

CRLS School Council

December 20, 2011

Attendants: Interim Principal Damon Smith - co-chair, Jessica Daniels - co-chair, Vice Principal Bobby Tynes, MJ Jensen, Bersabell Yeshitla, Greta Hardina - Family Liaison, Patricia Bradshaw, Ross Benson, Donna Erikson, Mary White, Lauren Gibbs, Amy Stein

Absent: Lace Campbell, Natassa Mason

1) Parent Handbook

Following a discussion about the Parent Handbook, it was agreed that we would edit and update the current handbook. A list of topics to be added or revised was generated by the group. Topics are included in these minutes and members are encouraged to volunteer to write or rewrite a section. Jessica will send a sign-up list to all. The goal is to have all edits finished by early March to be compiled into a draft of the newly revised Parent Handbook. This would allow reviewing, printing and distribution in a timely manner.

Topics suggested:

Parent conferences – description

Student supports/Special needs

Note section

College Prep, SAT support, TERI

Guidance Dept.

International Family Center

Review Phone Number

Workforce and work opportunities

Student early dismissal procedure

Youth Center

Career College Resource Center

Translations

Parent Liaison Corps of Parent Volunteers

The school could email the 900 parents on the newsletter list and ask them to respond to survey monkey. A list of all parent organizations and committees could be included so parents could volunteer for or join any group.

Given the need to include and support a greater diversity of students and families, Greta urged a stronger promotion of the International Center. This office is located in the high school. It was noted that the rooms off the front hallway of second floor houses student support services.

2) Cambridge Schools Advisory Group (CSAG) - Lace Campbell and Emily Dexter are representatives, but we are looking for additional reps who can attend regularly. The CSAG is primarily K-8 centered, but the June Meeting will be at the high school. There was a suggestion that other high school parents be considered to represent the high school, as school council members may not have the time. Principal Smith is concerned that the representative is a person who is knowledgeable about CRLS interests and who can accurately represent the high school.

3) Jessica reaffirmed that school council members with voting rights are those elected or designated as reps from parent interest groups such as Arts Committee, C-Pak (Special Needs), FoCA, Friends of CRLS, etc, **or** community reps. These members may vote as needed on school council issues.

4) Spring Term Parent/Teacher conferences

Looking at the two parent-involved events for Spring semester, Open House and PT conferences – how do we evaluate and modify them? The open house in September attracts good percentage of parents, but the second open house is under attended.

For P/T conferences in general, it is recommended that CRLS use a software program to allow parent online sign-up. The school is in the process of purchasing an online sign up program, and calling in may be an option, especially for last minute cancellations. It may be possible for students to go online and sign up their parents.

Principal Smith would like to institute changes in time for next semester.

There are already dates in place for these events: Feb 2 - Open House, March 20 and March 22 - Parent/Teacher conferences. It was felt that the second open house (in Feb) could be better used as a time for P/T conference time. Principal Smith introduced the idea of offering workshops an before conferences begin, and/or during. Members gave feedback on various models. Some felt parents already use the Open House as an opportunity to check-in with teachers on their child's work.

Parents would be permitted to sign up for **either** a Feb **or** March conference, but not both. If parents felt a follow-up conference was needed, they could schedule one with a teacher for a time outside the March dates.

Discussion included decreasing length for P/T conferences from 10 to 5 minutes. Teachers could follow a standard format/template that addressed student assessment in assignments, class participation, tests & quizzes, projects & papers, etc. Followed by teacher recommendation to improve/advance student work. Some parents expressed concern that this was not enough time, especially for students having problems, parents whose first language was not English, and those who need longer time to process information.

It was decided that the Feb Open House date would be changed to a P/T conference night and that workshops will be offered.