

CRLS School Council Monthly Meeting

Minutes: 10/30/2012

Co-chairs: Principal Smith, Adam Manacher

Asst. Principal: Bobby Tynes

Family Liaison: Greta Hardina

Secretary: Fran Cronin

School Committee Guests: Fred Fantini, Patty Nolan

In attendance: Ross Benson, Patricia Bradshaw, Lynn Cadwallader, Emily Dexter, Mike Frutkoff, Mark Gardner, Lauren Gibbs, Natassa Mason, Janet Randall, Gail Stubbs

I. Principal's Report/Check-in

Principal Smith reported on 1.) Teacher conferences and 2.) PSAT College Day

1. Teacher Conferences: There was general agreement this fall's scheduling for teacher conferences continued to improve the process with both more time slots and better participation. The three time slots - prescheduled morning and afternoon conferences and an evening walk-in - achieved over 1900 conferences with 500 scheduled on-line.

Tuesday evening dinners were provided by the CHA workforce and Breakthrough Cambridge from 6pm-8pm for the walk-in conference time. The evening was well attended, achieving the most diverse attendance and families were able to easily conference with faculty. Principal Smith noted that while Tuesday was the toughest day for teachers with conferences in the morning and the evening, it was also the best attended day. Breakthrough has offered to feed the entire school next time to encourage maximum parent participation.

Recommended improvements included alphabetizing the on-line teacher list; to post conference registration more prominently on the website; and to have teachers open their activation e-mails earlier in the process. Other options included electronic conferencing using Skype. Teachers recommended conference times combine both pre-scheduled and walk-in time slots. Teachers would also like for students to attend the conferences.

Greta Hardina has been compiling data from this fall's conference experience. While the on-line info has been captured, Greta is waiting for teachers to report on walk-in activity. Greta also offered to prepare a breakdown of CP v. Honors conferences for the next meeting.

Spring conferences will be announced using mailed letters, flyers and phone calls to continue CRLS' effort to connect with more families and to increase participation in conference times.

2. PSAT College Day: In an effort to minimize "free days," Principal Smith organized a morning of college visits for seniors while lower-grade classmen took their PSATs. Using mass transit, eight guidance counselors took 55 students - out of a possible 350 seniors - to visit eight area colleges. To generate greater future participation, publicity will be expanded. It was also noted that every grade could benefit from this type of experience.

Other ideas included recruiting presenters on how to best prepare students for careers that might not require a four-year college degree. Upward Bound also does a career night. It might make sense to try and merge forces with CCRC to do a more comprehensive college/next steps night for grades 9 - 12.

II. Class Rank discussion (continued from last spring)

Discussion was resumed questioning the merit and negatives of class rank. Information reflecting data presented last year and new findings were shared with SC members.

After much roundtable discussion, Principal Smith determined the issue exceeded the purview of the SC and should be presented for community-wide discussion. Identifying this to be a process-driven issue, Principal Smith requested input from CRLS constituent groups: guidance counselors and students.

Next steps, TBD

III. Citywide School Advisory Group (CSAG)

CRLS parent and CSAG member Emily Dexter reported that CSAG was established last spring. Emily distributed a CSAG flyer and schedule for this year's monthly programs through June 2013. Of particular note is the next meeting, Wednesday, 11/14. Dr. Karen Mapp will present: Family Engagement and Diversity at the Kennedy Longfellow School.

Activity highlights included a Whole Foods fundraiser for the Friends of CRLS that raised \$15,000, which exceeded expectations.

IV. CRLS Arts Committee

Parent Gail Stubbs reported *Urinetown* is the fall musical. Tech week spans November 8 - 14. Performances are November 15 -18.

Parents/Arts Committee members will sign up to bring in dinner for about 40 cast and crew during the tech and performance schedule. Parents/Arts Committee members will also sell tickets, usher, bring in and sell concessions for the fall musical as well as other productions during the course of the year.

Money raised through concessions are used to help fund projects which rotate between the arts departments. Two years ago drama students went to London and the jazz ensemble has gone to Panama. This year the art department will get to fund a project based on a proposal from the faculty.

The next CRLS School Council meeting will be on Tuesday, November 27, 6pm - 7:30pm.