

CRLS School Council Monthly Meeting

Minutes: 4/30/2013

SC Co-chairs: Principal Smith, Adam Manacher

SC Secretary: Fran Cronin

CRLS Family Liaison: Greta Hardina

CRLS student President: Akhtar Shameen

In attendance: Ross Benson, Lynn Caldwellader, Jamila Denning, Emily Dexter, Rhéa Dunn, Mike Frutkoff, Victoria Harris, Gail Stubbs, Mary White

The key issues covered during the evening's meeting were as follows: Principal Smith's report on post-marathon bombing procedures and ramifications; Professor Larry Blum's visit to the CRLS School Council; and the School Improvement Plan.

I. Post-marathon bombing update

Principal Smith provided a comprehensive recap of how the marathon bombings impacted the CRLS community - students and staff. A weekend long meeting was convened after the bombings with CRLS and city principles to craft support for the reopening of school after the spring break.

Fortunately the press was not an issue when school reopened and the Riverside Trauma Center helped develop in-school events to support community dialogue. New security parameters have been put in place. CRLS campus has over 20 entry/exit points. This has been restricted to two to better monitor visitor activity.

Principal Smith reiterated that as much as he and the staff are striving to resume normalcy on campus they recognize the community's healing will take time. He also shared that the FBI requested students and staff refrain from talking to the press as the bombing remains an active on-going investigation.

Principal Smith noted that actor and CRLS graduate Casey Affleck came to CRLS to show his support for the school. His appearance also reinforced that CRLS was not a catalyst in the behavior of the bombers.

II. Professor Larry Blum's visit

Professor Blum emphasized the importance of building community within CRLS. Principal Smith concurred. Principal Smith aligned this goal with social justice - curriculum, civic engagement and morality, which he stated should be evident across the spectrum of classes.

Under consideration is making community service a graduation requirement. A structure needs to be in place to make the initiative accountable and to be effectively implemented. "Our community needs to make a statement," said Smith.

A civics class is offered but it is not mandatory.

III. School improvement plan

Principal Smith said CRLS is a good school but the goal is to make it great. Guiding the School Improvement Plan is the NEASC process and its findings. The NEASC process demonstrated that students, faculty and parents can work together. It also revealed areas where the school needs to improve.

Of greatest concern is school-wide literacy, specifically the expectations of faculty within the curriculum. Assessing the strengths of the ELA program is critical as well as the skill set of ELA teachers. Principal Smith noted that reading comprehension is a huge issue for the school but only two certified reading teachers were on staff. This is a deficiency if strides are to be made.

Principal Smith emphasized that school improvement expectations were not just an “on-site” issue but involved parents and family members. The goal is to set 21st century expectations in community service, math, science and world languages with the support of external internships and a strengthening of internal curriculum.

The next school council meeting will be Tuesday, May 28 at 6:00pm.