

Teaneck Public Schools District Advisory Team

Minutes of Meeting – January 16, 2014 Eugene Field School – Conference Room

Present:

Bryant School	No attendee
Hawthorne School	Rebecca Alston
Lowell School	No attendee
Whittier School	Kara Brady
Ben Franklin Middle School	Tamika Francis
Thomas Jefferson Middle School	No attendee
Teaneck High School	Denise Sanders

Ms. Pinsak began the meeting at 7:00 pm with an overview of the reorganization of the Board of Education. Parents were given the list of Board Committees, Board School Liaisons and Board Meeting dates for the remainder of the year.

Ms. Brady reported the Minutes of the Whittier BQMT with a report that there was very good attendance at the Whittier BQMT meeting. The focus was on the school environment with parent and student visions. To improve the vision or change the vision by asking parents to sit down and talk about how they feel about the school. Students would create a mural to display in school. **Ms. Brady** continued to report that a discussion was held for students to express their concerns about the lockdown drill. **Ms. Brady** continued that visiting authors for fourth grade classes visited Whittier School.

Ms. Brady reported that there are parent concerns with dismissal procedures at Whittier School. Ms. Kaplan was investigating the possibility of having parents, who drive, line-up in their cars on West Englewood Avenue. However, the police department indicated that is a problem and obstructs access for fire trucks and police cars during emergencies. **Ms. Pinsak** responded that on West Englewood Avenue there was also an issue with students crossing the street. **Ms. Pinsak** offered to speak to Chief Wilson and the Police Department Traffic Officer who are very cooperative when we bring district traffic concerns to them.

Ms. Brady concluded that the Spring Lake trip for fourth grade students has been scheduled for the spring.

Ms. Alston reported the Minutes of the Hawthorne BQMT (attached) with a report that posts to the website of the Words of Wisdom is complete with each class posting their Words of Wisdom on the website. Pick up and drop off at Hawthorne School is going well but to eliminate any traffic jams, Dr. Spollen-LaRaia suggested that an oval driveway be installed on Letter Avenue.

Ms. Alston continued to report that in 2012-13 they did not meet their target in two areas in language arts and four areas in mathematics which is a concern. A discussion took place about what can be done to help parents help their children at home. **Ms. Pinsak** stated that the NJASK program for Title 1 students is starting. **Ms. Alston** stated that Go Math was a new program and **Ms. Francis** stated that the State changed some of the assessments. **Ms. Pinsak** responded that the problem is that the district doesn't get great data from NJASK that can be used for student progress.

Ms. Alston concluded that a suggestion was made to post APPS for parents. Explore Mangos APP for learning another language. In January, PTA will explore attendance option for parents who cannot physically be at the meeting but can join the conversation through Google hangout/Skype.

**District Advisory Team Minutes
January 16, 2014 Meeting**

Ms. Francis reported the Minutes of the Benjamin Franklin Middle School BQMT (attached) with a statement that parents love the Go Math Program. **Ms. Francis** continued that Dr. Small gave an update regarding new technology with a demonstration using the Smartboard that was purchased through Box Tops for Education by the PTO. The BQMT committee discussed implementing an after school homework co-op for an hour or two for students to complete their homework while parents arrive home from work. Currently high school students assist middle school students with their homework. **Ms. Francis** continued that a suggestion was made that possibly a reduced fee for SACC childcare could be offered for students on free and reduced lunch. **Ms. Pinsak** responded that SACC and WPA costs for free and reduced students could possibly be funded through Title 1 funds.

Ms. Francis concluded that she suggested presenting “an app of the day” at a reduced cost or free. The committee is planning a Spelling Bee.

Ms. Sanders reported the Minutes of the Teaneck High School BQMT (attached) with a review of the HSPA Program for all juniors; 182 eleventh grade students signed up for the program. The HSPA program will offer students who have Saturday detention to attend as well. **Ms. Sanders** continued that an after school homework program was presented to encourage students to be involved. H.E.A.L (Help Each Other Achieve Longevity) is a dynamic group of girls encouraging community members to attend a Pep Rally and visit events to get to know the high school. **Ms. Sanders** concluded that information for parents is needed regarding the status of teacher’s contract.

Parents inquired about permission to post photographs of students by PTO/A at events. **Ms. Alston** stated that the Hawthorne PTA notification to parents is “please note that during an event, do not take pictures and post them.” **Ms. Pinsak** suggested that a flag could be added to the Student Information System to indicate that permission was not granted. **Ms. Francis** inquired if permission for photos is required every year. **Ms. Pinsak** responded that it is necessary to complete the website/photo release form every year. Parents stated that some cultures do not participate in classroom/school photos.

Ms. Pinsak gave parents an update of technology at the buildings. Hawthorne has received their laptop carts. Laptop carts have been ordered for Lowell and Whittier. We are piloting Google Chrome at the high school with the students logging in through the network. We added a cart of iPads for the TAG (Teaneck Academically Gifted Program) at the elementary schools for students to learn how to manipulate the technology in preparation for the PARCC Assessment (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). **Ms. Pinsak** continued that at School Boards she saw projectors that would simulate a smartboard. **Ms. Pinsak** is looking at the possibility of purchasing Kindle Fire technology for students.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 pm.

Next Meeting: To be determined

Respectfully submitted by Linda Kuhran