

RIVERFIELD PTA
GENERAL MEETING
LMC
Thursday, October 13, 2011
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER Amy Crawford

Called the meeting to order at 9:20 AM

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS/WELCOME Lori Hubert

- Lori Hubert announces she will step down shortly as President of the PTA due to family moving out of town. Exec Board to meet to determine appropriate procedure to fill her position.
- Review of the changes to By-Laws. Amy Crawford makes a motion to approve new PTA By-Laws. Motion approved.

VISIT BY DR. TITLE, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

- Discussion of **District Improvement Strategy**
- Four main areas of focus. Fastest and best way to improve learning is to improve instruction. How do to this?
 - Improve skills of the teachers
 - Improve skills of the district leaders
 - Provide consistency in programs from grade to grade. Pre k – k, 5th to 6th and 8th to 9th in particular. Not identical practice – but consistent practices across the board
 - Effectively using the resources we have
- School improvement plan – how should it look?
 - Standardized protocol – start with school data. Every school looked at to identify key instructional issues in that school over 18 month period
 - Approximately 40 administrators in district – have skill instruction for them. They can then help teachers work on effective teacher practices
 - Each school to have an improvement plan. Each grade level to have an improvement plan
 - Teacher goals to be tied into school improvement plan. Is an ongoing plan for improvement
- School and grade level data teams will look over time at the impact of the changes being made
- This procedure is just starting this week. Warde HS is first to be looked at. Team collecting data for areas that might need improvement.
- Principals are to oversee teachers to see if plans are being properly implemented. Will make “instructional rounds” to gather data
- When finished with all schools – information will be on website
- Riverfield will have a team visit at least one time.
- Staff identifies the problems, staff works on it, then team comes in to further work on issues in the school
- Administrators and teachers working together
- Follow up to make sure ideas are being implemented and making sure the changes are effective – monitoring plans will be included in improvement plan. Will be a constant process.

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- Looking to raise up all students in the districts, not just remedial students or those not meeting goal
- Looking for consistency in district school's curriculum.
 - For example, there are several different math programs being used in the district at various elementary schools. There will now be a district-wide math program put in place. There will be some leeway for individual schools to see what would work best for their teachers and kids, but looking for more consistency
 - Currently Math for grades 3-5, and Language arts for grades k-5 are being evaluated for the district curriculum instruction model.
 - Shrinking the variance between schools
- Plans to be developed early November, then implemented over a two year period
- School improvement teams will consist of a representative from each grade level, as well as specialists from math/science and language arts. Up to principal to decide who else to include
- Riverfield currently has a school improvement team in place - with LA, Math/science instructional improvement teachers
- What will visits look like for school improvement plan?
 - Teachers will be notified of the visits
 - Classrooms to be picked randomly
 - Several people coming in at once to evaluate how curriculum delivered and looking for any areas in need of improvement
- These visits are different from teacher evaluation visits. For evaluation visits, principals visit classrooms in unannounced visits to observe and collect data.
- The school improvement plan is a big shift in way things have been done. Making "public" practices that had been "private" before
- Question on how to judge the "health" of the school besides standardized tests
 - This issue is being looked at by central office. Working on how best to assess this, what measure to use to determine a school's climate. The state has "school climate surveys" – under bullying legislation.
 - School climate is an important issue. Parent survey done at Riverfield every two years. One to be done end of this year.
- **Riverfield construction project**
- The Board of Education has authorized Chairman to write a letter to the First Selectman to form a Building Committee
- When the new Selectman is elected – he has to form a building committee – and Riverfield community has to help encourage this process
- After building committee – need to get financing for the project
- Can take up to six months just to get money for an architect to make a plan. They are trying to put that money aside now for this expense to speed up process
- Need bids, then plan and building committee has to review plans
- Once have plans it goes through the process for approval
- The more parents engage the more likely to get through the process
- The scope of the project has been identified for Riverfield – what is feasible on this site
- An architect has done preliminary cost estimates
- Tools for schools committee would monitor any issues that might surface like mold in the school

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DISCUSSION WITH MR. TOASO

- Follow up on CMT meeting/discussion earlier in the week.
- Teachers are working on improving small group instruction to differentiate to meet the needs of all students.
- It is a challenge for the teachers to work with large groups and many different levels of learners to meet the needs of all students in the classroom
- "Support staff" in the school is there to help the teacher do just that
- All children will not be pulled out of classroom to meet their needs, but the goal is for each child's needs to be met
- Discussion on teacher morale issue in the school
 - Need for positive relationship between principal/teacher
 - Need for positive relationship between teachers in each grade level
 - Need for positive relationship between parents and teachers
- Each teacher in each grade level must deliver the curriculum and critical/negative tone from parents is being heard by teachers
- Need to work on respect and trust between staff and parents

Next PTA General Meeting: Thursday, Feb. 9, 2011 at 7:30 PM
Meeting Adjourned at 10:55 am