

Teaneck Public Schools District Advisory Team

Agenda

January 15, 2013

Present:

Bryant School	Ledya Alcindor, Candida Wilshire
Hawthorne School	Rebecca Alston
Lowell School	No attendee
Whittier School	Vanessa Bing
Ben Franklin Middle School	Tamika Francis
Thomas Jefferson Middle School	No attendee
Teaneck High School	Pat Phillips

Anthony D'Angelo, Director of Facilities and Grounds was present as an invited guest.

Ms. Pinsak began the meeting at 7:10 with introductions of new attendees.

Reports from each building representative summarizing the key points of the latest BQMT meeting with questions, comments and/or concerns that the BQMT members would like discussed at the District Advisory Team (DAT) meeting.

Ms. Phillips gave a report from the Teaneck High School BQMT meeting of December 13, 2012. Minutes of the meeting are attached. To summarize, the high school is a busy place with a great deal happening and a great focus on student achievement. There were no other issues to discuss from Teaneck High.

Ms. Alston summarized the Hawthorne BQMT meeting that occurred on November 27, 2012. Minutes of the meeting are attached. She reported that the heating issues at the school have been resolved and the school was working through regulating the heat. She also spoke of concerns for the condition of the grounds due to construction (solar). Quantities of mud are tracked through the building following recess. Since Mr. D'Angelo was present, he reported that the grounds were being taken care of with short term and long term remedies. Mrs. Alston informed the committee that arrival and dismissal procedures have been modified at the school, with stricter visitor regulations in place.

Ms. Alcindor and Ms. Wilshire reported that Bryant's scheduled BQMT meeting had been cancelled but that a new date was set. They provided an interesting update on some of the activities and goals of the Bryant parents and teachers, including many literacy initiatives. Ms. Pinsak was able to give them the information that an ESL after school class and student support after school class will soon begin.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. D'Angelo was asked to discuss security upgrades accomplished and those still to come. The remainder of the school BQMT reports followed this meeting segment. For consistency of minutes, school reports will be summarized before reporting on the school security update.

Teaneck Public Schools District Advisory Team

Ms. Francis discussed the last BQMT meeting at Benjamin Franklin. In summary, she reported that Dr. Small and his administrative team presented and discussed school and district goals and objectives. As an example of some of the school's initiatives, she spoke of the leadership training for eighth graders and their positive influence on younger students. No questions or concerns were brought to the district team.

Whittier's December 7th BQMT meeting was summarized by Dr. Bing. The minutes of that meeting are attached to this document. BQMT members brought parents' questions and concerns to the school team and the team decided to survey the teaching staff for input on issues of priority to the team. No questions or concerns were brought to the district team.

Superintendent's Report on School Security

Ms. Pinsak discussed the Response to Emergency Management Plan already in place in all of the district schools. Our plans were improved through the implementation of a grant from the US Department of Education---the Response to Emergency Management in Schools (REMS) grant. The over \$100,000 received assisted us in performing safety audits of each school, revising/improving school plans and developing materials for schools, classrooms and parents. It also provided for additional security cameras and emergency supplies such as, "Go Kits" for every school. Ms. Pinsak invited Mr. D'Angelo to discuss some of the school security upgrades for the district. Mr. D'Angelo explained that some upgrades were planned prior to the Newtown shooting and some resulted from further scrutiny of plans and procedures. Upgrades include additional cameras, additional key cards for doors that are vulnerable, and the relocation of some door buzzers to the outside of buildings. Ms. Pinsak discussed procedural changes that include adherence to policy that classroom doors must be locked, a system to enable substitutes to lock doors, and stricter adherence for visitor check-ins.

Ms. Phillips asked if a script was used for school entry at buzzer/camera location. The team discussed that and felt that a script might add another layer of safety and recommended that to the district.

Ms. Pinsak will put a script together with principals and district team and distribute to schools.

The team expressed concerns for students who were in bathrooms and hallways during a lockdown or evacuation and recommended that principals make certain that this is addressed by school safety teams.

The DAT had questions about whether or not parents were notified of drills, reunification with parents in the case of an evacuation and other questions which Ms. Pinsak answered. Ms. Wiltshire recommended that our schools send out a test message to parents/guardians to check whether emails and/or phone numbers were up-to-date. Ms. Pinsak replied that some schools do this but she is not sure if that has been done at all schools. It is an excellent idea and she will facilitate it.

Other items added to the agenda by team members

No items had been added for this meeting.

Teaneck Public Schools District Advisory Team

Establish Time and Date for Next Meeting

Next meeting date: **February 21, 2013 at 7 PM in the Eugene Field Conference Center**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 PM.

Submitted by Barbara Pinsak

BQMT Meeting Minutes December 13, 2012

Attendees: Barbara Morris-George, Dennis Heck, Peter LoGiudice, Faith Mootoo, Michelle O'Reilly, Pat Phillips, Denise Sanders

I. Principal Report & Update

- A. Maya Lawrence visited Teaneck High School on November 20, 2012
- B. College Night was successful
- C. Open House on November 15 was well attended
- D. Freshmen Parent Night was well attended
- E. John Jones THS Class 2008 spoke to students about the field of engineering
- F. HEAL, SOLVE & National Honor Society visited Staten Island to assist after Hurricane Sandy.
- G. Parent Teacher's Conferences held November 29
 - 1) The number of individual meetings up 5% from last year.
 - 2) The busiest time was between 1:30- 3:30 pm
 - 3) Consider moving conference start time to 6:00pm
 - 4) In the future looking to schedule conferences via Skyward
- G. Early action letters are being received by seniors

II. First Quarter Performance Outcome

- A. First week in December Guidance Department will begin meeting with students and parents
 - 1) Priority to meet with poor performing students first
 - 2) Guidance to identify resources to assist students
 - 3) Need to follow-up on student progress to determine if intervention was effective
 - 4) Guidance will follow-up with Administration regarding parents they have not been able to contact
- B. Student performance on PSATs being used to identify how well students will perform on HSPA. HSPA test first week of March.
 - 1) HSPA Saturday classes begin 1/12/13 and runs for 7 Saturdays (January 12 - March 2)
 - 2) Identifying students that need to attend Saturday HSPA class.
 - 3) Last year 160 students attended Saturday HSPA class
 - 4) 51% of the students taking honors and AP courses. Look at why more students are not scoring Advanced Proficiency on HSPA.
 - 5) Students have the most problem with geometry, probability and statistics on the HSPA

- 6) Requiring sophomores and juniors to take the PSAT to identify students who need help. Used to look at NJASK but will now look at PSAT scores
- C. New testing coming out called PARCC
 - 1) Two more years of HSPA then the PARCC test will be administered
 - 2) PARCC test will be more challenging.
 - 3) More critical analysis. Need to infuse more non-fiction in curriculum
- D. Limited English Proficiency – several students enter high school in the 11th and 12th grades so there is no direct correlation from 8th grade
 - 1) ESL students need support in Social Studies, Math and other areas
 - 2) Encourage peer tutoring with ESL students
 - 3) Guidance Department should be the starting point for identifying ESL students who need help
- E. Starting a program for Algebra I students. Calling on Sylvan & Kaplan to assist.
- F. Several of the ninth graders in 2012 did not perform well on Algebra I exam.
 - 1) A lot of material on the test was Algebra II
 - 2) Test did not count. State trying to determine if test is valid
 - 3) The test will be changing and districts can opt out of Algebra I test

III. Identify Students for Grade Representation

- A. Identify students to sit on BQMT committee
- B. Identify students from wider student population to get various points of views

IV. Book Fair

- A. Recommendation from teaching staff to conduct Book Fair at THS
- B. Emphasis on promoting reading throughout the school—“Literacy Extravaganza”. Encourage pleasure and independent reading
- C. Invite authors to THS to speak to the students
- D. Target late April early May for Book Fair

V. New Business

- A. Recommendation for Book Club to promote reading throughout the school

Next BQMT meeting Thursday, January 17

Benjamin Franklin Middle School
 BQMT Minutes September through January

BQMT Minutes 9/24/12	
In Attendance 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Mr. Raymond Kiem Ms. Patty Monaco Ms. Denise Sherman Ms. Shirley Gaskin Ms. Tamika Francis Ms. Joby Horrigan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The vision and role that BQMT would play at BFMS was discussed. ✓ Mr. Kiem highlighted 3 areas of concern that the BQMT could work on: building policy, facility, and academics/culture. ✓ The parent members felt strongly that there needed to be an infusion of positive programming at BFMS. ✓ The committee agreed that a strong commitment to the BFMS website was a strong tool to highlight positive happenings. Mr. Kiem agreed to be extra proactive in maintaining the site. ✓ The lack of volunteerism by staff members was identified as a roadblock to clubs. (This was discussed at length) ✓ 1 parent member inquired about the Library using “mangoes”. ✓ 1 parent member suggested improving the visuals around the building. ✓ 1 parent member inquired about French text books. ✓ 1 parent member stated that he child at BFMS really loved coming to school but desired more extra-curricular experiences. ✓ A commitment was made by all members to promptly respond to email and to use that as our primary source of communication. ✓ The committee agreed to be “cyclical”. This was identified to mean that the BFMS staff members would bring all the concerns back to the school (students and teachers) and the parent members would bring the concerns to the community. ✓ It was agreed that future meetings would occur on Mondays. 	

Benjamin Franklin Middle School
BQMT Minutes September through January

BQMT Minutes 10/8/12	
In Attendance 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm	Mr. Raymond Kiem Ms. Patty Monaco Ms. Tamika Francis Ms. Joby Horrigan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Mr. Kiem provided the members with some upcoming dates: honor roll celebration, change to school calendar, upcoming Scholastic Book Fair.✓ The committee was given an overview of BFMS lunch dates and encouraged to invite in community members to participate.✓ 1 parent member requested that the upcoming Science Fair receive a “full invitation” to the community.✓ All parent members requested that school events be promoted more effectively.✓ Mr. Kiem gave the committee an update on the “beautification” of the BFMS hallways. <i>(Visuals of teachers and students were scheduled to be laminated and hung up)</i>✓ The committee left the library and went to the 3rd floor computer lab where Mr. Kiem gave the parent members an overview of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Danielson Model• Changes in State oversight (tenure, etc)• Expectations for teaching staff and administrative staff✓ The parent feedback from the overview was welcomed. Parents were asked to be “cyclical” and bring that information back to the community.✓ It was agreed upon by the committee that there was a positive “vibe” in the building and all of their children were having a great experience.	

Benjamin Franklin Middle School
BQMT Minutes September through January

BQMT Minutes 12/10/12

In Attendance
6:15 pm – 7:30 pm

Mr. Raymond Kiem
Ms. Patty Monaco
Ms. Tamika Francis
Ms. Joby Horrigan
Ms. Denise Sherman

- ✓ The meeting opened with Ms. Francis giving a report from the DAT meeting. She reported that the meeting did not “get off the ground” due to some confusion from members representing other schools. She informed us that the Superintendent was disappointed.
- ✓ Mr. Kiem highlighted the decrease in discipline / HIB reports and attributed that heavily to the role modeling being delivered by the 8th grade students.
- ✓ Parents of 8th grade students on the committee shared that their children were feeling very empowered and positive at BFMS.
- ✓ Other areas were identified as reasons for decreased discipline: improved instruction, the new observation model, particular staff members going above and beyond, and positive “vibes” inherent in the culture of BFMS.
- ✓ Mr. Kiem passed out an article about “How to Use Technology in School”. The committee took a few minutes to read the article and brainstormed ways to infuse student *smart-phones* as a tool.
- ✓ Ms. Francis stated that she would take this concern to the next DAT meeting and broach the subject with the Superintendent.
- ✓ Ms. Sherman gave an overview of some tangible forms of upcoming positive programming: Season of Service letters, Visuals that were already hung up, and some Guidance Recess groups.
- ✓ The date for the next meeting was set to occur after the next DAT meeting so Ms. Francis could continue to debrief the BQMT.

Hawthorne School

Deirdre Spollen-LaRaia, Ed.D.
Principal

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Hawthorne BQMT Meeting November 27, 2012

Meeting Minutes 3:30 PM – 4:15

Team Members Present:

Rebecca Riveiro-Alston, Parent
Lois Bono, Teacher
Deirdre Spollen-LaRaia, Principal

Principal Report

- ⚡ BQMT Information and Guidelines/Responsibility of Members
- ⚡ District Goals
- ⚡ School Goals (presented previously at PTA Meeting and Faculty Meeting)

Reports/Concerns/Questions from Team Members

- ⚡ Heat in the building has been inconsistent with the installation of the new boilers. Work orders have been submitted and Dr. Spollen-LaRaia and Joe Stamilla (Head Custodian) will meet with Anthony D'Angelo on 11/30.
- ⚡ Temporary walkway to the cafeteria from Lucy Avenue has been challenging because of the dirt, mud, ice.
- ⚡ Lights around the perimeter of the building are dim and do not provide enough lighting for parents, children and staff when they are walking to the cafeteria, particularly for WPA pick-up in the late evening. (Fixed)

Next Steps/Follow Up

- ⚡ Suggestion to provide updates on the progress of the solar panels on the website.
- ⚡ Dr. Spollen-LaRaia will meet with Mr. D'Angelo on 11/30 to discuss:
 - Solar Panel Kiosk Placement (members suggested the Computer Lab); Dr. Spollen-LaRaia will get specifications from Mr. D'Angelo and then survey the staff
 - Heating System and Boilers
- ⚡ Lois Bono will speak with Joe Stamilla regarding the status of the flood lights on the perimeter of the building

Report from District Advisory Team (DAT)

- ⚡ Rebecca presented the agenda and meeting minutes from the DAT held on 11/26/12. Included in the presentation was the draft of the District Goals, Objectives and Activities for 2012-2013 school year.
- ⚡ An update of Teacher and Principal Evaluations was shared. Dr. Spollen-LaRaia shared with the team that she is a member of the DEAC.
- ⚡ See attachment District Advisory Meeting Minutes from Rebecca

Good of the Order

Whittier School Building Quality Management Team (BQMT)

MINUTES BQMT Meeting

Friday, December 7, 2012, 8:15 a.m.
Whittier School

Attendance: Francisca Amponsah, Vanessa Bing, Jennifer Cusack, Jay Friedman, Michael Freedman, Suzanna Kaplan, Monique Mighty, Kim Milnes, Willa Rudy.

Introduction and Overview of BQMT

Mrs. Kaplan called the meeting to order, asking all in attendance to begin by introducing themselves. Following introductions, Mrs. Kaplan began with a discussion of the function of the BQMT, providing a brief overview of its history, and describing some of the past events and projects organized (e.g. development of the color system used at the school, *What Women Do at Work Day* program, and a presentation of a book about Black cowboys). Mrs. Kaplan then distinguished how the work of the BQMT differs from that of the PTO, and how it primarily deals with the intellectual vision and organization of the school. She noted how the BQMT works with the District Advisory Team (a larger group comprised of representatives from the BQMTs at each of the Teaneck schools and the district superintendent Barbara Pinsak), and how the BQMT works to support the school and district's goals. Mrs. Kaplan noted that she would provide members of the BQMT with a copy of these goals, and subsequently turned the meeting over to Dr. Vanessa Bing, BQMT member, to discuss the objectives of this meeting.

DISCUSSION OF PRELIMINARY BQMT MEETING

Dr. Bing framed the context for this meeting, noting that it was borne out of informal discussions she had had with Mrs. Kaplan dating back to the spring of last year, as well as issues that emerged following a smaller meeting with PTO Co-Chair Teresa Burton and Mrs. Kaplan on 11/28. The 11/28 meeting followed a District Advisory Team meeting that Ms. Burton and Dr. Bing attended on 11/26. Dr. Bing noted that the primary issues that came up in these meetings were: school climate issues; concerns about middle school transitions and how to support children feeling included as they enter a larger arena; considering a developmental transition group for boys to help them navigate some of the challenges of going from elementary to middle school; issues related to bullying and harassment; and the development of a survey instrument to get input from teachers. Dr. Bing highlighted the need for all of these initiatives to be embedded within a culturally sensitive framework, noting the importance of addressing differences among our students when talking about issues of inclusion. This includes discussion of race, ethnicity, language, religion, ability/disability, religion, etc. The goal is to introduce ways to naturally integrate these concerns into the existing curriculum, and to create a climate of valuing, appreciating and embracing difference, and not solely "teaching tolerance."

Dr. Bing shared some examples from parents who attended the district advisory team meeting, which illustrated the types of difficulties children are having with transitioning (to middle school) and experiences of bullying/intimidation. Dr. Bing opened the discussion to the group, requesting input from teachers and parents to get their thoughts about what they view as the primary classroom or climate concerns, and what should be the focus of this BQMT.

TEACHER/PARENT FEEDBACK

Many ideas were offered as a starting point for the BQMT:

- *Enhancing Social Skills/Increasing Emotional Intelligence* – Ms. Rudy noted that the Special Ed program makes use of a curriculum that has been very valuable in helping students to understand,

identify, recognize and express emotions. It was suggested that all students-- not just special education students, could benefit from such training. This curriculum can be obtained from Dr. Maureen Edwards of the Division of Specialized Education. Mrs. Kaplan also has a copy that she can make available to all interested.

- *Literacy Program for Boys* – Mr. Freedman suggested that the “Reading is Cool Program” that is used by the Teaneck Library is an example of the type of program that may be a vehicle to support some of the concerns facing boys transitioning to middle school.
- *Dealing with Social Conflict* – Both teachers and parents noted the value in providing general education to students around how to manage conflict, and how to differentiate peer conflict from bullying. Some students may not be aware of the difference and may be falsely accusing others of bullying. Kim Milnes recommended Brad Tassell, a comedienne and Ph.D. candidate, who wrote a book *Don't Feed the Bully*, as a possible speaker.
- *Creating Opportunities for leadership Growth and Sensitivity* – Mr. Freedman noted that we should explore more opportunities for the older children to work with the younger ones, and how this may be especially useful for children experiencing difficulty. This can help them to develop a level of competency in a task and feel that they have a real role to play in school. Ms. Mighty's *Young Leaders Program* was suggested as a model for this, as it is quite successful, with some 50 students participating to date.
- *Diversifying Reading Materials* – Jay Friedman commented on a *New York Times* article that addressed the need for children to read stories that “speak to them.” The group acknowledged that we need more reading materials that are representative of our population of students, and how, as a group we can make purchasing decisions about such books for Whittier. It was noted that there are virtually no materials available featuring children of Middle Eastern ancestry.
- *Addressing Children's Own Biases/Stereotypes/Issues of Entitlement* – There are concerns that children are exhibiting rude/disrespectful and intolerant behaviors during lunch and recess times that need to be addressed. For example, in the cafeteria it is known that some children are quite rude to the people that are serving them; are making insensitive comments to children who may be eating foods that look or smell differently from what they are accustomed to; and ridiculing other children who are not as athletic or otherwise adept at sports during recess. This speaks to the need to address children's sense of entitlement, their judgments of others, and stereotyped thinking.
- *Building Better Citizens* – Questions were raised concerning how to build character and create better citizens in our students, and teach them about how to “give back” to others. One suggestion offered was having students engage in a “pen pal project” with children from other (Third World) countries (e.g. Haiti, Ghana). Ms. Mighty offered specific suggestions to facilitate such a project.

SURVEY

Based on the discussion, it was agreed that it would be useful to develop a survey to get wider input from teachers concerning what supports they need and what their concerns/priorities are with regard to students. It was suggested that the survey might have a theme such as nurturing a classroom community and would specifically explore: 1) how teachers build a community in the classroom; 2) how teachers choose subjects to discuss in the classroom; and 3) how teachers help children learn to be good citizens who give back. It was agreed that Dr. Bing would draft a survey and get feedback from Mrs. Kaplan and other teachers in attendance at this meeting before distributing the survey school-wide.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Vanessa M. Bing, Ph.D., BQMT Member