

CRLS School Council Monthly Meeting

Minutes: 1/29/2013

SC Co-chairs: Principal Smith, Adam Manacher

SC Secretary: Fran Cronin

CRLS Family Liaison: Greta Hardina

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

I. 2/7 Open House update

Continuing with the theme of “building community,” the Open House this February will feature its first pot luck. Starting at 5pm, the parent potluck will precede a half-hour of information workshops with Cambridge community partners. Parents will begin classroom rounds at 6:30pm.

The CRLS cafeteria will be open and the food staff has offered to prepare their new Ethiopian chicken dish with complimenting side dishes. Parents signed up to bring an assortment of main dishes, salads, sides and desserts.

Greta Hardina will coordinate the evening.

II. Parent/Teacher Conferences

Incorporating a potluck with the Open House night is considered the first step in encouraging more families to attend events at CRLS. Another idea is to convert parent/teacher conferences to “Family Conferences,” which would require the presence of the student. The goal would be to have a more meaningful discussion between the teacher, student and parent/guardian.

It was agreed, after considerable discussion, to schedule conferences for Tuesday, March 26, Wednesday, March 27 and Thursday, March 28. The tentative plan is for Tuesday to be a delayed opening to allow for scheduled morning conferences; Wednesday would be an evening walk-in schedule and Thursday would be an early release day to allow for afternoon time slots.

Online scheduling will continue to be available for Tuesday and Thursday.

III. NEASC Update

Principal Smith reported that the Steering Committee had met and completed its voting on Standards 1-7. A report with a review of findings is being assembled and should be internally distributed by February 10.

On Sunday, March 10, 18 members from NEASC will visit CRLS. Along with visual observations, the NEASC team will also interview CRLS staff, parents and students. Students of NEASC’s choice will be shadowed Monday and Tuesday. CRLS will receive feedback on Wednesday.

IV. Author and UMass Boston professor Larry Blum visit

Blum colleague, Gail Stubbs, confirmed Blum will speak with the CRLS school council about social and cultural issues on Tuesday, March 26. Principal Smith, who has participated on panels with Blum, refers to him as a “critical race philosopher.”

Over the course of four years ending in 2005, Blum taught Race and Racism at CRLS. His new book, *High Schools, Race, and America's Future: What Students Can Teach Us About Morality, Diversity, and Community*, is the story of what Blum calls "a remarkable adventure" in teaching - and learning - about race in America in a multiracial, multiethnic classroom at CRLS.

V. CRLS FY2013 Budget

CRLS financial manager Julia Guida presented the FY2013 budget to the school council. While CRLS cannot alter salaries and benefits, there is a pocket of about \$263,000 that is the discretion of CRLS. Precedent exists for certain programs and the goal for the FY2013-14 budget is to maintain level funding.

Principal Smith and Guida are scheduled to draft a proposed budget over the February break. The school council is invited to present funding ideas when it next convenes.

VI. Class Rank

Principal Smith reported that after meeting with all pertinent constituencies and achieving consensus, he sent a letter to Superintendent Young recommending the policy of class rank be eliminated.

The next school council meeting will be Tuesday, February 26 at 6:00pm.