

School Council
September 23, 2008
6:00 p.m.
7th grade group room

In attendance:

AnnMarie Dunn
Mary Dunphy
Heather Hughes
Lisa Campbell
Lynda Feeney

Rose Walper
Anna Karski
Marianne Harte
William Tramontana

Approval of Agenda

Updates

Opening of school

New schedule, new staff, 6th graders adjusting to lockers

South Shore Collaborative Classroom

Location room 223

Attends 7th grade lunch

Great staff, smooth transition

Very well received by the Memorial Middle School Community

Program of studies

6th and 7th grade – Strategy Class

Reading / Writing

Math

- Placement was based on teacher recommendation, standardized test scores (Terra Nova, STAR, MCAS), transcripts

8th grade

World Language

Reading / Writing Strategy Class – 18 students

Math Strategy Class – 15 students

Placement was based on student request, parent request, teacher recommendation, standardized test scores (Terra Nova, STAR, MCAS), transcripts.

Recommendation to invite Jen Reardon and Marcia Uretsky to the next meeting to provide Council and parents with an over of the Comprehension Toolkit program.

Discussion about library services

Mary McCauley is at the Memorial Middle School every day from 12:30 – 2:30.

Concerns were raised regarding student time with librarian because students are dismissed at 2:20.

How were staff and students able to access the library for research purposes?

The library is open throughout the day for staff to sign up and bring classes to the library.

Discussion about asking for volunteers to work in the library –

Currently, there is one parent volunteer working in the library on Friday.
Request for volunteers were made at the end of the year via newsletter and posted on MMS website throughout the summer.
This request will be made again in the next newsletter and posted on the web page.

Discussion about Technology

Technology for computer purposes and Technology for Science MCAS
Heather Hughes explained that the technology for Science purposes cover data and manufacturing standards. These standards are different from technology computer standards (i.e. word documents, spreadsheets, power point etc.) It was discussed that the technology computer standards will need to be incorporated in the various curriculums and taught among all the staff members. The computer lab is open for staff to bring classes in for research and writing purposes.

Discussion about World Language

Concerns that 7th grade no longer have World Language
Marianne Harte looked into this matter and shared with the group World Language in Middle Schools is not required.
Lynda Feeney shared that middle school across the South Shore are dealing with this same issue / concern. Qualified candidates that are both French and Spanish certified are extremely limited.

Discussion on half-year classes

Concerns with 7th grade students no longer having technology, reading and World Language options. Eliminating specific current Unified Arts was mentioned.
Recommended they be replaced with Technology or World Language.
Marianne Harte discussed the options of using staff from the Wellspring program to offer a computer class for interested students.
The after school grant was discussed with the council. If MMS receives the ASOST grant again offering a computer class or a language club would be considered for students to sign up for.
Recommendation: figure out a way to utilize a Technology teacher for both the Jacobs and Memorial. Each school having the staff person for half a year.
This recommendation was also made for World Language.

Discussion on Open House

Well attended
Concerns were raised regarding class size and “make up” of classes (various level of academic ability)

Leveling of class was discussed

Mathematics is a leveled class. The remaining content areas are group with various levels of abilities. There is one ELA class in each grade level that has special education support in place.
The discussion on the pros and cons of leveling all classes occurred.

Some parents felt strongly that it should be considered. Others felt that some students may excel in one area but not another. Are they being placed properly if all classes should be leveled? What criteria should be used to ensure students are properly placed? What if a parent disagrees with the placement yet the criteria shows they do not qualify for the "highest" level class?

One parent mentioned this could be discussed all night with various thoughts and ideas.

Future Agenda Items

Having speakers come to future council meetings was discussed.

Mr. Blackall mentioned at Open House that he would be willing to come in to speak to parents. He encouraged parents to attend upcoming town meetings and school committee meetings to keep themselves updated and informed.

Jen Reardon and Marcia Utersky will be invited to the next meeting to present the Reading / Writing Strategies class.

Rose Walper would be willing to present the Step Second curriculum with Mike O'Donnell as well as present the Health Curriculum to discuss any questions or concerns parents may have.

End meeting with a discussion on what is necessary for Middle School

Safety

Mobility

Full time nurse

Staff availability

Communication

Flexibility

High Expectations

Options for curriculum

World Language

Access to technology

Access to library

Next meeting October 6, 2008

6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

7th grade group room