cannot also explain in English, behavioral issues take longer to address when two teachers are involved in the administrative process, time lost switching classrooms, etc. At this point in the year, teachers reported that English Language Arts and Mandarin Language Arts are both on schedule with regard to the curriculum guide set forth. Math, science, and social studies are all ahead of schedule.

Teacher Hiring Status – there are more applicants compared to one month ago, and Mr. Hauser is in the process of interviewing applicants.

Program Coordinator Status – we still need to figure out with the district whether there is a way to have the money available but not tied up in the gift fund, where it would be non-refundable. If we put the money in the gift fund and do not end up hiring a coordinator this year, the money can only be applied toward purchases made through CUSD (i.e. teachers’ aides, etc.). Daniel Wong is working with Dr. Holliday to see if there is any way to hold the money outside the gift fund. Also, Mr. Hauser will inquire about the time lapse between when the money is presented / available for use and when the coordinator position will be posted on EdJoin (time will be needed for the district to prepare the job description, etc.).

Self-Assessment Survey and Benchmarks – Tabled until next month’s meeting (MC Barrosa to lead discussion).

Middle School and High School – we need to plan ahead in order for students to be able to earn the seal of biliteracy upon high school graduation. Need to take both a top-down and a bottom-up approach with regard to curriculum. Because Mandarin is a more difficult language to learn, we need more immersion classes than the Spanish program (which tapers down to only 1 class by 8th grade). The AP language test is purely based on language ability, and does not test language-based knowledge in areas such as science or social studies. Ami Barrett suggested presenting CUSD with examples of middle school and high school curriculum from other Mandarin immersion programs throughout the country. Teachers were also informed of a dual immersion conference specifically targeted toward middle school curriculum, which will be held on a Saturday in May at UCLA.

Communications – Ron Pei and Chi Nguyen presented MIPAC members with a letter expressing their concern about the tone of certain communications. There was discussion, and a consensus that social media such as Facebook is not the proper place to discuss MIPAC-related topics. These topics should be discussed directly with board members. In addition, we all need to be mindful of our tone in both written and verbal communications. MIPAC board members should be diplomatic in all situations, and act as ambassadors for the organization.

Next MIPAC meeting is on April 28th at 1:30pm.