

CRANBURY SCHOOL TQM STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2008 – 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

TQM Members Present: Lynne Fox, moderator, John Haney, Joan Weidner, Kathy Bonazzi, Sharron Fass, Gerry Kearney, Kate McGarvey, Tom Stinson, Donna Tarantino, Judy Ulinsky, Angie Cook, Cheryl Coyle, Cheryl McCormack, Nicole Powell, Rachel Wanat

Also Present: Dan O'Brien, Joyce Picariello

Absent: Christine Capaci
Jim Cardinale
Toni Coleman

Scribe: Gerry Kearney

Lynne Fox welcomed Joan Weidner as our new committee representative from the Board of Education, replacing Elizabeth Silverman who served for many years.

CORRESPONDENCE: An email was received from Wendy Borg as a follow-up to her suggestion document whereby she thanked the committee for procuring recess equipment and commented on how the color-coded bags and equipment for each grade level made clean-up easy.

TEAM REPORTS:

Curriculum – John Haney

Mr. Haney reported that teachers will be trained in the Columbia Writing Project during the week of June 16. He thanked the PTO and the Cranbury Education Foundation for their donations of \$10,000 each to fund this project. Funding will also be provided from grants and shared training with the South Brunswick School District.

Mr. Haney also reported that, in compliance with the upcoming QSAC review, the five-year curriculum plan has been updated and that a matrix has been developed whereby teachers will ensure that all curricula aligns with each Core Curriculum Content Standard.

Technology – Dan O’Brien

Mr. O’Brien reported that the district will continue with training on the use of smart boards this summer and to purchase additional smart boards next year. Other new technology procedures:

- Servers will be virtualized
- New computers will be installed in the computer labs
- The mobile lab will be upgraded

Mrs. Fox complimented the district on its implementation of new technology.

Mrs. Coyle requested that Mr. O’Brien update the website with new directions to the school once she revises them as the businesses on Main Street have since changed and are no longer reference points.

Facility – John Haney and Joyce Picariello

- The pole barn will help to alleviate clutter in the hallways. Items to be stored will include those that are used once or twice per year.
- Hallway alcove was enclosed for storage use and is aesthetically pleasing.
- Bid openings will be conducted on May 23 for the roof repair projects which will be undertaken this summer.
- The HVAC computer that regulates the 1997 will be replaced this summer due to out-dated technology. Mrs. Picariello remarked that teachers should be encouraged to keep the HVAC units in their classroom unobstructed so as not to impede circulation.
- Integrated Pest Management – A pesticide treatment for termites will be applied over Memorial Day weekend near the kindergarten wing. Notices were sent to all staff and parents on May 15th in accordance with state mandates. Mrs. Picariello will send an email to teachers to remind them to remove all consumables from their classrooms that weekend.

Mrs. Bonazzi remarked that the courtyard in the new wing is inundated with dandelions. As with pest management, herbicides are not permitted for use, so other means of weed removal and/or prevention were discussed including:

- In conjunction with the PTO and outside agencies, including the Woman’s Club and other community interest groups, the courtyard could be revamped with stones and pavers, with smaller garden areas. The courtyard could be used as outdoor classrooms for reading and study groups. Mrs. Cook suggested that the PTO could sponsor a fund-raiser whereby engraved bricks can be purchased and used to enhance the area. This topic will be re-addressed at a PTO meeting.

Rachel Wanat requested that 8th graders be permitted to use the courtyard for the remainder of the school year for outside lunches. Mrs. McGarvey and Mrs. Haney responded that supervision is an issue but that he would consider setting aside two days in which the 8th graders could enjoy a brown-bag lunch in the courtyard.

Professional Development –Kate McGarvey – Nothing to report at this time.

PREVIOUS ISSUES:

- ***With new dismissal procedure, parent has trouble finding both children or having them find each other.***– submitted by Kim Ziegler
ACTION: Upon dismissal, the older student can walk down to the doorway of the younger students, who will remain with on-duty staff until the sibling arrives. Parent (or designated person) will meet the children at a pre-arranged location.
- ***Middle school student's hunger is not being satisfied by the amount of food provided in the paid lunch.*** – submitted by Carlene Reyes
ACTION: Upon researching other district's portions and speaking to our food service provider, it was determined that the portions are regulated by federal nutritional guidelines. It was also noted that in some cases, portions are increased somewhat for the older student but not if it is a set portion such as a sandwich or pizza slice. Students may purchase an additional entrée at a reduced price after all students have been served their initial lunch. Students are allowed to bring a snack from home that is consumed during a morning classroom period. Mrs. Picariello stated that Sodexo, the food service provider, is considering offering two lunches – one for K-5 and one for 6-8 students. Portions will be sized and priced accordingly.
- ***Concern with tracking cafeteria expenses and usage and that others will use our credits for their lunch. No way of tracking child's eating habits.*** – submitted by Robert Irving
ACTION: ***Parent should contact the cafeteria manager to request an email update when food account balance is low. This printout provides the details of food purchased and payment. Parent also had a concern about his child's account being used by another to pay for lunch. With the procedure of having students punch in their pin numbers prior to purchasing food, the cafeteria cashiers are able to see the name/photo of the student to ensure that the proper person is buying the food.***

REVIEW OF SUGGESTIONS DOCUMENTS:

DOCUMENT 1: Connect Field or Class Trips to Coursework. – submitted by Linda Ill

SUGGESTION: It would be beneficial to link the class trips to the content of a course. For example, in conjunction with their study of American history, the Revolution and the Constitution, fifth graders could visit the Constitution Center, Independence Hall and Betsy Ross House.

DISCUSSION: Teachers stated that in most instances, there is a correlation between what students are learning at that grade level and the destination of the class trip. However, not all grades, particularly lower levels, factor in the curriculum while choosing field trips. In the future, field trips on all grade levels will be reviewed with course content relevancy in mind. Mr. Haney reported that the Board will be looking at all field trips systematically. Mrs. Bonazzi reported that the 8th grade Spanish trip was the most educational and informational trip that she has ever attended.

DOCUMENT 2: Develop an Annual School Theme – submitted by Linda Ill

SUGGESTION: An annual school theme could be developed that incorporates the standard curriculum. For example, an Environmental theme such as “Go Green” or “Taking Care of Mother Earth” could encompass how we can look at ways to improve or be more environmentally careful in our own town, home and school.

DISCUSSION: Although Cranbury School does have a school-wide theme each year, it was agreed that the theme was not promulgated across the grades and carried out throughout the school year. Mrs. Coyle suggested that assemblies could tie in with the annual theme. Mrs. Fass said that using recycled paper for newsletters, etc. would be environmentally sound.

DOCUMENT 3: NJASK 7/8 Testing is Disruptive to the instruction of 6th graders – submitted by Linda Ill

SUGGESTION: Schedule 6th grade trip during testing week. Conduct all testing in large group room so 6th graders can get core subject instruction. Creative scheduling.

DISCUSSION: Scheduling a 6th grade trip would be an excellent solution. However, administering tests in the large group room is not an option due to testing procedures. Much thought is put into scheduling in order to accommodate testing needs for regular and special education students. Subject matter teachers are used as proctors which necessitates the use of substitutes and other teachers to cover non-testing subjects.

OTHER ISSUES:

A survey was sent to all 7th graders for input on next year's 8th grade activities with some students reporting that they would like to see less emphasis on the 8th grade dance or to full day activities for 8th grade class trip to New York. Results will be calculated and reported.

Another issue that was addressed was the legislative push toward school district consolidation. Mr. Haney reported that it is imperative that Cranbury continue to have its budgets passed, to continue with academic excellence, and for the district to pass the upcoming QSAC (Quality Single Accountability Continuum). One aspect the state is looking into is shared services between districts. Cranbury currently shares services with the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission for transportation, as well as other districts for our paper supplies and energy and will continue to look for ways to keep operating costs down.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:45 PM

Next Meeting: 2008-09 School Year