

## **CRLS School Council Monthly Meeting Minutes: 11/27/2012**

**SC Co-chairs:** Principal Smith, Adam Manacher

**SC Secretary:** Fran Cronin

**CRLS Family Liaison:** Greta Hardina

**CRLS Student Body President:** Shameen Akhtar

**School Committee Guests:** Fred Fantini, Patty Nolan

**In attendance:** Ross Benson, Patricia Bradshaw, Emily Dexter, Donna Erikson, Mike Frutkoff, Mark Gardner, Victoria Harris, Janet Randall, Gail Stubbs, Teresa Walker

### **I. Principal's Report/Check-in**

Principal Smith reported on 1.) Lock down drill, 12/11 and 2.) NEASC update

1. Lock down drill 12/11: The current plan is for this first-time drill to take place during 2<sup>nd</sup> period. Principal Smith began preparing the faculty for this drill the week before school started. This coming week, 12/3 - 7, students and families will be introduced to the requirements of the drill. A power point presentation will be given to students during community meeting and a letter from Principal Smith will be sent to parents.

The drill is to practice steps in response to an intruder in a campus building. As principal Smith said: "We do not anticipate anything happening. We just don't want to rely on responding to an emergency we've never practiced."

The goal is to make the lock down drill as routine as a fire drill, which evacuates all students and personnel from the building in four minutes.

NOTE: this is not a CPS-wide drill but is in response to the REMS emergency grant awarded to CRLS.

2. NEASC update: NEASC Standard 1, which focuses on the CRLS mission, was most recently evaluated internally and CRLS rated itself deficient. The mission statement includes core values, beliefs about learning and learning expectations. A process for getting feedback from faculty and students about the school's standing relative to its mission is under development with comments due by 12/18.

A sample questionnaire was shared with school council members. Values from the mission statement have been broken down into single statements ascribed letters A-L. The CRLS motto: Opportunity, Diversity, and Respect will be subjected to the same scrutiny.

The goal is to assess how well CRLS "lives out" the values it espouses. This is in keeping with NEACS, which emphasizes language that is evidence-based and measurable.

By 12/4, four of the seven standards will have been internally evaluated and only Standard 1 found deficient. Two more standards will be evaluated next week.

Said Principal Smith; "All ratings to date have been appropriate. We know where we stand and what work we need to do."

## **II. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Info Night, 12/11**

Family Liaison Greta Hardina reviewed the process. 1.) Learning Community and guidance counselor assignments will be sent out to incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders on 12/4. 2.) On the information night, families and incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders will first attend a presentation by Principle Smith and then will divide into one of eight groups hosted by an administrator and their assigned guidance counselor. Unregistered families will have a separate space and will be able to meet with a guidance counselor.

Various clubs and school groups as well as students from the STARS program, the Kids Council, members from the FRC and the C-PAC are expected to be present.

CPS upper campus 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes have been scheduled to visit CRLS on 12/5 and 6.

The scheduling of the info night is considered apropos to making a decision between attending a private, charter or public high school.

## **III. Class rank (discussion cont.)**

Principal Smith reported conversations have been conducted with the CRLS Faculty Advisory Council, CRLS student government and school guidance counselors. Pending the results of the NEASC evaluations on 12/4, the rest of the faculty will be asked to weigh in.

The indication so far is that class rank is unnecessary. But before it is eliminated, CRLS has to feel confident it will not negatively impact students and their opportunity for admission to college.

The issues that need to be taken consideration are: 1.) how to best continue communicating with colleges; 2.) criteria for determining the graduation speaker; and 3.) criteria and role of "Super Seniors."

## **IV. Determination of SC Yahoo group**

The consensus indicated email contact is sufficient to maintain inter-group communication.

## **V. Update on CRLS disciplinary procedures and prospective policy changes**

Principal Smith reported that last year this time the number of disciplinary actions was much higher. Continuing this downward trend is of course the goal. However, Principle Smith stated room remains for continued improvement.

School Committee member Patty Nolan remarked that the SC is working on the policy side of CPS's "Rights and Responsibilities" with an aim to drafting language that is less punitive and more supportive of students.

Noted issues included: 1.) the consequence range in the SC rewrite is broader, providing greater discretionary latitude to school administrators; 2.) the CRLS handbook was developed

without lifting language from the CPS handbook, which has resulted in many problematic discrepancies; and 3.) a need exists to build in a process that is more supportive to families and students in crisis.

A guiding objective is to develop preemptive tools to help resolve conflicts that percolate in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades and to better support students who are facing suspension. Said Principal Smith who would like greater clarity from the CPS document under revision: “We are not looking to remove kids from our community.”

Patty Nolan agreed to send SC links to School Committee policies.

#### **VI. Topics for 2013 winter/spring term (submitted June 2012)**

The council agreed the options would be reviewed at the December meeting. Principal Smith also noted that completion of the NEASC evaluation process March 14 will broaden the opportunity to take up new action items.

Consensus exists around end-of-the-year issues. After graduation in May, it is very hard to keep seniors in school. This impacts students not graduating and also conflicts with school values as reflected in NEASC Standard 1.