

MINUTES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

May 3, 2010

The Middle School Advisory Council Meeting of the Board of Education was held May 3, 2010, at the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard. The meeting was called to order at 5:11 p.m. by Dr. Winifred Hamilton, Deputy Superintendent.

The meeting began with Council members breaking into alike groups (parents, teachers, and administrators) to reflect upon priorities, obstacles, and questions which they believe still need to be addressed. The information was recorded by each group and collected by Dr. Hamilton for consideration as the work of middle school reform moves forward.

Dr. Starr distributed draft documents of the placement criteria and the regrouping process for grades 6 and 7 for next year. Council members reviewed the plans and were asked to comment on what they view as positive and/or negative aspects of the criteria.

Placement criteria advantages cited were: consistency across the district; incorporation of multiple assessments for grade 7; opportunity to move up in grade 7 based on grade 6 CMT. Comments on disadvantages included: lack of teacher input for grade 6 placement; standardized testing not a true reflection of student ability; two group system not right format, particularly for math.

Positive comments regarding the regrouping process were: end of 1st semester reassessment; consideration of teacher recommendation; multiple measures of achievement taken into account. Negatives mentioned were: restrictive cutoff; no accommodation for struggling students to move down to CP; amount of work the process requires for teachers and administrators.

The group then discussed the direction MSAC should take in 2010-11. Visiting schools, creating panels of teachers and students to provide feedback, and developing a closer link with high school and grade 4 and 5 teachers were some of the ideas proposed.

Dr. Starr conveyed his three major themes going into next year: articulation between elementary, middle, and high school; looking at data; and hearing from authentic voices.

Both Dr. Starr and Dr. Hamilton thanked Council members for their commitment this year, as well as sacrificing their family dinner time to attend MSAC meetings. Dr. Starr expressed his appreciation for their invaluable feedback, support, resistance, push-back, probing, etc. He stated that the group has accomplished what it set out to do and all should be very proud. Evidence—both factual and anecdotal—seems to be trending in a positive direction, but continued feedback is critical.

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

This was the final meeting of the Middle School Advisory Council for the school year 2009-2010.