

Manhattan School for Children
School Leadership Team (SLT)
February 10, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Claire Lowenstein	Principal
Katy Bowen	Faculty (UFT Rep)
Wendy Smith	Faculty
Danielle Monahan	Faculty (paraprofessional)
Andree Sanders (first half of mtg)	Co-PA President
Alison Holden (second half)	Co-PA President
Alyssa Cheng	Member/Parent Representative (K-3)
Brigit Beyea	Member/Parent (all grades)

Meeting began at 3:45pm in the Science Room.

I. MSC's New Principal

Superintendent Ilene Altshul made a brief appearance to announce that Claire Lowenstein has been selected as MSC's new Principal. She and Claire met earlier with all the teachers. The PTA and SLT will send out a joint letter announcing the decision.

Claire restated her appreciation for the opportunity and honor to lead MSC. She discussed some early changes that she wants to initiate, including hosting regular "Chats with Claire" with parents and ones with teachers to increase communication. She also plans to regularly share email updates to parents.

II. Parent Survey on Speaker Series

The team reviewed the draft Survey to parents, and discussed the ways to use a Speaker Series to help parents make connections between what their child learns in school and how to bring that home. The team recommended that the Survey be translated into Spanish; additional languages that are present in the MSC Community include Mandarin, Hebrew and Russian. The survey will be shared on-line and by paper, and due back after winter break. Suggestions were made around using positive language around building caring communities such as Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation (vs. Preventing Bullying), and noted that the March Student Town Hall meetings will be about this topic. Wendy and Maryanne are using resources from "Voices," a K-8 program that includes read-alouds, role plays and a focus on problem-solving. A parent workshop that brought in the same curriculum from "Voices" program and how MSC is using it could be a good example of how to use the Parent Speaker Series.

Brigit will followup with the Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee about how to incorporate the Town Hall plans with Claire's plans for regular open sessions. They can explore ways to integrate

these two activities, if they have shared goals. The PTA will also look to see if the “Chats” will overlap with PTA meetings.

III. **Updates on Previous Items**

- A. **Hiring Committee.** Claire announced that she will be working with teachers to convene a Hiring Committee, comprised of teachers, administration and parents, to help increase outreach to potential job candidates. One of her goals as Principal is to increase opportunities for potential staff to learn about MSC, and she will be working with teachers to attend more job fairs. Once applicants apply, MSC uses a specific protocol for interviewing, based on DOE regulations. The Parent Grantwriting Committee is also reaching out to identify opportunities to work with Bank Street or other teaching programs that help train and place teachers of color.
- B. **School Handbook/Student, Teacher and Parent “Rights and Responsibilities” document.** Claire requested help from the SLT to review the current Middle School Academy Handbook and the lower school package with the goal to merge them into one MSC Student-Family Handbook which can be shared with parents in September 2014. This document will help answer questions, avoid confusion and help better communicate expectations to all stakeholders. This could be part of curriculum night as well. While the bulk of the work might be done over the summer, the SLT could help by reviewing the current documents, researching other school models and providing teacher and parent input on content.
- C. **Results from iZone Survey.** Claire shared an overview of the iZone Parent Survey. She said while parents overwhelmingly liked the communication with teachers/classrooms, there was a big demand for better communication with administration. Implementing “Chats with Claire” is one way to help improve this; others include updating MSC Net to be more interactive and sending out regular communication to families.
- D. **Minutes from January meeting approved.**
- E. **Other News:** Katy Bowen has been offered an exciting internship opportunity that begins April 1, 2014. Congratulations, Katy! You’ll be missed!

IV. **Next Meeting Time: Monday, March 10, 2014 at 3:45.** Topic: To review Handbook materials in preparation for creating one MSC Student-Family Handbook for 2014-15.