

School Council Meeting February 7, 2019

1. Parent Engagement Update

- Task force is underway, meeting after School Council today.
- Cissy will create a Google doc so everyone can see what's happening.
- All-school email can be used.
- It was agreed that translated documents need to be provided to families who need it. We do offer it but Cissy thinks that it should be automatically available, not putting the burden of asking on the families, who normally don't ask.
- Kerry suggested that Old Colony has a volunteer service that can be used to help with translations.
- Geoff suggested looking into Line Bridge, which Boston Public schools use for translating.
- Major, consistent documents, such as those that go out in the August emailing, could be put into translated versions.
- We want to be much more non-English speaking-friendly to our families in order to help with family engagement.

2. 2019-2020 School Improvement Plan Development

- It was suggested that the cellphone use goals can be added to the SIP under either Technology or Fostering a Safe and Welcoming School Culture.
- Geoff suggested that a dedicated science and/or social studies teacher would be able to help improve student knowledge in Levels I and II.
- There's a lack of time in the teachers' day for preparing science and social studies due to prep time and meetings with curriculum coordinators; they're working on trying to keep ELA and math teaching as strong as possible which doesn't leave much time for science and social studies on Level I.
- Grades 5 through 8 have changed from having science 3 days a week to 5 days a week, so that part of the goal has been met.
- Kerry suggested the goal in the SIP for improving science and social studies curriculum could be changed to K-4. The Curriculum Coordinators could meet to decide how to implement this change.
- John stated that Level 2 currently does 6 weeks of science and then 6 weeks of social studies but they would like to put the FOSS kits to better use by reallocating time for science.
- Geoff says that Level 1 would like to see more science; there is already a lot of social studies included in Wit & Wisdom; science has a much greater amount of material preparation which cuts into class time and prep time.
- "Implement FOSS grades K-2" would be a good goal to put in the SIP.

- Cissy suggested that School Council meetings need to be either longer or more frequent since we never make it through the document in any meeting.
- Krista thinks the Curriculum Coordinators should be invited to School Council in order to have a say in these goals.

3. Student and Family Handbook 2019-2020

- Mary discussed the important issue of iPods and headphones at the high school
- The high school would like to see this issue addressed in the Handbook
- Joe explained that it's a problem with impulse control when it comes to students checking Snapchat and other social media.
- All high school teachers have been given pouches to hold the cellphones during class; consistency in having students put them there is needed. The problem is students pushing back hard at having their phones taken from them and this takes up valuable class time to deal with.
- Kerry wondered if it would make sense to start with the freshmen so that the newest students get used to the necessity of not having their cellphones during classes. Current 8th graders already have them put in their lockers all day.
- There can be benefits to the use of phones for certain things, but otherwise they're a safety issue, a distraction, and are keeping students from face-to-face interactions.
- Joe wants to see a cellphone policy on its own in the Handbook.
- Kerry suggested having an informational session at a Town Meeting at the beginning of each year so all students can know what changes have been made to the Handbook. Clearly not everyone is reading the entire document.
- Students not only give teachers push-back about handing over their cellphones; there is an addiction to them and they've been found to be using tricks to avoid giving them up, such as only putting the phone case in the pouch, or putting a second, dummy phone in the pouch and keeping the real one.
- The high school policy is different from the rest of the school. As an example, Level IV students know they have to leave their phones in their lockers at 8:00 am and don't get them back until 3:00 pm.
- Krista and Angie would like to add Apple watches to the list of devices that can't be used during the day, since they can do anything a cellphone can do. Any device that can access internet or text is a potential distraction.
- Options for blocking certain wi-fi were discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35

Attending:

Joe Kay	John Toland
Mary Carter	Krista Cafourek
Karen Boyle	Caroline Boyle

Linda Cook
Geoff Peterson
Shameeka Brown

Cissy White
Kai Schildmeier
Michelle Granara