

School Improvement Council  
November 18, 2009

Attendees:

Linda Weene, Principal  
Terry Stewart, Assistant Principal  
Jen Golden, Grade 1 Parent  
Michael Benadon, Grade 2 Parent  
Heather Dalton, Guidance Counselor  
Ellen Ahern, Placentino School Librarian  
Betsy Usherwood, Grade 2 Teacher

1. The November meeting of the 2009-2010 Placentino School Council came to order at 3:50PM.
2. The minutes were reviewed and unanimously approved. Ken Robinson abstained.
3. Linda introduced Ken Robinson to the Council. Ken was elected as the At-Large Parent Representative to the Council. Linda expressed her appreciation to Ken for his willingness to give his time to the Council.
4. Linda advised the Council that Michael Benadon is working closely with the Superintendent on the new Strategic Plan for the Holliston Public Schools. She asked Michael to update the Council on this effort.
5. Michael explained that there were 22 people on the Strategic Plan Committee. He shared that the Graphical Framework that the Committee is using is based on the needs identified in the current Strategic Plan. Michael shared the graphic with the Council, and explained that it is in a "concentric" form to indicate that all areas are important and support the central concept - "Each Student achieving at their own individual, best level of performance in a physically and emotionally safe school environment." The Committee is covering 2 of the target areas at each meeting. The Committee hopes to have the plan ready for School Committee review by mid – January. Linda reminded the Council that the School Improvement Plans need to be nested in the Strategic Plan. Michael recommended that the Council utilize the categories in Strategic Plan to be sure that we are in the same ballpark.
7. Ken Robinson asked for more specifics on what a Strategic Plan entails. Michael Benadon explained that the current Plan was written in 2005 and most of the goals have been met. Linda added that there have been several Strategic Plans in the past with very broad goals. Under Dr. Jackson's leadership the goals have been more focused

and a review of the Strategic Plans over time show how far we have come as a school system. Michael added that the format of the Plan will be the same as in the past.

8. The Council then began to review the current School Improvement Plan.

- a. Linda advised the Council members that an updated copy of the Plan was in their folders. She began the review with the Literacy goal. Linda explained that as a school we are working on acquiring data in a more efficient manner to ensure that instruction is targeted to the children's needs. When the Plan was written Placentino had not been involved with the Pearson (Reading Street) research project. All classrooms are focused on literacy and effective Assessment.
- b. Ken Robinson asked if the School Improvement Plan is developed by the school or by the Council. Linda advised that the School Improvement Plan is developed solely by the members of that year's Council.
- c. The Writing goal was reviewed. Linda explained that this is a collaborative work by all the teachers at each grade level.
- d. The third Critical Issue – Creating a School-wide System for assessment and Instruction - elicited several questions. Michael asked if a parent could Request to review the assessments results for their child from Kindergarten to Grade 2. Linda explained that in Reading the DRA is administered from the end of Kindergarten to Grade 2 and the continuum scores are available for parents to review. We do not maintain a continuum across the years in any other area. Teachers always have assessment results available for the current year. She explained that at some point providing assessment results across the years was clearly a goal, but we do not have the capacity to do this now. Jen Golden asked if the testing was for teacher use or for statewide data and if the results are shared with parents. Linda responded that testing is internal to Placentino and is used to inform instruction in each classroom. Testing outcomes are shared with parents at Parent Conferences and when report cards go home. Linda reminded the Council that due to budget cuts we are not administering the Stanford Tests this year. The first time children will participate in a "formal" testing situation will be in Third Grade when the MCAS are administered.
- e. As the Council reviewed the Math goal, Linda advised that Pat Rourke, the STEM Coordinator for grades Preschool – 5 was planning several parent information sessions. At this time, it is anticipated that 70-80 parents will be attending.

- f. A review of the Science and Social Studies goals indicated that Placentino is focusing on implementing the recent curriculum review recommendations.
- g. The Communication goal was then reviewed. Linda advised that a Preschool Information Evening has been scheduled for January 19<sup>th</sup>. The enrollment in our Preschool is down by 1 class this year. The current economic downturn could be a cause. There is a concern about the readiness of children for Kindergarten if fewer children are involved in Preschool.
- h. PBIS is still a high focus area. The major obstacle is the cost of training. Heather Dalton offered to contact the May Foundation for an update on training options. The new YUMMY program was presented. Betsy Usherwood indicated that the YUMMY program is evolving in a positive way. Linda agreed that peer pressure to behave appropriately was a goal. She also explained that the program is being carried over to other areas of the school to support proper behavior. Ellen Ahern indicated that she felt the volume and behavior in the Cafeteria was much better, and it was a much nicer environment. She compared it to an experience she had visiting another school and that now the Placentino Cafeteria was a much improved environment.
- i. Linda reflected on the importance of safety at our school. This is one reason that safety issues are in the Plan. Ellen asked if there were any “walkers” this year. Linda responded there is one child who walks. Linda explained that when a parent advises a teacher or administration that their child will be walking to or from school the parents are asked to provide a clear description of the route the child will be taking. We then have that route reviewed by Dave Gatchell, School Safety Officer, and Linda meets with the parent/s to review the plan.

Ken asked if the school has policies and procedures for lockdowns, containment or other safety plans. Linda advised that we have specific Plans for lockdown and containment, and we practice the procedures at least once a year. We have plastic containers bolted to the wall of each room in the Building that contain the Emergency Response Manual, and the lockdown and containment directives and guidelines. Linda added that once the children arrive on the buses and are all in the building all the doors are locked except the front doors near the Main Office.

- j. Heather Dalton advised the Council that she had found a website [www.kidsrunning.com](http://www.kidsrunning.com). This may help in planning the running club in the Plan. Heather and Ellen will begin to plan for this activity. Michael offered to help also. He suggested a “Fitness Night” in the Cafeteria for families.

- k. Linda reviewed the success of Placentino Reading Night that was held the previous evening. The Cafeteria was filled with families who came to enjoy the evening. Betsy advised the Council that it was the first time that she had participated, and "It was a blast!" Linda reflected on the first Placentino Reading Night when only 10 families came and how it has now become such a positive experience for so many families.
  - l. A discussion of the "Lights Off – no TV" week in the plan generated ideas for several activities that could take place during that week - Placentino Reading Night, a Fitness Night, and a Game Night.
9. The Council discussed dedicating the December meeting to reviewing goals and critical issues for the 2010-2011 Plan. All the members agreed to maintain the three main goals: Curriculum, Communication, and Health, Safety and Well Being. Linda advised that Literacy will be an ongoing major area in the Curriculum area. She explained that once the 2 year research project is completed if the staff agrees to continue with the Reading Street program, Pearson will provide the updated 2011 series and all support materials to Placentino at no cost. This is estimated to be valued in the \$500,000 range at a minimum. We will also be able to keep all the readers and Big Books that are currently being used in the research project.
10. A discussion of the need to meet with the Miller School Council began. It was agreed to invite the Miller Council to our December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and share our pending plans with them at that time. The importance of continuity between the Miller and Placentino Schools was discussed and all agreed that meeting together was very important.
10. The meeting adjourned at 4:55PM. The next meeting is December 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:45PM in the Placentino Library.