

School Improvement Council
April 15, 2009

Attendees:

Linda Weene, Principal
Terry Stewart, Assistant Principal
Dawn Nebrosky, PreK Parent
Jen Golden, K Parent
Mary Killelea, Grade 1 Parent
Maureen Gonsalves, Grade 2 Parent
Michael Benadon, Parent Representative
Heather Dalton, Guidance Counselor
Ellen Ahern, Placentino School Librarian
Betsy Usherwood, Grade 2 Teacher
David Gatchell, Community Representative

1. The meeting came to order at 3:50PM. Dawn Nebrosky arrived after the meeting began.
2. The minutes from the March 18th meeting were unanimously approved.
3. Ellen Ahern wondered about the new "Backpack Express" program and how parents could access the information. Michael Benadon explained that the RSS feed is open to most websites such as yahoo, Google; but, parents need to set up their webpage to access the information. Parents can get the directions on how to set up their computers to receive the information by going to the Placentino website.
Linda explained the "blast" email system to the Council. She also advised that we have to be careful not to "overuse" this form of communication as it would lose its effectiveness if too many emails were sent out.
4. Linda updated the Council on the 2010 budget. The House Ways and Means Committee of the Commonwealth was issuing its budget today, April 18, 2009. This would give the cities and towns of the Commonwealth a better idea of what the financial impact of the current recession will be on their budgets and allow them to plan more specifically how this will impact their 2010 budgets.
Linda reminded the Council that at the last School Committee meeting, the Superintendent presented the list of items that would need to be reduced to meet the financial goals of the town. Dr. Jackson's list was a tiered listing that reflected the various possibilities once the final budget recommendations were in from the Commonwealth and the Finance Committee. The reductions that could affect the Placentino School are: loss of the Spanish Program, no Stanford Testing, staffing still being reviewed.

5. Linda advised the Council that the combined evening of Placentino Math Night and the Book Fair was a "great success." The turnout was "amazing," and Linda thanked Pat Rourke for suggesting combining both events. Ellen Ahearn added that they just needed more registers to allow the large turnout to flow more quickly at checkout. She also advised that the visiting author/illustrator made a "great impression," and the 3rd Grade teachers are looking for him to return. Betsy Usherwood added that the line for donations to the Holliston Food Pantry was "out the door."

6. The Council then discussed the 2009-2010 School Improvement Plan. A draft of the plan was distributed and reviewed:
 - a. Allison Lindstrom will work with Linda and Terry on the Balanced Literacy goal.
 - b. RTI goal - this goal speaks to training staff to develop effective classroom based interventions (Tier I). Professional Development Days, workshops, and other opportunities will be used to provide the staff training needed. In response to Maureen's question on Tier I, Linda explained that this level of intervention that provides direct instruction in the classroom to support the needs of all children. Some of the interventions are – flexible grouping, small groups, one-to-one instruction, direct instruction in area of need, etc. Betsy added that interest groups and peer tutoring also provide the support that is important to children.

This led to a discussion of the placement process for the 09-10 school year. Linda explained that the classroom teachers place the children for the following year. This is extremely important since the classroom teacher knows the children's strengths and needs the best. Classrooms are established are heterogeneous and span the range of abilities evident in the grade.
 - c. Math goal - Linda explained that the enVision Math program was in place in all but four of the Second Grade classrooms. Those four classrooms will begin to use this program in the 09-10 school year. Linda advised the Council that the Berlin-Boylston school district recently sent teachers and administrators to visit at Placentino to discuss the enVision Math program. They met with staff and visited several classroom at Placentino and Miller.
 - d. Science goal - The Science Review Committee will be presenting the update on the review at tomorrow's School Committee meeting (April 16th). The goal for next year is to continue to implement the Committee's recommendations. Linda also advised that in May the Social Studies Committee will present its Review and recommendations; also, in May the Health/Wellness Committee will report on its work. In June, the Fine Arts Review Committee will report to the School Committee.

Maureen asked if handwriting instruction will be implemented in all grades next year, and Linda indicated that it would be integrated into all classrooms. There was a discussion of the cost of workbooks vs. purchasing hard cover books, and Linda explained that at this age level publishers do not

provide hard cover books. It is costly to buy each year, but the workbooks are all that is available.

Dawn asked about the Early Childhood Council and Fair. Linda responded that in the past, Holliston has done workshops and invited other Preschools to attend. The focus has been on pencil grip and handwriting in the past. Linda stated that maybe it is time to review and determine if we could be involved at this level again. Dawn recommended having a representative at the Fair.

- e. Health, Safety & Wellbeing Goal - Dave Gatchell and Linda participated in the "net conference" that was offered on the Safe Routes to School Program. The conference indicated that a Committee of parents, PE teachers and administrators would be needed to participate in the program. Some of the benefits that they were unaware of are : pedometers will be provided by Safe Routes, a "Golden Shoe Award" is part of the program, some good family participation ideas were provided. Participation in this program will require "satellite locations" for children to meet and walk to school.
- f. PBIS Goal – Linda described the PBIS program to the Council. This program is a system of "positive expectations" that apply to all areas of the school – the halls, cafeteria, playground, bus, etc. It brings in the entire school community and supports "catching kids being good" as part of the program. So far grants from HEPO (\$3500) and Harvard Pilgrim (\$500) will help cover some of the cost of training staff members. The website www.pbis.org has much more information on this program.

- 7. General discussion among the members focused on the following areas:
 - a. Using the school website as a tool for parents to access more information, such as the Summer Reading list.
 - b. Incorporate Math/PE skills – skip counting while jumping
 - c. Add Kids Care to the Communication section of the Plan with a goal to increase donations by 10% next year.
- 8. Linda shared with the Council that the Placentino Team for the HEF Spelling Bee includes Heather Dalton, Judy Simonson, and Linda.
- 9. Upcoming activities among the staff are: Linda is participating in the PMC challenge, Heather Dalton will be running in a ½ Marathon on June 7th. This led to the idea of a Placentino "5K Race for Education" next year.
- 10. Upcoming Field Trips at Placentino include: First Grade visiting the Holliston Library, Second Grade visiting the Roger Williams Zoo, and Kindergarten visiting Southwick Zoo.
- 11. The meeting adjourned at 4:55PM. The next meeting is Wednesday, May 20th at 3:45.