

CRLS School Council Meeting
1/28/20
CRLS CRC

Principal Smith introduced Connections

“Connections” is a way for people to build a bridge from where they are or have been to where they will be going and what they will be doing. It is a time for individuals to reflect within the context of a group – upon a thought, a story, an insight, a question or a feeling that they are carrying with them into the session and then connect it to the work they are about to do.

Connections was developed by Gene Thompson-Grove.

School Council Meeting used the Connections Protocol

People were given a chance to speak about whatever is on their minds?

People said:

- What brought you here tonight?
- Great that so many students here?
- How do we “unpack” what we have been hearing?
- I want things to get better and I am nervous that they might not?
- Students chose not to speak.

Principal plans to use it with staff to create and build on connections — it is a relationship building activity he learned when he worked in the Boston Public Schools.

School Committee Meeting Follow Up

Recap of time after 12/10 meeting:

- School set up processing spaces for students and staff on morning of 12/11.
- Some people came in first and second blocks – kids from ceramics class came in, in response to events from the night before.
- Students wondered how school could support Mr. Dua (based on clothing and statements).
- Kids went to Mr. Baring Gould class. Some things were destroyed.
- He has not been back to school since that day.
- Discussions and efforts have been under way to determine if Mr. Baring Gould might re-enter school. School community input has been solicited.
 - Some students and staff are supportive of a return
 - Others are not

Students chose to listen, take notes and not talk.

Recap of 12/12

- Smaller group sessions in media café for two blocks, one block in auditorium.
- Principals from schools in Cambridge came to CRLS and gathered in auditorium. Mayor, Superintendent was there.

- Someone asked if “Ms. Dexter should resign?” All principals from around Cambridge stood up.
- Small group conversations were held after that until well after school.
- Holiday break occurred.
- After the break, an incident occurred with Mr. Dua. Principal Smith cannot give out information related to this matter. Mr. Dua has been placed on leave.

Principal Smith asked if there were questions. The group broke up into small groups.

When the group reconvened someone asked what we can do to improve things?

- Attract and retain more teachers of color
- Social and emotional piece of things is important so that people can take advantage. Mention was made of hiring of someone to head up social and emotional development, immigrant resources.
- Principal Smith says part of the answer is to build on communications and how we see each other and connect.

The head of the Black Student Union made a statement about her opinions regarding the school’s action, Principal Smith, activities after 12/10.

Another student asked for a repeat of answer to what steps the school is taking to address grievances. Principal Smith said:

- Recruiting and retaining staff of color
- Opportunities for anti-racist staff training
- Start restorative process for starting to bring staff back, possibly.
- Discussion continued on communication between the BSU and school administration.