

Steering Committee Minutes

Attendance: Howard Smith, Barbarann Tantillo, James Fogarty, Joanne Vale, C Zbynek Gold, Daniel Frare, MaryLynn Pearlman, Ana Ocasio-Rios, Mary Jo Daley, Dianne Wiacek, Will Jacobs.

Date: October 31, 2006

Elementary Report Card Survey results

C. Zbynek Gold gave out copies of the results of the report card survey form teachers and parents. Zbynek reported that parents appreciated the hard work that went into developing and filling out the report cards. Also they felt that the individualized comments were much more beneficial than using the canned comments. In addition, parents felt that the scores on the report card can be confusing. Zbynek indicated teachers needed to make parents aware that the scores are a composite of many assessments and observations and not just the result of one assessment. Finally parents are struggling with the concept of the standards.

Next, Zbynek reviewed the responses from teachers. Some teachers felt that the specific guided reading scores should be removed from the report card and replaced with the language from NYS describing the different levels of achievement. Teachers also felt that there were too many math strands. Next, Zbynek reviewed the parent report sent out from the state. He pointed out that we will be adjusting the language on the report card to reflect the new descriptive language used by the state for describing if a student is meeting the standard.

Zbynek felt that he had gotten a good response from teachers but a small one from parents. He agrees there are too many math strands. Joanne Vale indicated that her teaching staff agreed that the grading method needed to be explained better to parents.

Updates on pilots (DRA 2, Deibels, PAF, Science 21)

MaryLyn gave an update on the different pilots.

DRA 2- pilot is working with K-6 teachers, 2 teachers per grade level, 10 students per teacher, which comes out to be 10% of the elementary student base. One exception is that K teachers are going to test the entire class. This is a pilot and will run to the end of the year. It takes about 45minutes to an hour to test students however it was felt that as teachers become more experienced with the test the actual testing time should decrease. Dr. Tantillo stated that they were calling around to other districts to see how they were doing the testing. She hoped they could give us some insight into better ways of reducing the testing time.

Deibels – not using it at this time. Staff is being trained. Hopefully will start to use it within the next month.

PAF- program is being used across the district and it is another way of providing intervention support in reading.

Science 21- this program is being piloted in two classes on each elementary grade level. The program is aligned to the NYS standards. Zbynek stated that the program is a hands on program and that students did well on the science test that had been taught using science 21. He indicated that we needed to decide benchmarks. Dan Frare wanted to know if this was in content or process. Zbynek said both.

SIS

Dr. Smith reviewed where we are in finding a new SIS system for the district. He indicated that a committee had been formed and it was looking at a number of systems. The leading programs being considered were Infinite Campus and E-School. One important component that is being looked at is the scheduling module and is probably the main thing driving the decision process. He was hopeful that a decision to purchase a system could be made by December with a transition for implementation over the next several months.

Facilities Update

Dr. Smith reviewed the progress being made on the construction on the MS/HS. Foundation work has begun and soon the old auditorium will be demolished. New concrete piers are going in and after the foundation work is complete the steel frame of the building will be going up. Some sound buffer walls will be install to help reduce the noise but we have to be careful of codes especially fire codes and exits. Dr. Smith also reviewed the progress being made at the Washington Irving School (WI). He indicated that because the cost of the project had gone up there had to be a redesign scaling back the project at WI. Staff have met with administration and a plan has been drawn up that redesigns classroom space within the present footprint of the building. Joanne Vale raised a question about was anything being planned for the Morse school. Dr. Smith explained that the original plan had included Morse but that bond did not pass. They had to scale back the plan and only deal with SHHS and WI. The Morse school redesign will have to be done under another bond issue. Dr. Smith asked how the Safety Committee was working at SHSS. Everyone involved indicated that it was going well. Staff were getting answers and felt supported.

Next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 28 at 2:20 in the Boardroom. Items for the agenda are Subs-how to attract them, how to keep them; SIS and facilities update.