



Park Road Montessori SLT Minutes

February 20, 2015

Members Present: Bill Aheron, Yetta Buchanan, Ayrton Dubinsky, Melanie Francis, Anna Hurdle, Andrew Lightsey, Anna Moraglia, Kristen Piscitelli, Susan Plaza, Jeannie Sauder, Candace Steude, Debbie Webber

Kristen called the meeting to order.

Principal's Report :

Discussed the letter sent in the e-blast addressing the Montessori middle school program at Sedgefield. The letter from the principal mentioned the B letter grade for just the Montessori program as opposed to the entire school grade of F.

Ms. Melinda has been working on behavior management with assistant teachers. They are also participating in webinars, most recently on autism. They will receive continuing education credits for this.

Magnet Schools of America visit was canceled due to the snow. This will be rescheduled to early March. MAP testing also begins in March. Ms. Moraglia did request that they come in the morning to see the morning work cycle. Staff has been advised of the visit, we want to show a normal day at PRM.

Kristen asked about open house attendance. They were well attended as usual. We do expect to have a wait list again. Parents generally ask about test scores, specials, etc. Kristen mentioned a parent who asked her about the school, she was confused about the program. We want parents to know what to expect here, it is not a traditional education. We still have the problem of being a cheap day care for PreK students. Raising tuition would be helpful. Bill said there are very few seats available for new families due to siblings and CMS employee children. Magnet acceptance letters have not gone out yet but PRM does have the initial roster for next year.

Journey and Discovery:

The invite is ready to go. Kristen got an endorsement letter from Tim Morgan to include with the invite. Kristen will meet with Anna and Bill to determine the invite list.

Instructional Assistant Training:

Grade level groups will continue to discuss behavior management.

Philosophy Document:

Ms. Candace discussed changing the language of the document to reflect the inclusion of the Autobell fundraiser. Ms. Anna said we could keep the language the same but decide not to follow it in certain circumstances. Bill asked if we should consider an amendment. He sees the value in the aspirational nature of the document. Ms. Candace thinks leaving the language the same adds to confusion. Ms. Anna said we did not write the document to follow what we do at PRM, it was written using Montessori principals. Ms. Ayrton says that parents think it was written for PRM. Ms. Moraglia believes it is timely to review the document and use it school wide, perhaps an addendum could be written to specifically address fundraising. Ms. Candace said PRM is evolving and the document should reflect this. Fundraising is an ongoing discussion. Bill and Candace can write a draft with Ms. Anna to be ready for March meeting. Kristen suggested that the Philosophy Document be reviewed on an annual basis by SLT. Ms. Moraglia said the all groups need to do this (PTO, staff, etc.) Bill said we could provide the link with the Journey invitation to incoming families.

PTO Funding:

Overview of funding was distributed at PTO meeting, crafted by the executive board. PTO is to get feedback from staff. There are financial procedures in place that need to be considered. Kristen feels the SLT will guide discussions but staff and administrators need to drive this and make decisions on how the money is spent. Bill and Mike had an informal discussion with PTO board members. They discussed setting priorities and the SLT role in that to give them more background. SLT wants to articulate professional development opportunities and school improvement plan priorities. They told PTO that we would give them ideas for the 2015-16 school year. Ms. Candace wondered if the funding overview was for next year. She is concerned about the Montessori Enrichment Fund as it does not address all options that benefit entire school, language does not leave room for flexibility. Ms. Moraglia said there is no reason to make a drastic change in language as we have not had any issues with funding. She has concerns of how this will work with the School Improvement Plan. Bill thinks it may just be a lack of communication between PTO and SLT. Ms. Moraglia reminded us that the PTO has had policies and procedures in place for spending. Bill said the SIP articulates priorities, we look to the principal for a plan to accomplish these, we look to the staff to implement details, and the PTO to assist with funding support. Ms. Candace worries that there is a "gatekeeper" feel to the document. It has removed principal's discretion for funding priorities. Ms. Moraglia agrees with this, specifically with administrator training and how it impacts the entire school. The staff sees the benefits of this training. PTO sees this as individual not entire staff enrichment. Ms. Ayrton mentioned that there have not been issues with mis-use of funds in the past. Ms. Moraglia said that teachers do research and run ideas past administration, they are not just working in isolation. This deals more with specials teachers as classroom teachers receive funds from the district. Bill asked if CMS provides professional development for other unique magnets. He will investigate this. Ms. Debbie mentioned that other magnet programs exist in non magnet schools (arts, language etc.) while Montessori does not. Kristen said the document implies that we are not trusting people to make correct decisions regarding funding. Ms. Debbie is concerned that the document did not include any staff members when it was developed. Kristen asked if the PTO has staff involved in the executive board. What are the rules for that? It seems that having teachers on the board would be helpful. Ms. Moraglia said faculty attends the monthly PTO meeting but decisions are not made at these meetings.

SLT team reps will share the PTO funding overview document with faculty teams for feedback which will be shared at the March SLT meeting. Anna will share faculty and SLT feedback with PTO once collected.

Key concerns are – 1) final spending approval has always been at the discretion of the principal in collaboration with key faculty stakeholders. Does this document propose any changes to that model of approval? 2) Budget hold over from year to year: what are the pros and cons including tax implications, etc. (for example the primary team requests to hold over this years' primary conference fund allotment to next year when conference topics are more relevant.)

Next Meeting – Friday, March 20 at 7:30 AM