

MINUTES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

October 25, 2010

The Middle School Advisory Council Meeting was held October 25, 2010, at the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard. The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. by Dr. Joshua Starr, Superintendent.

Dr. Starr gave a brief overview of a slide presentation entitled, "Middle School Transformation: Year 1 Update," and handed out hard copies. The Council was divided into groups, with each group given the task of reviewing and discussing a section of data, then reaching a consensus on what the data indicate and do not indicate, what further information is desired, and what actions should follow.

This activity prompted various observations and questions regarding CMT scores compared to State and between NCLB subgroups; distribution of students in CP and honors and final course grades; vertical scale growth by course and NCLB subgroup.

Dr. Starr informed the Council that the data from this document (MST: Year 1 Update) will be posted on the SPS website. During this activity, Dr. Starr explained the protocol when reviewing data is to stay in the descriptive, which can be "the hardest thing in the world." Don't make evaluative statements, or talk about your experience or what you know. Just describe; keep to the facts. At best, data help us to ask better questions, not make grand conclusions.

Next, the Council studied Year 2 changes. A second document, "Middle School Transformation Update," which outlines structural changes between 2009-10 and 2010-11, was distributed for the Council's review. Working In groups, members were asked to record their commendations and recommendations, and then report out to the Council.

Commendations included: introduction of 5 ELA coaches; Read 180 and System 44 interventions; more differentiated instruction strategies; professional development.

Recommendations included: offer enrichment for grade 7 (and 8) honors students; add more science coaches (one per school); have more PD on differentiated instruction for high level students; revisit math curriculum, assessment, and placement; re-examine value of more or less testing. Extending the advisory time was also discussed.

Dr. Starr talked about the model we are using, saying it is good and will get better. It's taken us from no standard curriculum to standard. The design for the model is right for the most part. People get the **vision** in Stamford. It takes multiple years. We've gone from a model of using solely CMT scores to one where we have consistent criteria. We're learning what's working and what's not—from focus group data, conversations with middle school teachers and administrators, we're learning what the issues are. For example, what do we do for grade 8; what enrichment should be offered for grades 7 and 8; we have hour long periods but only 6 – how do we incorporate world languages,

technology; what is the thinking of this group to plan for grade 8; do advisories extend beyond 25 minutes; what do we give up.

Time did not allow for the last agenda item, "Ideas for Year 3." This topic will be taken up at the next meeting of MSAC.

The Council closed with a Plus/Delta.

+	Δ
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good discussions at tables• Mixed groups (heterogeneous!)• Lots of information provided – Year 1 to Year 2• Parent involvement• Adequate time to discuss issues• Chance to work through data ourselves• Questions about data were helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have data in advance; difficult to absorb in short amount of time• Some data were unclear• Have students involved in process

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.