

**Oak Hill Middle School
School Council Minutes
April 7, 2011**

School Council Attendees: Eva Thompson, Risa Shames, Steve Siegel, Susan Kane, Elaine Whalen, Maureen McCann, Elizabeth Matera

Public Attendees: Betsy Blagdon, Bruce Henderson **Note-taker:** Elaine Whalen

Public Comment: no public comment

Minutes accepted with minor changes.

Discussion of how students could utilize the outdoors during lunch for “recess”. There is a staffing issue to adequately monitor the students with current lunch staff. The school is still pondering this and will continue to assess it. There continues to be conflict whereby the outside patio abuts two classrooms so the noise level would be a problem.

Discussion of new food service. Kids are enjoying the new food and the quality of it is better. Payment system is slow and will be revamped for next year which should help. Based on requests, menus can be customized by school. Some parent concerns exist because the cafeteria has begun serving ice-cream and “natural” soda.

A question was made re what will happen for Newton Serves at Oak Hill. Eva expects there will be work on the outside. The PTO is seeking a coordinator for Newton Serves. Mulch has been ordered from the city.

More discussion about some items from the idea list from last year’s survey. Conversation asking if outside experts could be brought in to run a club or activity with funding from sports/activity fee. Risa suggests perhaps asking Newton Community Ed if they could initiate something.

Eva asks if someone would draft a blurb for the handbook that might address a refrain from wearing clothing pertaining to birthdays or bar mitzvah’s to school. Risa offered to draft something. Everyone agrees implementation should be done at multiple levels, with Rabbis, School Council and something in the handbook.

Oak Hill is considering a shift to grading on a trimester. Currently 2 middle schools have a quarter system and 2 have trimesters. There was an extensive process to get input from OH faculty and the consensus is that we may shift to trimesters; this would offer teachers adequate time to gather clear performance information, especially from more long-term projects. Progress reports at midpoint would still go home. Right now there can be little data at the midpoint of a quarter to give solid feedback. Rotation classes (art, music, P.E, Health, Tech. Eng., Drama) run for half the year and on quarters. Thus, grades for those classes occur off-the trimester cycle. The school is exploring when and how these grades can be communicated to parents in real time in addition to being on the report card at the subsequent trimester.

In our last meeting the Council will take stock of what was accomplished this year and will consider its plans for next year.

Next meeting: May 12, 2011; 4-5pm, in the library. Note taker: Risa.