

School Council Meeting
October 25, 2023

Attendance: Mrs. DeGrenier, Mrs. Haley, Mrs. Hill, Mr. Lovell, Mrs. McKenna, Mrs. Palek, Mr. Wilson

OPEN COMMENT:

- Mrs. Palek mentioned that we are only offering hours for the Book Fair during school. It could create hard feelings with people if parents aren't able to attend with their child and would we consider giving people the option of evening hours so parents could shop with their child. Students are able to browse during the day and come back with their parents.
- The Farm Stand is doing well. We will have other options soon. Parents will be asked if they are shutting down their garden, they could bring any surplus to the school and we can sell it at the Farm Stand.
- Students take care of the chickens in the morning gathering the eggs. They are currently in 4H and are able to bring other classmates down to help. Presentations by two teachers will take place and give children information about how to treat animals and take care of them.
- Third grade has done different plantings (Tulips, corn, beans and squash). We have native corn and Holly Hill has planted some too. Students really enjoy this and it matches up with the curriculum well.
- 4th graders will be composting and planting garlic in early November. We had a lot of carrots and they were made for lunch, as well as given to a local farm.
- Minutes from the last meeting were approved by Mr. Lovell and Mrs. McKenna.

Teaching and Learning:

- School Improvement plan is done. We will not be presenting at this time.
- Fall Benchmarks for students are posted in the Family Portal.

Family and Community Engagement:

- PTA - The social for parents has been moved until November 9th. The Pumpkin Stroll caused a bit of a conflict, but these conflicts will arise. At the social, there will be items raffled off to raise funds for the school.
- Field Trips - We are moving forward with the Blue Man Group and working on getting the price down. Gillette Stadium is also going forward and a Team Building activity has also been discussed. Mrs. Palek mentioned parents reaching out if they are having trouble coming up with the fees for the field trips. A statement should be put on the forms that they would like their child to attend, but not enclosing any fees. Teachers may

already know a family is struggling and will take care of getting their student to the field trip.

Human Capital:

- Staffing Update - We have added a part time tutor, although we still have 3.5 open positions for ABA tutors open. There is one more interview for an ABA scheduled. The literacy position is on hold because of the current budgeting situation. All absences are fully covered.

Sustainable Funding:

- Last Thursday there was a voluntary meeting for the staff, although not a huge attendance. Many of the teachers were attending other meetings that same day. Mrs. DeGrenier is sending out an email to staff regarding a budget meeting being held for Cedar and Center in the Center auditorium: November 6, 2023 from 3:15-4:15. The December late day meeting will be canceled. Everyone will be expected to attend.
- Special Education costs have gone up substantially.
- The budget approval schedule has been moved up to the beginning of November.
- Items will be reviewed such as salaries, expenses and full day Kindergarten charges.
- We still charge for Kindergarten.
- Mrs. Hill mentioned that full day Kindergarten is costly and we are in a deficit right now. There is a cost associated.
- Variables for the Budget - Conclusion of ARPA funds, changes in Circuit Breaker, variables of state and federal grants, unknown costs for Special Education and Transportation.
- Mr. Lovel mentioned that it is challenging to compare towns to other towns for pupil averages, etc.
- Class sizes recommended by the School Committee are followed.

Safety and Security

- No items to discuss.
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Getting the Word Out to the Public Regarding the Budget

- How can parents get the information prior to the budget getting approved? What is the best way to get the information to them?
- Parents want to know why there is a shortage. Expenses have gone up significantly.
- It was suggested that evening meetings could be held and recorded. It could be sent out to “All Schools” to make sure it gets to everyone.
- Another suggestion: Giving an opportunity for two different meeting times - an evening meeting and a morning meeting.

- High school students could stay with the children, and do crafts, while their parents attend the meeting.
- Volunteer hours could be given for their time.
- E-mails could be sent out from all schools as well as the District.
- Using the Center auditorium is a good venue for this type of meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for December 6, 2023 at 3:15 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Mrs. Valerie Haley