

CRLS Council Meeting Notes for 6-16-15

Attendees:

Damon Smith, Principal
Greta Hardina, Family Liaison
Gail Stubbs, co-chair
Elka Uchman, Workforce
Mike Frutkoff, community
Teresa Walker, parent
Trina Abbott, parent
Laverne Wilkinson, parent
Bob Birnbaum, parent
John Delancey, parent
Nancy Berbena, parent
Kim Kaufman, parent

College Discussion Night (Gail)

75 people attended which was WAY more than expected
Most parents were from the sophomore class
Hosts shared their own experiences of the college application process followed by a Q&A session
Topics discussed included how to help create a college list and apply for financial aid
An email distribution list will be created as a forum for discussion

Parent Stakeholders (Elka and Laverne)

Ways to support parents from college admissions to financial aid
Areas of difficulty are engaging parents and student responsibilities (jobs and caretaking)
43% who were not F/R lunch ended up graduating
29% who were F/R graduating (some taking up to six years)
Get more higher education coaching on-site to help students

CRLS Athletics (Damon)

Conflict with getting Tom Aria to speak tonight because of Fall Sport Registration
More than 50% of the student body is involved with athletics
CRLS is in a new league which is more competitive but very welcoming
Track, basketball, volleyball, and crew did well this school year
Coaches evaluated yearly by Athletic Director for a 3-year "contract"
Staying in GBL would mean CRLS are winners but didn't match philosophy of Damon and Tom
Winning is great, however it's secondary to what they want students to take away
(play a role, leadership, working together as a team, value of hard work, participation, skills)
75 students and they placed second at nationals (will do Head of the Charles in October)
Damon wants data about students who are not involved in anything
Learn to Sail and Learn to Row in Fall
3 levels (freshman, JV, and V) except no JV Rugby
Freshman and JV sports don't have enough room for everyone who tries out
Some programs have a "no cut" policy

Track and volleyball are diverse but some traditional sports aren't as diverse
Damon worries that there are hidden messages about demographics for students
Have Head Coaches that are CRLS staff (agreed upon by Damon and Tom)
Dual County League has 11 teams (large and small which relates to strength of program)
Hope there is outreach to 8th graders for Fall Sports
DCL will force Cambridge to look at youth leagues
Can there be a quick survey to ask students what they do afterschool (job, sports, VPA)?
 Maybe in the fall to get students who are actually enrolled at CRLS
 Maybe it's on the Teen Health Survey

Fall Retreat Discussion

Communication (how to receive and transmit messages from Council)

If you are elected to the Council, what is the expectation?
Need to know where families live and who they are so they can be contacted
Who is the audience (current families and/or 8th graders)?
What is the goal?
Council representatives should also be able to bring forth staff issues
Council representative for each Learning Community should be in DYK newsletter
Perhaps it could be by grade level or neighborhood?
Expectation is to share information to "your people"
Talk about upcoming issues ahead of time
Don't leave out anyone so they don't feel included
Annual survey for talking points to families
Have Learning Community Council representative names on Council agenda
Robo-email with agenda
Communicate major decisions to Council first
Emulate School Committee access with CRLS Council
Families should want to contact community reps to discuss issues because they know or know who to contact
Damon expects LC representatives to filter out issues
Photos on CRLS website; have a table at Curriculum Night and 8th grade Information Night; add School Council rep to Learning Community pages; make sure to wear name tags at events

Diversity of Families

Off-site meetings help but was difficult to have staff attend Council meetings
How can we support our non-English speaking families?
Advertise and have a language-specific translator at Council meetings (start with 3 first)
Have students serve as translators
Have Council meeting handouts translated into several languages
Staff and students are really missed at Council meetings
Relieve staff of other responsibilities so that they will attend (stipend, PDPs)
Greta is recruiting students through STARS
Could have student elections for CRLS Council (grade level or LC; 1 or 2 students)
Change parameters for staff (not as many meetings or when they are not coaching)
Part of staff evaluation is outreach to families so Council meetings could be 10 hours for PDP

Shared Decision-Making

Actual policymaking

NAESC was a great way for families to understand the inner working of CRLS

Hard to make decisions with monthly meetings

Could change meeting times to get more parents involved

Have sub-committees work with Damon on specific issues

Have School Council members audit a CRLS class at the beginning of the school year

Need to identify the policies that need to be changed (SIP, etc.)

Damon wants members to have a chance to receive information and then dispense it

How can we elevate the School Council so that we are not insular but still powerful?

What are the big issues that the School Council could actually change?

Advance notification of when the School Council meets and what the topic will be discussed

Council could talk about district-wide issues but not take a stand

Damon wants Council to be well informed

Maybe the SIP needs to be divided up into sub-committees?

By July 30, Damon will connect with Council members about preliminary SIP