

Park Road Montessori
SLT Meeting
April 11, 2014

Members Present: Bill Aheron, Yetta Buchanan, Ayrone Dubinsky, Sherry Herbert, Mike Herndon, Anna Hurdle, Jackie Peterson, Kristen Piscitelli, Susan Plaza, Candace Steude, Debbie Webber, Cynthia Wood

PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE:

Ms. Debbie reported that PRM has received information from NC DPI (via CMS) that reinforces that students are not permitted to opt out of required testing.

We are losing Ms. Kelly and Ms. Sherry next year.

Absences, early dismissals and tardies are excessive, this increased after the bell was extended. Parents should be encouraged to minimize this. Jackie suggested comparing data to 2010. Ms. Sherry reminded everyone that this bell schedule is not developmentally appropriate. The state sends letters (Power School) to parents. This has a greater impact when you reach middle and high school.

Elections for parent SLT rep are coming up, several parents have expressed interest.

Bill discussed the CMS 2014/15 budget proposal. He attended the meeting, large group there. The proposal was well received. CMS continues to grow and struggle with budgetary constraints. There are 4 focuses: Staff Salaries, Choice Expansion, Family Support Services (Nurses, Social Workers etc.), and Literacy in early grades. The request to the county will ask for at least a 3% raise. The biggest provider of funding for the district is the state. The next 6-8 weeks are critical in influencing state and local leaders regarding teacher pay and support for public schools. Jackie says teacher pay is a huge issue and impacting the district. It is more than respect for teachers; we will have a shortage of good teachers. CMS needs 5 votes from the county commissioners to approve increased funding of the county supplement to support the proposed items, including the staff raise.

Testing Impacts: Bill has been waiting to share our information without supporting data from other schools. He has not received anything yet though several said they are in the process of gathering data. Kristen noted that some schools have a high population of challenged students and the teachers there like the testing. Bill agreed some schools see this testing as an important tool for younger teachers. Jackie said many schools are only looking at scores, not skills that they need to teach. Ms. Sherry said experienced teachers she knows feel the same as PRM – the testing does not give enough feedback to teachers to be useful, it is time consuming to dig and find out how to help their students. PRM faces more of a challenge with the multigrade structure. Ms. Debbie said they have listened to feedback and now test all lower el students at the same time. Mike asked what happens if we don't get data from additional schools? Bill said the conversation would then move to Kit Rea, Frank Barnes, and the magnet office. Jackie said this will have to be parent driven; administrators don't want to take the heat as "complainers." Anna H. said the timing may just be difficult as the year is winding down; perhaps continue this

in the fall as testing begins again. Teachers can track it as they go. Jackie wonders if a survey would be better.

Parent Compact: There is a new draft. Jackie asked how it is different. Ms. Sherry said the wording really focuses on Montessori key essentials so parents and teachers are on the same page working with the child. It dovetails right with the Primary document that will be discussed on Beginners Day. Parents will meet in small groups with a teacher to discuss the compact. The compact goes home at the beginning of the school year. Kristen stressed the importance of discussing this directly with the parents and students. Bill asked about sharing the document at Beginners Day. Ms. Sherry said the information Primary is giving out covers the key essentials. Anna H said the document can also be used at late entry interviews. Ms. Sherry said there is always a group of parents who get into the school at the last minute and don't get all the information; perhaps there can be an orientation for them. Kristen asked about late entry interviews. Ms. Anna H said they end in June. Right now there are 3 interviews a week; many families are in private Montessori schools. Bill said we hope to have our compact adopted for the district Montessori schools so there is consistency in CMS.

Bill discussed an event for parents new to Montessori. There will be a half day session May 3 for adults to learn about the Montessori philosophy from the Primary level through Upper El. Administrators are also invited. This information has been shared with incoming families, along with their welcome letter and info on Beginners Day.

Exit Interviews: Bill presented a draft exit survey, along with input from Anna H. Cynthia had a question about which family members wanted to leave. Ms. Sherry said this is a parent ed question and helpful for us. Bill will work on re-wording that question. We agreed that this survey is important to implement. Ms. Candace said we need to expect a certain amount of attrition annually. Ms. Anna H. said the purpose is what can we learn from this and what will we do with the information? The group will further discuss how the responses will be gathered and used.

Economic Diversity: Bill wants to continue this conversation next school year.

Staff Satisfaction: Mike and Ms. Candace have sent out a survey, used results to find 4 areas to focus on - Staff Meetings, Consistent Applications of Guidelines, Openness, Feeling Valued in the Role. Ms. Candace met with her team and the assistants to discuss this, the meetings were very positive. She is typing up the data she gathered, was pleased that people had suggestions for solutions. Ms. Aryon spoke with the Upper El team. They felt that most of their issues are not for SLT to help with.

Next Meeting: Friday May 16, 7:30am