

Manhattan School for Children

School Leadership Team (SLT)

May 12, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Claire Lowenstein	Principal
Wendy Smith	Faculty
Erin Moughon-Smith	Faculty
Andree Sanders	Co-PA President
Alison Holden	Co-PA President
Alyssa Cheng	Member/Parent Representative (K-3)
Brigit Beyea	Member/Parent (all grades)
Suzanne Shelley	Member/Parent (6-8)
Tatiana Hoover	Business manager (and guest speaker)

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

I. Approval of prior meeting minutes

Minutes from April meeting approved.

II. Upcoming Workshop: June 10th on Responsive Classroom & Conflict Resolution

Claire confirmed with Mary Ann and Michelle that they will present at the PA meeting in June from 8:45-9:05. Alyssa also suggested that Jennifer (parent in Geri's class) can also present as she's been doing weekly work with that class. Due to limited time, it will be set up like the "Chats with Claire" and questions will be solicited in advance.

Alyssa will do a flyer and Claire will put it in her weekly update. We can adapt the Diversity & Inclusiveness evaluation tool to collect feedback and solicit ideas for future topics.

Future Workshops:

Will aim to start additional workshops every other month, starting in September/October. The first topics will likely be Partnerships and Who's in the Building (see notes from last meeting). Additionally, Kindergarten teachers are planning to hold a workshop around Book Levels, and helping to calm nerves of families, put the reading levels in the context of the whole child and overall curriculum approach, and importantly, to reduce competition about levels.

Some will be held during PA meetings, while others will need to find alternate times (evening etc.)

III. Proposal for new Network Support

Claire and Tatiana presented on the "Network Support" that each school is required to contract with to receive professional development and specialized support on budget, special ed, HR,

data and ESL. The networks replaced previous Superintendent structure. Each school pays \$40,000 per year, but can select which network to participate in. MSC has had a contract with CFN532 for several years, but they have not been happy with the services provided. Further, the current network does not have any other K-8 schools, conducts all professional development during the day, and often seemed too busy or unavailable to meet MSC's requests.

This year, MSC is able to choose a new network. Claire and Tatiana researched and interviewed possible vendors, and recommended to the SLT that MSC apply to CFN102 & 113. This consortium has many progressive and K-8 schools, and others which are more aligned to MSC's program (examples include CPE, Ella Baker, Earth School, Landmark, School of the Future). This consortium has many schools which took an active stance against testing. The network provides professional development afterschool as well as retreats, and Claire and Tatiana were impressed by the people that they met and the resources which they have to offer (eg, 2 budget experts). Most importantly, they aim to create a learning community of schools, which is what MSC seeks to be in. This network will help MSC's teachers and administration stretch professionally, both by sharing best practices but also by learning and developing further. Other schools that Claire and Tatiana spoke with recommended this network as well.

The SLT unanimously supported MSC's application to the new network, and that if the old service was not working, it's important to find one that meets MSC's needs. Deadline is May 16th.

IV. Handbook

Suzanne reported on her work to select the information from the Academy (7-8th) Handbook which should be incorporated into the School-wide one. She did not include the day-to-day/'nitty-gritty' details which are only needed by those in those grades, but the team agreed it was important that EVERYONE in the school "see" and know about what happens at all grades.

Alison (not present) is collecting all the feedback and Claire will lead this over the summer. We will likely need a volunteer writer to get it done, as well as a graphic designer afterwards.

V. General Updates

- **New website** is up!! Feedback on 'look' has been very positive, though the content is still in progress. Tatiana noted that MSCnet will still be used through the end of the school year for the back-end stuff (databases).
- Claire reported that the **Parent Volunteers** filling in while the Parent Coordinator position is filled have been wonderful! They've been energetic and friendly. Claire suggested that it is a volunteer role that continues even after the Parent Coordinator is hired.

- Diversity & Inclusiveness Committee is holding the first **Parent Forum** on Wednesday, May 14th.
- **Kindergarten applications** increased by more than 250 this year (total of approximately 760!)
- Claire will meet with PA this week to review **budget** and fundraising needs for next year. School allocations/budgets usually are released by DOE in June (though new chancellor may change that timing). The SLT would then review the budget in Sept/Oct as part of its role.
- Update on decision to move Beacon **High School**. Suzanne reported that the new school will be a High School, but priority placements will be given to students from its middle school (6-8 grades). This could incentivize students to leave MSC after 5th grade, to guarantee a spot at the only HS on the UWS. Claire is aware of the change, and the group discussed that similar changes at other schools had not impacted retention at MSC in the past. However, it was noted as something to keep an eye on for 2015 and beyond.
- Team applauded the **school play**, Erin's great work on it and all the students who did such a wonderful job. Website has great pictures.

VI. Upcoming events

- PA and SLT elections: May 13th
- June 10th Workshop at PA meeting on Responsive Classrooms
- SLT meeting: June 10th (also) at 3:45