

CARLISLE SCHOOL COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

November 7th, 2006, 3:15pm

Office of Patrice Hurley, Co-Principal

Present: Patrice Hurley, Paul Graseck, Sandy Kelly (Teacher/School Representatives)
Hunter Hutchinson, Alex Krapf, Vera Tice (Parent Representatives)
Nadine Bishop (Community Representative)
Nicole Burkel, (Audience), Ms. Hutchinson's baby (Cute)

Quorum, Minutes, and Pumpkin Cake

The meeting is started at 3:25pm after quorum has been reached. Ms. Hutchinson has brought the promised pumpkin cake which is distributed to an appreciative audience.

Ms. Hutchinson moves to accept the minutes of the School Council Meeting of 10/17/2006. Ms. Kelly seconds. The minutes are accepted unanimously.

Mr. Graseck announces that he will have to leave at 4:15pm to vote in Connecticut.

Re I: Public Comments/Question Review/Response from Email account

There have been no emails or other formal communications from community members since the last meeting. A discussion of future agendas yields several proposals. Ms. Kelly's proposal to always have a short public comment period in place, just to account for unannounced attendees, gains the Council's support.

The Council members struggle with how to be open for audience involvement while also managing to conduct Council business in fixed-time meetings. Upon a question from Ms. Hurley, Ms. Burkel points out that there might be a need for agenda items that are more free form and possibly even School Council meetings that center on particular issues and are not primarily work meetings.

While School Council meetings are public meetings and open to all community members without formal invitation or announcement, the School Council adopts an informal process for audience participation. Community members who desire the School Council to discuss a particular topic are asked to follow the simple process outlined below:

- Submit concerns, questions, or proposed agenda items by phone or email. The council's email address is schoolcouncil@carlisle.mec.edu. Calling one of the co-chairs (Ms. Hurley or Mr. Krapf) by telephone is encouraged for more complex issues that might require background explanations or a longer discussion.
- The co-chairs will consult and decide whether or not to put the topic on the agenda. Requests for particular agenda items don't have to be honored, but the School Council will try to be as responsive to the community as possible while making sure it has time to conduct its business.
- Mr. Krapf will create the agenda and email it to the School Council members on the Friday preceding the following meeting.

The School Council will attempt to publish the minutes of prior meetings and the current agenda on the school's website in a fashion similar to the School Committee. Ms. Kelly will talk to the technical support staff about this. Mr. Krapf will send Ms. Kelly a PDF version of the accepted minutes.

Re II: Review of School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Ms. Hurley hands out updated pages for the SIP. The pages contain the current demographic information for the school and an updated signature page.

The bulk of the remaining time is spent discussing various aspects of the SIP. Some general discussions about the review process take place while the current SIP is reviewed. Mr. Krapf wishes the MCAS/standards topic to become a part of the updated SIP. As there does not seem to be an existing category for this in the current SIP, he states that we should feel free to create new categories. This starts a general discussion about (a) the review process, and (b) the continuity of the document.

Ms. Hutchinson, Tice, and Kelly state that the existing SIP represents a lot of thought and should not simply be discarded by the current School Council. Mr. Krapf clarifies that he did not intend to propose discarding the existing document but rather that the School Council should feel free to remove existing SIP goals that have been met and to add new SIP goals that represent new concerns. The other members agree.

The SIP creation process is understood to consist of two overlapping parts: an assessment of the current plan's goals and a discussion about the new plan's goals, which could be different.

Review of current SIP

A review of the existing plan's goals and Action Steps is performed with the following results:

1.A.1 Complete. A laminated poster of the "Universal Expectations" on the wall is identified as the living proof. Mr. Graseck adds that anti-bullying measures are still enforced and that this program and related discipline programs will continue to be fine-tuned and used. In that respect, the Action Step is a work in progress. Mr. Krapf asks how big the bullying problem is. Mr. Graseck states that it is not bigger than at other schools, but it's there.

1.B.1 In progress. The "Diversity Task Force" had its first meeting.

1.B.2 In progress. There are multiple after-school programs for "middle schoolers," including homework club, STEP, Title 1 programs. This Action Step could be declared complete were it not for the unsolved problem of participation. Ms. Tice and Ms. Kelly explain that this point came up last year because students were "hanging out" in the school and town libraries, the school grounds, and at Ferns after leaving school. After-school programs were requested to reduce this potentially unsafe and disturbing habit. As Mr. Graseck points out, there is nothing the school can do to control student behavior off campus and the students cannot be ordered to participate in clubs if they don't want to. Ms. Kelly adds that recently groups of students have returned to the school grounds after school to congregate in the little court yard.

2.A.1 A Math Specialist was secured. This was probably only carried on the SIP because of the position's earlier funding via a grant. Ms. Hurley will check that.

2.B.1 Ms. Perry is planning courses at Carlisle College and has Title 1 programs running.

2.C.1 Done. A K-5 World Language program has been put in place. Ms. Hurley states the need to put progress assessment in place for the new program. She proposes a new Action Step as

“Utilize the World Language Task Force to assess progress and determine staffing, budget & instructional needs for 2007, 2008 and beyond.”

Ms. Burkel points out that this program is currently funded via a two year CEF grant, so funding is an important issue.

2.D.1 Not Done. Funding was not secured for Systems Thinking and the paid positions of “Systems Mentor” are gone. The two “Systems Thinking” specialists are working as class room teachers. They are also still mentoring staff though and are planning a Carlisle College course on “Systems Thinking” for 1/07.

3.A.1 No action taken. The former School Council never did anything in this area. Mr. Graseck will monitor developments in the School Committee's Building sub committee and report to the Council.

New SIP

Mr. Graseck's recommendation to update the title of Goal 1.A to bring it in line with the language used in the District Goals is approved. Mr. Krapf's request to include an MCAS/standards related goal in the SIP causes a discussion about the process for updating the SIP. Ms. Kelly is of the opinion that new goals should take the results from the school survey into account.

There is unanimous agreement that the SIP should be a living document that will probably be updated throughout the year.

Parent & Teacher Survey

Mr. Krapf asks whether the detail level in the survey is sufficient. The other members all agree that time is more critical than level of detail. If the survey draft is not completed before the next meeting, it will take too long to get results back. Mr. Krapf opines that the results will probably come in too late for this year's SIP anyway. Ms. Burkel recommends an electronic survey because it does not only make delivery easier, it also makes the analysis much easier. She also recommends that the Council contact Ms. Barbee and Ms. Doyle, who both have some experience with surveys. Mr. Krapf wants to also use paper forms as an alternative to ensure maximum participation, even if it increases the analysis work.

Several smaller updates are discussed and incorporated into the survey draft.

Ms. Hurley will contact Ms. Storrs. Ms. Storrs volunteered last year to help out with designing a survey and has experience with electronic surveys.

MCAS

Mr. Krapf wants to have the School Council organize a special session for a larger audience to discuss the MCAS results. Ms. Kelly opposes this on several grounds. She questions whether the School Council is chartered to perform such an undertaking and whether it detracts from its mission to create a School Improvement Plan. Furthermore, there are several committees in place that already review curriculum. Mr. Krapf opines that the discussion of educational standards should be part of the SIP and that the School Council is the best place to have a discussion involving both parents and teachers. Ms. Kelly doubts that this topic is of sufficient importance to warrant such a step in the absence of any parent feedback. She recommends holding off until the results of the parent survey have been analyzed. Mr. Krapf doubts that the results of the parent survey will come back in time to prevent parents from raising the issues at other venues.

Ms. Hutchinson, Tice, and Bishop agree with Ms. Kelly on the question of waiting for the survey results before taking any action. Ms. Tice admits that she also feels sympathetic towards Mr. Krapf's views but that there is not enough information yet.

Mr. Krapf stresses that he does not wish to browbeat the School Council into a special meeting that the members don't want but that an MCAS discussion involving a larger audience will have to happen at some point and that the School Council would seem the logical place for it.

The members will study Mr. Graseck and Mr. Krapf's MCAS presentations that were handed out.

Action Items

1. Ms. Kelly will check with support staff about the feasibility a School Council section on the school's website.
2. Mr. Krapf will email the 12/5/2006 agenda to School Council members on the Friday before the meeting.
3. Ms. Hurley will check the reason for the Math Specialist position still being on the SIP as an Action Step.
4. Mr. Graseck will monitor developments on the School Building front and report to the full Council.
5. Ms. Hurley will contact Ms. Storrs about assistance with electronic surveys.

Next Meeting Agenda

1. Review Minutes of 11/7/2006 meeting
2. Public Comment/question/email review and response
3. Update one parent/teacher survey status
4. SIP Goals – MCAS Discussion
5. Prioritize SIP goals and continue implementation

The meeting is adjourned at 5:00pm.

Submitted by

Alexander Krapf

Co-chair & Council Minute Man