

School Improvement Council
Minutes
October 15, 2008

Attendees:

Linda Weene, Principal
Terry Stewart, Assistant Principal
Dawn Neborsky, PreK Parent
Jen Golden, K parent
Mary Killelea, Grade 1 Parent
Maureen Gonsalves, Grade 2 Parent
Betsy Usherwood, Grade 2 Teacher
Heather Dalton, Guidance Counselor
David Gatchell, School Resource Officer, Community Representative

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:45PM. Ellen Ahern was unable to attend.
2. Linda introduced the new members of the Council: Dawn Neborsky, Jen Golden, Betsy Usherwood, Heather Dalton, and Officer Dave Gatchell. Linda explained that Ellen Ahern, Placentino Librarian, is also on the Council this year but was unable to attend today's meeting.
3. The minutes of the May 28, 2008 Council meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved by Linda Weene, Terry Stewart, Maureen Gonsalves, and Mary Killelea, the members who were on the 07-08 Council.
4. The Council reviewed the information sheet with the names and contact information for members of this year's Council.
5. The Council reviewed the *Massachusetts School Council Handbook*. The Council voted to add one more parent to the Council in order to be in compliance with the DOE requirement that "Parents shall have parity {equality} with professional personnel on the school councils." Linda will contact the HEPO president to begin the process of adding another parent to the Council.
6. The Council reviewed the "Mission, Vision, and Beliefs" statement that was developed by a sub-committee of last year's school council. Linda reviewed the process that was followed by the group to develop the statement. She also advised that this statement had been presented to the Holliston School Committee last spring as a power point presentation. The statement will go to the Placentino staff for a final review before final adoption.
7. Maureen Gonslaves was unanimously chosen as the Co-chair of the Council with Linda Weene.
8. The Council reviewed the 2008-2009 Action Plan. Discussion revolved around:
 - a. At Maureen's request, Linda will check with the Food Services Director to see if the Food Pantry dates can be added to the Monthly Lunch menu that goes home.
 - b. Linda explained the purpose of developing Power Standards
 - c. In response to a question, Linda explained that the STEM coordinator is responsible for the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math curriculum areas.

- d. Mary asked about the Zaner-Blozer Spelling pilot, and Linda explained that this year it is in place in all classes grades K-2.
- e. Linda recognized Dave's help with the parking, drop-off, bus loop, and PreK drop off/pick up issues over the past 2 years. It was with Dave's help and planning this past summer that we were able to begin this year as smoothly as we did.
- f. Mary asked about the end-of-day pick up numbers in the cafeteria this year. Terry advised that there is a significant increase, but everyone seems to be adjusting well.
- g. Dawn asked if there was a "stranger awareness" program in place at Placentino. Linda advised that we don't address this as a specific program but weave it into developmentally appropriate lessons. Dave added that the training sessions that he is involved with as a Police Officer recommend focusing on "good stranger/bad stranger" rather than just "staying away from strangers." He explained that there have been incidents of children hiding from safety personnel because they were "strangers" and this impeded their receiving assistance.
- h. In response to a question about food in school, Linda advised the Council that she has reviewed the Wellness Policy with staff already this year, and there have been creative initiatives at grade levels to limit food for celebrations. Linda explained that this would be an ongoing discussion throughout this school year.
- i. Maureen asked if a Wellness Committee had ever been established. This is a Central Office initiative. Linda will check with the Superintendent's office.
- j. Dawn asked if the children always wash their hands before snack/lunch. Betsy explained that this is what she does, and she feels that most teachers do ensure this occurs. Linda advised that all classrooms have a sink in the classroom to facilitate ensuring that hands are washed.
- k. The Open Circle social competency program was discussed. This is in place in every classroom at Placentino. Linda advised that she has visited with every class to remind them that "teasing and bullying" are unacceptable. Heather explained that the Guidance Counselors are researching the "Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports" program and hope to work with a committee of teachers to move forward with this plan.
- l. Betsy indicated her interest in the Responsive Classroom program and how it works to build a community within the classroom.
- m. Maureen will speak to the Newcomers Group to see if they have a "go to" list that the school can build on to provide information to new families as they register at school.
- n. Betsy indicated that she wondered if the monthly "Food Pantry" collection could be promoted more visibly throughout the school. She has been involved in community projects that were school wide, and they were very well received. Other ideas around community service were added by Jen (Newcomers Coat Drive) and Dawn (Hop-a-thon for MS). Linda indicated her support for these important programs, but she advised that as a school we need to be careful to ensure that we create a balance in the programs that we support.

9. The meeting adjourned at 5PM. The next meeting will be on November 19th in the Placentino Library.

