

PS 118 SLT Minutes 10/15/19

Attendees: Elizabeth Garraway, Victoria Morey, Teresa Bazzi, Ronni Horowitz, Regina Rodgers, Heather Smith, Colleen Cruz, Meredith Hackett, Maria Heredia, Kim Landman, Travis Rew Porter, Kassandra Minor

- Call to order/sign in/timekeeper
- Travis Rew Porter (parent) & Meredith Hackett (kindergarten teacher) are our new members
- Reading/approval of Sept minutes
- Committee reports
 - PTA report: Movie Night coming up Fri 10/18, Marathon Fun Day Sunday 11/3, picture day 10/22. Rolling out the annual fund push, announcing tomorrow night and putting fliers in backpacks this week.
 - Survey results - Chocolate milk - majority want to keep only on Friday. Privacy slats - 60% want, but only on 4th Ave.
 - Diversity Committee: has not met since last SLT meeting
 - Abilities Awareness Committee - Maria stepped down and Eleanor McDonald is taking over as chair. No co-chair yet, so Maria will fill in as needed, but she's looking for someone. First meeting not yet scheduled.
- Unfinished Business
 - CEP: Testing Data: Scores dipped this year from previous years, so formed a data inquiry team to look at data. In 2018, 91% of students scored level 3 or 4, but in 2019 74%. Our numbers are so small that this could account for 3-4 students. We exceed District 15 standards by quite a bit. Quality review tomorrow and will be asked to reflect on this data. <https://data.nysed.gov/profile.php?instid=800000077828>
 - EG would like to form a CEP subcommittee, especially to write goals for "equity and student voice." CEP is a living document.
- New Business Agenda
 - Homework/EYB's: EG getting a lot of emails on both sides from parents - some want to make sure the no homework policy is adhered to and some want to add homework. EG does not believe in homework. The reason we started EYB is due to stress on parents, kids, and teachers. SLT discussed the issue in the past and decided that kids should be reading every night. Research shows that reading every night, across subjects, is the best way for kids to succeed. No negotiation on reading. One of the reasons EG is opposed to homework is bc teachers should use classrooms and preps to prepare for teaching, not to prepare packets of homework that may or may not be done by students. EYB's allow for families to be a part of homework. If teachers give homework, there's no time to give meaningful feedback. School is stressful and we do not want to contribute more to that stress. Parents want homework to prepare for middle school. EG pointed out that middle schools should be more like elementary schools; we shouldn't try to be like them. Research shows homework doesn't help kids - does not build skills. Parents want it to build responsibility, but we embed responsibility throughout the school day. Parents want kids to learn study skills, but homework does not teach study skills. Presently working on a study skills curriculum

for kids graduating. Parents want homework to see into the classroom, but there are lots of ways we build transparency into what's happening in the classroom.

- However, as a school, it is time to revisit the policy since parents are asking
- CC and KM distributed research showing no link between homework and preparedness for middle school. Typically homework policy develops discipline and stamina around doing work, so if those are the skills you're looking to develop, it might be successful, but those are not the main skills our school promotes.
- RH described sending home an optional homework packet in 4th grade and found it valuable - an opportunity for kids to practice math skills taught that day before a new skill was introduced the next day, as well as an opportunity to see when kids were lacking in mastery.
- Concerns with equity in EYB - some kids have more support at home to complete them, and others don't. EYB rate drops during the course of the year.
- CC stresses that research on homework in elementary school is unequivocal.
- Engage (math curriculum) worksheets are available online.
- Some teachers have been giving optional homework packets. This year's 4th grade families thought they were receiving "mandatory" homework, which is leading to confusion.
- Last year rising 5th grade parents were told there would be 5th grade homework, but there is not homework in 5th grade this year.
- School policy is still no homework/any homework is optional. We want to make sure options are available: as a team we need to discuss how parents can get resources in case they want homework.
- Creation of new agenda (community members)
 - Continuation of homework conversation: current 5th grade parents expressed appreciation of Ms. Horowitz's optional homework last year, especially to stay on top of math curriculum. Found it helpful to learn and understand what was going on for parents and as reinforcement for students. Another 5th grade parent expressed nervousness about preparedness for middle school as they tour and talk to middle school parents. Feels that homework is appropriate for 5th grade only. Another wants to be able to support her child at home and expressed that homework helped her to understand what she's doing in school. All 5th grade parents present stated that the vast majority of 5th grade parents are in favor of homework.
 - EG pointed out that we don't want the kids' last year in elementary school to be riddled with fear of what's coming.