

**MSAD #51 PTO
Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2009**

6:30pm

GHS cafeteria

Attending: Gloria Nicholson, Emily Kearins, Linda Collins, Stacey Carlson, Tracy Silverman, Robin Lary, Carol Lambert, Karen Campbell, Sara Perfetti, Vickie Bell, Margo Harrington, Bethany Hanley, Amy Saffian

1. Call to Order and Introductions

6:34pm call to order by Gloria Nicholson.

Gloria introduced guest speakers Becky Foley, Principal of NYMS; Karen Bubar, Principal of DRS; Susie Robins, Principal of MIW; Kim Brandt, Principal of GMS; Dan McKeone Vice Principal of GHS.

2. PTO addressed by Principals MSAD 51

Becky Foley – Principal of NYMS gave overview on grades K-5 math.

Math: Last year 88% of 5th graders met or exceeded standards
Topped this year.

4th graders only outdone by York in state of Maine. (graph presented)
09/10 – focus on differentiating instruction for children.

No students fall into “do not meet” category
32% (51/157) “exceed” standards

Teachers held 3 day focus on math with grade level focus and planning.
NYMS lost math coaches – administration cont’s to meet with students.
Student reference book now online – school working on login/passwords
Offers reading and math concepts, games, manipulation

Susie Robins – Principal of MIW gave overview on grades K-5 writing.

Writing: 5 years ago, K-12 committee set out to determine needs of literacy –
decided focus needed to be on writing. Followed math unit
protocol with mini lesson followed by independent practice.

Units of study by Lucy Caucus

Goal for 4 writing workshops:

100% K-2 (7 units) - small moments
3-5 (6 units) – nonfiction

New – K-5 writing assessment (Wednesday afternoon teacher
development work)

MEA results (07-08 data)

75% of grade 5 met/exceeded standards (highest in neighboring
towns. Of 46 students in ME that exceeded standards, 6 students
at NYMS.)

Karen Bubar – Principal of DRS gave overview on grades K-5 reading.

Reading: All grades focused on GIRT (**G**uided **I**ndependent **R**eadin**G** **T**ime)
Research shows it takes 7 minutes to get both into and out of a book to be fully engaged. Also, when only reading at 90% comprehension rate, it is very difficult to confidently answer questions.

Google search “*scholastic book wizard*” to get to web site that helps identify a child’s reading “just right” level.

Focus –

1. “Just right” books to maximize their success.
2. Decoding words
3. Consistent word work
4. Encoding

Questions:

1. Questioned with the demise of the MEA, will the new test allow same comparisons?

Answered by Becky Foley (NYMS) and Kim Brandt (GMS):

Now testing in October v. March (MEA). The State is putting on workshops on how to use data for comparison. New test is more district v. child specific. Will be looking at cohorts, grade-related trends.

2. Are “just right” reading levels identified in the library?

Answered by Karen Bubar (DRS):

No* - not even in class because don’t want student to rely on this. Focus more on series or type of book for reference. *Clarification (KB) - The library- public and whole school- are not "leveled" the way that we assess students, for the reason described and listed; but classroom libraries do have a certain percentage of their books leveled to provide some support in book selection. The entire classroom library is not leveled, because we don't want them to be dependent on the system forever. At some point, they need to learn about themselves as a reader to know what makes a "just right" book for them without having to look at the letter written on it. But, as a scaffold, we do provide many classroom books that are "leveled" as a guide.

Kim Brandt – Principal of GMS gave overview on literature, writing and math.

Literature: trimester assessment, anchor curriculum, common student learning for teachers to compare/ instructional practices/ curriculum evolution.

Writing: Biannual writing prompt (spring/fall)

All teachers except math teachers to assess blind (no names)
Teachers assess based of 6 anchor papers of varying strength (1-6)
Grade levels get together - identify strengths/needs across the board
Then teachers get their own student’s papers – ID same trends?

Students get to view anchor papers 2 and 5.
Review as group which one is better and why
Students then identify their own strengths/needs in comparison

Reading: Mentored texts
20 minutes of mastery time / structured time for reading avail in class

Leadership Skills: New committee of 13 parents, subcommittee of students
Goal to increase student voice at GMS, improve communication and conflict resolution.

Questions:

1. Is the goal was to have something long term in place regarding leadership?

Answered by Kim Brandt (GMS):

In place greater than one year with 7th graders, then to include 6th graders.

2. What is the philosophy of the neighborhoods? Are we trying to keep them?

Answered by Kim Brandt (GMS):

Neighborhoods designed to decrease intimidation when traveling throughout the building. Team comprised of partial classes of 6,7,8 graders. Pros and cons. Goal to identify if this is meeting the promise of what we said we'd do.

3. Do you get feedback from the children in the neighborhoods?

Answered by Kim Brandt (GMS):

Yes, this is the focus question put to 8th graders

Statement: Noted benefits at GHS level as incoming freshmen have increased familiarity with other students at higher grade levels.

4. Mary Belisle is the math coach – is there an equivalent in literature?

Answered by Kim Brandt (GMS):

No. There used to be, but none available. Kim now fills role. Wants a teacher for this position however all are full time and thus unavailable.

5. What philosophical differences between teaching grades K-5 v. K-8?

Answered by Kim Brandt (GMS) and Becky Foley (NYMS):

Many different models available with literature supporting either position. New literature identifies K-8 because of brain growth spurts, etc. K-5 well positioned. Need to shift focus on grades 6-8.

Programs largely focused on grades K-6 in writing and math.

Dan McKeone – Vice Principal of GHS gave overview of high school level.

Transition into HS – 1st semester very important in regards to the rest of HS experience.

Aided by: Parent night (Feb/March of 8th grade year)
Step up day
Freshman orientation
Senior mentors

Teaching/learning:

IB up and running.
50-60 children in IB courses
21 full time IB students shooting for diploma
Approx half faculty with IB training – benefits all
Increased interdepartment training
Pacing guides, common assessments, common syllabi
Melding IB program with old curriculum to identify what best meets needs of kids
everything from bell schedule to navigating curriculum choices
No more MEA tests, now SATs x4 years
GHS is one of 5 or 6 schools in ME in the top 10 category each year
No teacher movement over the summer for 1st time in 4 years – increased stability

Questions:

1. HS is a busy place – needs good security. Questioned the volume of students against the loss of the position

Answered by Dan McKeone (GHS):

Redefined role of Officer John Dalbech. Office located at far end of building.
Generally at GHS when students are.
Increased security with new building. Once in session, main entrance open only.

2. Questioned funding of Officer Dalbech's position – particularly in light of his increasing importance and impending future budget cuts.

Unable to give firm answer – attendee of meeting questioned if grant from town.

3. Questioned social learning v. academics – particularly at younger ages

Answered by Karen Bubar (DRS), Becky Foley (NYMS) and Susie Robbins (MIW):

Focus on structure, respect, guidance curriculum, friendship groups (mentors/ increased support). Staff to build consistency regarding respect. PE/playground play with safety, rules and patience.

4. Is there any way to measure how we perform in these areas?

Answered by Dan McKeone (GHS), Kim Brandt (GMS)

Talks to all new teachers – consensus is these are fabulous kids. Praised early

grades for all the hard work done in these areas.
Constantly looking at this – guidance curriculum, core values, restorative justice practices, building relationships using circles and talking stick. Focus on standard approach throughout the building with a zero tolerance policy in addressing aggressive behaviors.

Principals address to PTO concluded 7:44pm.

3. Approval of October Minutes

No quorum, vote postponed.

4. Old and New Business

Budget worksheet passed out by Co-Chair Gloria Nicholson and reviewed. Estimated expenses down due to cancellation of programs. Anticipate funding at \$12 per student accurate. Treasurer Carol Lambert reported this does not reflect on-line sales (total approx \$1250 – 1260).

5. Committee Reports

a) Treasurer

Sally Foster in November - Not reflected in \$11,660, NYMS \$2796

b) Events

No report

c) Fundraising

Sally Foster has all been distributed.

d) Publicity

No report.

e) Volunteer

No report.

f) Enrichment

MIW – Kindergarten teachers want 'Give a Pig a Pancake'
DRS/NYMS – No report.

g) Secretary

No report.

h) Co-Chair

No report.

5. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted: Stacey Carlson, Co-Secretary; November 17, 2009.