

School Council
Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2017

Meeting commenced at 3:45 p.m.

- 1) Welcome! Members introduced themselves.

- 2) What is School Council?
 - MA public schools have become the best in the nation and there are four parts of the law from 1993 that helped make them so.
 - School Councils.
 - Principals hire teachers, not school boards.
 - Charter schools.
 - Standards based curriculum
 - The Council's role is to advise the Principal(s); not to make decisions but to help the Principals make informed decisions.
 - Two large tasks that the Council works on are revising and updating :
 - o The School Improvement Plan, this will start next meeting.
 - o The Student Handbook, which will be looked at later in the year.

- 3) K-4 Progress Reports
 - Years ago we went to quarterly progress reports in place of the previous trimesters.
 - The teachers of students in grades 1-4 at SSCPS believe that trimesters are better; quarters don't give good value as far as the contents of the reports and the teacher time spent creating them.
 - Krista explained that the pace of learning in grades K-4 is slower than in the higher grades, therefore there is less to report if done quarterly; the teachers need more time to reflect on progress of students.
 - Kerry expressed concern about parents receiving enough information about why this change was being made so that it would be received as a positive move.
 - Deirdre wondered if it would be timely enough for parents to be made aware of when their child is struggling.
 - Angie explained that teachers feel the time spent trying to come up with comments for progress reports would be better spent on curriculum and lesson content and working with students directly. Keri Macauley asked if the results of DIBELS were communicated to families..
 - If a child qualifies for Title 1, progress reports go out twice a year with DIBELS results and also many of the Special Education Progress reports use the DIBELS as a data point.
 - Keri Macauley suggested it could be helpful for DIBELS results to be sent to families so they could be aware of any existing or potential issues. Ted said that he would take that idea and communicate it with the teachers who would discuss.

- Kerry asked why there is urgency to get this change approved by the Board of Trustees. Ted explained that the teachers assumed the decision was already made, but it hasn't yet, so there is some urgency.
- Deirdre reiterated that having feedback about their student's progress twice a year might not be sufficient. Krista pointed out that the information is far more specific in the lower level progress reports than in 5-12, so the gap in time is made up for by the frequency of receiving information.
- Kerry thought there might be a way of structured, informal communication that could keep parents informed, especially for students who are at risk.
- Krista wondered if it would be possible on half days, teachers could meet with families of students who need extra help.
- Ted will write about the dates of the trimesters in one of his upcoming Updates.
- Kerry feels parents have a hard time keeping up with the changes that happen on a regular basis with the school. Parents don't feel communicated with about the changes.
- Kerry noted that it might be helpful for the Council to refer other parents to the parts of the Handbook that say clearly that confidential matters cannot be shared with parents, to help calm the people who are feeling uninformed.
- Deirdre suggested that whatever language is the second most prevalent in the school, perhaps the Handbook could be put into it.
- Angie explained that the Handbook will be translated for those who need it in another language.
- Next month we will start looking at goals for the School Improvement Plan.

Meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Attending:

Deirdre Hall
 Kerry Griffin
 Deb Paquette
 Cissi White
 Bobby Thacker
 Ted Hirsch
 Angie Pepin
 Kerri Macauley
 Krista Cafourek