

School Council Meeting Minutes, March 6, 2018

In attendance:

Tina Gemme, Andy Bedell, Shawn Durrett, Irene LaRoche, Holliane Rappe, Kathy Dorval, Lori Roche, Kristen Robinson, 2 parents

Agenda & Minutes:

Tina shared the agenda in advance and distributed minutes (which had been emailed to Council members prior to the meeting). The group approved the meeting minutes from 1/24/18.

Tina distributed the following documents:

Superintendent's Report, DES (budget narrative for reference)
DES School Council School Improvement Plan

Tina led the group through a review of the SIP (updates and progress)

Educational Programming:

It was reported that the grade -level teams have met more than 3 times already, re: curriculum maps.

Clarification of math technology: is referring to Khan Academy, Dreambox, computer lab program

Question about the new History/ Social Studies curriculum from a parent rep: the new curriculum guidelines have been released by the State. Public comment is due by April 2nd (less than 2 months for public comment, and there are substantial changes, including to assessment)— are teachers yet engaging with the new curriculum guidelines? Not yet—the curriculum director is in charge. It's a testing/ pilot year. There is also a big focus on Civics in the new curriculum guidelines, which may align with our Community Engagement focus. A teacher rep shared that a big push recently has been math/ science, and she feels comfortable with the social studies curriculum getting the next focus.

Shawn will add links to the notes, re: new frameworks and public comment survey.

Draft proposed bills for civic engagement:

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/SD954>

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/S307>

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/S278>
<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/S244>
<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/S1038>

Frameworks Page

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/StandardsReview/hss.html>

Frameworks Public Comment Survey

sgiz.mobi/s3/Public-Comment-Draft-History-and-Social-Science-Framework-2018

A teacher shared the idea that we reach out to the Curriculum Director and engage her in conversation about reaching out to DES teachers. The professional days are already booked up, but maybe there is another way she can be in conversation with teachers about it.

Follow-up step:

Tina will reach out to Curriculum Director and see if there is some way she can bring this to the attention of the staff.

Report on progress towards using “the model of gathering research, building a plan, testing a plan, making improvements to monitor system changes”:

Staff input—there have been more opportunities for staff to give feedback on such things as:

- Lunch rotation schedules

- Class placement

- Workplace Norms

- Dress code

Invitation to stakeholders to come in for Coffee Connection

A lot of progress has been made in this area

Community Relations:

Some work has been done booking someone for Memorial Day; the Veterans Education Project is another possible resource (vcp.org)—they are a wonderful nonprofit that sends volunteer vets into schools to speak (for free) about their experience. Valentines for Veterans have also been made.

A parent rep asked about other community engagement events such as Black History Month, Women’s History Month. A teacher rep shared that the Diversity team recently had older students go to younger grades and read/ discuss events around MLK day. The upper grades 3-6 gathered and watched the movie Our Friend Martin and teachers had the opportunity to preview the film. The Diversity Team

sent out follow-up discussion questions to classroom teachers. A teacher rep shared that it was very successful; student-driven and fostered community.

Communication:

Discussion of event notification practices (double copies/ hard copies), such as Family Night (PTA event). A teacher rep shared that she feels there is plenty of communication. Tina shared that she heard from families that they like a hard copy of the monthly parent updates, so she will provide that. A parent in attendance shared that she really likes the emails from the principal that are about weekly events. Another parent in attendance shared that she is a new parent and would like a little more information about what certain events are. A teacher rep wondered if the PTA could share more info at the beginning of the year. Kindergarten Club has not been run by the PTA recently, which was helpful in the past. A parent in attendance shared that she would love to be a part of bringing Kindergarten Club back. Tina suggested that she connect with the PTA and the preschool around it, and the parent in attendance said that she would; a community rep said she would help. There is no line budget for it.

A parent in attendance shared that she does not receive regular communication from her classroom teacher. A teacher rep in attendance shared that she does not like the idea of this group setting mandates for all teachers. Tina suggested that the parent share that with the teacher directly (she has) and to let her (Tina) know if she needs further assistance. A teacher rep shared that she does not get regular feedback from parents about the weekly communication that she does send out. A suggestion was made to encourage parents (perhaps via the PTA) to share with their child's classroom teachers what forms of communication they appreciate. The 3 parent reps could talk about a way to encourage parents to share feedback with teachers.

School Culture:

Tina shared that Sapphire from the Collaborative is coming in to work with the Diversity Leadership Team and to work with 4th grade health teachers. She will also do some training with the staff and build in some parent work too. She will also come back for some follow-up work. The DIG (Diversity Inclusion Group) group sent a parent rep to connect with her too.

A parent rep asked about the work on reviewing school lunch/ recess. More support has been put in so that a staggered end time could be implemented. They tried different timelines within the grades. They heightened the awareness within students that if they finish eating, they can move out sooner. Staff are now monitoring students who may be done and helping them move along. First graders do not have natural awareness around eating and moving on, but the schedule has made it so this is not an issue. More user-friendly meals have been helpful. Some good progress has been made in this area, particularly since this has been a

reported concern from parents. A parent rep wondered if students had been surveyed; not in a formal way, though many students were talked to in the cafeteria more informally. Most students reported that they like the new system of being able to move out of lunch when done.

Tina reported that 1 staff meeting has been used so far to discuss student behavior.

Tina reported that continued Coffee Connection meet and greets are being offered, as well as parents events. The Math Night has 120 students rsvp'd to come!

Special Education/ Tiered Instruction:

In progress: looking at case loads, student needs
Teachers do a lot throughout the year in discussing assessments, evaluating data
The school is looking at a new model for team meetings
Trial of having classroom teachers come into am (pre school) meetings to increase communication

A parent rep shared feedback, re: SIP from the PTA mtng:

Questions about the language on the plan/ parents felt they didn't understand certain things and wanted more clarification of the document
Ability to give feedback; parents appreciated the survey but wanted to be able to give feedback on the plan before it goes to the Committee. A School Comm rep was at the PTA meeting and wondered about possible adjustments to the timeline. The timeline was not ideal this year because the School Council was busy getting up and running.
Parents would like more check-ins, re: SIP, and perhaps more meetings of the School Council would be helpful
A request for the SIP to be sent out via PDF (it's on the website) and for feedback
Could the School Committee have a spotlight on the SIP at a meeting?
The group agreed to put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Agenda for next meeting:

Revisit norms/ schedule
Parent feedback from PTA mtng, re: SIP
School Improvement Plan updates

Public conversation:

Question about how much time is allotted for lunch/ recess
Cell phone policy/ Dress code
Where can parents find policies and community expectations? Student Handbook, online

Next Meeting:

Wed, May 23rd, 3:30-4:30

