

Oak Hill Middle School

School Council Meeting: December 16, 2009

School Council Members in attendance: Susan Kane, Chip DiMarco, Jane Whalen, Maureen McCann, Eva Thompson, Elizabeth Matera, Risa Shames

Parents: Josh Cohen, Lisa Fabrizio, Chris Hill. Note-taker: Risa Shames

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I. Public Comment

- Josh Cohen asked for number of voters in the School Council race. Eva will ask Bruce Henderson for that information.
- Josh also asked to have the School Council meeting notices, agenda and minutes on the School website, not the PTO website. Eva will take care of that.
- Lisa Fabrizio applauded Eva and the staff for the steps taken to change the cafeteria environment and process.

II. November Minutes approved: Eva will put bullets of the minutes in her newsletter

III. Discussion of Parent Survey Results

Compiling and communicating results

- The Council will explore coding the results so they can be quantified.
- Eva presented a model of a PowerPoint presentation that Newton North used to present results from their survey. The Council liked this format.
- The Council agreed that Eva should briefly discuss the survey and the great parent participation in her next newsletter. More detail about specific initiatives can come in later newsletters or presentations.
- The Council also talked about several items that could be changed immediately to address concerns in the survey.

Key Themes in the results

- Parents feel little connection to school
- Bullying/cliques
- Differentiated learning, not enough challenge for some students
- After-school activities – good community builder
- Teacher websites – inconsistent
- More conference time
- Accommodating working parents
- Communication from school is good
- Lack of consistency across teams and teachers in terms of activities and field trips
- Guidance team well liked and effective
- Impressed with interim principal and survey
- Parent admin person for Mr. Cutler
- Picture of administrator and description of what they do in newsletter.

### Initiatives to address results

- Building Improvement: Chris explained that the PTO is going to bring together a group of parents to work on school improvement projects, maybe in connection with NewtonServes. Eva also explained that every school can have 3 summer projects to improve the building. The Council talked about painting the hallways and/or classrooms and developing outdoor space.
- Websites: the district is changing the webpage language. Perhaps offer brief guidelines to teachers on what to include on their websites, if they have one.
- Accommodate working parents: Eva agreed to offer cross- grade coffees in early morning and evening.
- Communicating more effectively to parents on themes such as:
  - Conference timing – part of teacher contract
  - Initiatives to combat bullying – health curriculum, peer leaders, cyber-bullying addressed in library
  - Sports teams, music options

### IV. Updates from Eva

- Space Team – In preparation of the four modulars that Oak Hill is getting this summer, Eva is putting together a team of teachers to look at space and think about ways to utilize rooms differently.
- Lunch Policy- Eva explained the new lunch process to the Council. She said that the new process has made the cafeteria safer and quieter and is a similar system with other middle schools. Eva also explained that she met with a group of students who had circulated a petition about the new lunch process. After the meeting, she felt that the students understood why the new system was in place. She also explored the idea of a student council with the students.

### V. Next Steps

1. The Council will determine how to present the parent and teacher survey results to the community.
2. Eva will write something about lunch policy and conversation with students for the next newsletter.
3. Eva or Council member will write up immediate tasks from the survey for the newsletter.
4. Each council member will review results again and come back to January meeting with 10 bright ideas from the survey.
5. Next meeting: January 27, 2010.